

# Connecting and Caring for Community

## At One with the Olympic Spirit

*“When I was advancing with the torch in hand, I saw the crowd on both sides of the road shouting and waving the national flag. It was a thrilling moment and it gave me a sense of mission to do Hong Kong proud in the Games.”*

It was an experience of a lifetime described by Yiu Chun-kan, a business student at CUHK who was one of 120 torchbearers selected to run the Beijing Olympic Torch Relay in Hong Kong. He was accompanied by three other peers at CUHK: Tania Mak So-ning, a psychology student and member of the Hong Kong triathlon team; Yu Chui-yee, a geography student and winner of four gold medals in wheel-chair fencing during the 2004 Athens Paralympic Games; and Prof. Dennis Lam Shun-chiu, Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences.

The Torch Relay was just the beginning of CUHK’s involvement with the Olympic Games. As spectators for the Olympic Equestrian Events had to disembark at University MTR station before proceeding to the venue, the Olympics were literally at CUHK’s doorstep. It made sense, then, for CUHK to invite the local community to participate in the “CUHK Carnival – In Support of the Olympic Spirit” to add fun and passion for the Equestrian Events and the Olympics, while at the same time, celebrate the 45th anniversary of the University.

The result was a carnival offering a wide array of programmes for all ages that was attended by over 12,000 people. The carnival showcased the University’s commitment to promoting the Olympics, international friendship and culture, and featured a wide variety of displays and interactive information sessions. Youngsters with dreams of sporting success had the opportunity to try out several sports activities and listen to the experiences and advice from CUHK’s elite athletes. Meanwhile, children had a blast trying to win prizes at the Horse Encyclopaedia Exhibition, Crossword Puzzle and the Pony Tail Contest.

While the carnival was in full swing in Hong Kong, Torch Relay runner and triathlon athlete, Tania Mak So-ning, was competing in Beijing in the Triathlon, arguably one of the Olympics’ toughest events, consisting of a 1.5 km swim, a 40 km bike ride and a 10 km run. Tania was not supposed to participate in the event until the 2012 London Olympics, but her excellent performance in the 2006 Doha Asian Games and her subsequent performances shot her up the world rankings and gave her entry into the 2008 Games. Even though she did not complete



*CUHK psychology student Tania Mak So-ning (right) competes in the triathlon event during the Beijing Olympics*

the event due to intense muscle cramps experienced during the swim, she felt incredibly honoured to represent Hong Kong and she is even more motivated now to train hard for the London Olympics.

Tania’s sporting success was possible in part by CUHK’s commitment to sporting excellence and support for elite athletes to fulfill their potential. She entered CUHK through the Sports Scholarship Scheme, and received further financial support and scholarships during her studies.

*CUHK provides ample space for sporting activities and competitions. The University Sports Centre in the centre is flanked by the expansive Sir Philip Haddon-Cave Sports Field.*

## Mobilizing a Community to Aid a Devastated Province

*Sichuan province in mainland China may be over 800 miles from Hong Kong. Yet, the news of the earthquake and the sheer scale of the devastation and loss of lives it caused reverberated throughout Hong Kong.*

CUHK took no time in mobilizing its financial and human capital. Right after the quake, *Prof. Lawrence J. Lau*, Vice-Chancellor of the University, sent a passionate plea to the CUHK community to make donations towards the earthquake relief efforts: "I call upon all of you to act now and bring relief to the thousands suffering from this natural disaster." The response was swift. Within two weeks HK\$1.28 million was raised among teachers, students and alumni.

Numerous CUHK staff were also compelled to lend their knowledge and expertise to alleviate the suffering of Sichuan's residents. *Prof. Leung Kwok-sui*, Professor of Orthopaedics and Traumatology, flew to Chengdu and helped with emergency deployment efforts. Based in West China Hospital, Professor Leung toiled in the frontline of the disaster and operated on earthquake survivors, many of whom had twisted limbs and other horrific injuries.

Other staff that flew to the disaster region included *Prof. Chan Ying-yang Emily*, Assistant Professor at the School of Public Health and Primary Care, who was part of the Médecins Sans Frontières team that provided frontline emergency medical relief; and *Prof. Leung Ping-chung*, Director of the Institute of Chinese Medicine, who led a team to provide manpower, medicine and technical assistance to hospitals throughout Sichuan.

Recovery efforts were also mobilized at the departmental level. CUHK's Department of Psychiatry was invited by the Guangdong Provincial Institute of Mental Health to train mental health personnel in the province and to help care for more than 1,000 survivors transferred from Sichuan to Guangdong. Members of the Faculty provided weekly sessions on such topics as "Trauma Psychology", "Psychological First-aid" and "Bereavement Counseling", helping frontline personnel develop the skills necessary to counsel and care for the victims facing mental anguish and trauma.

Staff from the Department of Educational Psychology also headed for the province. *Prof. Lau Siu-ying Patrick*, who provided counseling in one of the relief camps that were set

up for displaced children, was deeply moved. "These quake survivors were so young that when we talked with them, we could still feel their psychological distress. But despite that, they all shouldered important responsibilities in the camp and showed that they could do their bit and do it well."

The mission carries on. Under the Bridge of China project, a team of Architecture students led by *Prof. Edward Ng* worked with the members of Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology. They succeeded in building a model farmhouse of higher shock resistance at a lower cost in the affected area of Huili County before the Chinese New Year in 2009. The DIY technology taught to the villagers will help tremendously reduce the county's rebuilding budget.

All these efforts demonstrate that in times of national crisis and disaster, CUHK endeavours to fulfill its social responsibility and respond to the desperate needs of others with sympathy, passion, and action.



CUHK students hold a candlelight vigil in remembrance of the victims of the Sichuan earthquake.

### Our Mission

To assist in the preservation, creation, application and dissemination of knowledge by teaching, research and public service in a comprehensive range of disciplines, thereby serving the needs and enhancing the well-being of the citizens of Hong Kong, China as a whole, and the wider world community.

### Our Vision

To be acknowledged locally, nationally and internationally as a first-class comprehensive research university whose bilingual and multicultural dimensions of student education, scholarly output and contribution to the community consistently meet standards of excellence.