



# At Home On New Land

*A collection of migrants' stories*





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# **At Home On New Land**

A collection of migrants' stories







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# F o r e w o r d

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The great story of multicultural Australia reflects the economic contributions and social inclusion of generations of migrants. Many have quietly helped build the new country they adopted, at the same time going through personal struggles in settling and integrating into a new culture with often different values. Even in this generally peaceful society, migrants are still misunderstood and may even be seen as threats by some people—often earlier migrants. Differences in culture, values, language and previous experience in their home countries influence the way migrants act and create barriers between them and home-grown Aussies. It takes time and application for migrants to learn English, understand mainstream Australian culture and absorb a different set of values into their daily lives. While migrants mostly work hard to integrate, they need the understanding and support of others in order to make a country that is a mix of many different cultures cohere.

Through the sharing of stories of individual migrants, we hope this book will help our Australian compatriots to a better understanding of the struggles we experience, how we live in this country, and what we have built over our years here. Every person has a different story to tell. Migrants journey across

huge, strange distances to settle in a new country, and travel different paths to reach their destination. For some, moving to a new place is a choice, but for others it is a matter of fate. Some carry with them high hopes and expectations while others face the process stoically or are frightened or anxious. Some take bold steps and march towards their destination. They fly over hurdles with confidence. Some meander timidly along the way, hesitating when blocked. Some travel with friends and family while others take a solitary path.

In 35 years of community service, CASS has met migrants from all walks of life and shared their journeys. *At Home On New Land* is a collection of stories about aspects of migrants' experiences: the heartbreak of leaving loved ones; our gratitude for new-found freedoms; the joys and difficulties of mastering a new language; the tension between our cultural roots and embracing new and different ways; the confrontations of intergenerational conflicts; uncertainty about the future; the satisfaction of being able to give something back; and the challenges of passing on our original culture to future generations in a foreign country.

Many of the stories told here are about success. Most are connected to experiences volunteering for the Chinese Australian Services Society, commonly known in the community by its brand name "CASS". Like individual migrants, CASS has travelled over three decades of winding paths and experienced joy and sadness along the way. From its humble beginnings as a child care service co-ordinating unit with only one part-time staff member, it has developed into a community organisation providing a wide range of services for both migrants and the wider community, servicing some 2,600 families a week, including those of Indonesian, Korean, Vietnamese and other backgrounds, as well as Chinese Australians.

Its success depends on the dedication and commitment of many volunteers, from those assisting in the daily operations of Activity Groups to the Management Board. These volunteers, together with the hard-working staff members, are the pillars supporting CASS. The relationship between CASS and its volunteers and staff is a major theme of this book.

Our characters are committed to building homes and lives on a new land, not just for themselves and their families, but for the wider community and future generations. Although they come from many different professions and trades and are of different ages, they have a common goal: to cultivate the rich multicultural soil of Australia, making it a better place for their children and grandchildren.

The articles on which this book is based were first published in the Chinese Australian media, under the pen name *Kending*, a Chinese term for hard-working gardeners who nurture their land with love, dedication and respect. The authors are a group of people dedicated to community work, who are active in CASS, and they aim to share stories of the people with whom they have come in contact while working with the community.

We hope that these moving accounts will enable readers to understand the struggles and achievements of migrants and the rewards of volunteering, so inspiring more people to join in with community activities to become an active part of Australian society. No matter where we were born or our ethnicity, we all share a dream. We want to build a harmonious Australia and enrich the lives of all in our community.

We are grateful to Multicultural NSW for supporting our endeavours with a grant to part-cover the cost of publication.



# The CASS Group

## *Dedicated To Serve The Community*

The CASS Group, commonly known in the community by its brand name “CASS”, consists of a group of registered charitable organisations, including principally its parent entity, the Chinese Australian Services Society Ltd (founded in 1981), and the subsidiary, CASS Care Ltd (established in 2002). It provides a comprehensive range of community services and activities over a wide geographical area. More than 2,600 families access its services and activities weekly, including those of Korean, Indonesian, Vietnamese and other backgrounds, as well as Chinese Australians.

CASS aims to blend business acumen with a charitable spirit, to strike a balance between professionalism and the grassroots participation of its many volunteers. Services provided include:

### **RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE**

#### **HOME AGEING SERVICES**

- ♦ Home Care Packages
- ♦ Commonwealth Home Support Program & Miscellaneous Services

#### **FAMILY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

- ♦ Three Child Care Centres (Campsie, Hurstville and St Leonards)
- ♦ Outside School Hours Care Service
- ♦ Family Day Care Service
- ♦ Playgroup Network

### **SETTLEMENT & HEALTH SERVICES**

- ♦ Settlement Services
- ♦ Information Sessions and Expos
- ♦ Form-filling & JP Services
- ♦ Tax Help Services
- ♦ Provision of health information & resources

### **DISABILITY SERVICES**

- ♦ Specialist Disability Accommodation (Group Homes)
- ♦ Group Based Activity Centres
- ♦ Individual Supports
- ♦ Plan Management
- ♦ Carers Support Group



## **VOCATION & TRAINING SERVICES**

- ♦ CASS Family Day Care Employment Service
- ♦ Adult English Classes, First Aid Certificate Course in Chinese and other training
- ♦ Work placement opportunities

## **BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY**

- ♦ Advocating and lobbying for the minority groups of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ♦ Organising fundraising activities for charities
- ♦ Enhancing the community building capacity of the Chinese community and encouraging their participation in community affairs

## **VOLUNTEERING SERVICES**

- ♦ Volunteer recruitment and training
- ♦ Community Visitors Scheme
- ♦ Connect Call Service

## **PROMOTION OF CHINESE LANGUAGE & CULTURE**

- ♦ CASS Chinese Schools
- ♦ CASS Academy of Arts
- ♦ Cultural classes and groups

## **COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

- ♦ Social gatherings for Chinese, Koreans and Indonesians, etc.
- ♦ Environmental Care Teams
- ♦ Youth Groups
- ♦ Celebration of traditional Chinese festivals
- ♦ Interest classes

## **ENQUIRIES**

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# Daffodil Day

*Chinese volunteers joining forces with the local community to help a good cause*



CASS volunteers selling daffodils at Hurstville Station

People of Chinese background have a special love of daffodils. These golden flowers are often part of annual Lunar New Year celebrations. During that special time, people tie a red ribbon around a pot of daffodils and add a red *hui chun* note with the message: *Good fortune arrives as flowers bloom*. Daffodils, flowering early in the season, are believed to bring luck and peace, new life and hope.

Bright yellow “Western” daffodils are different from those grown in China. In Australia in August, as spring begins and the flowers bloom, the Cancer Council organises its fundraising Daffodil Day.

## CONTRIBUTING TO AUSTRALIA

Flowers and souvenirs are sold to raise funds for this worthy cause. This is an activity widely supported by the Australian community. Volunteers can be seen all over the country selling fresh daffodils in public places, and businesses such as supermarkets and petrol stations join in.

CASS has been supporting Daffodil Day for many years. Souvenirs are displayed and sold at our Head Office and among our different Activity Groups. In 2012, eight of our volunteers joined forces with others to sell flowers at Hurstville Station, contributing their time and energy to this good cause.

By seven in the morning, four CASS volunteers had already arrived at the station to join other dedicated volunteers. Stationery and teddy bears were also on offer, but the star was of course the bunches of fresh daffodils.

Most of our volunteers were seniors, but their work was just as productive as that of younger volunteers. Many Chinese Australians use the station and our volunteers could communicate easily with them in fluent Cantonese or Mandarin. When greeting travellers, they charmed them with lovely smiles and *Good Morning* in their first language. They were able to explain to potential customers the meaning and benefits of what they were doing. And their hard work paid off.

The meaning of volunteers' involvement cannot simply be measured

by sales. There was a palpable sense of pride among our volunteers. One volunteer spoke of how thankful she was for the opportunity to give back to the community. She had come to Australia from Hong Kong only three years ago. When she first arrived, she had felt lonely and isolated because of not being fluent in English, so unable to understand what was happening around her. Every day when family members went to work or school, she was left alone.

By chance, she attended one of CASS Activity Group meetings, and her life began to change. She met new friends and her social network expanded. Talks organised by the Group gave her information on health, and revealed how she could become involved in community activities. Her life has now become much more fulfilling. On Daffodil Day, she was so excited she got up at six in the morning and was the first volunteer to arrive at the station. After a hard morning's work, she was exhausted, but also flushed with pride, elated because she at last felt genuinely part of the Australian community.

Now she is no longer isolated. She is a true Australian citizen, working hand in hand with others to make a valuable contribution to health in her new country.

Next August, when the daffodils bloom again, we hope many other members of the Chinese Australian community will come out and help support this vital cause.

*Originally published in September 2012*

# Our Compelling Obligation

## *Chinese Volunteers Recruitment Project*



Some CASS volunteers, showing the organisation's commitment to volunteer training

Many people from non-English-speaking backgrounds feel lucky to be able to live in Australia, this Western country down under, with its people from so many different backgrounds. Such diversity of language and culture, however, means that some people from ethnic backgrounds find it difficult to fit in without feeling foreign.

Volunteering is highly valued in this country, both by the community and the government. While many of Chinese background wish to contribute, they may find it difficult to find the right place to start. With increasing numbers of clients coming from different backgrounds,

local community organisations also face difficulties in matching volunteers with clients of similar ethnicity. There is a growing need to recruit volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds. Unfortunately, lack of resources and appropriate skills have made it difficult for small local organisations to recruit, train and supervise appropriate volunteers.

Dr Lee Fay Low of the University of New South Wales has worked towards providing a solution to the problem of matching multicultural volunteers and local organisations. In a research study, she wrote: “One of the channels to help local community organisations finding Chinese volunteers is through the help of an established Chinese community organisation.”

CASS was quick to respond to Dr Low’s idea. At a press conference in March 2012, Mr Mark Coure MP launched the innovative project: *“Our Compelling Obligation”: Chinese Volunteers Recruitment Project*. CASS said it hoped that this could bridge the gap between community organisations and volunteers.

CASS has since played a significant bridging role. It registers people interested in becoming volunteers and also local committees of organisations such as the Red Cross, Meals on Wheels and Community Transport, which need Chinese Australian volunteers. CASS matches the needs of the organisations with volunteers with the required skills. At the same time, it provides training and support for the volunteers.

Dr Low’s assessment of our project has been positive. She says that

CASS is well placed to partner with local groups. Volunteers have played a vital role in the development and daily operations of CASS. It has been providing services for the Chinese community for over 30 years and has earned the wider community's respect and trust.

For some years, the far-sighted Board of CASS has adopted a professional approach to the management of volunteers. It is one of only a few ethnic organisations willing to put self-funded resources into the management of volunteers. It is probably the only ethnic organisation which made a submission to the government inquiry into volunteering. Such actions show that CASS has the vision and experience to manage and promote volunteering in the Australian community.

At the 2012 press conference, the Research and Policy Manager of the Centre for Volunteering, Mr Tony Frew, shared the touching story of a Chinese volunteer, Ms Lam. She said, "I am only one of the thousands of migrants from Hong Kong who now live in Sydney. For Ann, a 95-year-old Chinese lady living in a home where staff members speak only English, I am the only friend who can speak her language. For four years, I have been visiting her regularly. While Ann can no longer remember the faces of her children or grandchildren, she recognises me! Because I have spent time with her, she returns my care with love and gratitude."

CASS is always looking for new volunteers. Give us a call and come and join our team.

*Originally published in April 2012*



# Vision Without Sight

## *A conversation with Henry Pan*

A 2013 report in the alumni newsletter of the University of New South Wales described how Mr Henry Pan of CASS has been supporting education in Australia by donating \$2,000 each year to a scholarship for talented students.

Henry is best known for his contributions over three decades to community services. His support for education is less well known. He has a long relationship with the University of New South Wales, coming from Singapore when he was young to study there. He spent four years studying Mechanical Engineering and graduated with First Class Honours, top of his class and the winner of a University Medal. His alma mater made a deep impact on his later life. He is forever grateful to the lecturer who opened up the world of kinetics and power mechanics to him.

In the beginning, Henry could understand only 20 per cent of the lectures. But he was gradually drawn into the world of mechanics: the angle formed when objects fall or the friction generated when a spaceship meets air during take-off. He became so fascinated by the field that he immersed himself in studies and research, trying to find out as much as he could. His outstanding academic success did not come through luck, but was a result of his diligence and persistence.

Many people reminisce about the past, emotionally inflating their memories. Henry, by contrast, is a person who acts. He shows appreciation for the University, his respected mentors and his

Henry Pan's interview on the UNSW alumni newsletter, as shown on the University's Website



profession not by praising them, but by doing something. “If I have the means, I would like to support diligent and outstanding students,” he said. His donations to the scholarship show not only appreciation for his University, but also reflect his firm belief in hard work. Modestly, he often says, “I am not smart, but I am a very diligent person.”

In the modern world where repetitive learning and persistent practice are not encouraged, he hopes that his message concerning the importance of a “diligent attitude” can be heeded. He is also grateful to his parents, who always supported his learning, instilling in him a sense of self-discipline and initiative.

He is concerned that many modern parents rely too much on coaching for their children. While sending them to coaching colleges may improve short-term examination results, these will not be sustained if parents are not also involved in laying strong foundations for their children’s growth and learning.

Since the loss of his eyesight, Henry no longer has paid work. As the Honorary Executive Director of CASS, he manages the overall operation of the organisation – but as a volunteer, with no

remuneration. Many people, concerned about how he funds daily living expenses, feel that his generous donations are reckless.

Sighted people can only imagine his gloomy and lonely world of darkness, with all its potential dangers. Henry dismisses these concerns and worries with one word: simplicity. By living a simple life, he can save what he has and donate to those in need in the community.

“I need only two basic meals a day,” he says. “I never think of going to movies or travelling. In my life there is little need of money since there is not much to spend it on.”

He continues, “I will continue to use what I have to help where it’s needed, for example, in education and the building of aged care facilities. I hope others can do the same.”

The life he leads is not something Henry has undertaken lightly. He has chosen to act out of genuine altruism. While he lives with a physical disability that makes him disadvantaged, he has never given up his ideals. He continues to put others’ needs first.

While life may be seen as giving him a poor run, the tragedy has also emphasised his noble character. Though he has lost his sight, he has clear vision. He continues to contribute to society through his volunteer work and generous donations.

He never laments his loss because his heart is filled with a sense of satisfaction in his work. His physical limitations have not restrained his generous heart.

*Originally published in April 2013*

# Seniors And Children Together

*CASS Residential Aged Care Facility  
winning an architectural award*



Interaction of  
seniors and children at  
Campsie Child Care Centre

“Intergenerational programs” and “intergenerational living” have recently become popular concepts in aged care provision. Intergenerational living communities have emerged in countries such as the United States and Germany where the population is rapidly ageing. By offering seniors opportunities to interact with younger generations, they reignite their joy in life. Children learn how to relate to, and care for seniors.

There is something special about the location of the CASS Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) in Campsie. From the outside, visitors

can appreciate the modern design of the building and the abundant plants in the garden. Looking out from a balcony, residents can see the CASS Campsie Child Care Centre next door, full of children laughing as they play. Nearby, the CASS Activity Hall is crowded with middle-aged people meeting and doing what they enjoy. The happy sounds of their voices float up.

Three different services for three different generations are so close that participants can see what is happening next door. Although there are safety fences between the areas, it is clear at all times what is happening in each. When RACF residents relax at their windows, on their balconies or in the gardens, they can see and hear everything.

The CASS RACF won the 2015 Urban Development Institute of Australia NSW Award for Excellence. The Foundation Chairperson and Honorary Executive Director of CASS, Mr Henry Pan, commented, “We had intergenerational interactions in mind when we were planning the construction of the RACF. While CASS has been providing aged care services over the years, apart from adhering to Australian guidelines and regulations, we have always paid attention to new concepts and developments in the industry. When we found innovative ideas or experiences from other countries that would benefit our seniors, we would try to integrate them into our services.”

“The design of our RACF also has connections with our cultural roots. In Chinese culture, intergenerational living is common and is a symbol of happiness and wellbeing. When people of different generations live together, seniors can find a smile every day and experience constant

stimulation from younger people. Children and young people can learn from seniors' experience and wisdom, while at the same time learning to understand the difficulties they experience in their daily lives. They can understand the traditional Chinese value of filial piety as they look after their seniors."

"In our service provision for seniors, we have gained understanding of their needs. Before the building of the RACF, we had run activities for them in the Activity Hall while providing day care services in the Campsie Child Care Centre. We saw how the seniors' faces lit up when they saw children playing. So we have regularly organised joint activities for seniors and children to enhance their interactions."

"Since intergenerational programs have been well received by both groups, we decided to implement that model when we designed the RACF. We were not aware then that many recent studies in aged care services had also pointed a similar way."

"The experience of CASS shows that when we watch and listen to seniors while caring for their needs, we will understand them better and be able to provide the best services."

Watching children and seniors interacting at CASS is heart-warming and comforting. The seniors who receive such loving care in the RACF are truly blessed.

*Originally published in March 2018*

# Cleaning Up For Everyone

## *CASS Ashfield Environmental Care Team*



CASS Environmental Care Team Women's Group taking part in Clean Up Australia Day

On the first weekend of March every year, people all over Australia participate in a community event: the annual Clean Up Australia Day. It aims to raise awareness of the importance of caring for our environment, and to motivate people to take action.

What role do Chinese organisations and migrants play in such an event that is embraced by the broader Australian community? In Ashfield on Clean Up Australia Day this year, people can see a team



of Chinese seniors, mostly over 70, wearing pale blue t-shirts with the CASS logo, hard at work. They are the members of the CASS Ashfield Environmental Care Team, part of the Ashfield Activity Group.

They excitedly describe how they formed. In 1998, Activity Group members discussed how the main street of Ashfield and its mall were full of litter and cigarette butts. They were appalled by how dirty their surroundings were. They took the initiative to help clean the streets every week, a voluntary act that not only helped improve the cleanliness and amenity of the area, but also aimed at changing the attitude of those who drop rubbish.

CASS was supportive of their efforts. It approached Ashfield Council for approval for the formal establishment of the CASS Ashfield Environmental Care Team.

The Team has since become an active force in the area, literally bringing in a breath of fresh, clean air. Their work has earned a positive response and recognition from the wider community. The Council provided funding to purchase uniforms and equipment and the Mayor met Team members to show his appreciation. Some local cafes reward members with meal vouchers, as a token of support. And Team members are proud that many have been presented with awards by the government.

The Ashfield Environmental Care Team sits perfectly within the

framework of Clean Up Australia Day. It participates every year in this national event. Early in the morning of a recent Clean Up Day, Team members gathered at their meeting point, even the member who was suffering from knee problems and had difficulty walking. After a short briefing by CASS staff, Team members immediately busied themselves with collecting rubbish to add to that collected by other participants across the Australian community.

The night before the Day had been overcast, but the enthusiasm of the Team seemed to affect even the weather: the sky brightened, as if wanting to encourage them. After two hours of hard work, Team members dragged heavy bags of litter back to the meeting point. Their bright, rosy faces ran with sweat, but every drop was a reflection of the cleaner, fresher streets of Ashfield.

Chinese Australians in Ashfield have moved from the self-centred attitude of minding one's own business to taking the initiative to clean up their community. Chinese migrants have taken the giant step of showing they understand other Australians' care for their environment. Clean Up Australia Day has given them the opportunity to participate in activities which are a vital part of the wider culture. This helps build positive images and shows how they can join together with other Australians.

CASS will continue to help migrants contribute to the Australian community.

*Originally published in May 2012*

# Dragon Charity Walk

## Helps The Wider Community

### *Reflection on the eve of Dragon Charity Walk 2015*

The Dragon Charity Walk 2015 was a breakthrough. As well as fundraising for CASS, others also benefited from the money raised, including Harcourt Public School, the Heart Foundation and the Special Children Services Centre. CASS, the initiator in 2013 of the Walk, has always wished that it would not only benefit its own members and area, but also eventually extend its reach to the wider Australian community.

As long as 20 years ago, CASS helped other organisations in the community, including the Elderly Australian Chinese Homes Co-operative, the Children's Hospital and Canterbury Hospital. Now, through the dedicated efforts of participants, volunteers and organisers, the Dragon Charity Walk has established a good reputation in the community. This is reflected in the increasing number of participants.

Those gaining from the 2015 Walk represented the education, health and disability services sectors. Harcourt Public School is a well-regarded primary school in Campsie which provides venues for community language schools, including the CASS Chinese School. The Heart Foundation is dedicated to providing information and assistance to people suffering from heart disease. The Special Children

Services Centre assists those with developmental and speech delay and intellectual disability, by providing support and training. In strengthening the abilities of children with special needs, they are able to foster their potential and help them adapt to daily living. All of these organisations have made outstanding contributions in their respective fields.

The goal of CASS is to develop the Dragon Charity Walk as a regular event in the wider community. Using it as a platform to promote its services, CASS hopes that people can learn what it does and make an effort to support and contribute to it and the other organisations, either financially or through participation.

For two years, the route of the event passed the site where the CASS Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) was being built. In 2015, walkers saw a brand new, elegant building on what had been muddy ground. The RACF has already been providing quality care in a modern setting for seniors. It won a prestigious award from the construction industry for aged care facilities.



Community members participating in Dragon Charity Walk for a good cause

While delivering excellent services, CASS was, however, also shouldering the heavy financial burden of paying for the RACF's construction. Its cost exceeded 15 million dollars, an amount only partly supported by a low-interest loan from the federal government. The balance came from commercial borrowing arranged by CASS itself.

Since it started operating, CASS has tried to admit a greater number of low-income seniors to the RACF. As a result, the accommodation bonds so far received amount to much less than originally expected, increasing difficulties with repaying the loans. The CASS RACF needs generous donations from the community via fundraising activities such as the Dragon Charity Walk.

Using the slogan *Walk for Community Charities*, the Walk will be a continuing community development project. Through it, the altruistic values of Western culture can be extended from those in the Chinese Australian community to others. The event also promotes a healthy lifestyle encompassing exercise and recreation.

With more local organisations involved, CASS hopes that greater number of people of different ethnic backgrounds will participate in the Walk. Taking part in the 2015 event were not only the descendants of Chinese “dragons”, but others who knew that it would benefit people across the whole community.

Let's all walk together for a better future!

*Originally published in October 2015*

# When In Australia, Do As The Aussies Do

*Learn the social etiquette and be a real Australian*

It has been suggested that a community organisation like CASS could arrange a course for new migrants to teach them the customs and manners of Australia. This is a good idea, since Australian community workers and volunteers sometimes find the behaviour of the Chinese community difficult to understand. Timely advice could prevent misunderstandings based on ignorance or cultural differences. Other unacceptable behaviours may be the result of bad habits accumulated over time which could be changed through better understanding of social etiquette in the new country.

When CASS originally collaborated with Australian community organisations, they would often offer tea and refreshments to all participants. The expectation was that everyone would share what was on offer. Now Chinese organisations often decline to provide English tea during activities, saying that Chinese prefer Chinese tea. The truth is more embarrassing. When milk was provided for adding to English tea, some Chinese would instead pour themselves whole cups, leaving others with none. To avoid this situation, CASS has stopped providing milk.

On occasions when refreshments were served, those at the front of the queue would pile their plates. By the time the end of the queue was

## INTEGRATING INTO SOCIETY



It is common practice for Aussies to have refreshments at the end of a function to facilitate networking among participants

reached, there was no food left. In Australia, light refreshments are considered a form of morning or afternoon tea, not providing for a full meal. However, some participants were not only eating as a meal – they were resorting to “takeaway” as well.

Many years ago, we witnessed the unfortunate scene of a group of seniors fighting over food. After a community safety talk organised by a Council, refreshments were provided. Instead of queueing to get food, participants pushed and shoved, overturning plates and spilling food everywhere. Organisers were helpless. The Council had to call in their cleaning staff with vacuum cleaners and other equipment to tidy up the venue. After that incident, food is now distributed to individuals by volunteers whenever an activity group organises parties or functions.

Another problem faced by community organisations is getting audiences to pay attention during official ceremonies. No matter who the VIPs are, people continue talking when the guests are speaking. Many people who have attended activities organised by Chinese



organisations describe this is a continuing problem which does not fit well with normal practice here. During official ceremonies, it is important to show respect for honoured guests by listening to what they have to say.

As migrants, we know that in most Chinese cities, homes are small, making it difficult to invite family and friends in groups. People generally gather at restaurants to network, and have a habit of talking loudly and freely in public places as the surroundings are noisy. People in Australia, however, value privacy, and believe that it is important to minimise disturbance to others while at public venues.

A CASS worker remembers how, at a consultation aimed at improving community life, an Australian attendant expressed her displeasure in seeing people spitting in public places, and some elderly people letting their small grandchildren urinate in the street. Both are unhygienic practices. The worker felt so embarrassed she wished there was somewhere to hide.

Migrants need to learn “when in Australia, do as the Aussies do”. They are now on a new land where people have different attitudes and codes of behaviour.

We all need to understand that behaviour is caused by past experience, habits and other social factors. It will take a long time to change deeply-rooted ways. But through awareness, education and timely reminders, increased awareness of local customs and expectations will develop, for the benefit of all. Little by little, migrants of whatever background will fit in.

*Originally published in May 2011*

# The Reunion

*Two siblings reunited after six decades of separation*



Master Leong and his youngest sister (right) were finally reunited with their second sister (left)

In 1941, when Mr Fat Leong was just 13, he left his parents and three younger sisters in the Solomon Islands to study in Hong Kong. A week after his arrival, he witnessed the fall of Hong Kong and was left devastated and helpless. His family could not have foreseen the traumatic changes to come.

In 1942, the Japanese Army occupied the Solomon Islands. Mr Leong's father was captured and made to work on a Japanese warship. Unfortunately, he was killed when the ship was attacked. Meanwhile there was turmoil in the Solomon Islands, and his mother and eldest sister were killed in the wartime chaos. His second sister, who was

only three at the time, severely injured with machete wounds to her head, was sent to a French missionary hospital. Later she was taken to the United States by an American priest. She lost contact with her family. Only the youngest sister, who was still a baby, escaped the wartime upheavals, cared for by relatives.

During the War, Mr Leong escaped to his ancestral home in Guangdong. After the War, he became an officer in the local police force. In 1950 when things had settled, he took his wife back to the Solomon Islands to begin a new life. Only his youngest sister was left from the family. He rebuilt his life in the Solomon Islands, working hard at his business and becoming the Chairperson of the local Chinese Business Association. After he retired in 1974, he migrated to Australia.

At a CASS Hua An Activity Group gathering in 2010, 80-year-old Mr Leong was excitedly introducing a lady who was with him. “This is my second sister, with whom I lost contact for over 60 years!” he said. Every one of the 50 Activity Group members who were there could see the joy on his face. It was like a movie or a story in a newspaper. Everyone was touched.

They were also curious. People asked Mr Leong about his life, and he shared with them his heartbreaking twists and turns.

Although as a successful businessman, he always regretted not being able to reunite with his beloved second sister. He had visited the United States four times to search for her, starting with the address

left by the American priest all those years before. But the trips had been in vain. As the years passed, his hopes for a reunion vanished.

His youngest sister and his daughter both knew what the reunion would mean to Mr Leong. In 2008, he made up his mind to make yet another trip. His persistence paid off with a miracle: he finally found her!

That same year the younger sister decided to make a trip to Australia to meet her brother. The three siblings met after a separation of six decades. The joy, the excitement, the emotion – these are not easy to describe.

Mr Leong has been actively involved in voluntary work since he migrated to Australia. From 1987, he has been teaching Tai Chi free of charge at a Park in Hurstville, rain or shine. At the invitation of CASS in 1996, he started teaching Tai Chi to members of the Hua Kang Activity Group in Hurstville, and this was extended to the Hua An Activity Group in Campsie.

Mr Leong's active volunteering has been recognised by different levels of government and he has been presented with numerous awards. In 2009 he became one of the Alternate Directors of CASS, and later an Elder in its Council of Elders.

*Originally published in January 2011*

# Seeking Love Across The Miles

## *Issues about cross-cultural marriages*



Careful planning is needed to make a cross-cultural marriage work

Getting married has always been viewed as a happy development in a couple's lives. Now that people move easily around the world, marriages between those from different countries and cultural backgrounds have become common. But they raise issues beyond ones encountered within traditional marriages.

In recent years, many Chinese have travelled across the world to be united with partners in Australia. What are some of the factors

bringing this about? How do these marriages work out?

Settlement Services workers at CASS have much to say: “People seek residency through partner visas for different reasons: love, permanent residency, welfare benefits in Australia or a better future for their children. In the many cases I have handled, even though both partners began with high hopes and glorious aspirations for their future together, challenges often arise due to lack of understanding.”

“Some holders of temporary visas, after living for a while with their partners, discover that he or she turns out to be a very different person from the one they expected. They discover how little they really know about one another. Others are disappointed with the high cost of living in Australia and the inconvenience of public transport. For those Chinese who have married someone from a different background, there are additional problems related to cultural differences and language barriers, creating friction day by day.”

“In addition, people holding a Temporary Partner Visa (TPV) are not entitled to welfare support and have to wait for two years to get permanent residency. This adds to the pressure on some couples. Many of the TPV holders who come to us for help have limited English and no income, making them dependent on their partners. When faced with problems, it is difficult for them to approach authorities for help. Very often they have to bend to the wishes of their partners in order to secure their permanent residency.”

“When problems seem insurmountable, it is the partner from overseas who often suffers most.”

Is there any way to negotiate these difficulties? Our CASS worker suggests: “Before embarking on a cross-cultural marriage, people should plan carefully. It is advisable for them to make a few trips to Australia for short stays before making a long-term commitment. Then they can take the opportunity to see if the way Australians live suits them. At the same time, they can gain better understanding of their partner and see if they can work through issues arising from cultural differences or lifestyle preferences.”

“Partners need to think through consequences and be prepared for the worst before they give up their career, assets, family and friends in their home country. If the marriage does not work out, do they have the funds to return home or to continue living on their own in Australia? Before or soon after moving to Australia, they should equip themselves with useful skills, such as learning English or training in order to get a good job.”

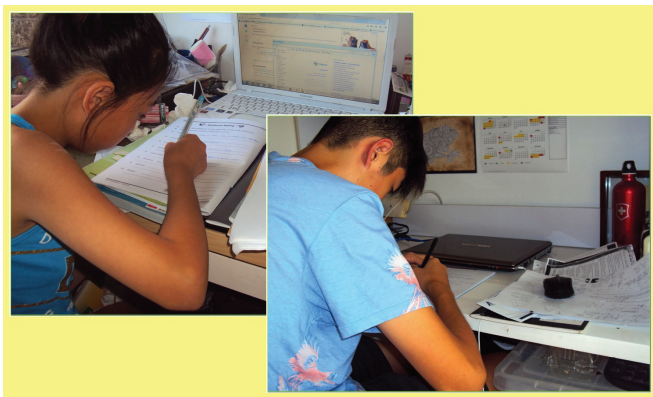
“‘Hope for the best but prepare for the worst’ is probably a good attitude to apply to all life’s big decisions. Having thought through the possible consequences and prepared beforehand will give migrants the capacity to build greater confidence within cross-cultural marriages. It is good to remember that there are many successful ones.”

*Originally published in May 2015*



# Young Migrants

*Helping the young ones to settle in the new country*



Migrant children need the care and guidance of their parents to help them adapt to their new lives in Australia

CASS Settlement Services workers know that in many migrant families from China, conflicts arise between children and their parents or step-parents. This can be particularly serious with teenagers.

One worker said, “We often have parents approaching us for help, describing misunderstanding and estrangement between them and their children. They ask for solutions to bridge the widening gap.”

Most migrants from China are granted visas under the skilled migration category, partner visa or as a dependent aged relative. Many bring their children with them to Australia. But the decision to migrate is made by the adults, the children having little or no

say in the process. Parents seldom foresee that children might have problems fitting in. Most believe that migrating with their sons and daughters must be a good thing, and are certain that they will be thankful for a decision meaning a better future for them.

Mr and Mrs Chen came to Australia many years ago as skilled migrants. In order to build their careers and increase their income, they decided to leave their son in China with his grandparents. When he came to Australia at the age of 14, the couple thought everyone would be happy with the reunion.

Unfortunately, because they had lived apart for so many years, the parents knew little about their child's personality. Neither could they understand the pressure a teenager faces in a totally new environment. While both continued to work, they neglected their son's needs. He was desperate for their support and care, both emotionally and academically. Having left a familiar environment and close friends in whom he could confide, the teenager lost interest in his studies. With his inadequate English, he constantly lagged behind, so that his self-confidence was eroded and it was difficult for him to integrate into the school environment. Lonely and depressed, he immersed himself in the world of computer games. His situation had already become serious when Mr and Mrs Chen discovered his plight.

Another story is Mr Zheng's. Two years after his son arrived in Australia, he and his wife divorced. He continued to live with his son, by then 17. Since Mr Zheng had to work hard for a living, he spent little time with his son, not knowing how the teenager was coping with his studies or adapting to the new country. But they often quarrelled. Then he discovered that his son often skipped school and had even contemplated running away from home.

The two families were at a loss how to handle the situations. Desperate for help, they approached our CASS Settlement Services workers, who advised them the importance of listening and communicating with their children regularly to build up mutual understanding. The parents and children were encouraged to seek counselling to help improving communication with each other. Rebuilding a loving relationship is an important foundation as they seek practical solutions.

Says our worker, “These cases are only the tip of the iceberg. New migrant teenagers and children desperately need the care and guidance of their parents to help them adjust to life in Australia. Many young people experience culture shock in the initial stages of migration. The loving care of parents is vital for the healthy development of children. When planning migration, parents need to understand that children have a lot to adjust to in a strange new environment. They need to realise that very often their parents are the only people they know here. And Australian schools have a very different philosophy of education.”

“It is very important for parents to communicate with teachers and schools if they find their children having problems adjusting to the new learning environment. Parents can also approach professional institutions which focus on working with young people, or seek psychological counselling for their children.”

We are often pushed into roles in life without rehearsals. Migration is like this. May all families enjoy a pleasant experience on their migration journey!

*Originally published in February 2015*

# The Three Musketeers

## *Volunteer English teachers*

*– David Lo, Robert Pak and Ringo Siette*

The Three Musketeers refer to the volunteer English teachers of CASS. They work as a team. When one of them cannot make it to a lesson, he informs the other two and they will step in, making sure the program is not affected. David Lo, Robert Pak and Ringo Siette are all retired from jobs unrelated to language learning, but they have found joy and satisfaction in teaching at CASS Activity Groups. All three possess the cultivated manners and admirable characters of respected scholars. A Chinese scholar once said, “A teacher is one who instils wisdom, imparts knowledge and resolves doubts.” That is just what the Three Musketeers do.

Every week they prepare and lead lessons, which are made funny and meaningful. They are related to real-life challenges such as going to the doctor or shopping, to cater for the needs of students who have limited English. Through the lessons, the three also share their own experiences of living in Australia. They guide Activity Group members in respecting and understanding Australian law and culture. They discuss current affairs and encourage people to develop their interests. They help in whatever way they can: reading letters,

The three volunteer  
English teachers of  
the CASS Activity  
Groups



filling out forms and making phone calls. Their ultimate goal is to improve people's quality of life in their senior years.

Before his retirement, David Lo worked in a well-known American chemical engineering company as a senior management executive. He is highly proficient in both English and Chinese. With the encouragement of his wife Phebe, in 2010 he became the English teacher at CASS Burwood Activity Group, Campsie Activity Group and St George Activity Group. He is very serious and conscientious in planning his lessons, taking into consideration the different levels of knowledge, and the needs of different groups.

At the 2013 CASS AGM, he was elected as an Alternate Director of the Board. Since then, his involvement in CASS and the community has broadened. Apart from teaching, he often takes the lead in encouraging Group members to become involved in charity events.

Seeing the huge need for volunteer English teachers in the community, he persuaded his mate Robert Pak to join him in teaching at the

Burwood Activity Group. Many people in the Chinese community have long been familiar with Robert, since he had worked in the government sector before his retirement. His connection with CASS goes back to those days.

Robert gladly took up the role of English teacher for the Burwood Activity Group. Though he comes from Hong Kong and his first language is Cantonese, he teaches in Mandarin, since the majority of students speak that language. With his sense of humour, he mixes well with them. David's and Robert's dedication has helped the Burwood Activity Group to expand, with membership increasing from the original 20 to 60.

Ringo Siette is the English teacher of the CASS Ashfield Activity Group. He also worked in the government sector. He has a fund of knowledge on Australian politics, culture and economics. Because of his work, he had already been in regular contact with new migrants, especially those from China. Through his involvement over the last few years as a teacher, he has built strong friendships with his students. When he was in hospital undergoing heart surgery in 2014, they were all worried and sent their good wishes to him for a speedy recovery.

The Three Musketeers spread positive energy to those around them. It is fortunate that we have such dedicated people in our community.

*Originally published in May 2015*

# Advice From A Friend

## *Story of a new migrant*

Li had been doing well in Australia. He had a PhD in Architectural Studies from a prominent Chinese university. Soon after his arrival here, he managed to find a junior position in an architectural firm. After working in the field, he realised that to further advance in his career, he also needed Australian qualifications. He enrolled in a Master's degree in Architecture.

After two years of hard work, he obtained his Master's degree and found a job with good prospects. His small family of three began to enjoy life in Australia.

It was not long, however, before a series of misfortunes threw them off balance. First, Li had not noticed that the lease of the house in which his family was living had expired. Because he had not negotiated an extension with the landlord, they had to move out fast. Then one night when he returned home, he found his new place had been ransacked

New migrants often have no one to turn to when they face problems in a new environment





by burglars. Two days later his car rolled down a hill. His only luck was to escape injury.

But worse was to come. His wife was diagnosed with a serious illness from which she would take a long time to recover.

This string of unfortunate events plunged him into hopelessness and despair. He lost the feeling of confidence that he could succeed in Australia.

Li is a gentle person who always greets people with a warm smile. He had worked hard at his company in his profession. However, because of his dedication to his work, his social circle in Australia was small. He did not have many friends, and none who spoke Chinese, with whom he could share his troubles. So he had no one to turn to when he faced personal problems. He felt lonely and miserable.

Then by chance he read about CASS in a newspaper. He brought his son along to seek help from our Settlement Services worker. During the meeting, he felt the worker's sincerity and concern and began to open up. His long-suppressed emotions swelled and he burst into tears in front of his ten-year-old son. This reminded the worker of the Chinese saying "a man does not cry until he has reached the stage of utter despair".

"Give me some advice," said Li. "Should I leave Australia?" Our worker advised him not to make any rash decisions when he was emotional. Li then said he was planning to buy a property. The worker again asked him to calm down, suggesting it was unwise to make big decisions out of desperation. Li was guided to analyse his situation objectively. He was later advised to seek psychological and financial guidance from

professionals so that he could set a clearer direction for the future for himself and his family.

A month later, Li again met the Settlement Services worker. He was excited, and his attitude and outlook had vastly changed since the first meeting.

He explained how he had solved his problems. After seeking financial help, he had decided not to purchase a property for the time being.

Being socially isolated, as Li was, made his life miserable, despite his high academic qualifications and good job. When he ran into problems, he had no one to share them with or offer useful advice. This is a common problem for new migrants in a country where the language and culture are hugely different from their home countries. Without help and support, they can easily fall into despair.

Li explained that he was lucky he had become aware of CASS through the newspaper, met our Settlement Services worker, found his direction and regained his confidence. Many migrants have gone through similar periods of stress. Friends can help through these difficult times. As a philosopher once said, “True friendship multiplies the good in life and divides its evils. Strive to have friends, for life without friends is like life on a desert island.” This is especially true for migrants who have moved to a country far away from their families. They need to widen their social circle and make new friends. A good way to do this is to become involved in volunteering. Through it, besides meeting new people, they can then also contribute to the community.

*Originally published in February 2013*

# Turn Your Face To The Sun

## *On in-law relationships*

Migrants are regularly faced with difficult challenges: conflict, pain, shock, despair or desolation. Since their lives are often confined to their own small families, problems which arrive from within can seem insurmountable, and negative feelings will have no way to escape. Such emotions will eventually affect the person's work and daily life.

It is important for migrants to seek external help and learn to let go. By highlighting what is positive, they will feel more cheerful and enjoy life in a new country.

CASS has been providing Settlement Services for over 17 years. It provides a space for migrants to air their concerns and seek advice. One of the problems most often encountered is relationships between in-laws.

Mrs Wong is a new migrant from mainland China. She and her husband had waited for 13 long years before they were granted permanent residency in Australia. At the same time, she received the good news that their only son was getting married in Australia. The old couple were elated and began preparing for their journey. Unfortunately, their happiness was short-lived. Mrs Wong's husband was killed in a car accident in China. She arrived in Australia on her own, looking forward to being with her son's family.

Sadly, misfortune often comes in threes. Her son died of a heart attack a month after she arrived in Australia.



Bilateral  
communication helps  
an in-law relationship  
flourish

Mrs Wong lived with her daughter-in-law after her son's death. While she could not find any fault with her, she made things difficult for her. She came to believe that her daughter-in-law had brought all the bad luck on the family, and that both her husband and son had died because of her.

But her rational thoughts told her the daughter-in-law was a wonderful person, and she sincerely wanted to improve their relationship. But this was hard. Whenever she thought of her husband and her son, she became sad, and would pick on her daughter-in-law. She would feel a sense of satisfaction when she saw her quaking with fear – yet deep down, she felt miserable. She wished they could get on better.

Mrs Wong needed to let go of the tragedies and move on. She did not realise that by carrying around past hurts and holding on to resentments, the person she was hurting the most was herself.

Our CASS worker told her the following story: An older monk and a younger monk were travelling together and came to a river with a strong current. As they were preparing to cross, they saw a young and beautiful woman also attempting to reach the other side. The older

monk offered to help her. Carrying the woman on his shoulders, he moved across the river and let her down on the opposite bank. The younger monk, although upset by what had happened, said nothing. Hours passed, and finally the younger monk could contain himself no longer. He blurted out, “As monks, we are not permitted to mingle with women. How could you carry that beautiful woman on your shoulders?” The older monk replied, “Brother, I set her down on the other side of the river. Why are you still carrying her?”

The worker continued, “Your husband and son would not want to see such a tense relationship between you and your daughter-in-law. If you choose to indulge in your grief, you will only become more and more miserable. Turn away from the shadows and face the sun. Your heart will be filled with sunshine. Concentrate on what is good about your daughter-in-law and reconcile with her.”

The worker also gave helpful hints on practical means to improve the in-law relationship, and suggested Mrs Wong try mediation and counselling services.

When they met again a month later, the worker was excited to see the positive change in her. Not only was she in high spirits, but her daughter-in-law, who accompanied her to the session, was jubilant. Having accepted that she could not change what had happened, Mrs Wong adopted a more positive attitude to what lay ahead.

She managed to build a better relationship with her daughter-in-law and they now enjoy a happier life together. She has finally learnt to turn her face to the sun and let the shadows fall behind her.

*Originally published in March 2012*

# Walk A Mile In Her Shoes

## *Another story on in-law relationships*



CASS Settlement Services workers help migrants on a wide range of issues

Many daughters see their mother-in-law as an outsider in their families, and relationships between them can become very tense and strained. If they could imagine stepping into one another's shoes, they would be able to look at the situation from a different perspective, and conflict could be avoided.

In her first session with our CASS Settlement Services worker, Mrs Lau, who had three young daughters and was pregnant with the fourth, was full of complaints about her mother-in-law. She had come to live with them to help look after the children, since her husband was often away because of work. With a baby on the way, Mrs Lau already felt stressed, but said that her mother-in-law, instead of helping out,

was creating extra burdens. She felt that she was purposely making things difficult for her, and disliked her more and more.

“Because I’m pregnant, I need more rest. But whenever I lie down, my mother-in-law makes noises so I can’t sleep. She either talks loudly on the phone or clatters bowls and plates in the kitchen. I need a light diet now, but she is constantly making greasy dishes including lots of fish and meat.”

She was full of anger. “I know my mother-in-law doesn’t like me because I am carrying another baby girl. She would rather have a boy.” In Chinese culture, of course, a boy is seen as more valuable than a girl. Mrs Lau felt her mother-in-law was taking revenge on her.

Our CASS worker calmed her down and tried to help her look at the situation in a different way. She told her the story of Su Tungpo, a Chinese writer, poet and statesman of the Song dynasty, and his good friend, Monk Fuyin. One day, Su visited the Buddhist temple and joined the monk at meditation. After a while, Su asked him, “What do I look like as I sit here meditating?” Monk Fuyin examined Su closely for a while and then said, “You are very solemn, healthy and gentle. You look like a statue of the Buddha.”

Su was pleased with this answer. After a while, the monk asked him how he himself appeared. Su thought: “This monk always defeats me when we debate anything. Now is my chance to win.” So he said, “You look like a pile of cow dung.”

The monk just smiled. He made no attempt to argue. Thinking that

he had won the debate, Su went home and smugly told his sister of his success. But she informed him that he had lost. “My dear brother, the monk’s heart was filled with the love of Buddha, so he saw you as Buddha. But your heart was filled with cow dung – so that’s how you saw him.”

The worker made use of this story to remind Mrs Lau that how she responds to a situation reflects what is in her heart. She told her: “There may be other ways of looking at what you described to me. Rattling and breaking a plate could be an accident. Your mother-in-law may be speaking loudly on the phone because her hearing is deteriorating, or because she doesn’t know you are asleep. As for the food, it may be the old lady is ensuring that the family eats well.”

She paused. “Sometimes things are not what we think. If you could step into the old lady’s shoes for a while and understand her side of the story, may be your problems could be solved. For example, you could tell your mother-in-law when you are going to take a nap and ask her to keep her voice down. As for the meals, discuss these with her and see if she can prepare something light for you.” Again she paused. “It’s important that you communicate your needs while at the same time listening to your mother-in-law’s views. If you can put yourself into one another’s shoes, your relationship will not be so tense.”

Understanding this good advice, Mrs Lau felt a surge of hope. She told our worker: “I’ve never thought about it in this way. When I go home, I’ll have a good talk with my mother-in-law.”

*Originally published in August 2012*



# Realising Their Dreams On A New Land

*Stories of overseas students becoming Australian citizens*



Different generations  
of overseas Chinese  
students at CASS  
who have all chosen  
to settle in Australia

Since the 1970s and 80s, there has been a stream of Chinese and other overseas students coming to Australia to study. Many later settle here and become citizens.

Mr Leung, an engineer working in an Australian electronics company, came to Sydney to study in the 1970s. After finishing his studies, he was accepted as a skilled migrant. He says, “I came on my own and tried to settle first before my wife and daughter came to join me. Life was difficult, especially with the comparatively high cost of living here. I had to have a job to pay for my studies. When my wife arrived, she had to work on two jobs. Fortunately, we managed to overcome these challenges and things improved. Owing to the political situation

in China and Hong Kong, and because we found Australia a tolerant place, we decided to settle in Sydney.”

With Australia’s rapid economic growth through the 1990s, tertiary education has become an important export. In the financial year 2013-14, tertiary education ranked fourth as an Australian export. There are over 40 universities in Australia, and they are constantly evolving to meet changing needs. They offer courses not available in other countries, such as aviation and veterinary studies. In 2012, Australia also became the first Western country to legally recognise and regulate the study and practice of traditional Chinese medicine.

Beng came to Australia to study business. He says, “Australia has a well-developed market in tertiary education. Most institutions recognise academic qualifications gained in China, and there are many options to choose from. Apart from universities, there are also VTC and TAFE. As the medium of teaching is English, there are also special English courses for students with English as their second language and other foundation courses as well.”

After Beng finished his university studies and found a job, he applied for permanent residency in Australia. He is now very successful in his career. With the opportunities opened up by the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement, he is contemplating starting his own business.

Before migrating, Jia Jia worked in China for many years and managed to save enough money to come to Australia to study. After completing a Diploma of Cooking, she applied for permanent residency. She says, “Students need to be aware that academic terms in Australia are different from those in China. Institutes and

universities begin their year in late January or early February, so overseas students need to apply early. Those contemplating permanent residency after completing their studies also need to follow the changing requirements regarding skilled migrants. The list of eligible skilled occupations changes from time to time to reflect the needs of Australia. Some people may begin studying for a profession that meets the skilled migrant criteria but find this is not favoured by the time they finish the course.”

Have things changed for the youngest generation of overseas students? Tom is in his second year studying physiotherapy at university. He says, “People with a student visa can normally work 20 hours a week outside their studies and they can work full-time during term breaks to earn some money and gain work experience. With changing market conditions, it is important for us to prepare ourselves early to face future challenges.”

CASS Board members, like Dr Leng Tan and Mr Henry Pan, are both overseas students who, after finishing their university study, decided to settle in Australia. Together with other ex-students, in 1981, they established CASS. The youngest member of the current CASS Board, Mr Sean Zhang, is also an overseas student who completed his studies just a few years ago.

With changing social, economic and political circumstances in their respective countries of origin, overseas Chinese students have for decades played an important part in Australian life, and will continue to do so.

*Originally published in July 2015*

# A Big Happy Family

## *CASS Indonesian Activity Group*



CASS Indonesian Activity Group

Many Chinese migrating from Indonesia had experienced racial discrimination in the country in which they were born. They felt they were treated like second-class citizens. Those who could find a way left the country, and many settled in Australia. “Living in this multicultural country down under gives us freedom we had never enjoyed before. We feel respected and supported,” a member of the CASS Indonesian Activity Group said.

The Group was formed in Ashfield in 2003, supported by government

funding. Says a member, “When I first came to Australia on my own a few decades ago, I felt helpless and lonely. I learnt of CASS from the newspaper and I immediately made contact with it. When I walked through the door, I had an immediate sense of being at home.” Home is a safe haven and a sanctuary where one can find comfort.

The Indonesian Activity Group members travel from different parts of Sydney to gather at CASS. Some even come from the Blue Mountains. They sing, they dance, they exercise and they socialise. Volunteers prepare delicious lunches, and once a month there are birthday parties.

There is a very strong team spirit in the Group. Shunniang Chan, a retired music teacher, helped to set up the Group in 2003. She felt it was a great opportunity for her to do something for her fellow Indonesians. She was very enthusiastic in gathering many Indonesians and Indonesian Chinese living in Sydney to join. She plays accordion, piano and electronic keyboard, and is also talented in dancing. She teaches Group members singing and dancing with utmost patience and has earned the love and respect from others.

CASS has provided the Group with access to free activities, and has a staff member to assist in managing it. In return, grateful members often perform at CASS events. For example, one talented member teaches others to dance and makes all the costumes for the performances. The Group was also generous in its support for building the CASS Residential Aged Care Facility. On learning that CASS was

planning to build a second residential facility, the Group immediately donated its savings of \$5,000.

Excursions are organised every two or three months. On a recent sunny afternoon, 126 members gathered at the Seven Hills RSL Club. Some members brought along their relatives visiting from overseas. It was like a huge family gathering, with members busy taking photos and sharing laughter. When CASS organised a cooking competition, a number of members participated. They practised at home, bringing in dishes to share with the Group members and seeking feedback to perfect them.

The warmth of this family has melted the heart of a cancer patient who insists on attending the Group activities every week in spite of his frail health. The loving care of this extended family has given him the strength to fight his illness and he has outlived the time predicted by his doctor. There are also a few other members who are struggling with ill health but still insist on attending the Group every week.

What a great feeling it is to come home! The Indonesian Activity Group is not a temporary shelter, but a permanent home for many Chinese from Indonesia.

*Originally published in November 2017*



# The Sparkling Jewel Of CASS

*Our precious volunteer – Dr Leng Tan*



Dr Leng Tan has won numerous awards in recognition of her active participation in community affairs over the years

The present Chairperson of CASS, Dr Leng Tan, has been a General Practitioner (GP) for over 30 years. She listens and spends time with her patients, showing she has their wellbeing at heart. She has earned their trust and respect with her compassionate, loving care and sound advice, based on long experience. There is always a long queue at her clinic.

She is an elegant lady, respected by all. She attracts attention because of her warmth and charm. She is very down-to-earth and efficient in her work.

Another important role Leng plays is as a community leader. Ever since her university years she has shown strong leadership skills. When CASS was established in 1981, she was a founding member, looking after its finances. Together with the Foundation Chairperson, Mr Henry Pan and others, she dedicated time and energy to providing

## VOLUNTEERS DEDICATED TO COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

a service similar to family day care. She worked hard to seek government funding to establish the child care services of CASS.

When the opportunity arose to buy a place that could be used as a child care facility, CASS did not have sufficient resources. Leng and her husband, together with Henry Pan and Cecilia Fong, used their own properties as security to secure a bank loan to buy the warehouse. Without the generosity of these founding members and their willingness to take the risk, the building of the Activity Hall, today used by so many people, would not have been possible.

While she was the Treasurer of CASS, Leng upheld her principles of thrift and hard work in running the organisation. Because it was in its initial stage of development, she knew limited resources should be employed wisely and efficiently. Leng never uses public money for personal use; instead, she often pays for things for CASS. As well as leading, she also likes to mix with members and provide help where needed. She does not just attend Board meetings, but many CASS gatherings and activities, chatting heartily with others, always showing care and concern. She can often be seen washing dishes and cleaning venues after CASS functions. She is the “big sister” of the CASS family.

For a while, Leng left CASS to attend to other community roles. However, she readily stepped in when the organisation was in crisis in 2006. Amidst all the turbulence, she remained objective and fair, playing an important role in bringing people together.

In September 2008, she was elected Chairperson. Working with the Honorary Executive Director, Henry Pan and other Board members,



remedial work began and they were able to turn the finances of CASS from deficit to surplus. Under her leadership, new services were developed and CASS began expanding.

Leng is also involved in other community organisations. Since 1990, she has been the Vice Chairperson of the Chinese Youth League of Australia. She was also involved in co-ordinating the work of community organisations such as the Australian Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification of China, the Australian Council of Chinese Organisations and the Australian Hokkien HuayKuan Association.

She has also played a key role as humanitarian ambassador for Australia by volunteering her professional medical services. Through her involvement in “Eyes on China”, she has assisted in providing free cataract surgeries to people in remote and poor regions of the country. For many years she has joined these annual expeditions, and helped change the lives of hundreds of people with the gift of sight. Whatever role she plays, she shows prowess, efficiency, love and passion.

While Leng commits herself to communities, she never forgets her important role in her own family as a loving wife and caring mother. Her husband is also a GP and an influential community leader. The couple shares a common passion and commitment to community affairs. At home, she makes sure her family has healthy meals and supports her children in all their pursuits.

Leng carries out all her different roles faultlessly. Her dedication and compassion make her an admirable role model. She does not simply talk; she takes action. She is loved and respected in the CASS family and in the community. This sparkling jewel is the pride of CASS.

*Originally published in November 2010*

# Knowledge And Dedication

*Dr Bo Zhou – a person with  
profound knowledge and high qualifications*



Mr and Mrs Zhaoxu Ma, Chinese Ambassador to  
Australia, with Mr and Mrs Bo Zhou

Dr Bo Zhou, Deputy Chairperson and Treasurer of CASS, is full of far-sighted wisdom. Bo graduated from Peking University and came to Sydney in the 1980s to undertake postgraduate studies in Geology at the University of Sydney. After obtaining his PhD degree, he completed a three-year post-doctoral research project on the geology of Antarctica, at the University of New South Wales. He later received a MBA from the Australian Graduate School of Management, and is currently a senior management executive of an international company.

He says, “I read in the newspaper about CASS running a ballet class. Since I wanted my daughter to stay connected with Chinese culture while growing up in Australia, I enrolled her. CASS ran the classes

with limited resources, parents volunteering for various tasks such as setting up the venue and collecting fees. As one of these volunteers, I met Henry Pan. I later accepted nomination as a member of the CASS Board.”

Bo became the Treasurer. Over the years, he has focused on scrutinising each month’s financial performance. He also does translation work. He represents CASS at external events organised by governments or other community organisations. At a reception in 2016 organised by Federal MP, Mr David Coleman, for community leaders, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull spoke of his 20-year friendship with Bo; they had worked together at an international company. Bo was also the only Chinese community representative to be invited to the farewell reception for the former Chinese Ambassador to Australia, Mr Zhaoxu Ma.

But Bo does more than represent CASS at important events. He travels frequently between Australia and China for his own work, and often helps carry materials from China to CASS or vice versa. No one at CASS will forget how he carried thousands of biodegradable bags in several batches over a period of six months from China to Sydney, during his frequent flights between the two countries. His generous efforts helped CASS save lots of money, since the bags are made in China at low cost—and there were no delivery charges.

Times have changed since Bo noticed the newspaper article about CASS ballet classes. With developments in technology, new media platforms have become more popular. With Bo’s support and guidance, CASS has begun to use multimedia platforms to communicate with the community and its members.

What has fostered Bo's relationship with CASS over the last 20 years? It is heartening to know that he had tried volunteering for other community organisations, but in the end chose CASS. He is inspired by the CASS philosophy of serving the community, and its commitment to the welfare and rights of Chinese Australians. His is not a family connection, and nor is it a matter of career advancement or financial reward. There must be another strong force that sustains his dedication. He comments, "Perhaps it is the spirit of altruism."

Bo has vivid memories of the three dark years of internal turmoil within the organisation that began in 2006. He stood by Henry Pan when he was unfairly treated. He does not mention much about the injustice he himself experienced.

Bo has served on the CASS Board for 18 years, and is always working for the good of the organisation. He notes that it has suffered because of unnecessary internal conflict, but hopes it will continue to broaden its services, at the same time building its expertise, to become a leader in its field.

Different people use different criteria as measures of success. Some would point to having a happy family and career; others would say spiritual contentment and feeling at peace; still more seeing children growing up and spreading their wings to soar high. Bo fits all these. He is a man of profound knowledge, with a strong sense of what is right.

*Originally published in April 2016*

# The Resilient Gardener

*Henry Pan – a man without sight yet full of vision*

Former NSW Premier  
Morris Iemma presenting  
the Quong Tart Lifetime  
Achievement Award in  
Community Service to  
Henry Pan, accompanied  
by his wife, in 2007



On 8 January 2006, the Foundation Chairperson of CASS, Henry Pan, was attacked while helping a disadvantaged member in her home. Without warning, a thug violently attacked Henry and, in less than a minute, blinded him. Ever since he has been living in a world of darkness.

Many people were horrified at this tragic misfortune and bewailed Henry's loss of sight. Many offered their help. But not everyone. A small group within the management of CASS asked, "Can a disabled man lead CASS to its next stage, building on our last 25 years?" Some began to spread rumours about Henry's capability, using this chance to rob him of his Chairperson role. He was devastated, both physically and emotionally, by this treatment.

Some people would continue to blame fate for its merciless blow. Facing the brutal reality of the greatest challenge of his life, Henry

stood firm, sustained by unflinching willpower. He may have lost his sight, but he used his ears, his heart and his brain to make sense of his new dark environment. He used special software to control the keyboard to access his computer, typed, sent emails and listened to news on the Internet, just like everyone else.

For Henry, a further challenge was resolving the internal conflicts within CASS. He was heartened that people rallied around him, with a group of CASS and other community members organising a gathering, *Community Spirit of Henry Pan*, with over 500 people attending to celebrate his achievements and contributions. Afterwards, Australian government officials and successive Chinese Ambassadors and Consul-Generals conveyed their warmest concern. The Australian Council of Chinese Organisations presented him with an award in recognition of his achievements. In 2007, at a Lunar New Year function, he was presented with the Quong Tart Lifetime Achievement Award in Community Service by the then NSW Premier Morris Iemma.

In December 2007, the persistence of Henry and loyal CASS members finally paid off. A new Board was elected at the Annual General Meeting. While Henry had no wish to take the Chairperson position again, he continued to offer his skills, talents, vast experience and expert knowledge as a volunteer, to help the organisation further its development. With Leng Tan, Peng Bai, Bo Zhou, Dominic Sin, Peter Fong, Louise Wu, Tao Bai and Chuck Hong working as a team, CASS recovered gradually.

Henry's soul glows. He often has his wonderful wife by his side, lovingly taking care of him. Mrs Pan takes Henry to work and quietly supports him. Together, the couple has contributed to CASS for as long as it has operated. CASS has become their second home. Seeing Henry and his wife holding hands as they walk through the gate of

CASS, people are touched by the serenity of the couple and their sacrifice.

Henry's work takes no account of day and night: he simply keeps going. He has high expectations for CASS. It is not uncommon for colleagues to receive emails from him in the middle of the night. While everyone else is enjoying a good night's sleep, Henry is still working. He wants to use every minute. While he has a huge workload, he is highly efficient, causing people around him to forget his disability. He never asks for remuneration; instead, he pays for his lunch and never claims for transport expenses. He even pays his own phone bill.

Henry says he lives a simple life with few needs. While people describe him as the architect of CASS, he counters that he considers himself a hard-working gardener. He is now surrounded by admirers and supporters and has worked with this team to formulate a blueprint for the development of CASS for the next decade.

Henry might lack sight, but he is a visionary. He is relentless in his pursuit of his goals, aided by his intellect and wisdom, his exceptional memory, his extensive knowledge, his unwavering persistence, and his positive attitude towards life. He will not be beaten by tragedy brought by fate, and never stops believing in the value and meaning of what he is doing. He fights against all odds and battles upstream. Those around him are in awe of his indomitable spirit. He is indeed a great role model, for all at CASS, his children and grandchildren and the community.

The concerted efforts of CASS leaders have paid off. Like a beautiful garden, CASS is flourishing, full of colour and vitality.

*Originally published in January 2011*

# A Radiant Gem

## *Our committed volunteer George Poon*

Summer is fast approaching. As this is not the season for apples, it is very difficult to get tasty ones at this time of the year. Every time when I have an apple, the sweet memories of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of CASS Hua Xing Activity Group in 2014 creep into my mind. It was around noon on that day. Lunch had started. Apart from dim sum, everyone got an apple. With just one bite, you would be amazed by how crunchy, sweet and juicy the apples were.

A participant pointed to a short, unadorned elderly man and said, “You can’t get these apples easily in the markets. George and his wife



CASS volunteer George Poon – a humble, down-to-earth and caring gentleman



Julie have driven 4 hours to Orange to get them especially for us. Since George lived in Orange before, he knows the good soil in that area produces exceptionally good apples. Apart from the yumminess of the apples, we are also tasting the savour of kindness and love.”

George is a member of the CASS Council of Elders, and an Elder of the Hua Xing Activity Group. He is like a loving father, witnessing the birth of the Group. He is there all the way during its different stages of development, giving what he can without asking for anything in return.

In view of the growing population in Bankstown, CASS started the Hua Xing Activity Group there in 2004, providing a social venue for the lonely seniors to network and bond. Since day one of the Activity Group, George and Julie have been actively volunteering. They are there every Wednesday to look after the needs of participants. Butterflies will flock where flowers bloom. George and his mates believe that people would be attracted to the Group if they could provide a wide variety of activities that cater for their physical, social and emotional health: Tai Chi, aerobics, singing, snooker and chess games, etc. etc. George even visits the Chinese Consulate regularly to borrow Chinese movies for Group members to watch. The movies always bring back memories and connections for the viewers on their mother country.

George is also generous in both money and time. He is famous for his healthy homemade dim sum. He often uses his own money to

make dim sum which are low in fat and sugar. Under the nurturing care of George and his mates, the Group has matured and grown. The Group has become so popular that another gathering time has to be arranged on Thursdays. Around 120 people attend the Group activities every week.

As a kind and loving gentleman, George is always looking after those in need. Once, there was a man who lived alone and injured his shoulder, making it difficult to look after himself. When George knew about the matter, he offered to visit this man regularly to render him whatever assistance needed, such as cooking for him and cleaning his place. He had taken this up for two years until the man was fully recovered. Another illustration of his kindness was that George once made fresh buns for an old lady who had difficulty in swallowing. His kind act led to a miracle. The old lady was able to eat the soft fresh buns and said she had never tasted such nice buns in her life.

George is just like the apples he bought for us. While they may look plain and ordinary, there is something spectacular hidden inside. You will not be attracted to George by his looks or his height, yet his kindness and love will draw you in like a magnet. There is always positive energy that radiates around him. This humble, down-to-earth and caring gentleman is someone we can always trust and will always treasure!

*Originally published in November 2015*

# The Human Magnet

## *Dedicated volunteer Colin Chen*

Someone once said, “There is a kind of seed, no matter where it is sowed, it will survive, spread its roots, bloom and bear fruits.” Colin Chen, the Group Leader of CASS Hua Xing Activity Group in Bankstown, is one of this kind.

I was invited to the Hua Xing Activity Group’s 8<sup>th</sup> Anniversary cum Dragon Boat Festival celebration in June 2012. When I entered the hall, I was greeted by an elderly gentleman with eyes brimming with vigour, and movement as nimble as a squirrel. With composure, he was attending to preparation work in details, while at the same time receiving the guests at the function.

Under the leadership of Colin, the Hua Xing Activity Group has become a new force in the wider Australian society in recent years. Whenever the local Council organises large-scale community events, the Group members often play an integral part, whether in performing or acting as volunteers – and they never fail to deliver!

The cohesiveness of the Group is largely due to the excellent leadership



CASS volunteer  
Colin Chen works  
hard in building  
a harmonious  
family for Hua  
Xing Activity  
Group members

of Colin. It is one of the largest among all the activity groups of CASS, with a regular attendance of 80 to 90 participants. Group members come from different walks of life and a mix of ethnicities, including Chinese, Caucasians, Vietnamese and Filipinos. It is not easy to manage such a diverse group. When members have different opinions, Colin is always able to unite them, convincing them with reasons, and securing a bond among members. He draws people together like a magnet.

Colin often reminds his Group members to show gratitude to those who have helped them. He fully understands the purpose of CASS in setting up the Hua Xing Activity Group – providing a venue for activities, form-filling service and a platform to help participants, especially migrants, solve their problems. Thus, whenever there is a need, Colin and the Group support CASS wholeheartedly.

As a caring person, Colin always puts the interests of others before

his own. Once, when the Group went on an excursion to the Art Gallery, he gave up the precious moments in accompanying his beloved wife to enjoy a cup of coffee surrounded by the glorious view of the harbour. Instead, he stayed with those who did not like coffee on the grass area and looked after them. At the Open Day celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CASS, Colin stayed with his Group members until they finished performing the last item at the conclusion of the function. He spent a total of 7 hours at the event!

When CASS commenced its Residential Aged Care Facility building project, Colin was appointed as a Benevolent Ambassador, entrusted with the responsibility of raising funds for the project. He was so committed to promoting the good cause – he even postponed the overseas trip his daughter had planned for him and his wife. The change of travelling dates had incurred extra cost for the trip, but he insisted on making the project his priority. He initiated the fundraising efforts in the Group and received a very enthusiastic response. Apart from the Group, he also worked hard seeking donations from friends and relatives. He showed his loving care to the project for the elderly through his great efforts.

Colin has won the respect and support of others because of his honesty and integrity, his careful consideration of others, and his selfless altruism. He has brought his experience and leadership skills to the Group, building a harmonious family full of fun and laughter for members of Hua Xing Activity Group. He is a human magnet that draws members together!

*Originally published in July 2013*

## A Well-Loved Role Model

*Hartono Arifin – veteran volunteer of  
CASS Indonesian Activity Group*

Every weekday, we can see people from all walks of life going through the gate of No. 50 Sixth Avenue, Campsie: children escorted by adults skipping happily towards the child care centre; people of all ages making enquiries about community services at the Reception Office; and the seniors eagerly attending activities at the Activity Hall. This place is the Head Office of CASS.



Group Leader of  
CASS Indonesian  
Activity Group –  
Hartono Arifin

There is a special scene on every Thursday morning. A tall handsome man stands at the gate entrance heartily welcoming the elderly participants. He helps unloading heavy goods from the van, or assists seniors out of the vehicle, or escorts those in wheelchairs to the Activity Hall. No matter how busy he is, he always greets people with a hearty smile. He is a CASS Board member and the Group Leader of the Indonesian Activity Group – Hartono Arifin.

Hartono and his mates begin their busy day early in the morning, preparing the venue and other tasks such as setting up tables and chairs, making tea, organising the sound system and preparing lunch. He is like a parent, looking after the family with tender loving care. He does not take things for granted and is aware of the tough road the Group has travelled. The Group was initially set up in Ashfield in 2003 with government funding for settlement services. However, when the funding ceased, group activities were terminated in 2007. The Foundation Chairperson of CASS, Henry Pan, revitalised the Group in 2008 by providing a small venue for the Group to continue its activities. In 2013, in view of the large number of participants, the Group moved from a 40-square-metre classroom to the CASS Activity Hall.

Hartono and the Group members were all grateful to CASS for its support. When some members tried to split the Group a few years ago, Hartono and the Group's Elder Shunniang Chan handled the situation resolutely. To enable more Indonesians to join the activities, he took the initiative to drive participants to the activities every week.

He also mobilised those who drive to do the same. While the Group reimburses him with transport allowance, Hartono has donated the money to the CASS Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF). As a strong leader of the Group, Hartono mobilised it to participate in the Dragon Charity Walk to help raise fund for RACF. The Group was the one with the most number of participants in the Walk.

Hartono shows loving care to all Group members and is quick to render assistance to anyone who needs a helping hand. There was an incident when a Group member had a stroke during the Group session. Hartono was quick to take action and managed to have the member safely transported to hospital without delay. There is also a member who has difficulty walking. Hartono makes sure the member can continue to join the activities and prepares a wheelchair to take him to and from the vehicle every week. He treats Group members as his family and often prepares yummy lunches for them.

Businessmen are often described as unscrupulous and corrupt. However, Hartono is not one of those people. While he was very successful in his business in the past, Hartono chose to give it up in his prime and decided to spend time giving back to the community. He has devoted his time and energy to serve his mates and the elderly. He has been very committed to the Indonesian Activity Group and has earned the love and respect of Group members.

*Originally published in February 2016*



# The Power Of Many

*Ms Teresa Chu – winner of Highest Number of Sponsors Award in Dragon Charity Walk*



Teresa Chu receives her award from Councillor Jeanette Wang at the Dragon Charity Walk Award Ceremony in 2014

At the end of 2014, the annual CASS gathering for aged care services clients and their families was held. Awards were also presented for the Dragon Charity Walk for that year. An elegant lady received two awards. She is Ms Teresa Chu, the passionate and talented leader of Hua Kang Seniors Group, which has hosted many CASS activities.

The Dragon Charity Walk is a big annual event of CASS. It was established to raise funds for the first CASS Residential Aged Care

Facility. Several awards were set up to reward eager participants. Teresa won those for the Highest Number of Sponsors and the Second Highest Amount of Sponsorship – two of the six. The Hua Kang Seniors Group that she led was presented with the Award for the Group/Organisation with the Highest Amount of Sponsorship.

Teresa was the central motivator and organiser, encouraging her family, friends and Group members to contribute money and effort for CASS.

The Hua Kang Seniors Group, which gathers at the Hurstville Senior Citizens Centre at 91 Queens Road, Hurstville, is an extended family for its members. It operates for two days every week. The Dance Group is held every Thursday and the Activity Group every Friday.

Teresa joined the Group in 2007. In less than two years, she was elected as a member of the Local Management Committee and the leader of the Friday Group. Her integrity, wholehearted service and commitment were evident to everyone.

As the Leader of Friday Group, Teresa was successful in creating a family environment for its members. From ensuring that the venue was clean to contacting the local government representatives, she is always present with her colleagues to take care of things. The problem might be an inadequate water supply or malfunctioning audio equipment in the Centre. So off she goes to inform the Council at once to fix the problem. If the Group is unfairly treated, she stands up and fights for their interests. Her caring attitude has won respect

and praise.

The common vision which she shares with CASS fuels her work. She knows it is to help the elderly and disadvantaged in the community and advocate for them, through providing multifaceted welfare services.

In 2011, Teresa was elected to the CASS Board as an Alternate Director. When the idea of raising funds to build a residential aged care facility was raised, she actively responded, encouraging Group members to make generous donations during the monthly birthday parties and celebrations. She knows that small amounts can soon add up.

Together with Jie Hua Li, Fat Leong and Polly Po Tang, Teresa raised more than \$30,000 in two years. For two years in a row, she won the Highest Number of Sponsors Award in the Dragon Charity Walk, adding each time to the people who donated. With her passion and determination, she has strongly demonstrated how she can lead and motivate.

Teresa often hosts CASS activities such as the annual Volunteers Thanksgiving Party, the Dragon Charity Walk performance program and the Aged Care Information Expo. Her calm grace on stage is noticed and praised by all audiences.

*Originally published in March 2015*

# Beneath The Blooming Flowers

*Canterbury 2015 Australia Day*

*Outstanding Volunteer – Ming Xu*



Ming Xu receiving  
the Canterbury  
2015 Australia Day  
Outstanding Volunteer  
Award from Mayor  
Brian Robson

Those who witness and participate in the spectacular scene of one thousand people doing Tai Chi together at the CASS 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration will remember it forever. At that grand performance, a lady dressed in white Tang costume stood in front to lead the audience performing the “Tai Chi 18 Moves”. Behind her, standing in a hidden corner was an unsung hero in charge of planning the performance. She is the teacher who visited various activity groups six months prior to the event to teach the exercises. Watching the performance from the back, she had an overwhelming sense of

satisfaction and joy. She was the Tai Chi teacher of Campsie Activity Group, Ms Ming Xu.

Petite but agile, Ming came to Australia in 1995. She joined the CASS Campsie Activity Group in 2003. The wise and farsighted Ming shared her thoughts, “While the Australian Government has provided a relatively good welfare system for the elderly, CASS has also been offering many other services for the community. The running of activity groups at various locations has provided a place for isolated and lonely migrants to meet new friends and network, giving them the warmth and support of a family.”

Believing that one should reciprocate a favour with gratitude, Ming dedicates herself wholeheartedly to organising activities for the Group. As a professional engineer before her retirement, she maintains her conscientious and enthusiastic attitude in acquiring new knowledge and skills, including dancing, Tai Chi as well as Qi Gong. Whenever Group members request to learn a certain dance, she will learn the dance quickly first before teaching members gradually to cater to their abilities. She understands the gist of teaching and guides her students step by step. Though she is nearly eighty years old, she shows agility and elegance in her performance. She is a humble leader, often asking others to take the lead role in performance while she guides the team from behind the scene.

When the membership of Campsie Activity Group remained stagnant while other activity groups were expanding in numbers, she and a few concerned members proactively visited other groups to learn

from their successful experiences, conducted market research and reorganised the activities. With new programs such as Tai Chi, Gong Fu Fan Dance, Health Dance and English classes, many people joined the Group, increasing the membership from ten plus to over 40.

Apart from her role as a volunteer teacher for activity groups, Ming also volunteers to work in the CASS Day Care Centre two days a week caring for seniors, including distributing lunch and washing dishes. The volunteers formed the “Care for the Seniors Team”, the backbone enabling CASS to provide quality elderly services.

Having experienced political turmoil in her early life and witnessing the internal turmoil within CASS in 2006, Ming had hesitation joining any organisation as a member. However, she is observant, reflective and alert to community affairs. She reflected not long ago: “Since Mr Henry Pan returns to the CASS Board in 2007, there are many positive changes in the services and activity groups. I am excited to see CASS continually adding new services to help the disadvantaged. Though Mr Pan has lost his sight, he is still taking the leadership role to develop CASS. He is amazing!”

Since then, she has dedicated herself wholeheartedly in the affairs of CASS. She changed her previous distrust of organisations and took up CASS membership. Recently, she is actively involved in organising activities for celebrating the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CASS. Certainly, she will accompany CASS to a flourishing future!

*Originally published in February 2015*

# A Life Full Of Gratitude

*George Kang – a dedicated volunteer*



George Kang  
receiving the CASS  
Long Service Award  
at the “Hundred  
Flowers Blossom”  
celebration

Within the Ashfield community service circle, George Kang’s name is well-known as he has been actively involved for a long time in serving the area. He is 86 years old now and has been an active CASS volunteer for 17 years. He describes himself as someone who speaks Chinese mixing with lots of English. He can brew a cup of coffee with an aroma which lures even those who don’t normally drink coffee. This is a snapshot of this longstanding volunteer with Western flair.

George grew up in Old Shanghai at the height of its glory in the

1930s. He graduated from a prestigious Catholic university, grooming him to be a cultivated elite, possessing style and taste. The political changes in China in 1949 altered the traditional societal values. The once highly respected man suddenly became an unemployed social outcast. After overcoming lots of hurdles, George finally managed to get a job as a high school teacher.

Everything happens for a reason! It is often through adversities that a person learns the preciousness of abundance, appreciates simple and good things in life, feels gratitude and contemplates giving back. When George migrated to Australia in 1994, he enjoyed all the benefits provided to seniors by this country, from financial subsidies to public housing. His heart was filled with gratitude, something he learned from a young age. He enthusiastically became a volunteer and actively participated in community services as he wanted to give back to Australia, a paradise for him.

Apart from volunteering for CASS, he is a member of “Ashfield Neighbourhood Watch”, passionately committed to enhancing the safety and lowering crime rates in the community. He also participated in the former Ashfield Council’s Community Service Committee and the Senior Citizens Association. He even left his footprints in the local police station as he had been on regular duty every week for a long period of time. Nowadays, he still insists on attending activities for senior citizens, helping with opening and locking the venues.

Of all his community participation, the one dearest to his heart is CASS, the first community organisation providing services for Chinese-speaking people in Ashfield. He says proudly, “I am a CASS



volunteer. People in Ashfield know that CASS provides services to help reading letters and form-filling. I am also a member of the CASS Ashfield Environmental Care Team!” For the past decade, volunteers of this Environmental Care Team have engaged in cleaning the streets of Ashfield regularly to enable a clean and hygienic environment. George is also a founding member of the CASS Ashfield Activity Group and is now a Group Elder, highly respected in the community. He is very grateful to Mr Henry Pan, the CASS Foundation Chairperson, who has always supported him.

George’s dedication to serving the community is reflected through his caring acts towards his neighbours and people of all ethnicities. He believes that a simple “how are you doing?” can bring people together at once. With his initiative in greeting people of different ethnicities, he has learnt to say “hello” in over ten different languages! His open attitude, his embrace of multiculturalism and diversity has enabled him to build a vibrant and exciting life, intertwined with rich friendships.

Hearing George’s life story and seeing the many Certificates of Appreciation for his volunteering work, one can easily sense the contributions a senior citizen can make. In George’s words: “Volunteering is more than giving. You receive more in return!” His contribution to the community has earned him pride, respect and a meaningful elderly life.

*Originally published in June 2012*

# Elderly Parents In A New Country

*Some food for thought*



Chinese migrants need to plan carefully in order to enjoy a happy life when three generations begin to live together

Chinese Australian grandparents playing with their grandchildren in parks, shopping malls and libraries are a familiar sight in Australia. Many who witness this admire their devotion.

Filial piety is one of the most important values in Chinese culture. But when they bring their parents to Australia, young people need to consider their welfare and wellbeing. In many cases, young couples migrate to Australia first, and after they are settled, apply for their parents to join them through family reunion. When planning how they will adjust, they need to consider their needs and ensure their parents' dream of having a wonderful life with their family in the new country can be realised.

Many Chinese grandparents in Australia are not as happy as they should be. They feel lonely and helpless. CASS Settlement Services workers explain why. “We have a lot of old friends coming to us to air their grievances. Some seek help in applying for welfare benefits or public housing, while others simply want someone to listen to their woes.”

There are many reasons for bringing elderly parents to Australia. Some couples need the help of their parents to look after their young children while they work, while others do not want to leave their parents alone in China as they age. But often couples have arranged for their parents to join them without thinking about the long-term consequences. Many elderly parents have to sell all their assets in China in order to fund the move to Australia. When they arrive, they are often called upon to help provide the deposit for their children’s first property, in which the three generations can live together.

“The idea of having the generations living together under one roof is a dream for many Chinese,” say CASS workers. But different habits and sharing a small space can often create conflicts. Financial stress adds to the tension of grandchildren growing up and competing for space. When grandchildren need more space and privacy, grandparents might be asked to sleep in the living room.

Health issues also affect ageing grandparents. Sometimes they are asked to rent their own place and solve their own financial problems. Even if they agree to apply for public housing, this process can take three, five or even ten years. Many Chinese seniors do not understand or speak English, and find it difficult to go to new places or seek help from local organisations. Such factors can lead to the deterioration

of relationships between the generations.

CASS Settlement Services workers lament that when the young couples need the help of healthy parents, they advocate family love, yet when their own children have grown up and their parents are ill and weak, they begin to speak of the independence of the elderly. Their parents have suddenly become baggage.

Once their children become adults, seniors in Australia have already started planning for their retirement. After they have paid off the mortgages on their homes, those with means organise medical and funeral insurance. They travel and enjoy life after work. If their health deteriorates, they sell their home and move into an aged care facility. Those with financial difficulties would have applied long ago for public housing and live on a government pension after retirement.

Our workers advise: “Before young people apply for their elderly parents to join them in Australia, they need to carefully consider and discuss the long-term consequences. Will they be financially vulnerable? Will the pension they receive from the home country be able to sustain them here in Australia? Will they be able to adjust to the new environment, especially when they have limited English? Can the young couple afford to provide for their parents in the long-term, for example by providing a separate place to live? They need to make sure their elderly parents can adapt to the new environment and enjoy their new life here, instead of the whole family suffering together when problems arise.”

*Originally published in June 2014*

# A Home Far From The Homeland

## *The joys and sorrows of senior migrants*



CASS encourages elderly migrants to join community activities

In the early 1980s, China began to adopt a reform and open-door policy. Prior to this, young people had not been able to study abroad because of the political situation in the country. The new policies resulted in a large number of students pursuing their dream of studying overseas. Over 200,000 young people went to other countries to study. Australia was a popular destination, hosting around 40,000 Chinese students.

Post-incident of 1989 in China, the Australian government granted permanent visas to nearly 20,000 students. Many of these

subsequently applied for their parents and other family members to join them, under the family reunion migration category. But many of these elderly parents, having left relatives and friends, faced challenges such as not understanding English, different cultural practices and loneliness. Because the environment was unfamiliar, they were scared to leave their Australian homes. Some wanted to return to China.

Young people who were sensitive to their situation tried their best to make their parents happy. They took them shopping or to participate in community activities (such as those of CASS). One elderly migrant, Mr Zhong, heard about CASS through new friends, and decided to participate. He started by joining one activity per month, then gradually this increased to attending weekly. Now he is at CASS every other day. At the Activity Groups, seniors like Mr Zhong are able to share their experiences and extend their social networks.

He was impressed by the welcoming attitude and friendly manner of CASS Settlement Services workers, who are always ready to extend a helping hand and have made him feel like a member of the big, loving CASS family.

CASS Settlement Services workers help older migrants with tasks like filling in forms or reading letters in English. They also organise information sessions and activities designed to help such migrants integrate into the wider community. They run English classes, organise health care talks, and suggest volunteering for environmental care teams or the annual Harmony Day events.

Noting how he has benefited from his English class, Mr Zhong recalled his early days here when he could not speak or read English and often landed himself in embarrassing situations. His bilingual English teacher understands the needs of elderly migrants. He started with simple conversations which helped new arrivals deal with daily life situations such as greeting others, shopping, negotiating public transport and posting letters.

To help senior migrants tackle the train system so that they could go to different places by themselves, the teacher enlarged the map of Sydney's railway network and drilled students on the names of the different stations. He took them on excursions to them, and to supermarkets, banks and the post office, to help put into practice what they had learnt.

With his railway map in his hand, Mr Zhong is now able to travel by train on his own. Instead of feeling helpless and isolated, he now feels happy and grateful.

Mr Zhong also regularly attends the health care talks CASS organises. He has learnt to take positive steps to prevent illness. He takes regular exercise and is conscious of his diet. His health has improved, and so has his sense of wellbeing. He is completely different from the anxious new arrival, and is now full of joy and energy.

He says that CASS gives elderly migrants a warm feeling: "a home far from the homeland".

*Originally published in January 2014*

# A Hidden Flower

*Shirley Chiu*

*— an active volunteer in the CASS Kitchen*

Not all beautiful flowers are displayed at the front of a florist shop. Some bloom in hidden places, but even then their faint fragrance can be detected. Just like these flowers, some volunteers contribute unobtrusively to the community.

Every Wednesday a trim figure enters the kitchen of the CASS Activity Centre in Campsie. Sometimes people ask, “Who is this lady?” When told her name is Shirley, they might ask, “Who is Shirley?” We at



Shirley Chiu receiving the CASS Long Service Award at the CASS 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration



CASS know that Shirley Chiu is a lady who conducts her life quietly and modestly.

She is a wife and mother who has devoted her whole life to her family. When she wanted to extend her love and commitment to the wider society, she joined the CASS family by becoming a volunteer. She chose to work in the kitchen, an environment often not highly regarded. Kwai Chun, Regina, Lisa, Grace, Susanna, Mrs Wong and others are, with Shirley, the Kitchen Volunteer Team. It has been serving meals to the elderly participants of the Hua An Activity Group for the past ten years.

Kitchen work involves a lot of chopping, cooking and cleaning pots and pans, to prepare meals for the elderly. This work can be dirty and tiring. Yet Shirley and her teammates do not mind hard work. They willingly contribute their time and effort to the old people.

When CASS started the Day Care Centre and Dementia Day Care Centre in Campsie, Shirley and her Kitchen Volunteer Team began to devote an additional day each week to serving clients with dementia. Every Friday, Shirley prepares meals for them. She shows them love and care through conversation and hugs, bringing joy as she helps them with fading memories. While the participants may not remember Shirley's name, their faces always light up with smiles when they see her.

Shirley also volunteers at other not-for-profit organisations. She visits elderly homes every month, chatting with the residents and

enlivening their daily routines. She also likes to buy them presents and offer surprises.

Shirley never complains or gossips. If she finds that things have not been done properly, she quietly completes the unfinished task. She has earned respect from many people for her honesty and integrity, and inspired many around her to become volunteers.

When CASS celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Shirley was awarded the highest honour, the Long Service Award, in recognition of her selfless contribution over the years. She also received the Outstanding Volunteer Award from another community organisation on its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

When asked “What has been the driving force behind your volunteer work over 40 years?”, she smiled and said, “If I can do something within my ability to help others, I feel gratified. It is more rewarding to give than to receive.” This has been her motto for life: putting into action what one believes.

Compared to others’ heroic deeds, Shirley’s contribution may look simple and unglamorous. Yet her continuing commitment and loving care are what make her stand out from the crowd. She draws people in by simple acts of kindness.

*Originally published in November 2011*



# From East Timor To Sydney

## *Story of an elderly client*

Each person carries a life story. Our colleagues working with the seniors often come across amazing stories shared by elderly migrants. Grandma Chen, who is 73 years old, was born in East Timor, a predominantly Christian state in maritime Southeast Asia which became fully independent in 2002. One of CASS Home Care Services workers told us her story.

The grandparents of Grandma Chen migrated from Guangdong to East Timor when it was under Portuguese rule and earned their living operating a small business. From the time she was very young, she helped in the business when she was not at school. Her mother would buy fresh coconuts from local farmers and she would help cut and clean them to sell in the local market. The family was poor and Grandma Chen did not have many toys or access to entertainment – she simply played with neighbouring children. Her brother saved up to buy a van and later opened a shop. The family businesses began to

In Australia,  
Grandma Chen  
enjoys walking  
with her friends  
and appreciating  
nature



prosper gradually.

Our worker said, “Grandma Chen told me she remembered her childhood years as simple and tranquil. Dinner hour was the time she treasured most in those days. The whole family sat together and chatted after a day of hard work. There were so many stories to share. Spending time as a family was the happiest thing in their lives.”

When Grandma Chen was 15, she was offered the opportunity to study in Taipei. For Grandma Chen, Taipei was a well-developed city as compared with East Timor. Her life changed and improved enormously: better daily life, transport, entertainment and cultural activities. She enjoyed her life in the big city, meeting her husband and starting her family.

However, it was not easy to settle in a new country. Grandma Chen



realised she needed to overcome the language barrier if she wished to have a successful life in Taiwan. Since she could not speak the local dialect (known as Minnan), she was considered as an “outsider” and missed out on a lot of opportunities. So she decided to work hard to master the dialect. She remembered this as a difficult time, but she asked her Taiwanese friends to speak to her in Minnan, and also she listened to local radio programs. Gradually, she became able to communicate in the dialect.

Then she and her family decided to migrate to Australia. Facing another new environment, she was eventually able to overcome all obstacles through her diligence and perseverance. Her only regret in her later years was not being able to return to East Timor to see her mother before she passed away.

Life does not always pan out as what we have planned. Rather than regretting them, Grandma Chen was grateful for the harsh training and tough times she experienced. She might have forgotten the Portuguese she had learned when growing up in East Timor, or the Minnan she acquired in Taiwan, but her determination and hard work can show others how to build successful lives.

*Originally published in June 2017*

# Welcoming Visitors With Open Arms

## *CASS RACF – visit by a Federal Minister and unannounced visit by the Quality Agency*

Growing numbers of aged care clients are seeking quality services, however, media reports are identifying cases of neglect and non-compliance. This unwelcome news has made clients and their families apprehensive, and government departments eager to monitor services for seniors to ensure providers are doing the right thing. Compliance teams work quietly behind the scenes, making unannounced visits to aged care facilities.

The CASS Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) received not one, but two recent visitors – one unannounced. The Honourable Ken Wyatt



The Honourable  
Ken Wyatt AM MP,  
Federal Minister  
for Aged Care,  
visiting the CASS  
Residential Aged  
Care Facility

AM MP, Federal Minister for Aged Care, visited us on 1 November 2017, as arranged. He toured the RACF and visited the Hua An Seniors Group and our Campsie Child Care Centre. He was clearly impressed by the wide range of services we provided, catering for the needs of the whole community, from children to seniors. He praised our innovative ideas and excellent services, noting the opportunities for old and young to get together. He encouraged our team to continue our good community work.

The day following the Minister's visit, there was a surprise visit to the RACF by the Quality Assessor of the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency. She was received by our Facility Administration Manager, Ms Chung.

Ms Chung smiled with satisfaction as she remembered the visit, which included observation, examination of records and random interviews with ten residents and four staff members. After eight long hours of scrutiny, the Quality Assessor said that the services of CASS had passed the tests with flying colours. Excellent performance was especially noted in managing challenging behaviours, complaints and related records. The Assessor said that all the interviewees had provided positive feedback.

The CASS Board of Directors was excited and encouraged by these two visits. Our Chairperson, Dr Bo Zhou, was especially pleased. He said, "Our excellent performance is the result of the concerted efforts of management, staff members and volunteers. We will continue to work together to ensure that high quality services are provided for those in need in the community."

Dr Zhou also spoke of less positive matters. “Over the past year, CASS has been receiving anonymous letters containing false accusations against our RACF and our Foundation Chairperson and Honorary Executive Director, Mr Henry Pan. These made-up stories are intended to smear the Facility, using groundless accusations to discredit Mr Pan.”

“Words are cheap; actions reveal the truth. These anonymous letters led to an unannounced visit being made in February to our RACF, and maybe the recent second visit. These have shown that our RACF is operating well, with positive feedback being received on both occasions. The Quality Assessor shared our view that the anonymous letters were meaningless.”

“Our services have earned the increasing trust and respect of government departments. Mr Pan continues to do what he has been doing for the past 30-plus years: working tirelessly for the community, contributing his time, energy and money to charitable causes. His integrity and selfless contribution have been acknowledged by community leaders. Positive responses from government and the community are our best defences against malicious attacks and baseless allegations.”

CASS will continue to adhere to its mission and its principles, working hard to improve still further. We are always prepared for any visitor, expected or unexpected.

*Originally published in November 2017*



# Right Time, Right Place, Right People

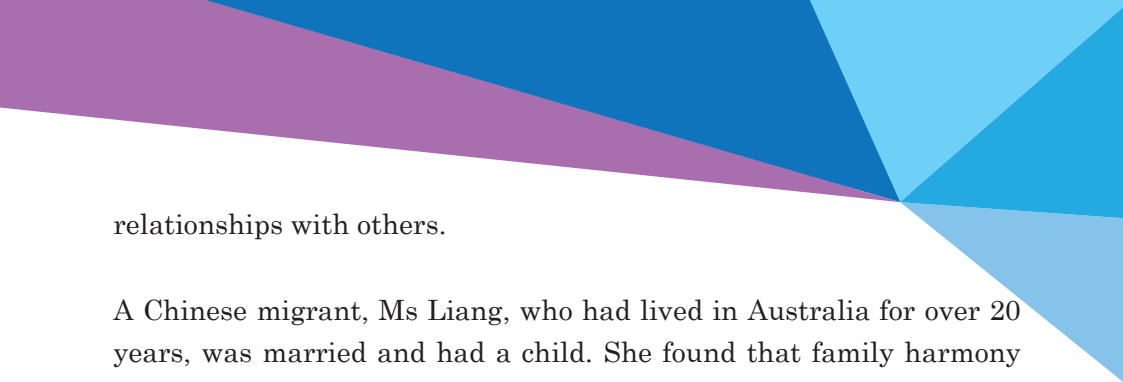
*Encouraging migrants to  
work together overcoming challenges*

Most Chinese migrants feel unsettled when they first arrive in Australia. They often face stress arising from language barriers, finding a job and financial difficulties. Older migrants who are financially stable can feel lonely, desolate and unable to integrate into the wider community. Many experience family discord, marriage breakdown and addictions such as gambling, which may lead to mental health issues or illness.

The staff and volunteers of CASS are ready to help people handle such problems. They are experienced in referring individuals and families to the appropriate social services. CASS also organises information sessions and puts people in touch with women's groups and seniors' activity groups, providing opportunities for them to build



CASS celebrating its 15 years of providing settlement services to migrants



relationships with others.

A Chinese migrant, Ms Liang, who had lived in Australia for over 20 years, was married and had a child. She found that family harmony began to be upset when her elderly mother-in-law joined them from overseas. The first problem was that the house was too small. The husband had to sleep with his child while his wife shared a room with her mother-in-law.

Ms Liang not only had to look after her young child but her mother-in-law as well. Conflicts arose on a daily basis, about small things such as cleanliness or big issues such as balancing the household budget. The elderly lady had been living on her own in China, free to do whatever she liked. After moving in with her son and daughter-in-law, she needed to adjust to her new role and new ways of doing things. She also faced challenges in adjusting to a different environment.

Ms Liang was used to managing her family in her own way. She needed her husband to understand that it would take time and patience to adjust to living with an older family member. The husband faced greater pressure stemming from his increased financial burden and also being trapped between his mother and his wife. Sleeping in separate rooms affected their intimate relationship. Discord among the adults eventually led to negative impacts on the child.

Another young lady Ms Wong came to Australia on her own to live with her husband and in-laws, leaving her own parents and friends. She gave birth to a daughter who unfortunately had medical conditions requiring special care. Her husband blamed her for this misfortune and neglected her, nor was her mother-in-law supportive. The string



of unfortunate events took away her dream of finding happiness and a new life in her adopted country. Instead, she found herself left alone to look after the child.

To resolve all these issues, the families needed mutual understanding and love. Our CASS colleague brought the whole family together and singly to discuss how to solve their problems, and encouraged them to step into one another's shoes to look at the situation from different perspectives. Each family member had their own concerns and views, and no one was right or wrong. They were encouraged to seek counselling. In Ms Wong's case, her family was also encouraged to learn how to look after a child with special needs. By working together as a family, there was hope that loving relationships could be built.

There is a saying that every task successfully completed needs the right person in the right place at the right time. For the Chinese, the saying is "good timing, right location and harmony among people". Of the three factors, timing is not as important as location, and location not as important as people. They are of paramount importance, and it is harmony, co-operation and the sharing of a common goal that brings success.

CASS understands from inside the challenges faced by migrants. It is there to give them a helping hand. Anyone experiencing conflicts in interpersonal relationships is welcome to approach the dedicated and experienced staff of CASS for help.

*Originally published in April 2011*

# Taking Care Of The Elderly

## *Two awards for CASS Aged Care Services*

Acknowledging the growing elderly migrant population and increasing demands for aged care services, in 1987, Henry Pan, Honorary Executive Director of CASS, committed the organisation to assist in the development of a residential home for the Elderly Australian Chinese Homes Co-operative Ltd. Large-scale fundraising activities such as the Dragon Charity Walk and Charity Dinner were organised.



CASS Residential  
Aged Care Facility  
won the Urban  
Development  
Institute of Australia  
NSW Award for  
Excellence in 2015

In 2000, CASS received government funding to begin its home care services in Sydney's Inner West, later extended to Sydney North, Southeast and Southwest. The main users of services extended from Chinese to Korean Australians. Aged Day Care Centres were also developed.

From 1981, Henry had been the Foundation Chairperson of CASS. While he and his colleagues were enthusiastically planning for the building of the CASS Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF), in 2006, he was attacked and lost his sight. For the following three years, CASS was embroiled in internal conflicts. The organisation suffered a huge operating loss and was on the verge of selling its assets. To add insult to injury, some former Directors approached government departments to make unfounded allegations about operations and corporate governance. Fortunately, when investigations were carried out, CASS was cleared of all allegations. The confidence and resolve of the team were then strengthened. Those who had made the false allegations had to make public apologies.

In 2012, CASS received government approval to build a 63-bed Residential Aged Care Facility next to the Head Office. This was a dream for which Henry and his team had been working for over 30 years.

It was not easy managing a \$16 million project. With loans from the government and the bank added to what had been raised at its own fundraising events, CASS was able to begin construction of this

modern Facility in June 2013. The RACF began operating in February 2015. All vacancies were filled in a few months.

The bright red and yellow walls of the three-storey building attract the attention of passers-by. The Yin-yang pattern on the lawn in the garden blends harmoniously with colourful flowers in full bloom. The Facility won the Urban Development Institute of Australia NSW (UDIA) Award for Excellence in aged care provision.

Henry Pan was nominated for the HESTA 2015 Individual Distinction Award. He was one of the five final nominees, and the only one of Asian background, nominated in recognition of their long-term contribution to the aged care sector. Henry humbly responded that it had been a collective effort and that he would continue to work with the CASS team to contribute to the community. His altruistic spirit is a strong motivation and inspiration for all at the organisation.

With the completion of the Facility, CASS continues to develop the Hua An, Hua Kang Seniors Groups and over ten activity groups for older people in different parts of Sydney.

*Originally published in August 2015*



# Loyalty, Responsibility And Sacrifice

## *Story of a Home Care Services user*

Many elderly Australians want to spend their final years in their homes instead of in aged care residential facilities. Home Care Services can be tailored to seniors' individual needs so they can receive assistance without moving. CASS is one of the organisations providing such services.

Mr Chan was one of our clients. He was born in Guangdong in the 1930s and moved to Hong Kong in the 50s, where he worked in ship building and restaurants. After coming to Sydney in 1967, he worked in restaurants until his retirement. After that, he and his wife did a fair bit of travelling. His son says that these years were the best of his parents' lives.

Over the last five years, Mr and Mrs Chan have both received help from CASS Home Care Services, after Mrs Chan was diagnosed with

CASS Home Care Services  
provide tailor-made  
services for seniors in  
their own homes



dementia. It requires a lot of physical energy and patience to look after a patient with dementia. With the assistance of a carer, Mr Chan insisted on looking after his wife at home. But his own health was also deteriorating, so his son decided to make arrangements for Mrs Chan to be admitted to a residential aged care facility.

Mrs Chan's carer regarded Mr Chan as a faithful man who was devoted to his wife. He asked the carer to take him to visit Mrs Chan every week, rain or shine.

Apart from his immediate family, Mr Chan had also for years supported his relatives and was seen as someone with a high sense of responsibility and loyalty to his family. Since his youth, he had set aside a portion of his salary to be sent to them in Guangzhou and Hong Kong. His nephew recalled that when he was a child, his



family in Hong Kong was poor. His uncle, Mr Chan, knew that the nephew's mother would not accept money from him, so he would use excuses such as buying treats to support them financially.

Mr Chan's son has poignant childhood memories. "Every time I said goodbye to my father when he left for work, I knew it would be days before I saw him again. I knew his work in restaurants was demanding, and it was not a job he liked, but it was the only one he could get. He worked six days a week and was always tired when he got home. He worked hard because he wanted me to be educated so that I could find a better job and not have to work so hard."

Mr Chan's story is similar to that told by many elderly Chinese migrants. He has worked hard all his life, sacrificing his own needs to support his family and relatives.

Not long ago, Mr Chan passed away. His son repeatedly thanked the staff of CASS, grateful for the loving care they had shown to his father, not just as a service user, but like a family member. His carer was also grateful to have met and assisted him.

Mr Chan is a classic role model from the older generation: loyal to his wife and with unreserved love and care for his family and relatives. These values are sadly not as prevalent nowadays. The sacrifices made by Mr Chan for his family remind all of us of traditional Chinese values of loyalty, responsibility and sacrifice.

*Originally published in August 2016*

# Learn To Enjoy Your Life

## *The joys and sorrows of elderly migrants*

There is a Chinese saying “one hundred years of parenthood; ninety-nine years of worries”. Parents always have their children in their hearts, no matter how old their sons and daughters are, or how far away. Many elderly Chinese choose to travel across the world to join their adult children in Australia, leaving their comfortable retired lives and familiar surroundings in China. Yearning for reunion with their children, they are willing to uproot themselves. They dream of an exciting new life in a new country. But many are unprepared for the realities of life in Australia.

CASS Settlement  
Services workers  
help to connect  
new migrants with  
Centrelink



Mr Chan was a public servant in China. To travel to this country to join his daughter and grandchild, he gave up his friends, his financial security and access to medical care. When he first arrived in Australia, he helped the family enormously by looking after his grandson, taking him to school and picking him up, and helping with household chores. His sense of loss and loneliness was counter-balanced by his enjoyment of life with his family.

As time passes, Mr Chan's grandson grew older and required less help from him. His daughter was also less caring and began to treat her father coldly. There was no chair for him in her lounge room, and she often gave him leftovers for his meals. He would be left alone in his tiny room, without television or any other form of entertainment. He felt that having to depend on his daughter for his daily living needs without making contributions himself, he was a burden on her. He wanted to be independent, but the pension he received from China barely covered basic living costs in Australia. He was worried that no one would care for him when he became older and weaker.

He often felt miserable but did not dare showing his disappointment to his family. He could only discuss his feelings of despair with a few elderly friends.

Encouraged by his friends, he sought help from a Settlement Services worker at CASS. He was referred to Centrelink, but was told that his visa (subclass 143) barred him from welfare benefits for the first ten years of his Australian residency. He had to rely on his sponsor, his

daughter, for his living and medical expenses.

On hearing this unwelcome news, Mr Chan felt even more disconsolate. But our worker encouraged him to be open to his daughter, telling her how he truly felt about his situation and seeking ways that, together, they could improve it. At the same time, he was also encouraged to face life positively, to consider his own health and expand his social network. He could join community activities such as learning English or dancing. He was put in touch with CASS Activity Groups.

Our worker has good advice for the elderly migrants – to lead a happy and healthy life, they need to consider themselves and their own needs. As well as helping their families, they should leave time to do the things that they enjoy.

The worker gave further advice – sons and daughters also need to understand, appreciate and respect their parents. They had come a long way to reunite with the family, without expecting anything in return. Their motive was love for their children. It is a responsibility of younger people to look after their parents, since their parents have brought them up and nurtured them.

We at CASS sincerely wish that all families support one another and lead happy lives together. We also wish elderly migrants good health and enjoyment in their new countries.

*Originally published in June 2012*

# Listening To The Young

## *A conversation with young Chinese Australians*

Steven was only nine when he came to Australia from China. Since he was not fluent in English, he often found himself isolated at school and had a difficult time there. Lost and downhearted, he could not understand why his parents had brought the whole family to this land where communication was difficult and everything seemed strange.

As Steven grew up, however, he began to understand why his parents had made such great sacrifices to come here. He could see that they had given up their friends and familiar environment to start a new life in Australia. But they found it hard to get jobs of comparable status to their Chinese ones, and they missed the support of friends and relatives. They became stressed. But they soldiered on. They had made their choice for their son's sake.

By the time he was 20, Steven was helping out at CASS Disability Services, in the Group Home. He showed loving care to the clients, and enthusiasm and passion for the work of CASS. His voluntary work was undertaken over and above his day job.

A group of young Chinese Australians with similar backgrounds offer

Young CASS volunteers contribute to society by assisting the disadvantaged



their thoughts about their parents' migration. They all understand their mothers and fathers had overcome difficulties and made many sacrifices to settle in the new country. They knew that their parents' dream was that their children would grow up in a stable environment and go on to have secure and affluent lives.

These young Chinese would rather speak English than their mother tongue. But it is touching to find that they have not forgotten the teachings passed on by their parents. Nor have they forgotten traditional Chinese values. They are proud of their Chinese roots. They work hard and have already achieved educational success.

This is undoubtedly the result of the two generations supporting one another. One of them commented, "We are proud to be the descendants of Chinese migrants because they have made such a great contribution to Australia – right back to the old days. They quietly took up jobs no locals were willing to do. The early Chinese migrants should take a lot of credit for what Australia has become today."

It must certainly be gratifying to their parents to know that their

sons and daughters understand and appreciate the sacrifices of their forebears.

However, because they have grown up in Australia, the younger generation may not always share the same views as their parents. Many want their children to choose professions that lead to a secure future, such as accounting, medicine or finance. They also often hope to share a home with their grown-up children. But young Australians value personal freedom and choice as well as wanting to choose careers which they enjoy and give them opportunities to develop their talents. They also want to move out of the family home and be independent.

Such views are often not welcomed or understood by their parents. They need to realise that the world has changed, and that there are cultural differences between China and Australia. The two generations have grown up in different decades and in different cultural environments, so naturally they have different values. While most young people respect the views and honour the wishes of their parents, they are inspired by a different set of beliefs. While acknowledging their roots, sons and daughters embrace Australian values in this multicultural society. Only with them as a guide can people from different cultures live together harmoniously.

As a way to show gratitude towards both his parents' generation and Australian society, the young CASS volunteer wants to make a contribution. We at CASS wish that every Chinese Australian will continue to strive towards interweaving Chinese culture and Australian values, to produce something worth passing on from generation to generation.

*Originally published in December 2012*

# Colour Of My Mother

## *Snippet from Chinese Class*

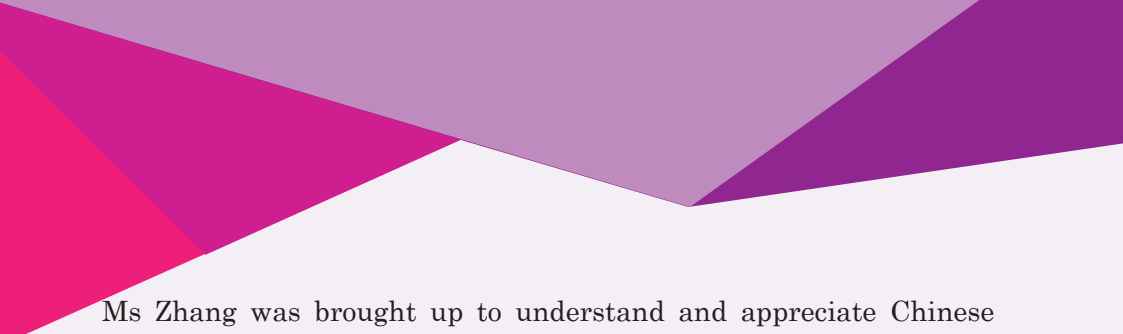
On a beautiful spring day at CASS, Ms Zhang asked her students to combine what they felt about spring with feelings for their mother. She was teaching the piece *The Colour of Spring*.

But what colour did the children think of in relation to their mothers? Ms Zhang explained, “It is not about the colour of your mum’s clothes. Try to use a colour to describe your image of your mum, how she looks to you in your mind when you close your eyes.”

Students at the  
CASS Chinese  
School diligently  
learning the  
language







Ms Zhang was brought up to understand and appreciate Chinese culture. As a teacher, she devised lessons to give the children an insight into important Chinese values such as filial piety, respect for elders, integrity and fraternal love. *Colour of my Mother* was designed to teach students gratitude. *Di Zi Gui* (Standards for Being a Good Student and Child), written during the Qing Dynasty, says, “Whatever pleases your parents, if it is fair and reasonable, try your best to get it for them.” Observing what one’s parents desire and trying to satisfy it conveys a child’s respect and sense of duty.

The group of five- and six-year-old Year One students thought for a while and then began to share their ideas. “My mum is white in colour because the angels I see in pictures are all white. I think my mum is like an angel.” What a moving answer! The teacher praised her. “What a lovely idea! Mothers are like our guardian angels, protecting us from rain and hail with their wings.”

Other children enthusiastically followed. “My mum is green because she loves green.” “My mum is brown because she always wears brown clothes.” “My mum is white because her skin is white and she looks pretty.”

One child sounded confused. “Oh! I don’t know what colour I should use to describe my mum. She wears different clothes every day. Maybe she is in many different colours!”

Everyone laughed. Ms Zhang said, “There is a small animal called a chameleon, which changes colour to suit its surroundings. In this way it can remain unnoticed and avoid danger. Your mother also changes colour depending on your needs. She is a white angel when she needs to protect you, but when you make her angry she becomes red or black. When you love her, she becomes a mix of different colours.”

Now the other children eagerly joined in. One of them said, “My mum is red, because a loving heart is red. My mum loves me very much and I love her too. That’s why she is red.” When Ms Zhang repeated this to the child’s mother, her eyes swelled with tears.

“My mum is a mix of different colours, just like a rainbow. She loves everyone and everyone loves her, just like everyone loves a rainbow.” The teacher found it amazing that a little child could extend her love for her mother to a love of human kind.

Later Ms Zhang reflected on the answers given by the children. She was surprised that such young children could express their feelings for their mothers in such poignant ways. She was glad that teaching *Di Zi Gui* in the Chinese School had created positive results. These teachings, planted in young hearts, will flower over a lifetime.

*Originally published in October 2014*

# The Invisible Wings Of A Little Angel

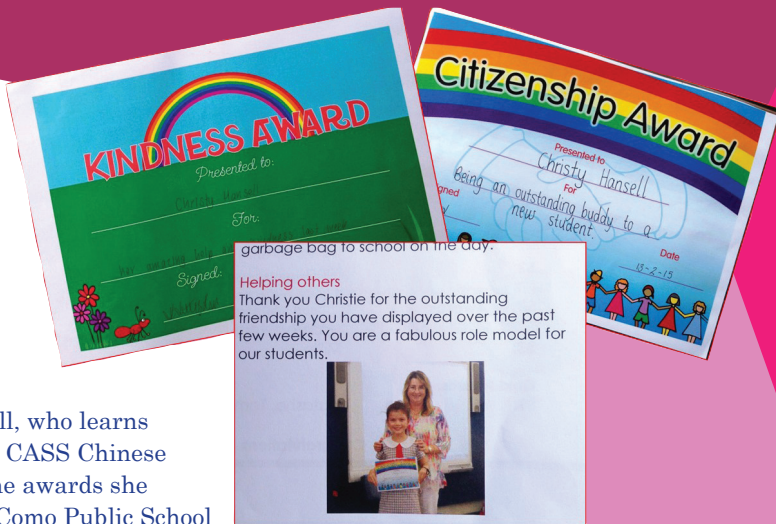
## *Story of a Chinese School student*

A growing number of people in Australia are now learning Chinese. Principal Sun of our CASS Chinese School, held on weekends, tells the story of her student Christy, who comes from a family whose mother tongue is English.

Principal Sun remembers: “One Saturday in March, Christy Hansell came running into Chinese School carrying a number of awards. Our students like to share with us what happens at their school, especially any encouragement or recognition they have received. Christy showed me certificates for the Kindness Award and the Citizenship Award at her primary school, Como Public School. She had used her Chinese language skills to achieve something very good for others at the school.”

“Christy is in Year 4. Outside her normal school schedule, she has been learning Chinese at our CASS Chinese School for three years. She is a smart and hardworking student who can already converse with our teachers in fluent Chinese. At the beginning of the school year, a boy who had just migrated from China joined her class. As a new arrival without any English skills, the boy was unfamiliar with the school

Christy Hansell, who learns Chinese at the CASS Chinese School, with the awards she received from Como Public School



environment and the people around him. He felt very insecure. He did not understand the school rules and could not comprehend what the teachers were saying in class. He simply did what he wanted to do, sometimes leaving the classroom without permission. The school, with few Chinese students and no Chinese classes, had to seek help from the Department of Education.”

“One of the teachers thought of a solution. She gathered together all the students who were learning Chinese to find if anyone could be the boy’s interpreter and act as a bridge. She found five students, but Christy was the only one who could communicate with him and help him to open up.”

“Each morning, Christy would go to school early and meet up with the boy before class. She explained the school rules to him: listen to the teacher, don’t eat during class, don’t leave the classroom without permission, and raise your hand before speaking in class. She also began sitting next to him in lessons and interpreting what the teacher had said. The boy blossomed. He had found a friend, Christy, who could understand his language. He became very close to her, always

by her side after class.”

“He gradually caught up with the lessons and settled into the life of a student in Australia. Christy is like a little angel protecting him.”

“Como Public School was pleased with his progress—but also with what Christy had done. It presented her with the awards to acknowledge her commitment to helping others. A photo of her receiving the awards was published in the school newsletter. Christy was so pleased with the praise and recognition she could not wait to share her achievement with the Chinese School teachers.”

Principal Sun continued, “We contacted the school and the Principal praised Christy for using her newly-acquired Chinese language skills to support another student. Christy may be too young to realise that what she has done has helped the school solving a huge problem: helping a little boy to begin his new life in Australia in a welcoming classroom.”

“Her experience has also given Christy greater confidence in her progress in learning Chinese. Because her family did not speak the language and the syllabus is more difficult in the senior years, she had felt discouraged and wanted to give up. But now, after helping the little boy, she can see how useful her special language skills are. Now she enjoys learning Chinese even more than when she started.”

It takes years of practice to bring success. During these years, wings appear and develop, and may help raise up others. One day they will enable a child to fly.

*Originally published in May 2015*

# Iron Man With A Tender Heart

*Peng Bai – a dedicated volunteer*

An Australian stamp has a face on it which is familiar to many at CASS. In 2001, the International Year of Volunteers, Australia Post depicted the bold and generous character of the Vice Chairperson of CASS, Mr Peng Bai, “Old Bai”.

Old Bai migrated to Australia from northwestern China in the early 1980s. The Chinese community in Australia at that time was mainly made up of Cantonese-speaking people whose families had often lived in this country since the mid-1800s. New arrivals speaking Mandarin had difficulties in settling, and CASS extended a much-needed helping hand to this group.

In early 1990s, Old Bai was living in Cabramatta and looking for a Chinese school for his children to learn their ancestral language.



The Australian stamp  
showing Mr Peng Bai

Although there were classes held in his neighbourhood, he chose to drive 40 minutes to bring his two children to our CASS Academy of Arts.

Since then he has become a member of the CASS family. He volunteered to assist in the Academy, helping out in setting up the venue and administrative work. Because of his easy-going and candid character, he earned the respect of many and was soon elected to the Management Committee.

Before his migration to Australia, Old Bai had worked in the educational field in Xinjiang, China, where he had been a strong supporter of, and participant in the arts. At CASS, he used his talents in our annual performances and fundraising concerts, making props and sharing his valuable opinions at rehearsals. His exceptional contribution was noticed by the CASS Board. In 1993, he was elected as an Alternate Director, and in 1994 he became a Director.

He has continued to contribute to the organisation. While as Vice Chairperson, he was responsible for cultural affairs as Principal of the CASS Academy of Arts. Managing the Chinese School was also part of his portfolio.

During the 2006 internal turbulence within the organisation, Old Bai was one of the minority few on the Board with an objective view of the situation. He boldly upheld justice. Because of this, he was targeted and ousted. When the internal conflict was resolved in 2007, he once again returned to the Board. Apart from his role in cultural affairs, he was also assigned responsibility for community relations.

Since the mid-1990s, CASS has had an increasingly significant role in building relationships with the wider Australian society and also those between Australia and China. As a key member of CASS, Old Bai often plays the role of ambassador, representing the organisation at important occasions such as two state banquets for Chinese leaders when they visited Australia. Other significant events have included the reception organised by the NSW State Government in commemoration of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Australia. Old Bai was one of the few leaders of community organisations invited.

He has also participated in events organised by the State Council of the People's Republic of China, such as the overseas Chinese teacher training workshops and Chinese tours for managers of Chinese Schools. His role as an ambassador has had positive effects in promoting relationships.

Old Bai was also chosen by TAFE as the face in their poster promoting work safety.

His volunteering has inspired those around him. His eldest son, Tao Bai, has also joined the CASS Board, becoming its youngest member.

CASS has been able to grow and develop over the last 30 years because of committed volunteers and members like Old Bai – and this volunteering spirit needs to be passed on to the next generations.

*Originally published in February 2012*



# The Cover Girls Of Seniors Week

*The Sisters Act of*

*CASS Wollongong Activity Group*

In February 2012, Wollongong Council published a booklet to celebrate Seniors Week. The images of those on the front cover seem to leap out from a vivid green background, as dancers flourish their bright pink fans to invite others to join them. There are eight Asian ladies dressed in colourful costumes, each holding a fan. What instantly attracts is their beaming smiles. Anyone who sees the cover must surely also break into a smile.

In the late 90s, CASS received government funding to provide Settlement Services in Wollongong and CASS saw the need to establish the Wollongong Activity Group to facilitate a weekly social meeting place for new migrants, those who need a new home in their adopted country. These ladies are members of the CASS Wollongong Activity Group – specifically, its dance group. They come from different backgrounds and each has different talents. None has ever

Cover of Seniors Week  
2012 booklet produced  
by Wollongong Council,  
featuring CASS  
Wollongong Activity Group



had formal dance training. Their connection is through the Activity Group. But for all of them, dancing has become their main physical exercise and leisure activity.

They have choreographed many dances: *Fan Dance*, *Gao Shan Qing* and *A Lovely Life* are examples. They do not just create the dances; they are responsible for all aspects in preparation for stage performances. They choose appropriate music, burn CDs and even shop for fabric to make their own costumes. No task is too challenging for these ladies. They are seniors, but they are happy to learn new skills such as mastering computer technology and managing sound systems, which require persistence and effort. They have re-arranged and lengthened the traditional folk song they use for the *Gao Shan Qing* dance, producing a new piece of music. Through their involvement in the Activity Group, they demonstrate the value

of diverse life skills, such as creativity, organisational expertise and team spirit.

Their graceful dance moves have entertained not just other CASS groups, but also gatherings from the wider Australian society. They showcase their positive attitude to life as expressed through dance.

They have been invited to perform in a number of local aged care facilities and their dances often move elderly residents to tears. Wollongong Council invited them to perform in Australia Day celebrations. By the time they had finished performing *Gao Shan Qing*, the audience was so engaged that many were imitating their dance moves. Seeing the enthusiastic response, the master of ceremonies asked the ladies to repeat the dance so that more could join in. It was a memorable occasion for everyone.

Behind the scenes, there were hidden stories. One dancer told us that her injured leg had given her intense pain during the performance, weakening her. Fortunately, she had managed to develop moves to disguise the pain.

The ladies certainly look attractive as they dance. But the main reason they became cover girls for Seniors Week is their strong community spirit.

*Originally published in March 2012*

# The Pandaroos Playgroup

## *Growing up in Australia but not forgetting their cultural roots*

A Chinese volunteer at CASS was teaching children to count *one, two, three* in Mandarin. Then she showed them how to write the Chinese characters for the numbers. After they had finished this, the children and their parents gathered in a circle to listen to her story of the origin of the Moon Festival. They were especially curious and interested when she introduced the special food eaten during the celebration – the moon cake.

After the storytelling, children and parents joined in with the Chinese song *Two Tigers: Liang zhi lao hu, liang zhi lao hu, pao de kuai, pao de kuai* (There are two tigers, two tigers / They run quickly, they run quickly). Then they all shared a delicious morning tea. Everyone was given a taste of the specialty of the day – the moon cake.



Pandaroos Playgroup  
members join the  
Lunar New Year  
Parade in Sydney

The Pandaroos Playgroup was held at the CASS Activity Hall on the second Sunday of every month. Some 15 families participated with children greeting one another in perfect Mandarin.

The Playgroup was set up by CASS in 2002, especially for Australian families who had adopted children from China. The title Pandaroos was chosen by the parents. It is made up of two parts, “Panda” representing China and “roos” (kangaroos) representing Australia. The name reflects the dual identity of adopted Chinese children living in Australia, and the hope that they will be nurtured by the cultures of both countries.

In 2000, the Chinese and Australian governments signed an agreement allowing Australian families to adopt children born in China. Families normally have to wait 12 to 18 months for their applications to be processed before approval is finally given. Once it is, the adopting parents immediately travel to China to meet “their” children and bring them home to Australia.

Such parents face many challenges. Often the children they adopt have been deserted by their birth parents at a very young age and have been living in orphanages or refuges for many months – some even for years. Such traumatic experiences may lead to anxiety and challenging behaviours. The children also come from a very different linguistic and cultural background from the parents’, and both need a lot of support.

A group of adopting parents decided to get together so that they could support one another through the process of bringing a child into

their families. Monthly gatherings provided a space for both parents and children to communicate and share their common experiences. Playgroup members came from far and wide, from places including the Blue Mountains, Wollongong and North Sydney. The parents did not mind the long drive to the venue in Campsie, since they wanted to give their children every opportunity to meet other adopted children from their homeland.

CASS hoped that the Pandaroos Playgroup would not only provide opportunities for the families to exchange views, but also give the children opportunities to understand Chinese culture, learn Mandarin and remember their roots in their home country. At the monthly gatherings, a Chinese volunteer taught the children and their parents Mandarin through songs, games and stories. They built up their vocabulary and this helped them understand more about Chinese culture.

Apart from the monthly gatherings, the families also took part in other Chinese cultural activities, such as the Chinese New Year Parade organised by the Sydney City Council.

It was gratifying to find that many parents could speak fluent Mandarin already. They had taken the first step needed to equip themselves with knowledge about Chinese culture. While they enjoyed seeing the children growing up in the wonderful Australian environment, they made sure they would not forget their roots. Many planned to take their children when they were older to search for their roots in China.

*Originally published in November 2010*

# Acknowledgements

The publication of *At Home On New Land* would not be possible without the participation of many parties. To those who have contributed their money, time or talents; who talked things over, offered comments and suggestions, we at CASS would like to express our heartfelt thanks.

We thank our dedicated volunteers and staff members, as CASS would not be what it is today without you, let alone having such rich stories to tell. We express our deep thanks to all our Kending writers for telling stories of many individuals who have formed strong bonds with CASS.

We greatly thank Diana Giese who has kindly assisted in editing the articles to improve their presentation through thoughtful review, comments and valuable suggestions. Her timely help was effective in enhancing our messages to readers of different backgrounds.

We are grateful to Multicultural NSW for supporting our endeavours with a grant to part-cover the cost of publication. We also acknowledge the support of Westpac, Dr Garry Darby and those advertisers.

This book was published with the genuine hope that our readers will better understand the life of migrants in settling in Australia. We sincerely invite readers and community members to provide their precious opinions and feedback to us so that we can improve.

*At Home On New Land* Editorial Committee

(Henry Pan, Maria Cheng, Jenny Leung, Kitty Leong, Bosco Chang and Alice Lam)

June 2018

## ADVERTISEMENT

As a community, we are incredibly appreciative for the work of all the volunteers who support CASS. You meet the needs and provide services to some of the most vulnerable people in our area, and for that I am extremely grateful.

Our State owes much to the valuable contribution made by Chinese-speaking Australians, many who have bravely left their home country to migrate here. Your willingness to take part in all areas of society has built a solid foundation for Sydney's multicultural community; one that is dynamic and flourishing.

Your generosity focuses on one of Australia's key values – that of showing consideration and lending a hand to people who are less fortunate than us. I congratulate CASS and its volunteers for its work in maintaining culture, language and traditions while helping provide such a diverse range of community services.

Many Chinese families have chosen to settle in the St George region, which I have the privilege of representing in the Parliament of NSW, and I acknowledge and thank the local community for its contribution to our State, along with the wonderful work that CASS has done over the years.



# Mark Coure MP

## Member for Oatley

### Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and Infrastructure

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"I am so glad that CASS is planning to publish a book by translating into English some of their amazing stories, parts of our shared Australian story.

I hope this book will promote deeper cultural understanding between ethnic groups and share the community spirit that CASS embodies."

*Chris Minns MP*

*Chris Minns is your local member for Kogarah. Chris grew up in the St George area. Chris is the former Deputy Mayor of Hurstville and has worked in Government and for the Labor Party.*

*Kogarah Electorate includes the suburbs of Allawah, Beverly Hills, Carlton, Carss Park, Kogarah and parts of Bexley, Bexley North, Blakehurst, Hurstville, Kingsgrove, Penshurst and South Hurstville.*



My wholehearted congratulation to CASS for the publication of "At Home On New Land" - A collection of migrants' stories" and wish them a great success in sharing stories of Chinese migrants to Australia.



Ernest Wong

*Ernest*  
**WONG**

**HON. ERNEST WONG** BCOMLLB

Member of NSW Legislative Council  
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary to the Opposition Leader  
Temporary Chair of Committee



Congratulations on your book of stories of Chinese migrants and their struggles in settling in a new country. I am certain these stories and personal experiences shared will help foster mutual understanding and acceptance, not only of Chinese migrants, but all cultures within our community.

Canterbury-Bankstown has long cherished its multicultural identity and we are proud to support local initiatives and organisations, like the CASS, which provide a comprehensive range of services, including aged care, disability and family and child care, to the culturally and linguistically diverse communities of Sydney, especially East Asian communities.

As Mayor of this great City, I am proud of the unity and harmony we have established as one of the most diverse communities in Australia, making our City unique and rich in global cultural traditions. This is why we continue to support a wide range of cultural groups, ensuring our community remains one built on inclusiveness and acceptance, always respecting each other's religious and ethnic differences.

CASS has made a tremendous contribution to our community. More than 2,600 families access its services or take part in activities on a weekly basis. I, therefore, take this opportunity to thank its members for their tireless efforts and hard work.

Congratulations again on your new book. I sincerely hope it will further promote harmony and social cohesion, and help bring us all closer together as a community.

Yours sincerely



**Clr Khal Asfour**  
**Mayor**



# **At Home On New Land**

**A collection of migrants' stories**

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“Harmony, mutual respect & understanding are what make multiculturalism in Australia a success story. It is through the sharing of stories found in such books of individual migrants, about their journeys, struggles and accomplishments that these principles are fostered and community harmony and social cohesion achieved.”

***Mr Jack Passaris OAM, Community Leader***

“This Book is a way to understand cultural diversity and the benefits of inclusiveness of how different cultures are related to one another, while learning new ways of life.”

***Mrs Marta Terracciano JP, CEO of Residential Gardens for the Spanish Speaking***

“CASS does not only want their clients to survive in their adopted country – it wants them to flourish, and encourages them to give back to Australia.”

***Mrs May Lee, teacher and media writer on Chinese cooking***

“At CASS, one gets a sense that if a particular problem or need has not been addressed it is only a matter of asking and help will be at hand – instantly.”

***Dr Garry Darby, Historian***

“The staff members in CASS RACF take care of me very well. They treat me like a family member, not just a client. It’s a much better life living here.”

***Ms So Ying Soo, resident of CASS Residential Aged Care Facility***

