

Stars help make mooncake event a shining success

Young students learn how to whip up a mouthwatering treat to help greet the Mid-Autumn Festival, writes **John Brennan**



Yu Kwan-yiu, front row left, samples the delights of mooncakes with organisers and guests at the Life on Life - Giving Love at Mid-Autumn celebration at Citywalk in Tsuen Wan.

It may not have been the night of the Mid-Autumn full moon, but the stars were still out on a Sunday afternoon to celebrate the upcoming festival.

The pop group Super Girls, model Anjaylia Chan and actress Evelyn Choi joined Peter Wong, executive director and COO of Towngas, and Dr Tik Chi-yuen, executive director of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong (ELCHK), on the stage at Citywalk 2 in Tsuen Wan to kick-off “Life on Life – Giving Love at Mid-Autumn” event, part of Towngas’ festive activities, which include the annual Mooncakes for the Community.

However, despite the presence of celebrities, the real guests of honour were the children and parents from the social service units of ELCHK’s Kwai Tsing district.

Seven-year-old

Yu Kwan-yiu, from Kwai Tsing, says what she enjoyed best of all was decorating a green tea mooncake with a photo of herself.

“We had to use honey syrup to stick our sugar plate photo on top of the mooncake,” Yu explains. “The honey syrup is so sweet and I like it very much.”

Yu says that on the night of the festival itself: “I’ll go out to the park with my friends and family and I will enjoy mooncakes and play with lanterns.”

Peter Wong says: “Towngas has always been dedicated to serving society and paying close attention to the vulnerable groups in that society. We are entering our 15th anniversary [of the Mooncakes for the Community event] this year and throughout this time we have embraced the same values and had the same aim: to enhance love and harmony between family members.”

He adds: “This year we are going to give away 100,000 pieces of mooncake across Hong Kong. Since 2001, we have already given away 1.72 million pieces of mooncake.”



Towngas COO Peter Wong helps get the Life on Life celebrations off to a flying start.



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WONG SAU-YING



For Towngas volunteers, helping with the Life on Life event was a priceless chance to reach out to the community.

Towngas head of corporate communications, Wong Sau-ying, says: "Towngas' Mooncakes for the Community programme is one of our initiatives to serve the disadvantaged, especially the elderly who are living alone and also low-income families. Every year, we collaborate with NGOs and local voluntary groups to give out mooncakes to needy families."

But Wong adds that though those who receive the mooncakes hopefully enjoy eating them that was not the most significant part of the exercise.

"It is not the mooncakes they feel most grateful for," she says, speaking of the feedback she has received. "It is the time that volunteers spend visiting them and talking to them that they treasure the most."

Twenty-one-year-old Celia Chan, a Towngas graduate trainee, was among those who volunteered to help with the Life on Life event.

"Towngas is a socially responsible company," Chan says. "As a graduate trainee, this is a good opportunity for me to experience the Life on Life programme and contribute to society.

Making the mooncakes with the kids was the most memorable part of the event and I was delighted when we completed them. The Mid-Autumn Festival is also called the Festival of Reunion and this is a good time to share love and care for the less fortunate members of the community."

Wong Sau-ying speaks with pride of the contribution made by volunteers from the company's graduate trainee programme to the Life on Life and Mooncakes for the Community events. She says the time these young people make for such activities outside their busy work schedule can be rewarding and valuable for them, too.

"They have many things on their mind, things that can pre-occupy them, and, honestly, spending time with the elderly may not stand out as a priority for them," Wong says. "But once they have a chance to mix with the older generation, they will experience firsthand how much this generation yearns for time with the young volunteers. Then these young volunteers will want more of such an experience. This is what we want, and why we use the term Life on Life; we want the older generation to pass on

their experience to the younger ones, and we want the young ones to realise the value of others."

Wong says Towngas attaches great importance to traditional Chinese festivals and echoes Chan's sentiments by pointing out that Mid-Autumn Festival values family harmony and reunion.

"By giving out mooncakes, and organising festive activities like the mooncake workshop, we would like to deliver a message of love and care to society," she says.

"The elderly may feel particularly lonely during these festivals if they are living alone, or if members of the younger generation are too busy to pay them a visit. Mid-Autumn festival is about family time and reunion and Towngas wants to bring home this message of paying attention to the older generation, whose wish is to share some quality time." ■