

256 Young and Aged Volunteers Served at the Wan Jin Shi Marathon

Campus focus

The largest annual marathon event in Taiwan, the Wan Jin Shi Marathon, kicked off on March 17, with over ten thousand participants. A total of 256 faculty, staff, students, and the elderly from Tamkang University participated in the service, with 204 students among them. Over the years, Tamkang University has consistently contributed the highest number of student volunteers among all colleges and universities. The enthusiastic spirit and dedication to service have earned high praise from both the organizers and the participants.

Volunteers are essential drivers behind the success of the event, and Associate Professor Kuei-Shu Huang, the head of the Physical Education Instruction and Activities Section, has been leading volunteers to assist the Wan Jin Shi Marathon for the past decade. Starting with just 18 volunteers providing multilingual services in 2015, the number increased to 50 in 2016 and skyrocketed to 200 in 2017. With the increasing number of volunteers, the responsibilities and pressures also grew. To ensure smooth operations and help students adapt quickly, Huang familiarized himself with various aspects of the event such as service, timing, finish line supplies, and traffic safety. He adopted a mobile management approach, provided guidance on important matters, and offered encouragement. His accumulated experience makes him one of the most knowledgeable individuals in marathon service.

On the day of the event, at 2:00 a.m., the volunteers gathered in front of the Shao-Mo Memorial Natatorium Complex. They were transported to the venue by a volunteer shuttle bus and immediately began preparations upon arrival according to their assigned groups. As dawn broke, participants started to check in, and everyone worked diligently at their respective posts, providing necessary services to the participants. They remained on duty until 4:00 p.m. before returning to the school. Unlike others who traveled by tour bus, Huang always drove himself back and forth to prevent any

unexpected situations. Despite the hardships, whenever he saw positive feedback from the students, his tired body and mind seemed to be filled with renewed energy.

Especially since 2021, leading the elderly to serve as volunteers together has sparked enthusiasm among the seniors, inspiring students to become more involved. Through their active participation and service, students have interacted with participants and spectators during the event, facilitating their growth and understanding of the true meaning of volunteering, and allowing them to enjoy the happiness of giving back. Huang stated: "The continued motivation to lead volunteer service is to foster a willingness in students to continue serving and to have a positive impact on overall social participation."

Ni-Zhen Xie, a student volunteer and senior from the Department of Public Administration, expressed that she lives near the venue of the Wan Jin Shi Marathon. She often heard friends share their experiences as volunteers. Last year, after taking the course "Spirit of Sports Volunteering and Service," she volunteered for the first time. This year, she joined again, working in the Results and Information team to process chip returns. Even when runners arrived at the finish line exhausted and could barely walk, they still showed great enthusiasm in expressing their gratitude.

"Receiving feedback from the runners warms my heart. Seeing smiles on the faces of those we serve is what impresses me the most. In addition, the organizers provide supplies to the runners, and we need to think about how to reduce carbon footprint and achieve the goal of green sustainability. This has prompted me to start thinking about my daily lifestyle and how I can contribute, hoping to protect the environment through my own small efforts."

"Work hard for a moment, cherish memories for a lifetime." Ms. Su-Fen Kao from the General Services Support Section shared that since 2018, she has been serving as a volunteer for this international event. Not only has it broadened her horizons, but she also enjoys the pleasure of serving. Whether it's cheering for the runners on the field, receiving positive responses, or feeling the excitement of the finishers, she feels happy

herself. "I will definitely volunteer again next time."



