

Director-General of K-12 Education Administration invited students with disabilities and their teachers to visit the Panda House

(Written by Zhong, Qun-Zhen)



These days, students from national special schools were spreading the news that the Director-General Wu was going on a trip with them to visit Yuan Zai, the giant panda cub, who has captivated every heart in Taiwan. To provide students with disabilities with the opportunity to see the adorable panda cub, the K-12 Education Administration organized three trips to visit the Panda House in May. More than 800 teachers and students from 18 national special schools were invited by Director-General Wu to Taipei Zoo on a life education tour. As only a limited number of participants can be admitted, each school went through a transparent and fair process for selecting eligible participants. During their arrival to the zoo, students were arranged to experience different types of public transportation, such as THSR, trains, MRT, and airplanes. Furthermore, students were given the opportunity to make friends with students from other schools along the way. Ultimately, these field trips provide the window of opportunity for students, so that they can learn to broaden their horizon, to love themselves and others as well as nature. It was also a trip that helped implement life, transportation safety, and environmental protection education.

Director-General Wu pointed out that he was fortunate enough to welcome Tuan Tuan and Yuan Yuan to Taiwan on December 24, 2008, during the time when he served as the head of the Department of Education, Taipei City Government. Taking this trip

with disabled students after the two pandas gave birth to Yuan Zai was like a part of imparting education to the next generation.

The first trip took place in May 1st. Director-General Wu led 244 teachers and students from National Taichung School for the Deaf, National Taoyuan Special School, National Miaoli Special School, the Affiliated School for Students with Hearing Impairments of National University of Tainan, National Hemei Experimental School, and National Pingtung Special Education School to the Panda House and had lunch with them after the tour.

During their visit, students were all having fun as they marched with Director-General Wu in the Panda House. He and others' involvement in these field trips reflected the Ministry of Education's perennial effort in caring for students with disabilities. After "meeting" Yuan Zai, he and the students watched a documentary on the birth of Yuan Zai. He hosted a quiz contest for the students to encourage them to learn more about pandas through these lively activities.

Deputy Director-General Huang, Tzu-Teng and the Chief Secretary Liu, Yuan-Ming of the K-12 Education Administration led the second and third trip to visit Yuan Zai respectively, on May 6th and May 8th, 2014. Participants of these two trips were students with different disabilities or disorders. Some were unable to move freely, and some even traveled from remote, if not rather secluded, areas, such as students from the special education school affiliated to the National Taitung University. These students probably never have the chance to visit places far away from where they live, or take the public transportation. In order to take part in this activity, they had to arrive in Taipei one day in advance. All of them overcame their physical and psychological obstacles with the assistance from their teachers and learned to communicate and get along with others in a new environment and participate in this life educational event.

