

The Vancouver Yee Fung Toy Youth Committee Report presented at the Yee Fung Toy National Conference 1996

Introduction

Thanks to the foresight and hard work of the founders of the YFT, we are able to gather today to celebrate the establishment of the YFT Society 92 years ago. Our forefathers faced tremendous odds in finding acceptance within the mainstream Canadian society, yet managed to solve their problems and left us a proud legacy. The YFT organization met the needs of the members at that time. Three generations later, society has changed and so has our membership. We have different needs now. If we are to remain a family organization that meets multi-generational needs, we have to come up with programs that attract members of all ages.

Programs for the youth in our family organization are especially important for the organization's health and continued existence. If we can help the young members appreciate the YFT in their formative years, we can be confident that some of them will contribute to the running of the organization in their adult years.

I would like to report on some of the initiatives and program updates of the Vancouver Youth Committee since the last Convention. My aim is threefold:

- encourage an exchange of ideas on Youth Programs between the chapters of the YFT;
- start a dialogue on the direction and focus of Youth Programs and Membership Programs in general
- solicit support for expansion of Youth Programs at all chapters

YC Program Mandate

The board of directors of YFT has not laid down any explicit guidelines for YC activities. In order to lend focus to our programs, I would like to submit the following requirements:

1. All YC programs should relate to the Yee Fung Toy Society, the local Chinese Canadian community, or Chinese culture in general. The young members should be exposed to their family history and their ethnic history. At the YFT we are at a unique place to do this.
2. All YC programs should have a self development or educational component to them. They have to be fun and be supported by both parents and their children. Many organizations have been successful in mixing fun with learning, e.g.: Science World, the Aquarium.

Youth Programs

During the past two years, our Youth Programs have focused on the providing programs to school aged children, from grade school to university:

Program	Description	Status
Family Picnic	Annual picnic with children's games	since 1967
Scholarship Awards	Annual awards for scholastic excellence	since 1984
Martial Arts	White Crane martial arts weekly classes	since 1995
Scholar Warrior	Personal development	since 1995
Young Entrepreneurs	Development of business skills	launched 1996

Family Picnic

The Annual Family Picnic has been a tradition with the Vancouver chapter since 1967. It is usually held on a Sunday in summer with a picnic lunch, lots of draw prizes, and children's games. This year we

attracted over 300 people, including about 70 children. With the help of Stan Yee and equipment borrowed from the school where he teaches, we set up many games for the children to take part in. This is a definite improvement over the past years when children's games were not as well organized or had such a variety of games. Another initiative is the use of the older students in leading and helping with the organizing and running of the games. In this way the entire family enjoyed the outing, with the younger children having a lot of fun playing in the games, and the older children learning leadership skills in running the games.

Future Plans:

- More involvement in the Family Picnic for the older students, including food planning
- Similar involvement in the Christmas Party.

Scholarship Awards

It was 12 years ago when the board of the Vancouver YFT decided to establish a Scholarship fund for the sons and daughters of members. From that small beginning, we are now able to disburse about \$3000 of scholarships annually. Many students have benefited from the support and recognition that come with winning this award.

One such student was Winston Yee, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Yuen Hay Yee, who was awarded his first of many YFT scholarship in 1988. He has since graduated with Law and MBA degrees in 1993. He currently practices Securities, Corporate and Tax law with a Vancouver law firm.

I am happy to report that Winston has not forgotten the support he had received as a student from the YFT. Now that he is in a position to contribute something back to the YFT, he has become an active member. He is the YFT representative on the board of the National Congress of Chinese Canadians. He was involved in the Scholarship Committee this year and gave us the unique input of a former scholarship winner.

We intend to keep in close contact with all our scholarship winners, and give them further opportunities for exercising leadership within the family organization and in the community at large. We need to grow our next generation of leaders in the YFT, and what better material than our own academic achievers to select from?

Future Plans:

- Involve the older university scholarship winners in the planning and running (MC, seating plans, etc.) of the annual Spring Banquet

Martial Arts

With the arrival of Sifu Franky Fan in 1995, the Youth Committee in Vancouver has concentrated on the development of a martial arts program. The martial arts have always a major attraction for young members of Chinese family associations like ours.

We set up a pilot martial arts program that started on April 1, 1995 with 20 members in the class ranging in age from 5 to 18. The class meets every Saturday afternoon from 2 to 4 in the YFT building. We are very fortunate to have a very energetic and experienced Kung Fu master who recently immigrated here. Sifu Franky Fan has been a practitioner of the White Crane style Kung Fu in Hong Kong all his life. We have great hopes that in future family celebrations, our students will be able to demonstrate some of their martial arts skills, including lion dancing.

In May 1996, Sifu Fan opened his own Martial Arts centre in Vancouver, but continues to teach our Saturday class. During the summer, the older students also attend a class on Tuesday evenings at Sifu's centre to learn lion dancing.

Future Plans:

- More involvement with Chinese community events, e.g., lion dancing on festive occasions

Scholar Warrior (Personal Development)

The primary objective for a student taking Martial Arts, of course, is the achievement of physical health and self confidence. We take it a step further. When the students are taking a break from learning their Kung Fu moves, we use the time to broaden their horizons in other ways. During the past year, the students took part in public speaking exercises and held discussions on Chinese culture and history. Our goal is the development of the total person, physically, mentally, and culturally. In the end, we want to see our children to be in top physical shape, as well as being ace students in school.

Future Plans:

- Chinese language classes
- Chinese arts and cultural classes: calligraphy

Young Entrepreneurs

This program is intended to create business enterprises that our young members can run. The YFT is offering these students opportunities for hands on experience in the world of business, opportunities not normally available in the schools. This experience will open doors and lead to better career preparation, even for the students who choose not to pursue business as an initial career.

One business that was suggested by Mr. Kan Chu Yu is to organize tours to attractions in the surrounding area. These tours should be initially targeted for YFT members, friends, and family. As we gain experience, we can include the local Chinese community in our marketing audience.

This business has the potential to generate income immediately, and as long as we want to keep the business going. There is minimal setup or overhead. It can provide young members direct experience in managing, marketing, and running tours.

We have held meetings with the students, some of whom are currently in university studying Commerce and Business Administration. They were enthusiastic with the idea. We are currently planning the first tour offering.

Future Plans:

- Implement the tour business plans next summer

Conclusion

Our goal with the YC programs is to develop our young members into well-rounded leaders, in our family, and in the community. Of the 11 scholarship winners this year, 7 have been involved in the Martial Arts program. All the Martial Arts students at a High School age or older have helped lead the children's games at the Family Picnic. We expect our University and other post secondary students to participate in the Young Entrepreneurs program.

I have seen some encouraging results within a short time. Not only have the students in the Martial Arts class progressed nicely in learning Kung Fu, they have also formed lasting friendships with one another. Many of them excel at school, and have received our Scholarship awards. The parents are naturally very pleased with the results. The YFT at Vancouver is a busier place on Saturday afternoons. All the board directors and advisors are in total support of the YC programs.