



No limits

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Students inspired by nation's aerospace progress

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Hong Kong secondary school students who took part in an aerospace-themed summer camp on the Chinese mainland said the trip gave them valuable insights into the field of aerospace and aviation and the chance to witness the remarkable advancements in the nation's aerospace industry.

During a sharing session held on Tuesday, the student attendees said that they eagerly anticipate opportunities to contribute to the growth of China's aviation industry and make a meaningful impact.

Launched in 2009, the Young Astronaut Training Camp selects secondary students from Hong Kong every year for an immersive astronaut training experience in key space cities in the Chinese mainland, such as the nation's capital Beijing and Jiuquan in Northwest China's Gansu province. It has attracted a total of 360 students to the 12 camps.

This year's camp, the first since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, started recruitment in May. Thirty teenagers from Secondary 2 to 6 were selected for the eight-day camp, from July 29 to Aug 5, out of over 160 applicants from around 100 secondary schools.

Starting the trip in Beijing, the students visited key astronomical facilities, and attended a science lecture by aerospace experts to learn about China's space station.

They also experienced a rocket launch and life on board the space station through virtual reality. In addition, they met China's first space traveler, Yang Liwei.



Young participants at the 2023 Young Astronaut Training Camp show their certificates during a group photo with tutors, organizers, sponsors and guests at a sharing session on Tuesday. CALVIN NG / CHINA DAILY

This year marked the first time that camp attendees had visited the Lingshu Mars Camp in Qinghai province, which bears a striking resemblance to the Martian landscape, and received courses on how to make a solar-powered Mars rover, and enjoyed stargazing under a magnificent night sky.

Summing up the experience, Chan Ts'nam, a student who is going into Form 4 at Diocesan Girls' School, said stargazing at the Mars camp was the most impressive of all the activities at the camp.

She said she felt privileged to be gazing at a night sky dotted with stars, trying to recognize constellations and take photos of glittering galaxies. "It is an awesome natural beauty hard to find in Hong Kong," Chan said.

She said she appreciated the erudition and patience of the astronauts, astronomers and space experts, who provided detailed explanations and answered all the questions asked of them. These role models encouraged her to expand her vision across various disciplines and consider this field as a future career, Chan added.

The aerospace enthusiast said she hopes to apply her passion to contribute to the country's aerospace industry.

Yip To-yuen from Po Leung Kuk Laws Foundation College said he was overjoyed to meet Yang at the camp, as his attendance had not been revealed beforehand.

The nation's first space traveler was very kind despite his busy schedule, Yip said. He recalled Yang's introduction to the work of an astronaut, the selection process, and his support for Hong Kong students to participate in the national space industry.

He Yujie, a Form 6 student at Sheng Kung Hui Tsang Shiu Tim Secondary School, said he was impressed by the rapid strides made in China's aerospace sector. He was also interested in the nation's shifting of aerospace focus from manned missions to lunar and Martian explorations during the camp.

Ricky Tsang Chi-ming, vice-chairman of the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, said that the camp provides students with an opportunity to participate in various space-themed activities, gaining a more

comprehensive understanding of the country's developments in this field.

This experience allows students to draw inspiration from the spirit of diligence and perseverance exhibited by astronauts, Tsang said, adding that he hoped students could apply such virtues in the future, to better handle life's difficulties and challenges.

Timothy Ho Man-hung, curator of the Hong Kong Space Museum, expressed gratitude for the support of the Chinese mainland.

When the camp team arrived in Beijing, the capital was experiencing heavy rains. Despite the weather, most of the activities were still completed smoothly with strong support from mainland partner organizations, Ho said.

The camp was jointly presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, in association with the Beijing-Hong Kong Academic Exchange Centre. The training camp was initiated by the Hong Kong Space Museum and sponsored by the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce.