**Why Do I Continue To Work As A Hua Kuang Library Volunteer?**

Phoebe Ling September 8, 2017

It was about six years ago when I was first introduced to Hua Kuang Chinese Reading Room, in Palo Alto. I had a skeptical mind, and an almost despising thought, when I first glimpsed at the untidy shelves and torn books of the library. I left without committing myself to any volunteering work. However, my mind kept thinking of the dustiness and untidiness of this little library and coming up with many questions. Do the Chinese population of this area need a Chinese library? Does a non-profit organization like this reading room benefit anyone and the State? What a vast financial responsibility is needed to run such an organization!? Where do the books come from, and where do they go when they become obsolete? Where do they get volunteers, who will work with no remuneration? In short, I concluded “much ado about nothing.” The many questions floating in my mind drew me in to Hua Kuang. I started to get involved in the various aspects of the library that appealed to my interest. I do not mean I have solved all my queries by now, but I have several things to say as follows:

1. This library offers several valuable and interesting courses, all taught by talented teachers who volunteer their time. The courses that have been offered and continue to be offered are the following: a) Chinese brush painting class; b) Chinese calligraphy class; c) Knitting class; d) Basic keyboard class (no longer offered), e) U.S. Citizenship class; f) English conversation class; g) Children’s Chinese story-telling class to preschoolers; h) Picture mounting class (given as needed); and i) Flower arranging class (no longer offered). I was attracted to the Chinese painting class. I learned a lot and had a great time with every session. I was the teacher for the Picture mounting class.
2. This library runs an annual Thanksgiving Open House in November. It showcases talented performers and interesting speakers to help celebrate special events, to thank supporters, and to benefit the general public.
3. To me, this organization is much more than a reading-room. It is a proper library that provides books to be borrowed or browsed, as well as newspapers and magazines. I see many dedicated and devoted individuals who work selflessly behind the scene to make everything operate properly. They are highly educated and intelligent people who see to every need of this library, physically as well as financially. As a result, after a few years of hard work, now the library has a new look with new and orderly shelves, nicely labeled books, clean and nice tables for meetings, reading, class activities or social gatherings.
4. Nowadays, volunteers including myself come with an enthusiastic spirit and a loving heart do the tedious work needed in this library, no matter in harsh winter weather or in burning summer heat. They travel far and near at their own expenses to help make the library work for the pure benefit of the public.

5. From time to time, the library volunteers hold celebrations of every kind, including members’ birthdays, teacher appreciation and Chinese holidays. But when unfortunate scenarios happen, or when someone has a sickness, the library workers cling together in praying spirit and thoughts.

6. I see the many benefits Hua Kuang Chinese Reading Room offers both to the young, the aged and the public. To the young, they learn how to read Chinese stories, be inspired by the performers, and learn the Chinese way of living by cooperation and giving socially. To the aged, they have a chance to be actively involved in the library’s activities, to promote the Chinese culture and literature by maintaining its wealth of donated books, to learn new and challenging library skills, and to socialize. To the public, especially the Orientals, it gives life and hope from the many areas of human interest that appeal to them. I long to see the library not only survive and flourish, but be respected and loved.