

Cultural Exchange to Australia

4E IQRA

**Winner of the "Strive for Success" Programme
organized by the Tuen Mun Youth Programme Coordinating Committee**

Last year I was chosen from school to participate in a program called Strive for Success. Over the past year, I have done so many things which I think I'd never have done if I hadn't been the participant of Strive for Success.

I went to 4 day outdoor camp in Sai Kung, in those 4 days I had to carry a bag which was actually heavier than me. Another activity was a 4 day job experience in 2 different companies; one of the companies I worked in is a very popular Beauty Salon in Hong Kong, some participants got to work in airport and some worked in toy-making factories. For every participant, these 4 days were like going on a real job, although we didn't get any pay for our work but it was totally worth it. Then there were inspirational talks where successful people were invited like CEO's of big Companies in Hong Kong and experienced Journalist. We also had to do some community service, what me and my group mates did was taking photos of people in Hong Kong belonging from different Cultural backgrounds to create a big picture to bring out the message of no racial discrimination; we also made food of 3 different countries and distributed it in a community centre. I also got around \$1000 to learn anything I want, I took drawing lessons with half of the money and with another half, I took yoga classes, some others I know took desert making classes and language learning, and the day we graduated the Strive For Success Program, we had a city hunt, we had different tasks to do around Tuen Mun, it was great fun and a chance for us to find out how well we know the area.



The 4-Day camp in Sai Kung



A family we met in Brisbane

And the last activity of Strive for Success was a 9 day trip to Australia which was for 16 participants of Strive for success and I was one of them, so during Easter break I went to Australia. Basically what we did was have a lot of fun. We went to 4 different cities of Australia which were Melbourne, Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sydney. So 16 of us were divided into 3 groups and we had to do a project when we come back to Hong Kong related to certain places we visited to have a better understanding of Australia in different aspects, so we had to gather information needed for

our project that we had already discussed before going to Australia. Also in each city, we had to talk to at least 2 people in Australia to practice our English speaking skills. So these were the requirements we had to fulfill and rest of the time we could do whatever we want.

I loved the encounters with people I had over Australia, all of them seemed to be so easy going and welcoming, actually none of them were obliged to talk to me, in Hong Kong it's like we'd rather travel alone and avoid having eye contact with anyone in case we'd have to talk, but over there it was completely different, they not only smiled cheerfully, but they also stopped and had a little chat with me, they don't hesitate and avoid talking to people and these few minutes of conversation actually makes quite a difference in your mood, I felt more fresh and cheerful after such encounters.



Baby of a family we met in hotel



Movie World in Gold Coast

One more thing I really find interesting is that when I was in Gold Coast, I saw a guy leaving the hotel bare feet, and I heard our tour guide saying that it was very common here, and I wanted to try doing that because I thought YOLO. But I was told not to because it was risky as I'm not used to it, but then we went to the beach and while coming back I was in a hurry to catch up with others so I walked half way back to the hotel without shoes, and it felt great. I took a lot of photos and recorded a lot of videos, all the cities were amazing and it was a great learning experience, and meeting and talking to new people felt wonderful.

And finally, I'd like to say that Strive for Success is a really meaningful program, even if you don't get to be part of the final activity of strive for success, it still is totally worth joining because you get to do a lot of things that you normally cannot do. Also you meet new people and make new friends. I was the only non-Chinese in the program so I was kind of hesitant at first, not confident to open up, but today, after being part of all the activities, I have really become more confident than I was before being part of Strive for Success, it's very helpful for personal growth, you learn a lot and definitely change one way or another, and most importantly you learn to be considerate.

I'll suggest you guys to apply for it next year. But if you want to get the chance to be able to go overseas, the basic requirement for that is you have to participate in all the activities. Good luck and thank you to the teachers who chose me for this.