

CHINA

Disabled people find a ‘cozy haven’ in center

Community offers a range of services to vulnerable group

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Sunlight pours through the windows of Wenxin Jiayuan, literally “cozy haven”, a small but vibrant community center nestled in Dongzhimen subdistrict, Dongcheng district, Beijing. Inside, several residents with disabilities are weaving intricate knots, their fingers moving with precision and calm.

It is a scene that plays out daily in this quiet corner of the capital, one that reflects a broader commitment to improving lives.

Dongzhimen subdistrict is home to 1,541 residents with disabilities. From individuals with learning difficulties and hearing impairments to wheelchair users, many now benefit from a range of dedicated services aimed at fostering independence, skill building and community connection.

Those efforts were nationally recognised in May, when the subdistrict’s civil affairs office was named an “Advanced Collective in Disability Support” at China’s seventh National Model of Self-Improvement and Advanced Disability Support Commendation Conference.

“This honor reflects the work we’ve integrated into everyday community services,” said Kang Anqi, deputy director of the Dongzhimen subdistrict administrative committee. “Wenxin Jiayuan is the nearest and warmest support hub for our residents in need, and we continue to explore new ways to assist them.”

Echoing her, Deng Mei, head of the Disabled Persons’ Federation of Dongzhimen Subdistrict, who is in charge of the Wenxin Jiayuan, emphasized that supporting individ-



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Deng Mei, head of the Disabled Persons’ Federation of Dongzhimen Subdistrict in Beijing

uals with disabilities is like “an unceasing relay of warmth”.

“The recognition we received is like a torch that inspires us to keep going, to deepen community bonds and make small, steady progress,” she said.

Statistics showed that the street has attracted a combined fund of up to 1 million yuan (\$139,000) and partnered with 25 government bodies and private enterprises to develop training programs and improve accessibility, often guided by professional teams.

Inside the Wenxin Jiayuan, people with disabilities can be found making birthday cakes, crafting fashion accessories, exploring photography, or learning vocational skills.

A young man surnamed Cao, who has learning difficulties, enlisted for training of hotel service in tableware cleaning offered by the center, and achieved a job training certificate from Beijing Rosewood Hotel.

After earning his vocational certificate, he found employment at the nearby Beijing Oriental Mao

Hotel, which brought much joy and relief to his family.

Liu Shudong, a retired interpreter and researcher at Yonghe Temple, also known as Lama Temple, and a member of the Beijing History Research Association, was an active volunteer in the center.

“I’ve taught history, culture and etiquette there for the members three times a week, and what impressed me most was that the trainees prepared a big birthday cake in cold December last year for me to celebrate my 70th birthday after my class. ... At that moment I was impressed by their improvement and their love in response to our contribution,” she said.

Some local residents gaining support from the center expressed their sincere gratitude.

“It’s incredibly convenient to have bathing services right at your doorstep, with professional caregivers to assist,” said an elderly man surnamed Zhang, who has a physical disability, regarding the bathing assistance services provided to him.

Addressing the issue of difficulty in bathing for individuals with disabilities, the subdistrict has introduced professional institutions to offer home-based bathing services, catering to over 100 individuals throughout the year.

Statistics indicated the subdistrict provided services including daily care for the needy, besides a convenient canteen service with reasonable prices for up to 10,000 people.



Online
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Volunteer Liu Shudong cuts a birthday cake made for her by members of Wenxin Jiayuan in Beijing’s Dongcheng district. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Members enjoy painting at the community center in Dongzhimen Subdistrict.

Education blends with entertainment in Confucius’ birthplace

By **ZHAO RUIXUE**
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Tsin Yuhei, a 19-year-old freshman from City University of Hong Kong, carefully pressed a piece of paper onto an inscribed stone tablet at the Confucius Research Institute in Qufu, a county-level city of Jining, Shandong province.

With practiced strokes, she dabbed ink over the surface, gradually revealing four Chinese characters which mean “choose the good and follow it”.

“This phrase captures the essence of Confucian values,” Tsin said, examining her imprint.

“It teaches us to root our actions in goodness, to do what’s right, and to learn from virtuous people. Experiencing this ancient art form makes these lessons come alive, they are not just words in textbooks,” she said.

Tsin is among a group of university students from Hong Kong on a week-long study visit to Shandong during the summer vacation.

Since June, students of all ages, from wide-eyed primary schoolers to university students, have been flocking to this cradle of Chinese civilization, where Confucius was born over 2,500 years ago, to learn about Chi-



A guide introduces exhibits to Russian students at a museum in Qufu city, Shandong province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

nese culture. In early July, at the Ancient Architecture Museum behind the UNESCO-listed Kong Family Mansion, a group of Russian teenagers sat in focused silence, their paintbrushes tracing intricate patterns of the golden dragon and phoenix, both imperial decorative motifs from China’s architectural heritage.

Under expert guidance, they progressed through meticulous steps including sketching outlines, mixing mineral pigments, and finally bringing the designs to life.

At the Lu State National Archaeological Site Park, the Russian students gathered around a demonstration of rammed-earth techniques.

As instructor Mao Fuwei explained how ancient builders created earthquake-resistant structures 3,000 years ago, his words were translated into Russian in real time.

“Many young visitors asked how these walls built 3,000 years ago stand sturdy and stable,” Mao said, guiding students to compact soil

with wooden rammers. “When I see their amazement at our ancestors’ ingenuity, I feel tremendous cultural pride,” he said.

Capitalizing on its rich heritage, Qufu has developed immersive programs blending education with entertainment.

“We’ve moved beyond passive sightseeing,” said Kong Xiangsheng, director of the study tour program of Shandong Zhidao Culture and Tourism Development Co.

“Our archaeological exploration program allows students to experience the archaeological exploration process, while the Lu Ban Workshop teaches traditional woodworking — complete with miniature mortise-and-tenon joints for children to assemble,” Kong said.

These innovations respond to meticulous market research. This year, Qufu officials conducted surveys with international tourists, held educational exchanges in Hong Kong, and met with major travel agencies. The findings prompted tailored offerings such as calligraphy master classes and Confucian banquet culinary tours where visitors learn the philosophy behind dishes.

Even previously overlooked sites have found new life. The museum of steles of the Han (206 BC-AD 220)

and Wei (220-265) dynasties, once a quiet niche attraction, now draws crowds of Japanese and Korean calligraphy enthusiasts.

“These stone inscriptions are time capsules of Chinese script’s evolution,” said Xiu Xiaochun, director of Qufu Overseas International Travel Service Co.

In addition to traditional sites, the small town of Luyuan — known as the place where Confucius was born — has been transformed into an immersive open-air cultural zone where history breathes through interactive experiences.

At the town, visitors can participate in a wide range of activities including decoding millennia of aesthetics by trying on ancient Chinese attire and rolling bamboo slips to recreate the very medium that preserved Confucius’ teachings.

To accommodate growing international interest, Qufu has upgraded its services, setting up currency exchange counters and providing multilingual audio guides.

In the first half of this year, visits of international tourists to Qufu saw a year-on-year increase of 26.8 percent, according to the city government.

Cao Nan contributed to this story.

XINHUA

African students shine at China’s innovations event

NAIROBI — Lavenda Chepkirui, a 25-year-old student from Kenya’s University of Kabianga, has taken a step closer to realizing her vision of transforming agriculture in Africa with eco-friendly solutions.

Her invention — a biodegradable soil mulch film made from crop waste — earned her a gold medal at the inaugural Africa Division Contest of the China International College Students’ Innovation Competition 2025, which concluded last month in Nairobi, Kenya’s capital. “By applying the biodegradable film over the soil surface, farmers can increase their yields through eliminating weeds and conserving moisture,” Chepkirui told Xinhua at the award ceremony.

Chepkirui was among 559 students from 115 African universities

who submitted 185 innovation projects to the competition, hosted by China’s Nanjing Agricultural University. It marked the first time the event held a regional round on the African continent.

The submissions spanned a wide range of fields, from agricultural and food technologies to artificial intelligence and environmental sustainability. After expert evaluations, 30 teams from 21 universities across nine African countries received awards in various categories.

Chepkirui said the platform not only allowed her to showcase her idea but also offered invaluable mentorship.

“I received valuable expertise from my Chinese instructors on how to conceptualize and test my innovation in the farm fields,” she

said, expressing her hope to commercialize her product and offer farmers a sustainable alternative to plastic mulch, a major pollutant.

Beyond the lab, the journey was also personal. Growing up in a single-parent household in rural Kenya, Chepkirui said the experience helped her overcome early challenges and strengthened her resolve to make a difference.

Roselida Owuor, director-general of Kenya’s State Department for Science Research and Innovation, said the competition serves as a launchpad for African youth to develop homegrown solutions to the continent’s challenges. “Kenya is keen to nurture youth to commercialize their innovations through the establishment of innovation hubs across the country,” said Owuor.

Zhu Yan, vice-president of NAU, said the contest not only serves as a platform for Chinese and African youth to showcase their innovative wisdom but also stands as a vivid example of implementing the Belt and Road Initiative and deepening the construction of the China-Africa community with a shared future.

“We are delighted to see young students from both China and Africa jointly exploring innovative solutions focusing on sustainable development, technology empowerment, and livelihood improvement,” Zhu said. “It is part of our university’s mission to support global agricultural development and foster international youth exchange.”

The stories behind the winning projects also highlight how innovation, cultural exchange, and practi-

cal problem-solving are coming together to meet Africa’s evolving needs.

Silvia Christopher Mganga, a 27-year-old Tanzanian postgraduate student at Egerton University, was part of a gold medal-winning team that developed a tomato grafting project.

Her inspiration came from watching her parents struggle with crop losses as small-scale tomato farmers. “Our project combines Chinese rootstock with local tomato varieties, creating a product that is both disease resistant and high yielding,” Mganga said.

Tefera Efrata Tibebe, a 19-year-old information technology student from Ethiopia, helped create an award-winning robotic sorting arm using code-scanning technology. The silver medal-winning project aims to enhance efficiency in Africa’s logistics sector.

“Our goal is to improve Africa’s

Night tourism lights up Tianjin

TIANJIN — As night fell, coffee vendors prepared their stalls to soft melodies in the background while young office workers queued up, bringing the fourth Tianjin Coffee Culture Festival to its pinnacle. “It’s my time to unwind,” said Wang Chen, a local resident at the bustling night market. “The vibe here is fantastic, well worth the trip.”

Xia Lanying, general manager of Palm Tianjin, an organizer of the coffee festival featuring stalls showcasing crafts, art, and lifestyle products, said: “Today’s youth are redefining how and when they spend. We designed this space for both comfort and engagement.”

A young entrepreneur surnamed Tian saw the festival as more than a sales opportunity. “It’s our gateway to the city’s nightlife and nighttime consumers,” he noted. “Young people gather here for coffee, cold drinks and music on summer nights.”

In recent years, Tianjin has expanded its night economy through upgraded streets, displays of intangible cultural heritage, pop-up art, and immersive cultural experiences.

Citywide “bridge concerts”, Italian opera flash mobs, and traditional folk performances now turn urban areas into nocturnal stages across Tianjin.

On the Haihe River, tourist Liu Hao from Northwest China’s Xi’an in Shaanxi province marveled at the waterfront lights. “Like stepping into a 3D painting,” Liu said.

Demand for night cruises has surged with the arrival of the summer peak tourist season. According to the cruise operator, 29 boats operate over 70 nightly trips every night. Themed “performance cruises” featuring comedy or opera transform sightseeing into memorable experiences.

“Our boats are mobile cultural spaces,” said Zhang Shifang, deputy manager of Tianjin Jinlv Haihe Cruises.

At Tianjin’s Dongli Lake, an immersive lakeside show captivated audiences. “With the breeze, water and storytelling, it’s a comfort,” tourist Feng Nan said. Many linger afterward to explore nearby scenic areas.

Tianjin’s vibrancy mirrors China’s nighttime economy boom, with regions including Jiangsu, Sichuan and Chongqing enhancing offerings. “Nighttime cultural consumption has entered regional development strategies,” said Dai Bin, head of the China Tourism Academy.

A report from the academy indicates that 63 percent of China’s 5A-level scenic spots operated at night in 2024, up from 23 percent in 2020, with over one-third of national museums hosting after-dark events during summer. “Night tourism spurs innovation and expands industry boundaries,” Dai added. “Its future lies in cultural creativity and sustained, high-quality development.”

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