Lifelong learning to help both you and me: Ms. Tong Kit-ha's sharing for awarded Outstanding Third Age Citizen

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Lifelong Learning to Help Both You and Me:

Ms. Tong Kit-ha’s Sharing for Awarded Outstanding Third Age Citizen

Tong Kit-ha & Emily Chan | Translation: Angel Gao & Tony Lai

23 April 2015 is a particularly exciting and memorable day for eleven retired people, as they were selected by HK Electric and Kong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) to be the Outstanding Third Age Citizens 2015 for their positive and optimistic life attitudes.

Having a passion for volunteerism and lifelong learning, Ms. Tong Kit-ha, “a toy-packaging worker who pursued tertiary studies after retirement and graduated with merits, better than many younger students”, was elected as one of the Outstanding Third Age Citizens. We are honorable to have Ms. Tong sharing with our readers her third-age life experience as well as her feelings as an awardee. Below is Ms. Tong’s sharing:

Retirement Education Benefits the Society

Lacking learning opportunities when I was young, I have always yearned for new knowledge. Seeing my husband and my two sons graduated from the university has rekindled my passion of going back to school again. With the encouragement from my family, I attended various computer courses and eventually fulfilled my dream of becoming a university graduate by pursuing my Associate and Bachelor Degrees in Social Science at Lingnan University. Besides, after years of hard work, I have attained the coaching qualifications of both Tai Chi Form and Tai Chi Spear issued by the Hong Kong Tai Chi Association. These learning experiences are all very precious for me.

During the process of lifelong learning, I realise that I can not only better equip myself and live a healthier life, but can also share my knowledge and experience with others. This benefits both others and myself and can make a contribution to the society. I believe that people of all ages can make progress through the acquisition of knowledge, let alone seniors. Therefore I will not stop my life after retirement, but would rather promote the idea of “elderly education benefits society,” and advocate formal education for the elderly as a civil right instead of social welfare.

The Meanings of the Award

It is a big encouragement for me to be awarded as an Outstanding Third Age Citizen by HK Electric and HKCSS. This is recognition of my determination to lifelong learning, devotion to social services, as well as my spirit of self-inspired, self-learnt and self-taught as a third-age individual. I would like to express my gratitude to my family and friends who have provided me with love and support after my retirement, which is the fuel of my motivation. Even after receiving the award, I continue to “live and learn,” and develop my interest and expertise. I strongly believe that “one should not refrain oneself from doing something which is deemed petty, nor to limit oneself by one’s age”. Lifelong learning is not only a process of knowledge increment, potential realisation and spirit uplifting, but also an opportunity for the elderly to improve their living quality. Through sharing their knowledge and experience, older people can further contribute to and respond to important issues of the society, raising the awareness of the public towards elderly’s social participation.

Early Preparation for a Brilliant Life in Third-Age

Your retirement life could be more colorful and have a tighter connection with the society if you prepare your retirement early. Let us plan and make good use of our golden years, never stop learning, actively participate and engage in community affairs, and enjoy a vibrant old age!

Remarks:

What is the “Third Age”?
The Third Age refers to those who aged 50 or above and have retired from fulltime work or family responsibilities, and are free to pursue his/her dreams and interests.

Afterword: Just as the saying goes, “life is priceless,” and what makes this statement true is the infinite possibilities within one’s life. Retirement does not mean a declination in productivity, but an increase of opportunity to achieve great things due to the disengagement from work. From self-transcendence to contribution to the society, what we could learn from Ms. Tong’s experience is that there are plenty chances for life-long education and voluntary service. As long as there is a will to learn, to share, and to participate, elderly can also demonstrate their talents and bring hope and positive energy through their ways of living.