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Greetings from La Salle College, Hong Kong. Peace and Joy is within you.

Our annual Summer Programme ended on Saturday 10th August. I came back to the Brothers' La Salle College Community on 14th for a short holiday and a good rest. Here I am, two days later, sitting in front of my computer to bring you up to date on LSSC Changjiao.

My last report was on 31st March. It was centered round the Winter Programme at LSSC and the activities connected with the celebration of the Spring Festival ... Chinese New Year...in Baijiang sector of the village of Changjiao.

For those of you who have been following my activities in China will know that with my encouragement and support, the subsistence rice farming in the village of Changjiao slowly evolved into commercial fruit farming of pomelos. For the past 9 years the harvest was good and depending on how each farmer looks after the trees and how the crops are sold, they have all been having good cash sales.

In early April this year the whole village was filled with the fragrance of pomelo flowers. The trees were in full bloom. Farmers were delighted and were happily tending to the trees and looking forward to a good harvest and good cash income. Then disaster struck. Strong winds and heavy rains came and it rained relentlessly for a record of almost three months. The young fruits were washed off the trees. Most trees are almost bare except for a few pomelos that survived.

The daily heavy rain was unusual and it caused unusual floods in many parts of Meizhou in Guangdong. The most tragic was at the highway between Dabu and Charyang. It was raining and at night when a landslide slide under the highway and took away half the road. Car after car plunged in until a fire broke out and a big truck cut across the highway blocking the road thus stopping the flow of traffic. It was a national disaster costing the death of 48 persons according to the local press and affecting the lives of those injured and of many related to them.

The main part of our village of Changjiao along the riverside was flooded twice when water overflowed the embankments. LSSC is on higher grounds in Baijiang sector. We were not affected by the flood but there were a few minor landslides along the one kilometer road that we built into the valley. LSSC was not spared. A tree was blown down by strong wind but fortunately it fell against the building wall and did not destroy any roof tiles. Three villagers came over to help me cut it down and one of them was very happy as he collected lots of firewood from the trunk and branches of the fallen tree.

In the midst of very hot days and rainy days, the weekend lessons at LSSC went on as usual, with local students recruited for the 2023 Summer Programme, after the May 1st Labour Day Holiday. It was very rewarding teaching those who returned for the weekend lessons as most of them are serious students and are eager to learn. We managed to put in 6 weekends of lessons before we closed down to allow the students time to prepare for their promotion examinations in early July.



Early birds for interview



More waiting to sign in



Filling up Interview Form



Volunteer checking Form



Parents – Students waiting



BDLiao interviewing

As usual we conducted our interviews of students and parents for the 2024 Summer Programme on the first weekend of school holiday, 13th and 14th July. We did not make any announcement yet 260 + students with their parents turned up for the interview. On Saturday 13th July I conducted interviews from 8am to 1pm and 2.30pm to 6 pm and on Sunday 14th from 8am to 12 noon and 2.30pm to 5.30 pm. A total of 264 interviews were conducted, most easy but a few difficult because the child was not interested but forced to attend. I was very adamant that parents know that it is their duty to make sure that students vocally practice at least 4 times a day. As to be expected, outstation students trickled in after the official interview and in total we had 280 students for the 3 classes ... Class 1 (Primary 4 & 5 students) Class 2 (Primary 6 and Junior High School students) Class 3 (Senior High School students and university students).

On the first weekend of July when students were preparing for examinations, four parents came over to give LSSC a full clean up and wash. I am always very thankful that parents are very helpful whenever they know I need assistance. Printing and plastic bagging of the new Pinphonics Sounds and Structural Grammar handouts were also done by a parent in her shop with the assistance of other parents.



Volunteers preparing name tags



Preparing Grammar Sheets

The weekend before we began our Summer Programme we had visitors from Guangdong Ji Dian Zhi Ye Ji Shu Xue Yuan. They had heard about our Summer Programme and were eager to see how we run our programme. They witnessed the first day of our programme and were very impressed by the way we organized the students from many different schools to our LSSC discipline system.



Teachers from Guangdong



Students from Guangdong Ji Shu Xue Yuan



They helped set up the teaching hall



For the record of the visit

The Summer Programme kicked off very smoothly. A few parents who were my former students took time off from work to come over to assist in the first day. They all knew what to do ... getting the students to line up in different queues and making sure each student got the student name tag, lined up in the proper queue to enter LSSC study hall for the lessons.



1st Day ... Name Tag and Pinphonic Sheet



Pre Class reading Pinphonic



Class One Students lined up



The teaching hall filled up

Many of the Junior High School students had never attended our Pinphonics Lessons to read phonically before, had to attend 1st Class and follow the 2nd Class to learn our Structural Grammar in song method. The second year Primary Students in Class 1 who could read well were very helpful in setting the mood in learning our Pinphonics Sounds. Their ability and willingness to learn had a very positive effect on the new students. The Summer Programme took off and was up and running on the very first day ... much to the surprise of many new students' parents who stayed around to listen in.



Students at the back



Students in front



Students across the hall



BD Ukulele and Singing

Unlike previous years when I had many stay-in students, this year I limited it to just 5 students. Two are from far away Hunan. One is the daughter of a former student from Hunan and the other is my own great grandniece. Two other students are from the Meixian and the fifth is my grandnephew from Shenzhen. I give extra lessons to these 5 in the afternoon ... with three other students who slipped in when they knew that special lessons are given. I used the extra lessons to prepare for the next day's lessons as I could interact actively with them and from their reactions, I would adjust my teaching method and process.

We had three exciting days and then the highway tragedy between Dabu-Charyang struck. All officers of government departments including school teachers were required to report for emergency duties and all public indoors and outdoors activities were ordered suspended for three days. A retired senior officer came over to inform me and advised me to inform parents of the suspension.

So, our 18 days lessons were unavoidably reduced to 15 days. When we resumed the following Monday, I had to teach at a faster pace to complete the 12 days Basic lessons in 9 days. We always schedule the 3rd week's lessons for the practice and common usage of the Basics learnt in the 1st and 2nd weeks.



Dabu TV filming



Dabu TV Interviewing



Daily Lessons going live on DaoYin



Group activities for Seniors



Preparing for performance



The stage is yours ... relax and have fun

Thank God, after the excitement of the heavy typhoon rain, the tragedy of the Highway along Dabu-Charyang (about 36 km from where I live) and the flooding in the lower village of Changjiao, the 5 hours per day teaching activities at LSSC went off smoothly with the daily assistance of three former LSSC students, two are now English teachers and one is pursuing her Masters Degrees at Beijing University. I had had sore throat in the second week and a number of parents delivered all kinds of cure including three days of home cooked Birds' Nest soup. I have to admit I no longer have the energy of past years and I lost 5 kg at the end of the programme but thankfully my BP remained very consistent and good. I should be able to continue till 2026 to celebrate 25 years of teaching at LSSC Changjiao. Next year 2025 I will be 80 years old according to Chinese calculation of the fact that I was born in the Year of the Dog.

I end this report with anecdote of an old 84 years village uncle who is still very active and still goes into the forested hill to collect herbs. Early one morning he decided to walk to Huliao to buy some herbal roots he could not find in our hill. He left at 8 am and must have taken a wrong turn while in town and ended up in the recently developed new section and was unable to find his way home. By evening his son and family members were frantically looking for him. He was tired and hungry when he asked for help in a shop. He told them he is the uncle of English Teacher Liao of Changjiao 廖乐年老师. The shopkeeper posted his photo on the DaoYin social network and within minutes I was contacted. Within 20 minutes a parent of one of my students brought him to LSSC in Changjiao. I handed him back to his family. Ha ha ha ... if you ever get "lost" in Dabu, just mention my name.

I say a big "Thank You" to all of you who have supported me in this remarkable mission in China since I started giving free English Tuition in 2001 and eventually got involved in community development projects and providing university fees subsidies to needy village students. I am sure the many activities that keep me fully occupied have been the main contributor to my relatively good health at 78+ today.

Take care and God bless you. Peace and Joy is within you.

As always with love in the service of youth for the development of nation through DLS,

Br David Liao FSC

All good things must come to an end

So that better things may begin,