

Strong and Beautiful

A history of
Wai Yin Chinese Women Society
1988 - 2008



慧妍社

Wai Yin Chinese Women Society

Serving the community

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Strong and Beautiful

The History of the Wai Yin Chinese Women Society

1988 - 2008

Contributors

Irene Chan	Donna Ngan
Lisa Chow	Irene Pang
Susanna Chiu	Circle Steele
Yim San Chu	Anna Tsang
Amy Lai	Jenny Tsang
Shirley He (nee Lam)	Sylvia Sham
Sally Li	Louise Wong
Sau Wan Li	Juanita Yau
Lisa Mok	Anne Yuen

Researched and written by Mark Greenwood.

The story of the Wai Yin Chinese Women Society in Manchester reflects the experiences of the Chinese women who founded, worked and volunteered for the Society over the last twenty years. The narratives told by these women have become the story of Wai Yin. I am grateful that they have allowed me to listen to their personal journeys and to help me construct the History (so far) of the remarkable organisation that is the Wai Yin Chinese Women Society.

"Pioneers plant trees but the latecomers rest in the shade"

Traditional Chinese proverb

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First Springs

1985-1989

In 1987, hurricanes swept across southern England. Trees were up-rooted and extensive damage was caused to buildings and property. Trees that had stood for centuries were up-rooted and left undignified to be chopped up or to rot. It made the headlines and has etched a deep memory on most people living in England at the time.

In another part of England, a small and, at the time, insignificant event took place in Manchester. A group of Chinese women who had been meeting informally for several months invited Susanna Chiu, an economist from Sheffield, to come and talk about the Lai Yin Association, the first independent Chinese women's group in the UK. She urged her Manchester friends to follow suit to set up a Chinese women's group in Manchester. She argued that Chinese women need to organise to support each other. Chinese women were disadvantaged by being part of a hidden ethnic minority in England and by being women in a society which traditionally had treated women as inferior in status to men.

The meeting was held in the Chinese Cultural Community Education Centre (CCCEC) based in Princess Street, a centre supported and sponsored by Professor Lo Let Li. Susanna Chiu's speech struck a chord with many of the Chinese women who attended. Most of them had been born and educated in Hong Kong. Most of them were young professionals who had come over to the UK either as spouses or as professionals in their own right. They had found it difficult at first to adapt to British society, and many felt very isolated, away from families and support

networks in Hong Kong. They saw the value of a women's group and came away from the meeting determined to make that a reality.

Over the next few months not one but three women's groups were founded. All three were very informal and they emerged from different friendship circles and social networks. The first was established at the Chinese Cultural Community and Education Centre (CCCEC) in Princess Street; the second was formed in association with the Chinese Library Group based at Central Library, and the third was started at the same time as the Chinese Health Information Centre (CHIC). This last group was most associated with Josephine Chan, an ophthalmic nurse, deeply involved in community work at the time. Each group would meet on an informal basis and many women would attend all three. There was a different focus for each group; the CCCEC tended to promote Chinese culture through opera, music and dance; the Library group tended to be focused on education and language teaching and the CHIC looked at health promotion and education. But this was not a strict demarcation at all, and the differences were more to do with individual personalities and their friendship circles.

Anne Yuen came to Manchester in 1985. She had trained as an opera singer in Hong Kong and was passionately involved in promoting Chinese opera. When she came to Manchester, she explained that whilst there were Chinese organisations helping business people and there were cultural organisations promoting Chinese culture, there were no "advice or information centres which looked at welfare support"

"Women need to help women. It was my idea to get ten to twenty women together to meet on a regular basis at a restaurant. Some were nurses and

teachers, some were business women like me, some were younger and some were older, but we all had skills to share."

Anne Yuen

National Federation of Chinese Women - Inaugural Conference September 1988 in Birmingham

In May 1988, Anne Yuen hosted a BBQ party at her home. She invited many women and their families and a good time was had by all. Some of the key founding women met at that party: Josephine Chan, the ophthalmic nurse, Sylvia Howe who worked for the Equal Opportunities Commission in Manchester, Lin Tang, and others. This was the first meeting of all the women who would later that year found Wai Yin.

Many of these women later attended the inaugural conference of the National Federation of Chinese Women in Birmingham and were inspired to set up Wai Yin formally on the 5th December 1988.

Wai Yin Chinese Women Society

Wai Yin's founding meeting was held at 36, Charlotte Street, in the heart of Manchester's Chinatown. The building is an old Victorian warehouse, with a rather splendid exterior, worthy of its Grade 2 listed status. Inside, it is less edifying. It was cold, drafty and dark, with threadbare carpets and inadequate heating; yet it is remembered fondly by all who came to associate 36, Charlotte Street with Wai Yin. However, at the time of Wai Yin's birth, it was home to the Chinese Arts Centre, run by Amy Lai.

In the mid 1980s, Amy worked for the Chinese Arts Centre and was an English teacher at the Chinese School. She recalls meeting other Chinese women at the English classes at the time;

"It was my first experience of understanding the difficulties women were facing as parents of young children. Chinese children were growing up speaking English, not Cantonese. The mothers could not understand what the children were saying to each other. This made them feel inadequate as parents."

Amy Lai.

Amy also recalls taking this group of Chinese women, about thirteen or fourteen in total, to an International Women's Day event at an Afro-Caribbean Centre in March 1988;

"For most of these women, it was the first time they had tasted food other than Chinese food. They were amazed that other women had a centre and had funding for running a women's group. It was a very powerful experience."

Amy Lai.

Another issue that concerned many Chinese women was the lack of contact with English people. For Chinese migrants, English people seemed very cold and indifferent, making no effort to chat or to become friends. It was only when Chinese women met with English women at events such as International Women's Week that it was explained to them that English people are culturally very reserved and don't wish to "interfere" in other people's businesses and that it

was up to the Chinese community itself to be much more assertive about its own needs.

Susanna Chiu, the economist from Sheffield, who originally inspired the Manchester women to set up their own organisation, came to Manchester to work in 1989. Her experiences in Sheffield gave her a deep commitment to promoting women's rights and help Chinese women integrate better into British life.

"We needed to give these women the basic tools to function in English Society – they had to learn to speak the language. Once they began to understand and speak English they developed a lot more confidence."

Susanna Chiu

"I remember I was most impressed when I saw two Chinese women I knew in a Pizza Hut. This was very rare for Chinese women; usually they stuck very close to their husbands. Also, they weren't eating in a Chinese restaurant but in a Western restaurant. They were ordering in English and felt very comfortable."

Susanna Chiu

Susanna was deeply involved with Wai Yin in its first three years. She returned to Hong Kong in 1992.

Most of the women interviewed said that it was extremely difficult to make English friends. They felt drawn into the Chinese community as a result of isolation and loneliness. The Chinese community in the UK was very dispersed. There are no "Chinese" residential areas in the cities, in the manner of other south Asian communities. Chinatown is a commercial and recreational centre for the

Chinese, not a residential area. The majority of the Chinese migrants who came to the UK in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s came as economic migrants, fleeing from poverty and the land squeeze in Hong Kong and the New Territories. At first, young men came to work and set up in the catering business, and they scattered themselves to live above takeaway shops in a geographically dispersed manner. Women followed as families realised that they could share their labour and their accommodation above shops. As a result, the vast majority of this generation never learnt to speak or read English fluently.

Working six days a week and incredibly long hours, Chinese families relied on themselves for support and companionship. Their one day of rest would be marked by a trip into Chinatown to meet friends, have a meal and perhaps visit the casino. Chinese parents traditionally sacrificed all, in order to ensure that children attended school and were diligent in their studies. This sense of familial and, ultimately, filial obligation is very strongly held by all the Chinese women I interviewed.

The Stream Flows

1989 – 1991

“The Eight Confucian Virtues; Benevolence, Righteousness, Courtesy, Wisdom, Fidelity, Loyalty, Filial Piety, and Service to Elders”

Traditional Chinese Proverb

At first, Wai Yin was not a formally registered or constituted organisation. It was set up as a Women’s Group, as a direct result of a national initiative and to bring women together from the three separate groups which had established themselves in Manchester by the late 1980s. Wai Yin was different because it was a women’s group independent of existing community centres or established community groups. Many of these established groups identified with individual community leaders who had power and prestige within the Chinese community. However, like all human endeavours, there were tensions and clashes between personalities and the groups they sponsored. This partly explains why there were three different groups.

Wai Yin set out to achieve something new. It was to be a women’s organisation run by Chinese women for the benefit of Chinese women. It was to be independent of faith groups or business interests and it aspired to be open and democratic with representation from all sections of the Chinese community. In truth, this aspiration was not always fulfilled but the philosophy of a women-led and democratic organisation, within the community, remains at the heart of Wai Yin to this day.

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The women involved in Wai Yin spent the first year organising events, outings and fund-raising. On 5th February 1989, a Chinese New Year's Eve Party was held which raised some funds. The following month, Wai Yin participated in the International Women's Week events at Manchester Town Hall. In July 1989, a trip to the Lake District was organised. Small scale but regular events slowly but surely built up a membership base which has been the bedrock of support for Wai Yin throughout its history. Women and men found an outlet for volunteering which benefited the Chinese community and was hugely enjoyable for the participants.

In the East, China was stirring. Students and other activists had been occupying Tiananmen Square in Beijing. Inspired by events in Europe, and proclaiming support for the reformist Communist Party leader, Zhao Ziyang, the students felt that democracy was about to flourish, and the "Elders" (the ruling Communist Party elite, led by Deng Xiaoping) would resign to allow a new generation of reformists to take control. Unfortunately, they were mistaken. The "Elders" dismissed Zhao Ziyang, and replaced him with Jiang Zemin, declared martial law and on the night of 3rd June 1989, sent in tanks and troops to crush the democracy movement. Thousands were killed. Thousands were captured and imprisoned, and thousands went into exile or were already abroad and sought political asylum in their respective host countries.

The massacres of Tiananmen Square had a profound impact on the Chinese diaspora. Many people in Hong Kong began to worry about the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, and the effect that would have on their families. Chinese students abroad worried about the wisdom of returning to face political repression and began to make plans to find jobs and settle in America, the UK or other European countries. Some of the women interviewed were married

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to husbands with "sensitive" jobs in Hong Kong and cited the return of Hong Kong to China as one of the main reasons for migrating to the UK.

Juanita Yau, the current Chairperson, came to Manchester in 1987. She had been living in Cambridge for five years before, coming to Manchester when both she and her husband relocated for work. Although she did not attend the founding meeting of Wai Yin, she met another key player at this time – Anne Yuen. Anne introduced Juanita to the key women who founded and ran Wai Yin in the first year – Josephine Chan, Sylvia Howe, Amy Lai, and Lin Tan. Juanita became involved in May 1989 and recalls that, at that time, there was no formal committee, and that women would meet once a month in different places.

"From the beginning, our aim was to get our own place, our own space.

We wanted a centre which could provide English classes for women and act as a drop-in for women who needed help and support"

Juanita Yau

Education and mutual support for women have remained at the core of Wai Yin's activities ever since. The dream of purchasing their own Centre also remains one of the key objectives for the organisation twenty years on. As this book is going to press in February 2009, an offer has been made on a city centre premise which hopefully will realise this long held aspiration.

Juanita Yau has played a central role throughout Wai Yin's history. In the first few years, with two young children and a demanding job, she still found time to volunteer most evenings a week. Before Wai Yin found its first office space, Juanita used her home phone number for contact. She recalled;

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"Sometimes, I would be phoned by very worried Chinese who were in need of help for very difficult domestic problems"

Juanita Yau

Wai Yin held its first Annual General Meeting on 16th December 1989. The AGM was held at the Chinese Health Information Centre (CHIC). In many ways, the CHIC has been a sister organisation to Wai Yin in Manchester. Founded a year before Wai Yin, CHIC had been created by three volunteer Chinese General Practitioners. CHIC and Wai Yin have been active in the Manchester Chinese community, but in their own spheres. CHIC has concentrated on health awareness and health promotion, and has a close partnership with two or three Chinese doctors, based in the city centre. Wai Yin has concentrated on education, and social care. However, many women have worked for both CHIC and Wai Yin over the years.

One of the first women to work for both CHIC and Wai Yin was Circle Steele. Circle was born and educated in Hong Kong, where she worked at the YMCA, developing children and young people services. She was also a volunteer at the Salvation Army Church with Vietnamese refugees during the so-called boat people crisis in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when ethnic Chinese fled from persecution in Vietnam. She met and married her husband Patrick in Hong Kong and came over to the UK in 1989. She managed to get an administrative job at CHIC. In this way, she became "networked" into the Chinese community. During this time, she became pregnant and gave birth to her first child. However, at CHIC, Circle heard of Wai Yin, and she decided to become a volunteer at Wai Yin to help to develop a support group for Chinese women.

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"My first impression of the Chinese community in Manchester was that nearly everybody was involved in the catering industry. Compared to Hong Kong, there were no community services for them. I was very surprised at this, particularly the lack of support for the Chinese people."

Circle Steele.

Circle was involved with a group of social work students from Hong Kong whom she had met at both Wai Yin and through the Chinese Christian Church. In June 1990, a small group of demonstrators, including Circle, marked the first anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacres with a vigil in Chinatown.

Circle was responsible for Wai Yin's first successful funding bid. This was a small grant of about £500 from the BBC's Children in Need which came in 1990. Although it was only a small grant, it was a very significant start. As a result, Wai Yin was able to organise several outings for children and their mothers. Children in Need has been a very good supporter of Wai Yin over many years. However, Wai Yin was constrained in its ability to fund-raise due to the lack of a base, or office, which was requirement of most funding bodies at the time. Locating and sustaining a base, however modest, was an essential task of the founders. Juanita Yau was instrumental in raising funds for Wai Yin. With her best friends Josephine Chan and Anne Yuen, she secured funds for the first drop-in centre. They visited many Chinese businesses to ask for donations during the cold winter evenings in early 1991.

The second year (1990-1991) was very similar to its first: activities, celebrations and fund-raising. In March 1990, a Chinese dance class was started and ran for 38 lessons at the Greenheys Centre in Moss Side. In May, a group from Manchester went over to visit the Lai Yin Association in Sheffield with a return visit in July.

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They met at Longsight Library. By the end of 1991, Wai Yin had managed to raise £13,000 through its membership subscriptions, a lot of fund-raising and a grant from Manchester City Council. This was a remarkable achievement in only two years, and it meant that Wai Yin could afford to rent a small office and employ a part-time co-ordinator. It also meant that Wai Yin could apply for other grants, as it now had an office base and an official address.

Juanita Yau was successful in securing a grant to fund a research project looking at childcare needs for under-fives in the Chinese community.

Chapter 3

The Stream becomes a River

1991 - 1996

“Use the days of plenty to think about the days of nothing”

Traditional Chinese proverb

Wai Yin's first home consisted of two rooms on Portland Street. The Society rented the space from Mr Andrew Yu, who ran a shop from the same premises. Wai Yin was indebted to Mr Yu for kindly letting the office at a very reasonable rent and his assistance to secure low cost materials for refurbishing work. The building itself was an old Victorian warehouse, and it was in a very dilapidated condition. However, with the efforts from the then core members, their families and friends, the rooms were quickly made comfortable, with a seating area which acted as the drop-in, a partitioned office space with two desks, and a separate classroom. Women visiting the office described it as being basic and very cold in winter, but very welcoming.

The new Centre was officially opened by Lady Pamela Youde, the wife of Sir Edward Youde, the Governor of Hong Kong in the early 1980s.

The first co-ordinator worked part-time. His name was Yiu Man Chan and he was a post-graduate student in education, from Hong Kong. He was part of the group that Circle Steele became friendly with and he participated in the Tiananmen Square vigil in June 1990. However, there was a strong tradition of volunteering which resulted in many women spending time at Wai Yin, helping with enquiries, and providing information and support.

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The focus of Wai Yin's work continued to be education, particularly English language classes, as well as activities and outings for families.

There was one unexpected, but very significant change that happened when the new office base was set up. For the first time, Chinese women had a place where they could come and seek advice and help from other women. Slowly at first, but then in greater numbers, women would come for help with issues such as domestic violence at home. For the mainly educated, middle class women who had founded Wai Yin, the level of domestic violence that was now being revealed within the Chinese community came as a profound shock. Most of these abused women could not speak English and frequently, they were denied access to independent financial resources by their husbands. They had come over from Hong Kong as young wives to work long hours in takeaways or restaurants and social isolation led to very stressed family environments where verbal and physical abuse became common.

These abused women had often suffered years of violence, but were powerless to resist. With no money, no English and no understanding of the welfare system, they had nowhere to turn. When Wai Yin opened its doors, word got around the community that there was a women-led organisation that was willing to offer assistance, and they came for help.

Having to focus on the needs of women in crisis changed the priorities of Wai Yin forever. It could no longer act solely as a social club for women which provided some English classes and family trips out. It became clear that women needed a range of services which could help them gain independence, socially, financially and emotionally. With this in mind, Wai Yin applied for funding to the Consortium for Volunteering (COV) and was successful in securing £32,000 per

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year for a three year period. For the first time, Wai Yin had enough money to sustain its activities beyond a few months.

In April 1992, Jenny Tsang was appointed as a part-time administrator. She was interviewed by Juanita Yau and Susanna Chiu. Jenny was born in Hong Kong, but came to live in Newcastle at the age of nine. Jenny has worked at Wai Yin ever since and is its longest serving member of staff.

The funding from COV was enough to employ a full-time co-ordinator. Since Yui Man Chan was already employed as a part-time co-ordinator, Christine Chan was employed as his job share. Both of them were post-graduate students from Hong Kong and were permitted to work a maximum of 20 hours per week. Christine and Yui Man co-ordinated the activities of the centre together. They fell in love and married as well! After a few months, Christine applied successfully for a job at the Chinese University in Hong Kong.

When Christine left for Hong Kong, Circle Steele applied to job share with Yiu Man. She left on the birth of her second child. Early in January 1993, Yiu Man Chan returned to Hong Kong having completed his PhD.

Kim Chew was appointed as the full-time co-ordinator and Wai Yin moved from its cramped premises in Portland Street to 2nd Floor, 36, Charlotte Street. The 1st floor had been the home of the Chinese Arts Centre for a number of years Kim remained in post for three years and is credited for submitting Wai Yin's successful application to the National Lottery in 1995. Kim returned to Singapore in 1995.

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Many thousands of miles away, Deng Xiaoping, the architect of the Tiananman Square massacres and the last remaining “Elder” decided to visit the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone. The year was 1993. This Zone had been established to encourage both Chinese and foreign companies to set up factories and businesses, with minimal regulation and government interference. Deng Xiaoping declared that this was the economic future for China. State control of industry was to be relinquished and China was set free to become a capitalist economy. Fifty years of the communist control of the economy came to an end, even if the power of the Chinese Communist Party remained unchallenged. Within ten years, China would become the fastest growing economy in the world and its citizens would travel the world in their millions.

From 1989 onwards, mainland Chinese were allowed to travel abroad providing they had sufficient funds. During the 1990’s, Chinese migration from the People’s Republic spread across the globe. Thousands of students and migrant workers took up the challenge of new opportunities in the Pacific economies, Europe and North America. Between 1992 and 2004, it is estimated that 400,000 Chinese students came to British Universities and around 300,000 migrants, claiming asylum, came to work in Britain

In 1995, Wai Yin moved out of Charlotte Street and went to Spear Street in the Northern Quarter. At the time, this seemed to be an advantageous move. The new offices were better appointed than the old dilapidated building. They were warmer for a start and security was much better. There was also proper disabled access which was a very important consideration with the newly passed Disability Discrimination Act. However, it soon became apparent that Wai Yin members, particularly the elderly did not like the location of the new premises. Even though it was still in the City Centre, few people came and many that came complained

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that Spear Street premises were too far from Chinatown. As a consequence, Wai Yin moved back to the 1st Floor Charlotte Street premises two years later in 1997, to the space recently vacated by the Chinese Arts Centre when they moved to their spacious premises in Shudehill.

The River runs Deep

1996 – 1999

“If you don’t climb the high mountains, you can’t view the plain”

Traditional Chinese Proverb

In April 1996, Wai Yin secured funding from the National Lottery, worth £300,000 for three years. It was an impressive achievement for a small organisation that relied so heavily on the hard work and commitment of its volunteers. Credit must go largely to Kim Chew, the co-ordinator, who wrote the bid and was able to articulate clearly the needs of the Chinese community in Manchester. Kim left Wai Yin shortly before the funding came through but the new funding covered a new post of Centre Manager. Donna Ngan was appointed as Centre Manager in June 1996. She remembered her interview with at least six committee members;

“My first impressions were that everybody was very friendly. They were all enthusiastic. At the time Wai Yin had a mixed reputation within the Chinese community. Because they focused on women’s issues, some parts of the community felt that they encouraged women to leave their husbands and thus contribute to family break-up. The National Lottery grant was an opportunity to convince the community as a whole that Wai Yin supported women and their families”

Donna Ngan

Apart from the Centre Manager’s post, the National Lottery funding paid for three project workers; Elderly Project, Youth Project and the Children’s Project.



Outing with the Parenting group to visit the London Eye, taken on 23rd May 2005.



Promotional photograph for Parenting project (2005)



Photograph taken at Women’s Health Talk, taken on 12th January 2004



Our current Management Committee. (Taken at our recent Annual General Meeting on 11th January 2009)



Photograph of Wai Yin staff and volunteers at the Chinese New Year celebrations in Manchester's China Town on 1st February 2009.



Just some of our staff. (Taken on 9th December 2008)



The four "Choi San" (that's me on the far left) making a special appearance at Wai Yin's Chinese New Year Celebration on 9th February 2009.



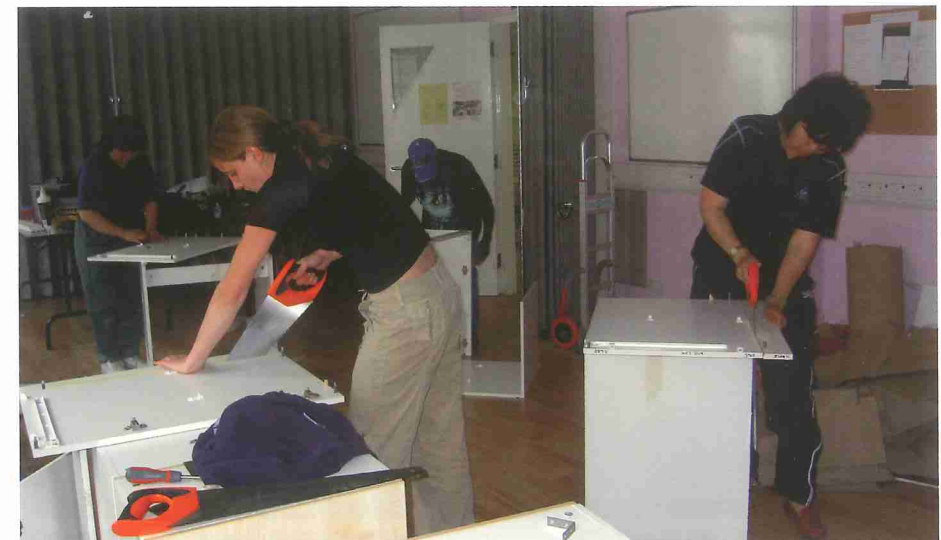
Photograph from our Women Construction Solutions class, held at Manchester Settlement. Taken on 17th October 2006.



Launch day for our Community Fixers Project. This project later became the Women Construction Solutions project. Taken on 9th May 2005.



A group of learners at our Women Construction Solutions course. Taken on 27th July 2006.



Some of our Women Construction Solutions learners helping to renovate our Activity Hall at Wai Yin Headquarters on 61 Mosley Street. Taken on 5th June 2007.



Photograph from the launch event of our HMRC funded EQUIP General Advice Project. Taken on Monday 21st April 2008.



Photograph of meeting between General Advice staff and the volunteers involved in the project. The meeting was held on 14th May 2008.



Photograph of a Tax Planning Talk, given on 11th December 2007. The talk was delivered by Simon Li, of SL Accountancy.



Photograph of Alan Ho (far right), the General Advice Worker between September 2007 to March 2008, delivering a talk to our Elderly service users at our Sheung Lok Luncheon Club. The talk was delivered in September 2007.



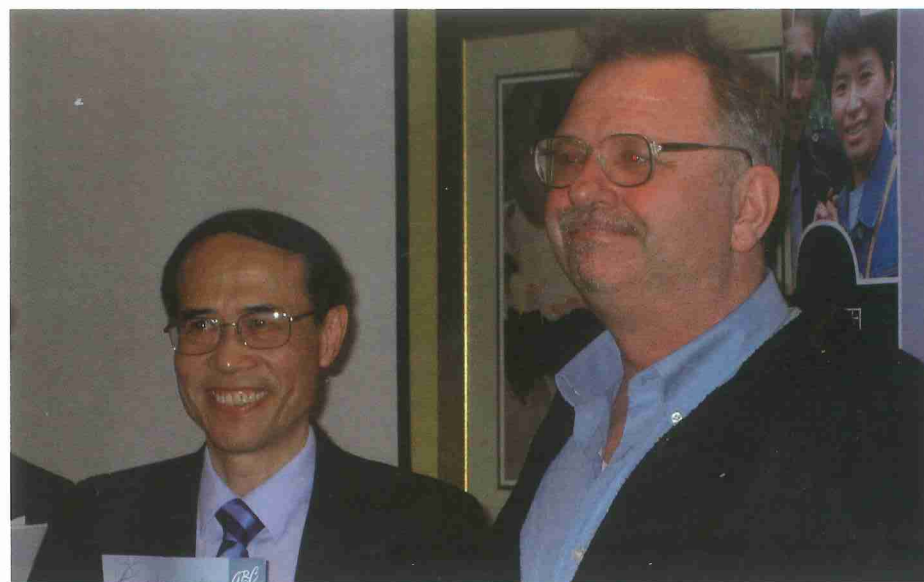
A group of learners attending our ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses. This photograph was taken on 26th October 2005.



As well as language and ICT courses, we also run interest based courses. This is a photograph of the students on our Tai Chi course, which was also taken on 26th October 2005.



Learning doesn't have to be based in the classroom. This is a group of learners on one of our ESOL courses at the Museum of Science and Industry on 2nd July 2006.



At the end of the learning journey, learners should be rewarded and their achievements should be acknowledged. This is one such learner, receiving his certificate for learning Chinese from the General Consul of China at the Award Ceremony on 23rd April 2006.



Wai Yin ensures that its elderly service users are well looked after. That is why we organise regular health related checks, including this check up with a fully qualified optician. This check on one of our service users took place on 21st January 2008.



A healthy mind and a healthy body are important. Our elderly service users regularly take exercise and practice Tai Chi. Some of our service users demonstrated their skills at an event on 23rd February 2008.



We regularly organise social activities for our elderly. One such activity was an excursion to Austria. A group of us (including me, driving the mini bus) went to Austria in May 2008.



I said earlier that a healthy body and a healthy mind were important. Our elderly take care of their minds by playing the ancient Chinese game of skill, which we know as Mahjong. This was one such game, which was played in our centre on 13th January 2005.



As part of our Children's project, many activities were organised. This one activity was to Portland Basin Museum in Ashon-under-Lyne. It happened on 6th June 2002.



To celebrate the Olympics being held in August 2008, Wai Yin's Goldstar Volunteering project took part in a "We Are Olympikids" event. The event was held at Trinity Sports Centre, and took place on 7th June 2008.



As well as the activities that were organised for our Children's project, a roller hockey team was formed from some of our service users. The team won many matches, and competed in the Community Roller Hockey Tournament. This team photo was taken on 13th October 2005.



Volunteers were also encouraged to help others into volunteering by participating in events such as this one at North Manchester Volunteering Fair, which was held on 13th November 2007.



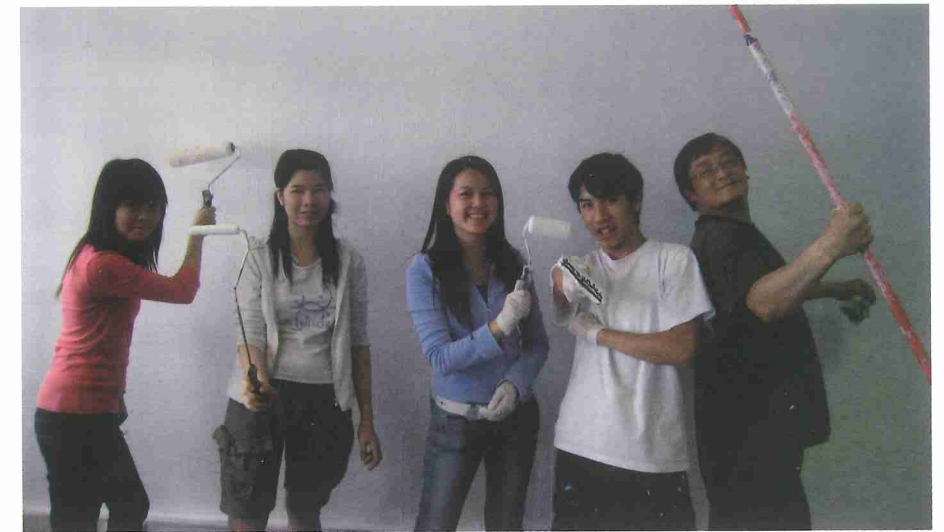
Volunteers aren't required solely for administrative tasks. Some of them work closely with our service users. Mark Lane was a volunteer for our Adult Learning project and worked as a classroom assistant.



Volunteers are important, and they should be valued. Wai Yin held a Dissemination event for the Goldstar project on 26th March 2008, where 5 volunteers received our "Diamond" award for their volunteer work. Unfortunately, a real diamond wasn't given as a reward.



The UK Online Centre at Wai Yin has provided users with access to information using computers and the Internet, and has also proved a useful tool in communicating. It has also provided endless hours of entertainment for our younger users.



Our UK Online Centre at Wai Yin's Headquarters on 61 Mosley Street received a makeover. On 10th August 2007, a number of staff and volunteers volunteered (yes, even the staff volunteered) their Friday to decorate the UK Online area.



The Kwan Wai (Mental Health) project has been established for 6 years, and has taken on many different projects as part of combating mental illness in Chinese. The Community Engagement Project was one such project. It looked at Dementia in Chinese elderly. This was a meeting of the working group, which was held on 15th June 2006



As well as the café bar, the project also organises activities for its users. These activities help our users become more socially active and improve their self-confidence. This one such canoeing activity took place on 19th June 2006.



Our Kwan Wai project also runs a café bar two days per week. This is the café bar at Daisy Bank Road Day Centre.



Whilst our headquarters is closed on Fridays, our Kwan Wai team are busy working for our drop-in sessions. We invite service users to come and join us for Mahjong and other activities. Whilst the centre is quiet, it's an ideal time for our users to enjoy themselves.



Our recent partnership project with two other Black Minority Ethnic (BME) organisations is our SEVA Project (which I have been heavily involved in). The team has taken a lot of work in planning the project during the six month scoping exercise. This photograph is of all the hands of the team members, taken at their Away Day in 2008.



In 2000, Wai Yin was awarded funding for a minibus for its Children's, Young Person's and Elderly projects. It was decommissioned in 2008 after a long and fruitful life of service.



Our Young Person's project organises many activities for our young service users. One of the activities organised in 2004 was a drama group. I'm yet to find out if any of the participants made it to Hollywood.



Our Young Person's project also took part in a fashion show, where some of the youths modelled and designed all of the garments that were involved. This photo was taken on 6th October 2005.



It isn't just on the catwalk that our youths show their competitive edge. We have organised many other activities, including a go-karting championship race. The race was organised on 20th December 2004. Unfortunately, none of them were signed to any of the F1 teams.



As part of our Family Learning Project, we organise both educational and interest based classes. We are currently running an Arts & Crafts class at Hulme Adult Education Centre. This photograph was taken on 10th February 2009.



As part of the young person's project, we have worked with St John's Ambulance to set up a Chinese division of the long-standing organisation. It was set up in 2002 and has met at Wai Yin every Tuesday evening ever since. This photograph was taken on 30th April 2005.



We also had funding from Neighbourhood Learning for Deprived Communities (NLDC), which funded interest based courses. Some of those courses were popular and have been incorporated into our Family Learning project, such as this beauty therapy course, which took place on 11th June 2006.



The Dragon Boat Festival is an important festival in the Chinese calendar. In 1994, Wai Yin participated in a Dragon Boat race.



It's hard to believe that Wai Yin was established 20 years ago, but it has. In order to be 20 years old, we need to have been 10 years old at some point. This is a photograph from our 10th Anniversary. You can see, from this, that Juanita really has played a part in Wai Yin's history for a long time.



This is a photograph of our 9th Annual General Meeting, which was held in 1997.



Chinese Opera is a very traditional piece of art from China. In 1990, Wai Yin set up its very own Chinese Opera group.



This is a photograph of our Management Committee members between 1994 and 1995. I think this would have been taken at our Annual General Meeting that year.



Wai Yin attended the International Women Conference in 1990. This photograph is just some of the people who attended.



This is a photograph of our 6th Annual General Meeting, which was held in 1994.



In the 1996, General Consul Mr Wang visited Wai Yin to see its services. This is the group shot that was taken at the time.



On 8th February 2000, Wai Yin held one of its many Chinese New Year celebrations. They have become a regular feature of Chinese New Year for many years.



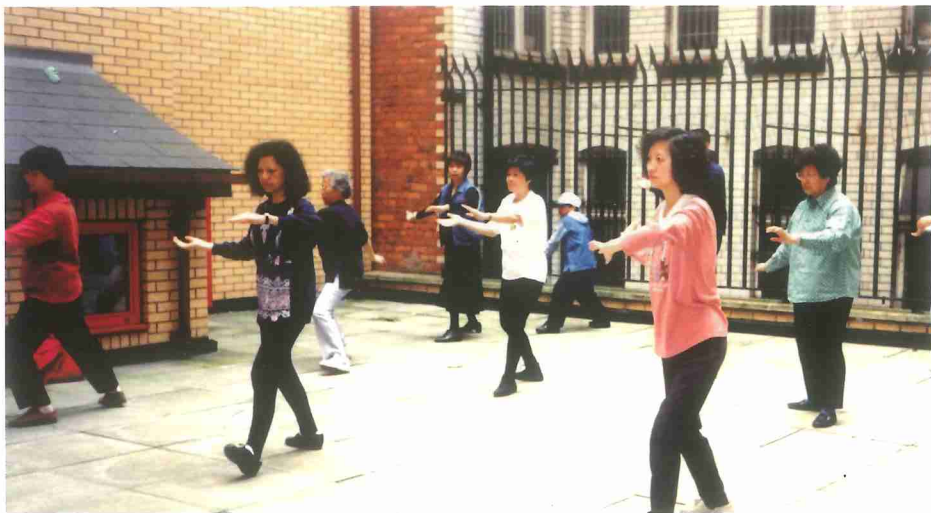
In 1993, Juanita retired as Chairperson of Wai Yin. However, her work with us continued for many years, and she returned to the committee soon after.



In the year 2000, Wai Yin held its 12th Annual General Meeting. It was chaired by Circle Steele.



In 1996, Wai Yin was awarded its first National Lottery Grant. In 1997, it opened its doors in its Spear Street centre.



In 1997, Tung Sing Housing Association invited Wai Yin to an event, where some of our service users demonstrated their Tai Chi skills.



On 28th September 1997, Opera singer Law Ka Ying visited Wai Yin and met with some of our users, staff and volunteers.



Another photograph from one of our Annual General Meetings, this time it was our 8th. It was held on 18th January 1997.



Wai Yin has always believed in new and alternative ways of learning. In 1997, we organised a flower arranging class for our learners.



Staying close to the cutting edge of technology, Wai Yin held computer classes for many years. This one was taken in 1997.



One of our core services for our Elderly project has been our Luncheon Club. This is one of the first Chinese Luncheon Club lunches that was organised, held in the Manchester Chinese Church in 1996.



This is a photograph of many of the people involved at Wai Yin during our 10th Anniversary. By now, the people involved would have grown immensely.



In 2000, EYDEP funded Wai Yin's Children's project for a healthy living event. This photograph has many of the young people, staff and volunteers involved in the event.

The Elderly Project

The elderly project consisted of two parts, the education (mainly English language) and the outreach work (mainly luncheon club). Louise Wong took responsibility for the education work and Shirley He was appointed as the outreach worker. The appointment of Shirley He was inspirational. She is a force of nature, who will not take “No” as an answer. She works incredibly hard and has the energy of three people. And above all, she speaks Hakka. Shirley went and talked to as many elderly Chinese as she could find. In the three sheltered housing schemes, Faulkner Court, Princess Court and Kent Court, there were communal areas but these were rarely used. Shirley had the ability to persuade, cajole and gently bully people to come and meet up for lunch.

After three weeks of visiting every flat and every home they could find, Shirley held the first meeting for the elderly at a restaurant in Lever Street. Forty elderly people attended; she had never seen so many elderly Chinese people together. When Shirley consulted those present as to what they wanted, the clear answer was a luncheon club. At first, Shirley encouraged the Chinese elderly to attend one of the many mainstream luncheon clubs in Manchester, but the results were disastrous;

“The first time I took 27 elderly to a luncheon club in Whalley Range. It was awful. The meal consisted of a steak and kidney pie, very bad chips and very wet cabbage. It was horrible. They had to pay £1.20 and the portions were very small.”

Shirley He (nee Lam)



Over the last 10 years, our staff and volunteers have grown and diversified from this ...



...to this. Who knows what Wai Yin will look like in 10 or 20 years time? One thing is for sure: Wai Yin will always be at the heart of the Chinese community.

It became obvious very quickly that the elderly Chinese needed a luncheon club of their own that could cook and serve good quality Chinese meals and at a very good price. Within three months, Shirley had managed to attract 80 elderly Chinese to become members of Wai Yin. Unfortunately for Wai Yin, she secured a nursing job at Manchester Royal Infirmary and subsequently became the Clinical Nurse Specialist at the Chinese Health Information Centre. Although she was only involved with Wai Yin for a short term, her impact was immense. In effect, she started the Elderly Luncheon Club which has remained at the heart of Wai Yin's work and purpose ever since. For Shirley herself, this period gave her an insight into the problems faced by the Chinese elderly in Britain;

"I was shocked at the lack of information available, especially health information. The language barrier is very powerful. As a result there is a gross inequality of access to health. There was no interpreting service, no awareness among health professionals about the needs of the Chinese"

Shirley He (nee Lam)

In November 1996, Age Concern gave some funding to start a Chinese luncheon club. For twelve months, the luncheon club met twice a week at the Chinese Christian Church in Whalley Range. It moved to Charlotte Street in 1997 and continued to provide lunches on two days a week, until 1999, when Wai Yin was able to increase the luncheon days to four days a week.

The luncheon club wasn't just about food, however, it was a vitally important means for isolated and often lonely people to meet and socialise; to come out of their homes and be active. Activities and trips were and remain a regular feature of the work of the Elderly Project. Health talks and information talks on many different subjects are a regular occurrence. Most of the elderly who now attend

the Sheung Lok Day Centre are in their 80's and 90's. Most of them are remarkably physically fit and mentally alert. They come most days and socialise in a variety of ways. They have a freshly cooked meal, consisting of rice, meat, fish and vegetables. The combination of healthy food, purposeful activity and social stimulation has kept them happy and well. But for the Elderly Project, many of the older Chinese community in Manchester would no longer be with us.

Mental Health Project – Kwan Wai Team

The roots of the Kwan Wai (mental health) Project are in this period. In April 1995, Linda Wong and Carmen Chan, two housing officers at Tung Sing Housing Association, approached Creative Support, a mental health charity based in Manchester for help. They were responsible for managing properties at three supported housing schemes for elderly Chinese tenants – Faulkner Court, Princess Court and Kent Court. Their problem was that many of these residents had additional health and social care needs, which they were unable to meet due to the cultural and language barriers that existed. Cantonese and Hakka speaking staff at Tung Sing felt that they couldn't cope with the requests for GP appointments and helping tenants deal with agencies such as Council Tax, utility bills, and the many other problems that are faced by all of us on a daily basis. Linda and Carmen had heard about the housing support worker service developed by Creative Support, where additional support was provided through a premium on the rent paid for by housing benefit (if the tenant was eligible due to special circumstances).

Unfortunately, Creative Support was unable to help due to a lack of Chinese support workers. Creative Support employed a Chinese Referral Worker, Chi Man Ko, who was a qualified mental health nurse, but he did not work with any

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Chinese clients. In fact, Chi Man lived in the warden's flat at Faulkner Court and had informed Linda and Carmen about the supported housing scheme at Creative Support.

However, Linda and Carmen's visit planted a seed of change because, like many other mainstream organisations, Creative Support was completely unaware that there were any problems within the Chinese community. There was a pervasive (and racist) assumption that the Chinese community "looked after their own" and there was no need for any welfare services. The setting up of supported housing schemes by Tung Sing blew that assumption completely out of the water. Linda and Carmen had experienced elderly relatives being placed in tenancies and then their families relinquishing responsibility for them completely. There was a clear expectation that once they had a flat, Tung Sing Housing Association now took on the "filial" responsibility for them, for which they were not prepared nor morally or legally required to do.

The Development Manager at Creative Support at the time was Mark Greenwood (me!). It was my job to identify support and housing needs for people with mental health needs and to work with Housing Associations to develop a range of supported housing services in the Greater Manchester area. As a trained psychiatric nurse, I was aware of national initiatives relating to mental health. Although I had no direct contact with the Chinese community at the time, my parents were working and living in Shanghai, so I took a particular interest in the lack of support for the Chinese community and decided to do something about it.

One month after the April meeting with Linda Wong and Carmen Chan, I read about a conference in Birmingham entitled "The First National Conference on Chinese Mental Health June 1995". Immediately, I contacted Linda, Carmen and

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Chi Man and suggested that we all went down to Birmingham in June 1995 to attend this conference. On a very pleasant sunny day, four intrepid adventurers set out early to make sure they got there on time. For me, it was a life changing journey. For the first time, I heard Cantonese being spoken fluently. I was introduced to a world of pot noodles...real ones from Hong Kong not the awful English variety; to a world of Chinese families and businesses; to a language and culture called Hakka; to a tradition of Sunday dim sum meals in Chinatown; to a world of BBCs (British Born Chinese) and to a richly diverse community that very few "English" people had any real knowledge or contact with.

The Birmingham conference was organised by a flamboyant and charming man called Billy Ko. Billy was, by his own description, a Chinese leprechaun. Sporting a multi-coloured dicky bow tie, small, dapperly dressed, he was an extraordinarily charismatic man. Billy was a psychotherapist employed by North Birmingham Mental Health Trust to write a handbook on mental health issues affecting the Chinese community in the UK. Billy knew everybody. He was a gadfly with a finger in every Chinese pie. He was the Secretary of the Chinese Takeaway Association of Great Britain, a position to which he appointed himself. This gave him the excuse to travel the country, meeting thousands of Chinese people, offering help and assistance to them. He had a habit of giving out his mobile phone number to anybody who asked for it and told them to phone him if they were in trouble or had any problems he could help with. Consequently he became the Chinese National Agony Aunt, or Uncle.

The first National Mental Health Conference was a great success. About a hundred people attended and for the first time recognition was given to several key issues within the Chinese community; that the Chinese do not always "look after their own" as often claimed; that the Chinese are a "hidden" minority, who

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rarely complain about the lack of resources for their community; that Chinese people who suffer from mental health problems are often stigmatised by their own community; and that across the country there needs to be dedicated mental health services that are culturally responsive to the Chinese community.

Since that first conference in 1995, there have been eleven national conferences in different parts of the country. The third conference in 1997 was held at the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester. Among the delegates who attended the Manchester conference was the Mental Health Commissioning Manager for Manchester Social Services; Mr Bob Bamblett. He listened to the speakers, and realised that whilst Manchester had the second largest Chinese community in the UK, there were no mental health resources allocated to this community. As a consequence, he managed to secure funds from Manchester City Council, and approached Wai Yin in 1998 to ask them to establish a Chinese and Vietnamese mental health team. The mental health team was recruited and started their work in 1999.

Billy Ko started on an impossible mission, in 1995, to raise national awareness of mental health issues within the Chinese community. Everybody, including Billy thought he was crazy. Within four years, Manchester had established a dedicated Chinese Mental Health Project, which has been in existence ever since. There is a Chinese proverb which says;

“The person who says it cannot be done should not interrupt the person doing it”

Traditional Chinese proverb

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Unfortunately, Billy Ko died in his fifties in 2003. Many believe that the burden of handing out his mobile phone number to all those in emotional distress finally overwhelmed him. Thousands came to his funeral in Birmingham. The above proverb was said and written specifically for Billy Ko.

Celebrating Ten Years of Achievements – June 1998

Wai Yin celebrated ten years of achievement at a well attended event in June 1998. Councillor George Harding wrote to thank Wai Yin for all its work and the following is part of what he wrote;

“The Wai Yin Women’s Society has grown from strength to strength and ten years on it plays an important role in the lives of the Chinese women of Manchester and the North West. It has increased its membership and has spread its role throughout the Chinese community in Manchester. In arts, sport, recreation, learning, culture, there is so much to be had from the Society. In such a short time the Wai Yin Chinese Women’s Society is now internationally known for its work in Manchester.”

Within ten years, Wai Yin had grown from a small group of committed women to an effective organisation employing 6 members of staff. It had weathered the storms faced by many small groups in their early days. Lack of funding, lack of suitable accommodation, sometimes having to face distrust and hostility from members of the Chinese community, yet Wai Yin managed not just to survive but to grow and continue growing. In 1998, Anne Yuen wrote in the Annual Report;

“Last but not least, we want to express our thanks to every single member of Wai Yin. Lets work together in harmony, be ready to stretch out a bit

more of your heart and strength. Let love and warmth spread, affection reach out and Wai Yin enter the new Millennium in a tender stride.”

Anne Yuen

Neuh Keung Yan: Being Strong and Wise

“A nation’s treasure is in its scholars”

Chinese Proverb

Dr Sylvia Sham, Wai Yin’s current Director, came to the UK from Hong Kong in 1986. She was in her mid-twenties, from a large family of seven sisters and one brother. When Sylvia came to Manchester to start a new life, she spoke very little English since she had attended Chinese school in Hong Kong. She enrolled on an English language course in Manchester, followed by a Nursing course at Stockport College. In an extraordinary period of seven years, Sylvia went on to complete a degree followed by a PhD from Manchester Metropolitan University.

Sylvia was employed for over three years as a Research Fellow whilst she was completing her PhD. A secure future as an academic seemed to be her fate. However, that was not to be. In November 1997, Sylvia was told about a Project Manager’s job at a small Chinese charity based in Chinatown. Sylvia had never heard of Wai Yin. It offered much less money, no pension, no job security, and many headaches. She would have been crazy to have taken up the challenge.

The interview was held in front of eight Chinese women which reflected the passionate support Wai Yin attracted, as well as a certain lack of modern human resource expertise. The questions came thick and fast and, as Sylvia recalled later, it felt like she had been put through a mangle. However, she was impressed, as

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many are, with the warmth of the welcome she received and the dedication these women, mainly volunteers, felt for the organisation.

The first challenge Sylvia faced was to convince the other members of the Management Committee and the staff, that Wai Yin should apply to the National Lottery for another three years funding and that Wai Yin should be much more ambitious this time. The first three year's funding for four posts was due to end in March 1999. This was a huge risk to take for two reasons; first, Wai Yin had to demonstrate that it had the professional capacity to deliver services and second, Wai Yin had to move away from being a volunteer dominated organisation to being a strategically led by volunteers, but with a paid professional workforce.

Much to everybody's surprise, the second bid for National Lottery funding was successful. During the twelve months of 1999, Wai Yin grew from employing six workers to employing fourteen members of staff. Annual turnover doubled in this year alone.

The increase in staff was funded from two sources; the Mental Health Project, described above in Chapter 4, which employed five staff and the National Lottery which employed another nine.

In 1999, Sylvia was appointed Director and had set out a clear strategic vision for the future of Wai Yin. She had arrived at the right time for such a bold way forward. The New Labour Government had been elected with a massive majority in 1997. New Labour had set out a political agenda for transforming social and health care services in England and Wales. Scotland was to gain semi-independence following the passing of the Scotland Act 1998. New Labour's modernisation plans for social and health care kept the competitive market for

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service provision developed by the Conservatives and encouraged voluntary sector organisations to compete for contracts.

The second important development was the passing of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 which requires public authorities such as the NHS, Local Authorities, Prison and Probation Services etc, to actively promote race relations and to develop Race Equality policies. Although New Labour policies took some time to work their way down to a local level, Wai Yin was in a potentially strong position to respond to this new policy climate.

In Manchester, Sylvia was invited to an endless series of consultation meetings designed to implement the national policy agenda. She had to learn a new language of local politics, and quickly became aware how excluded the Chinese community was from these developments. She recalled later;

"I was the only Chinese person who attended these meetings. People would come to me and ask me about the Chinese community and they expected me to know! The problem was that I was new to my own job and I was only just starting to understand the personalities and politics of my community. It was a sharp learning curve for me, but what I learnt proved to be essential for not just the survival but for the future development of Wai Yin"

Sylvia Sham

At this time, most of the minority ethnic community groups were focused on the needs of their own communities. They had learnt to survive on annual grants which put them in a very precarious financial situation. Although Manchester has a proud history of inter-community relations, only a few people realised at the time

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that change was needed and the future required closer co-operation and partnerships between BME organisations.

Sylvia also learnt the importance of developing high quality, professional services if BME organisations like Wai Yin were to compete in the developing markets of social and health care. Above all, BME groups needed to think *“outside the box; to move out of their ghettos!”*

In June 1999, Lisa Mok was appointed as Project Manager, to replace Sylvia who had been appointed as Director. It was to prove a partnership made in the Middle Kingdom. Lisa was a qualified nurse with many years community development experience, in Hong Kong, Australia and in England. She had set-up and managed a Chinese home help project in Manchester before coming to Wai Yin. Sylvia and Lisa, along with Jenny Tsang, the finance officer, formed the core of the Management Team that would lead Wai Yin to its current position today. Sylvia provided the vision, the ability to galvanise staff and volunteers, and the important skill of understanding individual strengths. Lisa provided the organisational experience, the eye for detail, as well as her own skills of marketing and networking externally. Jenny Tsang had been the longest serving staff member, and the rock on which financially Wai Yin was built.

The arrival of both Sylvia and Lisa marked a transition for the Management Committee as well. Over a twelve month period, several of the original Committee members left to be replaced by Chinese women who felt more at ease with the new sense of professionalism that now came to Wai Yin. The atmosphere inevitably changed. Some women felt that Wai Yin was no longer the small intimate group of volunteers supported by a few members of staff. There seemed to be less room for volunteers to run and make an impact on the day to day work

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of the organisation. Others felt they wanted to concentrate on promoting Chinese music, dance and art, which Wai Yin didn't have as a core mission. There were and still are plenty of other Chinese organisations in Manchester, such as the Chinese Arts Centre, the Chinese Library and several Chinese supplementary schools. The women who stayed or who were attracted to being Committee members of Wai Yin were women who valued the business like manner in which meetings were conducted, and the professional manner in which Wai Yin governed itself. This has been enormously helped by the dedication, perseverance and the support given to the staff by Juanita Yau, Wai Yin's chairperson for the last ten years.

Being Strong and Beautiful – twenty years of success

“Each generation will reap what the former generation has sown”

Traditional Chinese Proverb

The Olympic Games, held in Beijing in August 2008, were spectacular and successful. Vast resources had been made available to ensure that the Games were triumphant. From the opening ceremony to the closing evening, the Games symbolised for China and for the Chinese diaspora, the final coming of the modern age for the Middle Kingdom. The children, grand-children and great-grandchildren of the decades long brutal civil war that traumatised and destroyed so much of the Chinese nation in the 20th century, could finally enjoy a renewed sense of national pride in being Chinese. In 2008, it was cool to be Chinese.

This new sense of confidence was reflected at Wai Yin. In 2002, as the end of the Lottery Funding loomed in March, Wai Yin was facing a potential crisis. However, this crisis felt very different from the previous Lottery hiatus in 1999. This time, Wai Yin was prepared for the transition. Wai Yin had diversified its funding base. During the course of the year, Wai Yin secured grants from UKonline (Department of Education), after school children’s club grant from Bernardo’s, a BME employment outreach project with Job Centre Plus (Department of Works and Pensions), and contracts with Manchester Social Services to provide a range of services to older people and their carers. At the same time, the Manchester Youth Service gave Wai Yin a three year grant for our Youth Project.

The manner in which Wai Yin coped with the transition, and has grown since, reflects the improved business management of the organisation, and its ability to diversify its contract and funding base. The foundations had been laid for the medium to longer term security of Wai Yin and new business opportunities could be capitalised on in the forthcoming years. For the first time, Wai Yin could look to a future beyond the yearly panic about renewing contracts and waiting for grant applications to be successful.

In 2002, Cat Settle was employed as a Strategic Development Manager. This was a direct result of developing a business plan which specifically identified the need to transform Wai Yin’s income base from mainly grant aid to service contracts. Cat had been a very successful funding consultant, specialising in securing grants from the European Social Fund. She stayed for four years at Wai Yin and was instrumental in securing four large contracts with the Learning and Skills Council in 2007. The key feature of these new contracts was that they required Wai Yin to set up a partnership with three other Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) organisations.

Throughout 2007 and 2008, Wai Yin successfully led this consortium in achieving, nay, over achieving, the strenuous targets that had been set by the LSC. It took an enormous amount of effort from a team of staff, led by Lisa Mok, the Assistant Director. The success of the LSC contract was instrumental in securing another contract, based on a consortium with two other BME organisations. The SEVA partnership started in January 2008, and will continue to at least 2011. This contract was negotiated and operationally developed by Mark Greenwood (me!). I have been working continuously for Wai Yin since 2002.

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One of the key changes in the last ten years has been the diversification of the staff and volunteers. Before 2002, most of the staff and all the volunteers were either British Born Chinese (BBCs) or Hong Kong Cantonese. The predominant languages spoken were Cantonese and English. One or two members of staff came from Singapore or Malaysia. Within six years, the linguistic and cultural transformation has been remarkable. About 30% of the staff are Mandarin speakers from mainland China; 30% of the staff are non-Chinese. There are Polish and Russian speakers on Fridays and at the week-end. On Thursdays, there are many women speaking many languages who come to the Refugee Group, run by the British Red Cross. The process of globalisation has been embraced by Wai Yin.

Wai Yin has accumulated many awards in the last few years. It achieved the Investors in People award in 2002, and renewed twice since. Again in 2004, Wai Yin won the "Services to the Community Award" at the National Pearl Awards in London. In February 2008, we were awarded Grade 2 by OFSTED for their education service. In June 2008, the Learning and Skills Council awarded Wai Yin their "Embracing Diversity Award" and their "Provider Excellence Award". Finally, Wai Yin achieved the Matrix Quality Assessment Kite-Mark in August 2008.

Wai Yin's Mission Statement is:

"To provide outstanding services to the Chinese and other communities and to promote full participation in British life"

Wai Yin is fit for purpose in the dynamic world of 21st century Britain.

Chapter 6

Celebrating Twenty Years of Success

"To know the road ahead, ask those coming back"

Traditional Chinese Proverb

Wai Yin celebrated its twentieth anniversary in March 2009. This year, women across the world celebrate 100 years of International Women's Day. The original International Women's Day was on March 8th 1909. It was organised to support a large strike by women garment workers in New York. These women fought back against extreme poverty and exploitation. Chinese women, have a shared history of exploitation in the rag trades, the sweat shops, the laundry trades and in the careering business. Even as I write, there are sweat shops around the world employing Chinese women on poverty wages in sometimes appalling conditions.

However, on 10th March 2009, Wai Yin celebrated the achievements of Chinese women, especially in Manchester, in the last twenty years. A national conference was organised with eminent women speakers from both the Chinese communities and from the non-Chinese community. It was held in Manchester's majestic Town Hall. The Conference was followed by this Gala Dinner. Three hundred people are expected to attend. It was such a difference from that first BBQ organised by Anne Yuen in her back garden in 1988.

Wai Yin's roots lie in a small network of Chinese women, mainly coming from Hong Kong, who met together to support and help each other in Manchester. Twenty years ago, several women from this network decided to organise an independent women's organisation called Wai Yin Chinese Women Society. In 1988, there were Chinese cultural and community groups but they tended to be

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dominated by men and they tended to be focused on promoting business. Wai Yin was different.

Wai Yin has accumulated many awards in the last few years. It achieved the Investors in People award in 2002, and renewed twice since. Again in 2004, Wai Yin won the “Services to the Community Award” at the National Pearl Awards in London. In February 2008, we were awarded Grade 2 by OFSTED for their education service. In June 2008, the Learning and Skills Council awarded Wai Yin their “Embracing Diversity Award” and their “Provider Excellence Award”. Finally, Wai Yin achieved the Matrix Quality Assessment Kite-Mark in August 2008. Inspired by women’s groups in the UK and across the world, Wai Yin’s aims were to help and support Chinese women to access training and education; to provide welfare support to dependents (children and elderly parents) whom women mainly cared for; to support women who were abused or oppressed; and to promote a pride in being “Strong and Beautiful” – “Wai Yin” – Chinese women.

Today, Wai Yin provides a range of education, training, employment, advice and welfare services not just to the Chinese community but to a diverse range of communities. Wai Yin employs over 50 staff and supports over 60 volunteers. Across these last 20 years, there have been 129 members of staff, 43 members of our Management Committee and countless volunteers, working shoulder to shoulder to fulfil Wai Yin’s sole, unaltered mission of providing services to the Chinese community. But size isn’t the measure of success. What matters is the impact Wai Yin has in the lives of women and their families. It is their experiences that will determine if the next twenty proves as successful as the first twenty years.

Appendix 1

Members of Wai Yin’s Management Committee between 1988 and 2008

Amy Lai	Irene Chan	Mei Mei Thong	Sylvia Howe
Ann Cheung	Josephine Chan	Oi Mei Li	Teresa Lai
Anna Tsang	Juanita Yau	Penny Wan	Teresa Chan
Anna Yung	Julie Yiu	Rosa Lo	Wei Leung Law
Cheng Bee Parker	Kam Sheung Wan	Ruby Yan	Wei Shieong Lau
Circle Steele	Kwai Ying Chan	Sally Li	Woon Cheng
Connie Kam	Kwok Chun Cheung	Sally Steer	
Erica Lau	Lai Kwan Chew	Shirley Chiu	
Fang Lee Cooke	Lin Tang	Sister Lee	
Helen Luk	Lisa Chow	Suk Fun Pao	
Helen Wong	May Chau	Susanna Chiu	

Members of staff at Wai Yin between 1988 and 2008

Abi Fakeye	Davis Choi	Lai Tong	Shiela Standard
Ada Woo	Donna Ngan	Leona Pang	Shuk Man Jung
Alan Ho	Dora Chu	Lisa Mok	Sin Sim Kwok
Alan Vico Tat	Eleanor Mulhearn	Lisa Mac	Sinclair Tsui
Alfred Chung	Eva Liu	Louise Wong	Siu Hei Wong
Amy Lai	Florence Cheng	Lucy Rong Zhao	Sou Ha Yung
Amy Zhou	Fook Ying Chan	Maggie Yao	Stella Chu
Angel Lee	Gang Guo	Mark Greenwood	Steven Lam
Anna Tsang	Gary Chai	Mary Lui	Su Mei Wu
Arthur Koon	Grace Law	Mei Yuk Wong	Sue Xin

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Bernadette Lam	Helen Wong	Melanie Bister	Sylvia Sham
Boh Lum Ng	Hoi Yen Ho	Michelle Wong	Tom Griffiths
Brandi Skipalis	Hong Ling	Mike Lam	Vanessa Cheung
Brony Woo	Hong Fen Zhou	Ming Chiu Chan	Wai Kwan Turner
C K Wong	Hui Fung Choi	Miranda Lam	Wai Shun Yip
Carmen Chan	Hui Yu Xiong	Monica Roberts	Wilson Wong
Carol Jenkin	Iok I Leung	Nala Sun	Winnie Chin
Caroline Kam	Irene Pang	Nancy Cheung	Woon Cheung
Cat Settle	Jackie Quing	Nancy Brown	Xing Xing Lu
Catherine Kam	Jacqueline O' Brien	Nathan Bunn	Yiu Man Chan
Cathleen Liu	Jane Lu	Pat Lock	Yuan Yi Liu
Cathyn Te	Jeffery Lee	Pauline Mottram	Yuk Kwai Li
Charles Hughes	Jenny Tsang	Peck Kin Chew	Yuk Lin Ku
Chong Hou Lo	Jenny Chow	Penny Lightburn	Yun Yan Zhou
Chris Tang	Jenny Yoong	Pui Ling Ho	Yueer Chan
Christian Chan	John Yuen	Richard Chow	Yvonne Tang
Christine Shaw	Johnny Ho	Samantha Tran	
Christine Sin	Kevin Suen	Sandy Lo	
Cindy Kwan	Kin Ming Cheng	Santa Teoh	
Circle Steele	Kwai Chun Lau	Sau Wan Li	
Connie Chu	Kwai Ming Yip	Sau Wah Chan Wong	
Crystal Chong	Kwong Man Chow	Sebbie Tran	

We have done our best to acknowledge all the members of staff who have worked for us and are currently working for us. If your name has been missed from this list, or you know of a former committee member or member of staff who has been missed from the list, we sincerely apologise and wish to acknowledge your hard work for Wai Yin.