

## CAMILLE CHEN

THE NEW MEMBER OF OUR FAMILY OF  
VOLUNTEERS

Camille is an exchange student from China studying TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) at Victoria University of Wellington. Even though Camille's stay in New Zealand is only for five months, she finds time to volunteer with various organizations and here at MCLaSS, she is a valued volunteer at the Seniors' English class.

Most of Camille's time at MCLaSS is spent on helping senior students in their learning and as she puts it, 'being a bridge between the teacher and students whose first language is not English'. Naturally fluent in Mandarin, she is a great help to Mandarin speaking students and she herself being a non-native speaker of English, helps make the process of learning a new language a whole lot smoother for our students.

Her favourite part about volunteering with MCLaSS is working with adult students. Camille says, even though the students in the Seniors' English class have a very basic level of English, they are very diligent and it is fulfilling to see students grow in confidence as they progress in their learning.

Working with senior students at MCLaSS is good practice for her in her own journey to become a teacher of English. Volunteering with MCLaSS has also given her a great opportunity to practically apply the theories that she learns while studying TESOL. And Camille says, when she is overloaded with assignments and exams and feels drained, she always thinks of the 67-year-old making an effort to learn English against all odds, and is inspired to pull out all stops and give all she's got to her studies.

*"My journey of volunteering is amazing. I learn from the students, learn from their stories. Most of all, working with adult students, I learnt how important it is to persevere and that it's never too late to learn something"*

Camille thinks volunteering is a meaningful way of getting involved with the community, and an opportunity to connect and interact with different people. And she says, it is the most rewarding experience because volunteering always fills her with a sense of accomplishment. In her short period of stay in New Zealand, volunteering has helped her get out there and experience New Zealand to the fullest.

For Camille, her time at MCLaSS is a wonderful experience to remember New Zealand by.

