

# 飛越「美」夢

## Realizing a "Sweet" Dream



「我由細細個開始，已經好想去外國讀書。」走出去看看這世界、認識不同的人，是出生於基層家庭的Jeff從小到大的夢想。但對於父親是建築工人、母親是清潔工的他來說，這無疑是痴心妄想。

"When I was small, I had a dream that I could study abroad." Jeff was born in a low-income family with a dream to see the world and meet different people. However, it is hard to achieve his dream when his father works as a construction labor and his mother works as a cleansing worker.

## 可嘆人生路不熟 愛遊蕩險入歧途

「我覺得自己是全世界最幸運的人。」遠在美國 Wesleyan University 的 Jeff 在電話訪問中說道。體會到「教育改變一生」的他提到：在 ARCH Community Outreach (ACO) 計劃的幫助下，他才有機會成功申請 Freeman Asian Scholarship Program，實現一直以來的夢想。「ACO 不但使我可以免費到美國讀大學，創辦人 Jennifer 更特意在假日趕來幫我墊支各項費用，因為我家人連必須以信用卡繳付墊支費用的信用卡都沒有。」這著實叫 Jeff 十分感激。

Jeff 說自己很幸運，並不光是因為他的夢想終於能實現，而是他年紀輕輕，已經遇上了很多幫助他的人。小學時，他們住在將軍澳，一家六口擠在狹小的單位。「那時候，家人常常吵架，為了逃避，我總是和弟弟到樓下的商場、遊樂場流連至睡覺的時候才回家。當時整天在街邊玩耍，曾經認識了一些壞人，更差點誤入歧途。」中一時，全家終於可以搬進馬鞍山一個空間稍大的公屋單位，情況才有了改善。他剛搬來時，一個朋友都沒有，為逃避媽媽和弟弟因學習而引起的爭執，無處可去的 Jeff 每天都在學校逗留到學校關門。「直到弟弟參加了社區中心的活動後，由於我要照顧他，所以也開始到中心看課外書。後來，我更養成了到中心的自修室溫書的習慣。它成了我可以安靜溫習的第二個家。」他在香港青少年服務處認識了洪姑娘和社工 Grace，命運的軌跡也因此得到了改變。

## 有幸一圓留學夢 文化適應不容易

「無論是家庭問題，抑或是讀書壓力，她都幫我排難解憂。」他笑說，他與社工 Grace「日見夜見」，一星期總會見面幾次。報讀海外的大學需要填寫大量的文件，更要考不少公開試，DSE、SAT、IELTS、TOEFL 全部都要考。「我既緊張又期待。在此期間，全賴 Grace 幫我安排申請大學的準備：細讀我每一份申請書的個人抱負、教我如何面對考試壓力、就著面試為我進行了多次模擬練習，句句為我斟酌，字字為我推敲，更教曉我不少應對的技巧。不過，要說服媽媽支持我申請 ACO 也絕不容易。因為我們出身基層，出國留學好像是天方夜談。所以，她總認為我是痴心妄想，堅持要我專心應付 DSE。」後來，他媽媽在洪姑娘和 Grace 多番解釋和鼓勵之下，態度開始改變了，更主動為評核人員的家訪，作了最好的準備，讓他充分感受到媽媽的愛和支持。



## Not Familiar with the New Environment

### Love Wandering Around and Nearly being Led Astray

“I always think I’m the luckiest person on Earth.” Jeff talked on the phone in Wesleyan University. His dream came true with the help of ARCH Community Outreach (ACO). He could truly experience how education changes life. “ACO sent me to study abroad in the United States for nothing and taught me how to apply for foreign universities. The founder, Jennifer even lent her credit card to me to make payments as my family and I did not have any credit cards.”

Jeff thought he was lucky not just because his dream came true after few years. He lived in Tseung Kwan O and had waited for the allocation of public rental housing. Later, when he was in Secondary One, his family could move in a flat in Ma On Shan but six members in a one-person flat. “At that time, my mother always argued with my grandmother, so I just went back to sleep.” He did not know any persons in Shatin, so his brother and he just stayed in the shopping centre or playground. “Always wandering in the streets and meeting bad guys, I was nearly led astray.”

## Achieving the Dream of Studying Abroad Luckily

### Adapting to Foreign Culture is Not Easy

Fortunately, since his brother had helped carry out activities in Hong Kong Children and Youth Services, Jeff knew the social worker, Grace. “She helps me a lot. No matter family issues or study problems, I share with her.” They met a few times in a week. He needed to attend quite many examinations for applying foreign universities. “DSE, SAT, IELTS and TOEFL. Grace helped me prepare and taught me how to deal with stress.”

在如願考上大學後，Jeff 亦面對着許多的挑戰。「美國和香港在教學方法上有很大差異：在香港讀書，只有老師講，學生聽；在美國，大家都習慣在課堂上自由發言。」Jeff 自嘲「英文差」，在剛開始時很不習慣，也不敢開口說話，生怕會被人嘲笑。在和室友的相處中，由於生活習慣上的差別，他感到大家難以相處。但經過在美國生活了一段時間後，Jeff 在課堂上已經能充滿信心的暢所欲言，和室友的關係也變得十分融洽。

## 感激路上多扶持 回饋社會絕不辭

他由以為夢想永不會實現，到現在夢想成真，一路走來，他將幫忙過他的人都默默記在心頭。通過香港青少年服務處的義工活動，讓他認識了許多社會上不同階層的朋友，大大擴闊了他的眼界，同時讓他明白到：只要敢於追夢，原來人生可以有很多突破。「我真的很幸運。」Jeff 再次強調。「在我的人生中遇到了很多人，他們每每在我需要的時間伸出援手。」Jeff 回憶起小學的校長知道他家裏沒有地方做功課，便在辦公室中劃出一角，放了一張桌子讓他溫習。正修讀經濟和數學的他，也提到了從前的小學老師為他私人補習的往事：「這也是我現在選擇這兩個科目的原因。」我打算畢業後，到其他教育落後的地方工作，參與教育的工作，以及政策的制定，讓基層的孩子可以有更公平的學習和成長的環境。

*我希望其他青少年知道我的故事後，也能勇敢追夢，因為所有夢想總有一天會實現。*

*I hope other teenagers will pursue their dreams bravely after they have listened to my story because all dreams would come true someday.*

After he has entered U.S. university successfully, he still faces challenges. “There is a huge difference between the education system in the United States and Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, only teachers speak and students listen. In the U.S., everyone can speak and discuss freely in class.” At first, he was not used to speak and was afraid that others would mock his poor English. Even with his roommate, he felt hard to talk and interact with. Luckily, after living in the U.S. independently, he can speak and discuss freely with others in class. He also talks to his roommate, so they have better relationship.

## Feeling Grateful for All the Assistance

### Willing to Contribute to the Society

Jeff used to think his dream would not come true and feel lonely in the new environment. Presently, he could truly stay in the U.S. and meet many companions in Hong Kong Children and Youth Services. He thanked and remembered everyone who has helped him. “I hope other teenagers will pursue their dreams bravely after they have listened to my story because all dreams will come true someday.” “I am very lucky.” Jeff emphasized. “I have met many people in my life who helped me when I encountered difficulties.” The principal knew Jeff did not have enough space to do homework, so he put a table in his office. Jeff’s primary school teacher also arranged a private tutorial for him. At that time, I was studying Business Administration and Mathematics. “That’s why I am studying these two subjects now.” I plan to work in developing countries after graduation, participate in education work and policy making for a fairer learning and growing environment for the kids in poverty.

