

今年「星星」特別多！



2005年11月2日，當我還是一位中學老師時，那天早上，學校的工友拿著一疊當

天的報紙進入教員室派發給老師，我看見報章的頭條後，開心得目瞪口呆，報章上印上十個大字：「天上有顆星—命名陳易希」！這是我們香港人的光榮，亦是我們「新一代」多年來努力的成果。一星期後，11月9日，我和「新一代」領導層首次踏足「科學創意中心」的前身—「西貢郊野學習館」。那時的學習館只是一座破舊和被棄置的建築物，但在我眼中這正是一個培育香港少年科學家的好搖籃！這兩件事情促使我放棄十多年的教師生涯，決心在「科學創意中心」為香港摘更多的「星」。

轉眼間，「科創中心」已成立了兩年多，獲得眾多師生和家長的全力支持和參與，而中心的各項活動亦踏上軌道。更值得鼓舞的是本港學生在本中心舉辦及承辦的科學比賽中大放異彩，吸引了大批傳媒的正面和廣泛報導，大大提高了科研及創新的風氣。「科創中心」推廣科學的工作已經不只是面對香港的中小學，而我們一直所堅持的「科創精神」更散佈到地球上的每一個角落，遠至瑞典、夏威夷到墨爾本都可收看到有關「科創中心」的活動。過去一年多，我們連同「香港科學創意學會」及「香港科學英才會」透過與各大傳媒合作推廣科學。在香港多份報章和雜誌，包括《星島日報》、《經濟日報》、《大公報》、《蘋果日報》、《兒童的科學》、《TVB周刊》及《高峰傲》都刊登出多篇有關我們的專欄和訪問，內容包括一些介紹科學創意的活動和實驗，及指導家長和老師如何提升小孩創意的文章。在電視方面，我們與多間電視台，包括《中央電視台》、《香港電台》、《無線電視》、《亞洲電視》、《有線電視》及《NOW新聞台》合作拍攝多個高質素的教育及資訊性節目。過去幾年，我們協助《無線電視》製作和

提供顧問服務給多個兒童和科學節目，例如《放學ICU》、《DaDaDeDe 識多啲》、《問問Master Joe》及《係咪小兒科》，目的是希望「科創精神」可以滲入每一個家庭。

當然，「科創中心」最重要的工作還是發掘和栽培科學人才。最令人值得高興的事情是今年5月，本人很榮幸再次成為今屆香港代表隊的領隊，帶領4位傑出少年科學家遠赴美國參加「第59屆Intel國際科學與工程大獎賽」—全球最大規模的中學生科學競賽。本港學生於是項賽事中再創佳績，年僅14歲的劉德誠及劉德健同學，以「21世紀神奇防撞鎖」的專利發明，奪得大賽隊制項目二等獎。這是香港學生在這個被譽為科學屆的「奧林匹克」比賽中，得到最好的隊制項目成績！這一對「科創孖寶」是次勇奪殊榮，並非他們在公開賽事中首次得獎，他們之前已於多個在本地、全中國及歐洲舉行的賽事中奪得一等獎。同時，劉德誠及劉德健亦繼陳易希及陳嘉鍵之後，同樣成為香港的「星之子」。國際天文學聯盟於2008年9月公佈，把小行星「25065」命名為「劉德健星」(lautakkin)及「25073」命名為「劉德誠星」(lautakshing)。今次是香港首次有兩位學生同時得到小行星命名，可謂「今年『星星』特別多」！能夠親眼目睹一顆又一顆「星星」的誕生，是我的榮耀，亦是我的尋「星」夢向前邁向一大步。

要成功和有效地培育科技創新人才絕非簡單，不是一些補習學校開辦的「速成班」就可以製造出來的，而是需要政府、社會、學校和家長的通力合作。「科創中心」正是一條橋樑，將這些重要伙伴連接起來。很多小朋友第一次踏足「科創中心」都會喘不過氣來問我，為什麼中心要設在這裡，這條西貢「康健路」又彎又斜，真是難行！我常回答他們：「一位成功科學家的路，都不是一條平坦和易行的路！」

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Twinkle, twinkle little stars, shining above Hong Kong SAR.

I can still remember the morning of 2nd November 2005, at that time I was still a secondary school teacher. The school janitor came into the staff room with a pile of that morning newspapers, distributing them to the teachers. I was so jubilant and dumb-struck when I saw the news headline which read "There is a star in the sky, named Chan Yik-hei"! This is an honour for Hong Kong and also the result of many years of hard work by New Generation. A week later on 9th November, I set foot for the first on the Sai Kung Field Studies Centre, the former address of HKNGCA Science Innovation Centre. At that time this was a disused and derelict building, but to me I had a vision to turn this into a 'cradle' in nurturing our future Hong Kong young scientists! It is these two events that brought me to make the decision to resign from my post as a secondary school Physics master which I had held for over 10 years, and to take up the reign at the Science Innovation Centre to search for more "stars" for Hong Kong.

Since its opening in 2006, our Science Innovation Centre has received very positive and tremendous responds from students, teachers and parents. Most of our activities are on the right track, especially pleased to mention is that our students have performed with flying colours in all the science competitions organized and led by our Centre. Our work in promoting science and creativity is no longer just targeting local schools alone, in fact our innovative spirit has spread to every corner of the world, people from far away places like Sweden, Hawaii or Melbourne can see and learn about our activities through television reports and documentaries. In the past year or so, together with the Hong Kong Science & Creativity Society and the Hong Kong Science Talent Society, we have been popularizing science through the mass media with great success. Newspapers and magazines such as Singtao Daily, HK Economic Times, Takung Pao, Apple Daily, Children Science Magazine, TVB Weekly and Gafencu have published many articles and specialist columns on topics related to science activities and experiments which we encourage children to carry out at schools or at home with their parents. On television, we have participated with CCTV, RTHK, TVB, ATV, Cable TV and Now TV in making various high quality educational documentary programs. In addition, in the past year or so we have collaborated with TVB in producing several popular science and children programs, including "After School ICU", "DaDaDeDe Learn for Fun", "Ask Master Joe" and "Are you smarter than a 5th grader". The aim of all these work is to popularize science and bring innovative knowledge into every home.

Of course the main work at our Centre is to search for and nurture talented young scientists. The highlight of 2008 came in May, when I had the honour to be the Hong Kong Fair Director of the "59th Intel International Science & Engineering Fair" in Atlanta USA, where I led 4 outstanding young scientists from Hong Kong to compete in the world's largest pre-college

science competition. Among them were 2 boys from the same school, Ivan Lau Tak-kin and Steven Lau Tak-shing with their revolutionary patented invention "21st Century Miracle Anti-bump Lock", they were awarded with a Second Place Grand Award. This is the highest honour ever achieved by a Hong Kong team project in this often been regarded as the "Olympic Games" for young scientists! To put the icing on the cake, Steven and Ivan followed the footsteps of Chan Yik-hei (2005) and Tom Chan (2007), became the new generation of young scientists in Hong Kong to have minor planets named after them. In September 2008 the International Astronomical Union re-named the planet "25065" as "lautakkin" and "25073" as "lautakshing" in recognition to their achievement and contribution to science. Ivan, Steven, Tom, Yik-hei and all the students who have excelled in various international science competitions, have proven that Hong Kong students are among the best in the world in terms of scientific achievements. All these twinkling little stars are now shining all over Hong Kong S.A.R. and this is a tremendous boost to my 'star-chasing' dream.

Nurturing innovative and creative people is no simple task, one cannot just run "crash courses" in a tutorial school to produce such bright people. Our government, schools, families and societies as a whole must work hand-in-hand together to achieve this goal. Our Science Innovation Centre is just such the link in joining these parties together. Many children when they first set foot to our Centre, they would often come up to me almost breathless and ask the question, "why is the centre built here on top of this steep and winding Hong Kin Road in Sai Kung, which is so difficult to reach!" I would then give them this reply, "the road to be a successful scientist is never flat and easy to walk!"

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