

Underprivileged children learn to become mighty Hong Kong lions after performing traditional dance workshop as part of Operation Santa Claus

- Performing arts workshop gives 14 children a break from video games, helps them connect with traditional culture
- Charity says learning lion dance gives underprivileged children a ‘sense of accomplishment’

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The lion dance workshop was organised thanks to the support of Operation Santa Claus. Photo: Jonathan Wong

The streets of a public housing estate in Hong Kong echoed with the sounds of a drum and cymbals as 14 children learned how to perform a lion dance.

The children, aged six to 14, were taught how to move the lion's head and operate its mouth, eyes and ears, while also performing the dance of the mighty beast at a workshop at Hing Wah Estate in Chai Wan on October 23.

"Rotate [the lion's head] twice. Rotate three times. Use your strength," coach Li Fei-piu told the group. As soon as the first child had finished their turn, all the other kids were eagerly asking Li if they could try.

Coming from underprivileged families, the children were beneficiaries of the ChickenSoup Foundation and The Hub Hong Kong, two of the 18 causes sponsored by Operation Santa Claus (OSC).

This year's OSC, an annual fundraising campaign organised by the South China Morning Post and public broadcaster RTHK since 1988, teamed up with six performing arts organisations to run workshops for the groups supported by the charities.



Children from The Hub Hong Kong and ChickenSoup Foundation learn the lion dance with coach Li Fei-piu (left), and singer Pakho Chau (right). Photo: Jonathan Wong

Li Fei Piu Chinese Martial Arts Association founder Li Fei-piu said he was glad to hold the lion dance workshop with OSC.

“The children are able to learn about this traditional Chinese culture,” he said.

“We only have an hour today but most of them are able to learn what we planned for them. I am really happy.”

ChickenSoup founder Edward Man Ho-wai said that learning the lion dance was a meaningful opportunity for the youngsters.

“Some of them may suffer from learning disabilities or ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). They love activities with a lot of moving and sound,” he said.

“They may lack the opportunities to go out and participate in different activities as they always play video games and watch TV at home.”

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Jacko Ko Pui-ngai, the service manager for The Hub Hong Kong, agreed, saying performing arts workshops were beneficial to children’s growth.

“I saw some of the participants were shy and scared at first and became more attentive as they developed interests in the workshop. Some of them have [special educational needs] like ADHD. They were actually very focused during the workshop,” she said.

“They are able to develop a sense of accomplishment, knowing that they are capable of [learning about the arts].”

OSC ambassador and Canto-pop singer Pakho Chau, who also took part in the workshop, expressed his gratitude to the charity campaign.

“I am honoured to be OSC’s ambassador for the third year. The past two years were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, which made it hard for the fundraiser to organise different activities,” he said.

“It is great to chat with the children, which I seldom have the chance to due to my work. I hope that my participation can motivate them and cheer them up.”

Source:

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/society/article/3164342/underprivileged-children-learn-become-mighty-hong-kong-lions>