

## City University School of Law Students Shared Love and Warmth With Children Witnesses of Domestic Violence and Children From Low-income Families During the Christmas Season- “See You Zoom See You Soon” Online English Storytelling Classes and Christmas Party”

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Since 2015, CityU law students and alumni have been participating in a number of service projects for children and teenager witnesses of domestic violence living at Serene Court, a women’s shelter for domestic violence victims, of the Christian Family Service Centre (“CFSC”). Such projects included School of Law students and alumni acting as mentors and accompanying these children to purchase books at the Hong Kong Book Fair, a mentoring scheme for secondary school students and Christmas parties. These activities have benefited more than 200 children and teenagers, allowing them to feel the love and concerns from the volunteers while living in the shadows of domestic violence.



An online English storytelling session with 2 law students as teachers and children from Tin Shui Wai

In the past year, the Covid-19 epidemic has not diminished the enthusiasm of CityU law students for public service. In September 2020, a number of law students attended a webinar jointly organized by the CityU School of Law Students' Professional Development and Public Service Programme ("the Public Service Programme") and the Children Family Service Division of CFSC to understand the needs of children witnesses of domestic violence as well as underprivileged and ethnic minority children. After this seminar, children from four families received online private tutoring from the law students for three months. This enabled the children to receive adequate learning support despite their lack of resources.

During the past Christmas and New Year break, the Public Service Programme joined hands with Serene Court and Tin Shui Wai Community Centre of CFSC again to serve the children in need in an activity entitled "See You Zoom See You Soon." In this activity, 23 CityU law students provided a total of 12 online English storytelling sessions to some children witnesses of domestic violence staying or used to stay at Serene Court and children from low-income families living in Tin Shui Wai. 43 children participated in this activity. In each session, two volunteers read English story books around the themes of Christmas and good morals to a small group of children. Volunteers did not simply tell the stories but also encourage the children to reflect upon and discuss in English their thoughts on the contents and morals in these stories. Some of the stories were specially chosen in light of the needs of the participants. For example, most children affected by domestic violence lack confidence in their interactions with others. By discussing the book "If You Give A Moose A Muffin", volunteers highlighted the importance of establishing trust in human relationships. They also shared their own experience in developing trusts in their friends thus providing a role model for these children.



An online Christmas party for children in Tin Shui Wai

We have received very positive comments from both the children participants and volunteers. According to the children's feedback questionnaire received by the Tin Shui Wai Community Centre, 100% of the participants agreed that this activity had helped them learn new English words and increased their interest in English. All of them were satisfied with this event and the performance by the volunteers. According to the feedback from the law student volunteers, most of them indicated that they felt happy in the service process and found this experience very meaningful as they could help children in need and bring them joy. They were grateful for the opportunity to participate in this activity and had learnt how to interact with children and be more patient. In particular, one law student wrote that through participating in this activity, "I was able to understand more about the less privileged." Another wrote "I got to understand more about the children's situation, thus making me appreciate the things that I have right now."

Besides the storytelling sessions, on Christmas Eve, Mrs. Fung, Adjunct Professor and founder of the Public Service Programme and volunteers also helped in an online Christmas party for the children in Tin Shui Wai. Activities in this party included singing of Christmas songs, story-telling and an art and craft session where each child made a Christmas tree. Hand-made Christmas cards and presents were also prepared and given to the children at Serene Court and in Tin Shui Wai. Hopefully all the time spent by the law students with the children together with the Christmas cards and presents could bring warmth to these children amidst the cold weather during this joyful Christmas season even though we all had to stay at home!



Children in Tin Shui Wai received presents prepared for them with love from the volunteers

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