

REFLECTION FROM

CHRIS MALONE

The Australian Institute of International Understanding was very pleased to welcome the Youth Delegation from Hong Kong under the International Youth Exchange Programme for a two week visit to Brisbane Australia from August 15 to August 28 ,1999. The Youth Delegation was involved in a varied and memorable program which included a leadership training program and visits to a number of venues in the Brisbane area as a part of their cultural exchange.

The highlight for the host families was the Farewell Evening which took place on the night before the group's departure to Hong Kong. A wonderful evening of entertainment was provided by the delegation and of particular note was the performance of a traditional Chinese Wedding Ceremony.

Host families commented on their enjoyment of hosting young people from Hong Kong for the very first time. It was a very rewarding and enjoyable experience for the host families. Many families expressed their interest in being contacted again to host delegates from this group if the delegation returns to

Brisbane.

On behalf of AIU I would like to commend the delegates for their enthusiasm and whole hearted participation in all aspects of the program which at times were very demanding and challenging. It was wonderful to be associated with such a fine group of young people who were exemplary ambassadors for Hong Kong. I hope we can continue to develop and foster the goodwill and understanding that was formed during this visit.

Chris Malone

AIU

Queensland State Manager

REPORT ON MEETING

THE HONG KONG STUDENTS!

During September of this year, I was delighted to meet a bunch of fun-loving, outgoing and friendly Hong Kong students. I had the pleasure of showing these wonderful students, along with my friends, around my university campus - The University of Queensland, St Lucia. We learnt many new things from the students, ranging from things like the educational structure in Hong Kong, to their every day lives, and attitudes toward such things as religion and politics. After the tour around the uni, we took them into Brisbane city, and gave them a tour of our Southbank Parklands (the former site of EXPO'88), and then had dinner with the

tour group. I had a great time meeting this wonderful bunch of students (especially the 'real characters' amongst them). They were genuinely interested in the Australian culture and our ways of life - and foremost were fabulous ambassadors for Hong Kong. They really instilled in me a great desire to one day visit Hong Kong! Thanks guys, I really enjoyed the experience!

Details about me:

Name: Amanda (Mandy) Ross

Course: Bachelor of Information Technology, University of Queensland

SHUM PRASHER

This September, I was given the opportunity to meet with some Hong Kong students, who were part of an educational tour group.

I found the experience quite enlightening as it allowed my friends and I to learn a little about another city, and culture, while the Hong Kong students were learning about ours. We met on a few occasions to show the students around the university, and also Brisbane city. This time was spent as we discussed many ideas ranging from education to lifestyle, to the personal interests of the students.

As a result of this tour, my friends and I benefited from a broadened understanding and appreciation of Hong Kong and also a friendship with the students, who were not all that different from us - this is what made conversing with them so easy.

In the end I am glad that I took the time to meet the

students. Even if I never get the chance to visit Hong Kong, at least I now know what it is like.

Shum Prasher

BlnfTech, Queensland University

6/10/99

SALINA AHMED

In September, I was embarked in the opportunity to meet a fantastic bunch of Hong Kong students.

My friends & I were fortunate enough to exchange our thoughts & feelings upon numerous topics, ranging from the traditional 'Hong Kong boat races' to birthday celebrations.

We interacted on a few occasions to give a tour of Southbank, Citycat & University of Queensland. The night before the Hong Kong students departed, we had the privilege to be present at their farewell concert.

I enjoyed the experience as I learned a lot about Hong Kong & its culture. The Hong Kong students were warm, friendly & very enjoyable to talk to.

Upon reflection, it is evident that my friends & I appreciated spending time with these wonderful people.

Thank you

Salina Ahmed

BlnfTech, University of Queensland

8/10/99

PETER

YUEN YUI-CHI

Name : Yuen Yui-chi (Peter)

Date of Birth : 12 April 1979

Occupation : the third year student at the University of Queensland Faculty of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering and Faculty of Business, Economics and Law

Other occupational interests includes various teaching and research positions at the CSEE, Department of English (Linguistics) of UQ and the Department of Information Technology, Martin College, Brisbane

Comments :

To all,

As an Chinese Australian Hua Qiao (華僑) of 15 years, I was very interested in the prospect of meeting and conversing with my peers in Hong Kong, my place of birth, and a place with which I still identify with strongly. Having lived in Australia for so long, I rarely have the opportunity to interact with Hong Kong students of similar age as myself. Hence, I was extremely happy to speak with successful Hong Kong students such as you and hope that on my return to Hong Kong, I will be able to associate with people like yourselves.

Having a strong interest in socio-political aspects of Chinese, I was interested to see that China's

leaders of tomorrow (you) have vastly different attitudes and ideals from the Chinese of previous generations. By retaining the world famous-Chinese standards of intellectual achievement and augmenting it with an open and friendly attitude towards others, you have served me to be thoroughly impressed.

You have been excellent ambassadors for Hong Kong. I wish you all the best of luck in the future and I hope that when I return to Hong Kong to pursue my own career, I will have the fortune to be friend with people such as you.

Kind Regards

Peter Yuen

Rebecca

Cheung Ying-Ying

Without the support and care of my dear group mates, the trip would not have been so delightful and fruitful. If we haven't been through the challenges, we would not have come out as a group. What so valuable about the trip is not only the cultural exchange and excursions that broaden our horizons, but to explore inwardly of our own potentials and relate each other as a team.

It always amazes me that a group of 16 strangers can spend two weeks together with such joy and fun. And it didn't come out with a click but a process. Through the leadership training course and especially the 'muddy pool', I could assure you that we have applied the team spirit to the fullest and we are proud of being the bright leaders, everyone of us!

I'll always remember the heart-warming scones shared in the Australia bush; The lovely sharing with the Queensland Youth, who spent their time sincerely with us; the night when my host parents showed us the Southern Stars in the big sky; the touching scene when the heroes are saving the belles; and the things taught in the leadership Training Course...

I am so thankful to have known my dear group mates, my host parents and friends in Australia. I'm sure we are going to be life long friends, forever!



Christie

Chan Sze-kee

The trip was a real challenge to me, as this is my first time of leaving my parents for such a long time and going to a strange place with people whom I only got to know 2 weeks beforehand.

Though we only knew each others for such a short time, we still managed to develop intimate relationship among us. We almost met each others everyday, preparing for the trip, and especially the farewell party. And to me, the most remarkable preparation is going to Shenzhen to buy souvenirs and costumes with Kelvin and Venus. We were like shopping maniacs, sweeping all shops and bargaining for low prices.

And throughout the trip, I would say the activity that made the most impression should be the outing of the Leadership Training Course. When we were all stuck in the mud pool, I would neither forget the feeling of having dried and cracking mud on my whole body, our involuntary shiver and trembling voice, and our heightened joy when finally all of us got out of the pool. Though the experience was quite horrible, I was enlightened that we should not easily give up and determination prevails over all difficulties.

Besides, I must say that the whole experience of being in Australia is very rewarding. The lovely places that we visited, like the Mount Cootha and the Lone Pine Sanctuary, and the warmest welcome from the Parliament, AllU, students of the Queensland University, host families, and many others which I am not able to mention. I must express my deepest gratitude to you all, for giving us a remarkable trip in our holiday and for exposures that we have never encountered.

Once again, thank you all, and I look forward to seeing you in Hong Kong

Yuki

Chan Ting-li

Frankly, I'm so blessed to know all of you. You're the ones who fill my days with laughter and excitements. You're the ones who change my life into a brighter and more joyful one. You're the ones who make the trip memorable and extraordinary. There are some feelings that I want to express to all of you in order to reveal how much I appreciate the contributions and efforts that you've put in the trip...

Ann: you're sincere and considerate. Thanks for being our general secretary and jotting down all the necessary information for us so that writing this report becomes an easier task to accomplish!

Chris: you're so kind and generous (thanks for the ice-creams and snacks that you've bought us!). Undoubtedly, you're the focus amongst all of us since the very first day of the trip!

Christie: you're very elegant and beautiful! Thanks for helping me in preparing the script of the drama show. Without your help, it's impossible for me to handle the MC task on that night!

Fan: I'm really surprised by your comprehensive

knowledge on different fields (from Chinese culture to medical findings, from literature to zodiac). Thanks for telling me all the details which I found very informative.

Holly: though I've been studying in the same school with you for 6 years, I didn't know you well (what a pity!). This trip gave me the golden opportunity to get familiar with you. In my eyes, you're strong and independent. You're the role model that I want to pursue.

Howard: I'm so envy of your big eyes and healthy skin! Thanks for being the official photographer throughout the trip so that every remarkable moment was carefully recorded.

Joyce: you're honest, brave and humorous! Your jokes always make me burst into laughter! Thanks for taking care of me when I had stomachache in the recycling centre. I'll never forget the fun we had in the Gold Coast as well as your ever-caring heart.

Kelvin: you're a very responsible and helpful leader (and a good massager, also). You always concern about others' feelings and are willing to take up responsibilities. I can't imagine how the group would become if you're not there.

Keziah: you're the most cheerful girl that I've ever met. You always bring me inspirations and insights on various aspects. You bring back my enthusiasm in pursuit of Jesus' teachings. Thanks God and Keziah for helping me to achieve a much more intimate relationship with the Trinity!

Rebecca: you're such a charming and tender girl. You always wear a smile on your face and I just love it! From you, I can experience Lord's grace and love which are essential but I've slighted in the past.

Rosanna: you're the first one that I got familiar with within the group. I just don't know why, every time I

Ann

Cheung Yan-ye

talk to you, I just feel that as if we're old friends that have known for years. Every chat with you is such a delightful experience!

Sharon: you're so gentle and sweet. I still have to thank for the bandage that you've given me on the day to the parliament house. Without your help, I'm sure I couldn't even reach there!

Venus: thank you for being our group leader. All the pre-trip preparation as well as the coordination work afterwards must take you a lot of time and efforts. But you've really done a good job!

Vincent: you're a very talented pianist. I enjoy every piece of music that you've played and the songs you've sung (on that full-moon night, remember?). Also, thanks for waking me up every time I fell asleep during the travel before I was too late to get off!

Wing: I admire your confidence and calmness in dealing with different problems or conflicts. You always give the right advice at the right time. Your bright and effective ideas contributed a lot for the smooth running of the whole programme.

If you ask me what I treasure most for the trip, I'll tell you it's the friendship amongst us.

There are a few words which maybe regarded as old-fashioned or even as cliché. However, they are the very true words that can express my emotions deep inside.

'FRIENDSHIP FOREVER!! I LOVE YOU ALL!!'

Food:

Australian foods are quite typically western style. There are commonly bread, salad, pizzas, fish and chips et cetera. People there used to have morning tea served on some muffins and cordials. For me, since I didn't have enough living expenses there, I didn't keep this habit. I spent every penny wisely and stuck to my budget. But still, I followed their habits that I also have my own packed lunch including sandwich bread, meat, muslie bars and fruit, healthy and economic!

Luckily, I did not totally comply with my original diet program or I would have felt sorry for the warm welcome of those delicious foods. I've made friends with macadamia nut ice cream, and also dropped by to see my favorite fruits staying overseas, oranges, apples and mandarins very often. Of course, especially Kelvin and Vincent did not neglect the charming chocolates of different kinds. However, may be there's modification to suit the Western taste, my emigrated old friends spring rolls and sour lemon chicken did taste weirdly. I don't mind at all for their acknowledgement to foreigners. Anyway, certain adaptation seems unavoidable!

People & Culture:

Previously, I thought that Australians live a cosy life, just manage farms and graze sheep. But, when I went into Brisbane city early in the morning, people in suit, their fast pace of life and the business-like atmosphere is just similar to the Central district in Hong Kong. But, their affection to nature is still there. After work, they do housework and gardening, feed poultry and mostly keep pets. Such kind of living does help with relaxation and alleviate stress.

Citizens are also generally diligent. They are used to seeing books and playing cross-word games in bus. They like watching TV programs quizzing on general knowledge. And, they do respect individual space and privacy that try to be considerate and not disturb others. Frankly, I do feel a little bit ashamed that most of our Hong Kong teens, are just interested only in fashion trend and entertainment. May be it's time for us to evaluate and try nourishing our intrinsic virtue!

Bits & pieces...Treasures:

The endurance and wisdom challenge in the mud pool, appearing dirty but feeling the most beautiful moment in my life; the aspired potential development of the mentally retarded kids to contribute to the society and simultaneously attaining self worth at the Kingfisher Recycling Centre; the energetic oldies giving a spectacular social dance, the first experience of being a matchwoman in the Chinese wedding drama; the touch with wombat, koala, possums, kangaroos and other Australian flora and fauna; the care and acceptance from my host family and the friendship I gained from my Hong Kong groupmates, all are delectable and unforgettable. And, they are automatically imprinted into my mind, memorized ever!

Kelvin

Choi Tsz-chun

This was a remarkable trip for me.

This was my first time travel abroad, so it was very exciting and everything was new to me. I am interested in learning different cultures and I was so glad that I could have this opportunity to explore the Australian culture. I find that Brisbane is a nice place,

both for leisure and study. The lifestyle there is quite relaxing, not as stressful as Hong Kong. When holiday came, I could see many Australian driving for hours to somewhere else to enjoy their holiday. I think that is good as they can really enjoy the holiday.

I would also like to thank the other delegates for giving me such joyful trip. Although we only knew each other two weeks before the trip, we got to know each other very quickly and we had fun and challenges together. I will not forget the leadership-training course that we had participated in Australia, especially the day we were having our outdoor challenges. We all trust each other, respect each other and cooperated with each other. That was a very valuable experience for me and I have learnt how to tackle problems in a team approach. Thanks a lot.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our group coordinator, Ms Sandra Yow, who looked after us and helped us during the two weeks trip; AllU, for arranging such a wonderful itinerary for us so that we have not missed anything in Brisbane; and all the organisations for receiving us.

I would like to once more thank my host family, the Zarghami, for taking care about me. As I remember, when I first arrived Brisbane, I know nothing about it: I don't know where I will live, where I can have something to eat, where I can buy the things I need. It was you, the Zarghami family, who gave me a warm and friendly 'home'. You were so kind not only showed me how to get a bus to the city, but also sometimes

drove me here and there. The trip will not be so wonderful if you were not there. I treasure the time we were together, and I will not forget a single bit of it.

This is really a nice trip and I have learnt a lot from it. Something more is, I also got some new friends, both in Hong Kong and Australia. I am looking forward to return the hospitality to my counterparts and my host family.

Holly

Chung Ho-ying

‘You are selected as one of the Hong Kong Youth Delegates in the International Youth Exchange Programme 1999’ When this sentence came up to my letter, I rubbed my eyes again and again so as to ensure that I was not dreaming. And now you can see that my dream really came true. It is always my honour to represent Hong Kong, promote our homeland and let the others know more about this ‘Pearl of Orient’.

First of all, I would like to thank AIU (Australian Institute of International Understanding) for arranging such a plentiful itinerary for us. Although we were really very busy almost everyday as we had many different places to go and visit, we enjoyed every moment because it was a precious opportunity for us to know various aspects of Australian life. We did visit many places that we would not have a chance to go if we just join an ordinary sightseeing tour. For instance, we paid a visit to the Parliament House and

sat in on a government session. We also visited the University of Queensland and had a really nice chat with the Australian youths. Besides, we got a chance to communicate with the Australian elderlies when we went to a senior citizens club. Though I only stayed in Brisbane for two weeks, I had chances to see some of the political, educational and social sides of Australia.

Moreover, I would like to give my thank to Alan, the lecturer of the Leadership Training Course for offering us with so challenging programmes that I do not have a chance and dare not to join in Hong Kong. For instance, with a view to developing our problem solving skills as well as our team spirit, we were asked to help an emu get back to its own group and also we had to walk on some thin strings with the help of only a few rope and of course, the help of each other. I am sure that all of us will never forget the day when we were left helpless in the muddy pool! Yes, it was a muddy pool and we all got muddy from head to toe. However, I know that I will only encounter such kinds of challenges in Hong Kong once in a blue moon. As a result, I really treasure this experience. Also, after the day in the muddy pool, I found the 16 of us were much closer and I could really sense our team spirit in the following days in Australia. Of course, we did bring this spirit back to Hong Kong.

Certainly, I would never ever forget to thank all of my friends in this journey. Since I am one of the only 5 secondary students in the trip, it is really a great pleasure for me to get along with people who are much mature than me and can teach me a lot of

things in different aspects. Although we did have some arguments, we finally came to a comprise with harmony. Even now, the moments that all of us were together playing and laughing keep springing to my mind. The scenes that we struggled to help each other get out of the muddy pool, danced joyfully together with the senior citizens and also enjoyed Yum Cha at China Town etc. will stay with me forever and ever. All in all, it was indeed a fruitful and rewarding trip which allowed me to broaden my horizon, have the opportunity to meet the Australian youths as well as my lovely teammates. I also found myself much independent and mature after this journey. Lastly, I would like to thank Sandra Yow, our group coordinator (HK) for taking good care of all of us, Mr. Li Yatsun for his helpful advices and also my career teacher for their nomination. Thank you very much!

Venus

Ho Wai-lan

This summer was my unforgettable one. And there were a lot of happy memories in my mind.

I was so glad to be chosen to go to Australia because I had not been there before. On the other hand, I felt the pressure because I was one of the delegate representatives of Hong Kong. We would meet some politicians in the Parliament House in Australia. Wow, such a great mission we had!

In the trip, I had made lots of friends. The first group was my groupmates. We studied in different schools. We were totally strangers before the orientation of the trip. But we become good friends now, specially after the outing of the leadership training programme. Our relationship was much closer than before. We helped each other in order to finish the tasks. We got our team spirit! It was so touching as we held hand in hand. My groupmates were very great! Whenever I had difficulties, they came to help me. All of them were so helpful. I love them very much!

Thanks to all of my groupmates for your kindness!

The second group of friends I made was my host family . They were so generous to open their warm house for me. They were so kind as to drive Ann and I from place to place. They also showed us some other wild animals in their gardens. We were just like having the General Studies lesson! I could know more about Australian animals. And as we chatted, we shared the differences between Hong Kong and Australia. I could know more about Australia from them. I was so pleased to meet them.

Thanks to my host and her family for their warmth!

The third group of new friends I met was the Australian youth group. Although we met three times only, we were just like old friends, talking about the education system in Australia and their habits. It was so interesting to know them. We did have fun together. The time we spent together was too short. Otherwise we could have more topics to share. Although we are now back to Hong Kong, we still keep in touch . Thanks to all the Australian youth for your friendly treat!

Besides the friendship I gained in the trip, I learnt how to work in a group. The leadership training programme was only a 5-day training. There were a lot of interesting activities for us. But we had also to think of the solution together. And after that, we had time to do the reflection and think about the process we did. Although the programme was short, it was an important part in our trip. We did enjoy it very much.

Thanks Alan for your funny training!

All in all, there are lots of people I want to say 'Thank you' to them. Otherwise we could not have such a great trip. In the future, I hope I can meet all of you again.

Million thanks from my heart!!

Ho Yan-fan

I can hardly describe how excited I was when I was notified that I had been selected as one of the delegates of the 1999-2000 Youth Exchange Program! Though I had some worries, as that would be the first long trip I had ever taken, I looked forward to the 'journey of discovery' very much!

The trip was very fruitful. Although the itineraries were tightly packed, I was very happy because I could learn a lot and try out a lot of new things every day. Before arriving in Brisbane, I knew very little about Australia. However, when I left, I could claim that I knew much more about it!

I used to be afraid of animals, but when I was there I began to lose those fears. I could sense how much the Australians love the native wildlife and this prompted me to think in a more friendly way about my host family's pets. As you can imagine, real fun is absolutely what I got!

Before my arrival I had imagined that Australia would be a place with a slow tempo and a relaxed lifestyle. However, hustling and bustling turned out to be more common in the city. The only correct prediction that I had made was that people in Brisbane tend to sleep early and get up early. I myself, being a typical Hong Konger, found it quite hard to go to bed at around 9:00p.m.!

The most unforgettable part of the trip was the leadership training course. Difficult tasks were assigned to the group. My teammates and I shouldered the responsibilities and resolved the difficulties together. After taking part in all those activities, I developed a deeper self-knowledge and better co-ordination skills with my teammates.

In retrospect, the trip was surely a great success! It helped me to broaden my horizons. It helped me to make friends with both Australians and fellow exchange program participants. What's more, it let me come into direct contact with Australian culture.

I would like to quote a sentence from an Australian magazine to mark the conclusion of my trip:
YOU WILL NEVER NEVER KNOW IF YOU NEVER NEVER GO!

Keziah

Law Ka-pui

It was a precious experience . Being a graduate this year, I was expected to stay in Hong Kong to find a job. In the end, I've got to Australia. I really thank God that I had not missed out anything by joining this trip. Instead, I gained a lot.

It was my first time to Australia. Everything was fresh and new to me! Thank God that all tour mates were pretty good! Everything we went through was impressive ! It was unforgettable we cooperated with each other when we were in muddy pool. The chilly weather and hungry stomach only not made us strong in spirit, but we also insisted on solving problem and helped each other with extra patience and wisdom. The efforts of boys were highly appreciated. Our friendship was everlasting though the trip was over. This was one of my treasures in this trip!

I got chance to stay in an Australia family, Clerk's, they were friendly. I loved them so much! During the homestay, I learnt a lot. For instance, I had to be more independent. My house was far away from the Brisbane City. I needed to take almost an hour to get there. I travelled by bus alone everyday. I tried not to get lost. It was a good experience for me to sort out the problems by myself. In Hong Kong, it is easy to go home . But, it was totally different in a foreign country. You needed to stay clam . I thank God that I could get back home safe after praying.

Usually, this situation is very annoying . We might complain or grumble. But, I did not .I was quiet at that time. It was precious for me that I grew up a lot.

During the Leadership-Training Course, I found that I changed a lot. In past, I was very talkative. Sometimes, I would like to express more, I did not know how to listen to others. But, I could learn it successfully in this trip. Then, I found that others' opinions were also precious. The people always said that the youth were still young, they needed to experience more. They can contribute nothing. Actually, I do not think so. In this trip, though my trip mates were younger than me, I still learnt so many things in them. Importantly, I learnt how to appreciate, love, care and accept others more. I also found that I was ready for meeting any challenges after this trip.

All I got in this trip were valuable for me. I would never forget . I would like to thank God for giving me such a chance to learn in this trip. I also want to thank the Commission on Youth and the Hong Kong Institute of Education . Importantly, I would like to especially say 'Thanks' to my lovely trip mates.



Vincent Lung

I always feel privileged and honoured to have been selected as one of the delegates of the International Youth Exchange Programme to Brisbane, Australia.

I have enjoyed all visits and excursions as well as the leadership training course during the trip. Mount Coot-tha, Dreamworld, Parliament House, Senior citizens home, recycling centre, Lone Pine, China Town... I could not have forgotten any one of them. While the place itself is fascinating enough, the friendly Aussies we met bring out the real charisma of the place.

I remember we had a lovely dance at the home for the elderly together with the senior citizens. I was really amazed at their beautiful and elegant steps. And yet, they seemed energetic all the time even when we, the younger ones, began to cross our waists and take deep breaths!

The leadership training course has been a precious part of the trip. I learnt how to look at issues from different point of views and how to solve problems effectively. Most important of all, I realized that leaders are not the ones that can only achieve his own goal, but also the goals of his counterparts and subordinates. I was brought into a new domain of

communication and problem-solving by this leadership training programme, thanks to Alan, our 'teacher' in the course.

And yes, my stay with my host family has been absolutely fantastic! They were so nice and friendly that I did not even find myself home sick! Chris, Kerry and Nathan, thanks so much for your hospitality! Hope to see you in Hong Kong soon!

But the thing I treasure most in this trip is the friendship and unity the 16 of us share. We did not know each other before the trip, and it is fate that brings us together. I recall how we got out of the muddy pool together; how we have discussions and share our views along the journey; how we share our food and drinks; how we help each other out in the games; and how we put our effort together to make the presentation and the drama a successful and a warm-welcomed one. I even felt frustrated when we were about to leave Australia. I was afraid that we are not able to keep our friendship when we are back in Hong Kong.

'Friendship that flows from the heart cannot be frozen by adversity, as the water that flows from the spring cannot congeal in winter.' Buddies, keep this friendship in heart, and remember to put all our best into making a better Hong Kong!



Tang Wing-see

As I said in the self-introduction, I would regret if I did not join this programme. I have gratitude to my life. I treasure it so much that I decide I must burn my life to its brightest. I never give up any chance that I can experience more about life. As I said, I applied for this programme out of curiosity at the very beginning. I did not think that I could really become a team member of the programme because the programme was so attractive. There must be vigorous competition and strict screening. I was really very very lucky that I can get a place in the team.

It is not an easy task to get along with 15 unfamiliar people; especially everyone who can get in this programme must be outstanding and capable. I felt lost for a short while at the early stage in our preparation work period. But as day went by, everyone changed. Friendship is so difficult to expect. Frankly, I did not expect much on friendship between the teammates and myself. But we really become good friends after the journey.

It was an unforgettable experience for me. In this trip, I had overcome my weakness. I was afraid of all kind of birds. I was even afraid of birds in photos and

picture. There was a great problem. That was my host Mum. She is an enthusiastic volunteer. She looked after injured wild animals and sent them back to the nature when they had recovered. She had a goose and a duck in her backyard and she kept an owl, some birds and ducks in the house while my days in her home. On the first day I arrived her home, she and her daughter were so kind and warm to me. To show their friendliness, her daughter showed me a pair of young birds. She let me hold the birds in hand. I really did not like to have those birds in my hands. But I didn't tell them that I am afraid of birds. I just rejected her politely. But I promised myself I must behave better next time. My next chance came. My host Mum brought a parrot in front of me. This time, I actively asked my host Mum to put the parrot on my shoulder. Really unimaginable! I can withstand a parrot on my shoulder. I did it! I did overcome!

The end of the story is my host Mum didn't know about my fear. She gave me a farewell card with a big ostrich head on the cover. And, I told her about the truth on the farewell card that I gave to her. She felt sorry about showing me birds in that two weeks. But the truth is, Sue, I must thank you. With your help, I have overcome.



Joyce

Tse Nga-fong

The two-week trip was indeed unforgettable and fruitful. In the early day that I came back to Hong Kong, the pieces of Australia memories were still having vivid images in my mind. My host father and mother, the scenery, the mud pool, and certainly the lovely Kangaroo and koala.

Before the trip, I didn't expect that it would impress me so much.

For the homestay program, Rosanna and I stayed in the same Australian family. Our host father and mother were so kind to us. They let us know more about the life style in Australia, as well as its culture. It really widen my horizon about the culture difference. Also the visit to the Sunday market enable us to know more about the real life in Australia.

Before I went to Australia, I have participated in many leadership training courses in Hong Kong. But the leadership training course in Australia has enriched my knowledge about myself in terms of conscious side as well as the unconscious side. Also the enhancement of term spirit and ability to overcome difficulties by the course were also the unexpected harvest.

Moreover, the unpolluted area there also impressed me so much. The starling night outsides my room, the clear water and fine sand in Gold Coast and the fresh air all around. Everything there was unforgettable.

The experience in Australia has strengthened my desire to pursue a nature life. Besides I got some real friends.

Christopher

Tse Tsun-ting

When I realize that I am lucky enough to be selected to be a delegate to Australia, I have come up with a lot of expectations. I expect to learn more about Australia, a country previously unfamiliar to me. I expect to gather skills in the Leadership Training Program. I expect to earn friends within our group as well as those in Australia. It turns out that the program is way beyond my expectations.

As delegates from Hong Kong, we come to offer the best and receive the most. Mr. Schneider, Secretary of the Parliament, introduced the Parliament to us. We also had the honour of exchanging ideas with the Speaker and some MP's. We also had the chance of speaking with representatives from the Chinese community, knowing more about life in Queensland. In both occasions we tried to present to them Hong Kong after the return of the sovereignty to China. Hopefully we succeeded in removing some of their doubts.

As far as sightseeing is concerned, we managed to grasp a reasonably picture of Queensland (the Sunshine City) in two weeks time. We had a tight schedule for a glimpse of everything. Credits should

go to Beth and Sandra for their efficient coordination work.

The leadership training program was convened in a lively, relaxed manner. Instead of giving conventional lectures talks on leadership, Alan LeMay inspired us on this topic through games and discussions, as well as bringing it in action- the muddy pool certainly brings our notion of leadership out from a classroom, from theory to practice.

The Maurrel family aforementioned in the host family section positively forms an integral part of the exchange program and my appreciation towards them is simply beyond ordinary words.

My view towards friends from Queensland University conform with my views on people whom I have met in Brisbane - they were all warm and friendly people. The birthday party they organised for me in Sizzlers Restaurant was the noisiest, but most unique, the loveliest and a most memorable one that I had ever experienced.

I cannot end this article without mentioning my teammates. I will never be able to enjoy the trip without their full participation and selfless behaviour. The sixteen of us acted as a group besides being excellent individuals.

For me, the journey to Brisbane has yet not come to an end. The impact is lifelong and beyond simply an 'exchange'. The life that I have experienced not only showed me how Australia is like, but also enabled me to look at Hong Kong, once again, from another perspective.

Rosanna

Yeung Chi-shan

I can never thank you enough

To my fellow delegates,

You are always so reliable, trustable, thoughtful, concern, cheerful, natural, forgiving, energetic...It is so enjoyable to be with you. I feel as if we had known each other for years! I will never forget that time when we were trapped in the muddy pool shivering. I remember those wonderful time when we shared our delicious pie and pastries, chocolate cakes and ice-cream, time when we ran around the Dreamworld to take as many thrilling theme rides as we could. I also remember those days when we made laugh of each other, the two weeks preparing for the cultural evening, from morning till very late at night... so many joyful moments, so much laughter. You have brought me so many precious memories. How can I forget? And I am sure that many more are still on their way, right? d^v^b

To Marilyn and Barry,

I cherish every moment we spent together.

I still remember the first day when I came to your house. It was not a very big house, still bigger than mine though, but it was very warm, both the temperature and the atmosphere. I did feel a bit strange coz it was the first time I had lived in a foreign family. However, I got used to it very soon. I really felt that I was welcome by you! I was so delighted that Joyce and I were offered with a big big room!

It surprised me when you told me that except for

Joyce and I, you had already got a Chinese host student in your house and two more Japanese were on their way! Yet, you treated everyone of us equally well. You knew what we needed and you made us feel as if we were at home.

I miss you, Barry, Marilyn, Minh (a dog like a piece of 'black carpet') and Sam (the master of the house, which is a cat). And I missed all the different dishes you had prepared for us..... Sushi, mashed potato, mashed pumpkin, pan-cake, salad.....It was really hard to say goodbye to you and to these food. Hehe. d^o^b

I just wondered how come you had so much love and energy to share with others?

I would also thank Chris, Salina, Mandy, Sham and Peter for showing us around, sharing with us your U live and giving us such wonderful evenings. Thank you so much! You were so friendly and I felt so delighted to talk to you. d^o^b

There is too much to say but there is too little space. Sorry that I can't mention every one who offered me help and support during this trip. Thank you very very much!

I love you all!

With all my love,

Rosanna

Sharon

Yau Mei-mei

Travelling to a foreign country with friends, taking photos with animals, finding destinations with a map - these are all the experience I have never tried, or even imagined before this exchange programme.

In contrast to the crowded environment in Hong Kong, Brisbane is a very quiet and calm city. The first

challenge I had to cope with was to learn how to get to the bus stop and meeting places with a map. It seemed scaring at first, especially when I had to find my way back home late at night. However, what I learned was that under any circumstances, fear did not help but confidence and courage were the only solution. Soon, I found it enjoyable to walk by myself under the moonlight.

There were many activities and visits during this trip, which did not only broaden our horizons, but also cheered up our team spirit and boosted our friendship. One of the most unforgettable experiences was that all of us were trapped in a muddy pool, on a wet, cold day. We were shivering, hungry and muddy. However, we were all united to think, and strive, in order to achieve our common goal. This *Youth Challenge Programme* enabled us to understand ourselves much better, and made us much more confident and united when facing problems.

On the whole, it was an enjoyable, lovely and unique experience. And I would like to thank Beverley, who cared and gave much advice to us, Allan, who held the *Youth Challenge Programme* so successful, my dearest host family and all the friendly people who gave me sweet memories of the trip.

