

Let the Elderly Enjoys their Lives

Recently, the Chinese newspapers has reported how we have been officially accredited as a low care accommodation facility by the accreditation authority and the whole process was not tough but the good works of Ms. Veronica Hon, the Hostel Manager should not go unnoticed.

An interview was conducted with Ms. Hon, the beloved and highly respected manager of the recently set-up Indo-Chinese Elderly Hostel is fondly called by its patrons as Sister Hon ---- a well-experienced registered nurse in Hong Kong who has been accredited to work in Australia, and has ample experience in setting up centres that provide specialist care services including establishing service centres for the mentally retarded and disabled in Hong Kong.

To commence this interview, I asked, “When do you work with the elderly hostel and why are you interested in this type of work?”

Ms Fong-ping Hon said, “The rudimentary situation of the elderly hostel at the very beginning did not scare me off when I started to work for the hostel project in August last year. We have two very experienced consultants and 31 caring trustees who supervise and care for our work. The elderly hostel is running very successfully not because of me alone, but the effort put in by the whole team involved”.

“The hostel started to take in patrons last October and was almost full at once. It was set up to look and feel like a HOME and everyone wants to stay in their own homes. As long as the hostel is homely and comfortable, the patrons would enjoy living here. It takes time for them to settle and a challenge for me and my staff to make them feel ‘at home’. We put a lot of efforts to ensure that. We want them to enjoy the rest of their time here, whether to go past 70, 80 or 90 years I often tell my staff to show love and care like they would treat their elderly parents.”, she continued.

When I asked her, “How would you approach to your work here?”, she has this response, “In any jobs, we must have a positive approach and yet understand the nature of our roles. This is a business and not a charity as such. Their children are making contributions to society like their parents had before and had served society. Now they have to serve them and serve society at large too. With such an attitude, you will not feel tired, boring and irritated because you are serving someone who is almost your parents”.

Ms Hon is a very diligent person and shows a willingness to serve others and enjoys doing so. She smilingly continued, “Our hostel staff is put into a roster of three shifts round the clock. Staff from the three shifts is rotated in a way that each one can work with me as I only works from early in the morning through to the late afternoon and early evening. My role is liked a middle-person, bringing staff, patrons, families and external services together. It has never been easy but manageable as different people have different needs and behaviours. One good example is the meals – three times a day and not everyone likes them and there are so many varied requests. However, I would try my best to provide tasty but nutritious meals to my patrons – ensuring their health and well-being are taken care of foremost. I believe this is what their families, the governments and society expected of me – to give them good quality care to the patrons”

She spoke a lot and I hope I have recorded all she has said. Before I could proceed further, she again reiterated, “The general public may have a wrong impression that homes for the elderly can be dirty, filthy and smelly. This is a wrong impression. I am keen to ensure that the hostel under my management is clean and tidy, and in fact reaching a level of comfort to a hotel standard. For instance, a single-bed room in the hostel has its own ensuite, floor-to-ceiling glass windows and air-conditioning to secure the best possible privacy and comfort. Laundry and cleaning services are provided. In addition, clusters of room units are surrounded by beautifully designed gardens.”

“With such high standard of care and comfortable environment, I believe, it does not only meet the requirements of the patrons but also to the privately operated accommodation for the public. Therefore, in this day and age, it is also a wrong concept that sending parents into elderly hostels is an indication of badly treating their parents, and thus has no respect to them. On the contrary, I think, our hostel here would be of benefit to their parents if they were given a chance to live in an amicable environment whereby they find comfort, pleasure, friendship and security living there, according to her.

“We offer a trial period of living in the hostel for potential residents. They may try living here for a period of time to mak “With such high standard of care and comfortable environment, I believe, it does not only meet the requirements of the patrons but also to the privately operated accommodation for the public. Therefore, in this day and age, it is also a wrong concept that sending parents into elderly hostels is an indication of badly treating their parents, and thus has no respect to them. On the contrary, I think, our hostel here would be of benefit to their parents if they were given a chance to live in an amicable environment whereby they find comfort, pleasure, friendship and security living there, according to her.

Ms Hon also stated, “Filial piety should be seen as children offered the most suitable living place and environment for their elderly parents who would be provided with various kinds of entertainment and activities together with 24-hour hospitality services rather than staying at home by themselves while they went to work. Accommodation in an elderly hostel has provided an option for our aged parents. It also creates a relief for everyone in the family and carers have greater freedom to enjoy their time in and outside their own home. When an aged parent lives here, his family members can visit or take him/her out for Yum-cha or for a special dinner gathering or even stay overnight – all to the comfort and ability of the family. So, let your elderly parents enjoy the care and comfort of an aged hostel facility like ours”.

In this interview, I have learned a lot like I had attended a full-on workshop on aged care and about this industry. I hope we would have better understanding of this type of service and change our perception on how to give the best care to our elderly parents whether in a hostel or nursing home environment, so that they would enjoy growing old in this country.