

# Youth blossoms at flower market

With Chinese New Year around the corner, students gear up for the Lunar New Year Fair at Victoria Park (維多利亞公園), ready to bring energy to the market

THE Lunar New Year Fair (年宵市場) is traditionally a place to buy **auspicious** flowers and plants, such as kumquats, a few days before the Spring Festival. That is why it is also called a flower market. In recent years, however, shoppers have **increasingly** been encountering plenty more than flowers. Toys, cushions and **gadgets** with special designs are becoming **the mainstream**. That is partly thanks to the young stallholders, many of whom are school students.

## Creative minds

"WE mainly sell creative products that target young consumers, such as road signs with funny slogans," says Nicole Chu Wing-man (朱詠雯), a Form 6 student and the external secretary of the Hong Kong Joint School Economics Association (HKJSEA, 香港聯校經濟學會).

Members of the association are Form 3 to 6 students interested in socio-economic systems in Hong Kong. They have participated in the New Year Fair at least 10 years in a row. This year is no different, with the students holding a stall in Victoria Park from 13 to 19 February.

"Our theme this year is '登陸太羊'," says Daniel Ko Chun-lai (高雋禮), HKJSEA's president. The Chinese slogan is a play on words – swapping the Chinese word for sun (陽) for sheep, it sounds like 'sun landing' but reminds shoppers that this year will be the Year of the Sheep.

Their **pun**-filled road signs were popular with young shoppers last year. The slogan 'Next station: university' is a particularly warm encouragement for those who are preparing for the Diploma of Secondary Education (DSE) exams. This year, they have launched an online option for custom-made signs and tumblers.

## Management mindset

"THE reason I joined HKJSEA is to participate in the lunar New Year Fair and to learn how to operate a business in practice," say Toto Cheung Chin-to (章展圖), the association's IT



secretary and a Form 5 student. Last year, the association attracted around 200 volunteers for the Lunar New Year Fair. "They are real volunteers, as they have to cover all expenses including food, drinks and transport themselves," says Anna Kwan Ming (關銘), the Form 4 human resources officer.

It is a challenge to manage such a huge team. "We separate the whole staff into groups according to their shifts," says Kwan. "We also set a minimum price for each product and we don't encourage them to bargain with costumers in order to sell more."

## Growing up

DESPITE careful planning, accidents are sometimes unavoidable. Chu suffered a **ruptured** ligament after falling off the platform too many times while she was doing promotion for the stall last year. Although she had to have

surgery for the injury, she does not regret being involved in the fair and has decided to return this year. "We will do more to maintain the safety of the volunteers," she says.

Although the hands-on experience differs from classroom learning, the students feel their time at the fair has helped their academic studies. "I have a better academic performance," say Kwan. "I have become more diligent and understand how to better manage my time, as I do not want my parents to worry about me."

The students have been preparing for the fair for over four months, meaning they have not had as much free time for rest and entertainment. But they would not swap their special experience during the week-long fair. "After a whole day of hard work, we play basketball, lie down in the middle of Victoria Park, **frolic** together on the empty streets; all of this makes up our memories of youth," Ko says.



(L-R) Daniel Ko, Nicole Chu, Toto Cheung and Anna Kwan.

## Other scenes at the market



Creative products target young consumers.



Students sell local snacks at the Lunar New Year Fair.



Wishing-lantern balloons is another creative product.

## Vocabulary

### rupture (v) 斷裂

- M:** tear or burst an internal part of your body
- E:** He **ruptured** his stomach in the accident.
- A rupture is the injury when a wall of an organ tears. If there is a rupture between people, the relationship between them gets much worse or ends completely.
- E:** The doctor treated the **rupture** in surgery.
- E:** The incidents have caused a major **rupture** in the political ties between countries.

### 1 auspicious (adj) 吉祥的

- M:** indicating a positive future
- E:** His career had an **auspicious** start.

### 2 increasingly (adv) 越來越多地

- M:** more and more
- E:** Tiredness was **increasingly** affecting Paul's judgement.

### 3 gadget (n) 小玩意

- M:** a small, electronic machine or device
- E:** The teenagers queued overnight for the release of the new **gadget**.

### 4 the mainstream (n phr) 主流

- M:** something accepted as normal
- E:** Action films with no storyline are becoming **the mainstream**.

### 5 pun (n) 雙關語

- M:** a clever and amusing use of a word or phrase with two meanings
- E:** He spoke of a hatchet job, which may be a **pun** on his boss's name.

### 6 frolic (v) 嬉鬧

- M:** play or move in a lively, happy way
- E:** Tourists sunbathe and **frolic** in the ocean.