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Through the valuable opportunity provided to students by the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund, I was able to join the Sichuan Service Tour organised by my school CUSCS and co-organised by Yellow

House. Such experience has allowed me to rethink the meaning of life and my lifestyle.

After joining the Sichuan Service Tour, I found that although the local people do not enjoy a high material standard of living, they are happier, able to enjoy life and cherish what they have more, compared to the people of Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, people generally spend all their time on their work or studies. Students have to cope with endless homework, dictation, tests and examinations. On top of the basic school work, many of them have to attend extra tutorial classes and interest classes. Their schedules are so tight that they are under great pressure. As for adults, they are busy with heavy workloads and long working hours. With increasing competition, many people have to pursue further studies after work. It is difficult for Hong Kong people to strike a proper balance between work and home life. The overall atmosphere drives people to enhance their competitiveness and be efficient, as if there is no time for a moment's rest. As time goes by, Hong Kong people seem to forget the most important thing in our lives. It is hard to find a substitute for a happy life. Sichuan people are always happy, and it is this positive attitude that we should learn.

During this Service Tour, we played group games with the children in the morning.

They were so energetic that they always outran us. It was really fun to play with them and we always felt that time passed too quickly. In the afternoon, we had to visit the elderly living in the mountain areas. The trips along steep mountain roads were a bit strenuous for us. The fact is that with our efficient transportation system and little exercise, we have been leading a pampered life. In Sichuan, elderly people approaching the age of 80 are still strong and healthy because they have to go up and down these steep mountain roads every day, whereas young people in Hong Kong have various kinds of illness such as obesity. It strikes me that I have to start changing my existing lifestyle. All the elderly people treated us warmly as if we were their grandsons or granddaughters. They gave us tea to drink and even asked us to join them for dinner at their homes. I was overwhelmed by their kindness. I loved the food provided on this Service Tour. The vegetables, pork and chickens we ate in those few days were grown and raised by the locals. No chemicals were added to the food. They were so healthy and delicious!

Besides, this Service Tour has provided me with a valuable opportunity to put what I have learned from the Higher Diploma Programme in Human Services into practice. Before setting off, we had to plan group activities for the local elderly people and children, submit proposals and prepare all the necessary materials. When carrying out the activities, I had to apply facilitation skills to create a lively atmosphere and ensure efficient division of labour. In case a child was injured, I had to be more cautious about the safety of participants in future events. After a few days of hands-on practice, I have realised the importance of paying attention to details when planning activities, which is of tremendous help to me in ensuring the smooth running of similar activities in the future.

All in all, this Service Tour has made me rethink the meaning of life and provided me with an opportunity to put subject knowledge into practice. I will definitely take part in similar service tours again in the future.

