

The Beauty of Giving Back—Gigi Leung (1992)

An MCS Graduate is an open person who is becoming more concerned or interested in wider issues, community and world issues.

A Form 5 MCS graduate in 1992, Gigi Leung is a singer-actress who rose to fame at an early age and is now an icon of showbiz in Hong Kong, Taiwan and the mainland China. She will be holding her first concert in Beijing on this Christmas Eve along with the release of her new album.

When she was still a diploma student at the School of Design of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Gigi made her movie debut in *Doctor Mack* in 1995. Her outstanding performance and innocent look brought her an opportunity to star in another movie *Full Throttle*, co-starring with Andy Lau, and won her a nomination for Best Newcomer at the 1995 Hong Kong Film Awards. The following year she released her first album titled *Love Myself* which was a big hit.

Since 1995, Gigi has appeared in more than 30 movies and released over 30 albums. She is also the youngest-ever local to receive the "Ten Most Outstanding Youth Award" at the age of 27.

In the showbusiness for 15 years, her public influence can be reflected in a up-and-coming social media—Sina Weibo micro blog, which reaches the mainland citizens. Her micro blog account started with nearly 500,000 followers early this year and now has more than 2.1 million.

Recognising this, Gigi has been actively involved in charity work. She is the ambassador of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Hong Kong and some others. She has also formed the Hope Foundation, a non-profit organisation, to help children in need with her artist friends including Charlie Yeung. Most importantly of all, she has helped to build 8 primary schools for the poor children in the mainland China.

The Maryknoll Spirit is a willingness to share with others, fostering mutual support and trust

Gigi was with Maryknoll Convent School since primary one and she was deeply influenced by the selfless dedication of the Sisters. "The Sisters came all the way from the US to fulfil their education mission and treat us like their beloved daughters. At the end of the day, they don't

expect anything from us. Essentially, I grew up with the same mission.”

“At Maryknoll, we’re taught to think big, to serve others and never be a bookworm. In order to open our eyes, the school encouraged us to take part in voluntary social services.” She joined the Red Cross and visited community youth centres when she was a secondary school student.

“I take pride in being an artist who can influence my fans, or the public, to support various charity activities. The ability to give back to the society gives me a sense of fulfilment in life.”

It is Maryknoll Convent School's mission to provide experiences for students to develop healthily in a spiritual, intellectual, physical, psychological, asethetical and social way.

“The Sisters encourages us to develop our own interests apart from academic studies. They care more about our personal growth than sheer academic results.” She managed to strike a good balance between her academic study and extra curricula activities. “I was in the basketball team, partly because of my height,” she says with a grin.

Since she was a kid, Gigi was gifted in drawing and painting. “The two-hour art lesson was what I most looked forward to as I had a good teacher who gave us ample room to develop and expand our own ideas.”

When she was in Form 3, Gigi received a scholarship for recognising her outstanding performance in the art subject. “Although it was only 500 dollars, I could buy a complete new set of drawing tools. This was such a great encouragement and I could hardly forget.”

Seven years ago, Gigi founded the Gigi Leung Scholarship for her alma mater which is presented at the annual Speech Day. “I’m so happy and feeling warm to receive the thank you cards from the Scholarship recipients every year. I’m grateful to be able to give the same encouragement to the Maryknollers.”

Sweet memories of the school linger in her mind. “I like my uniform most, and also the red-brick school buildings. It made feel like I was getting into an ancient fortress every morning.” The quality time she spent was in the library. “It was located at a loft, with a very low ceiling. I quite enjoyed reading there as if it was my own universe.”

Three years ago, Gigi was invited to make a visit of the school. “It has changed a lot, with many new facilities and extensions.” What has not changed, however, is the school’s vision

and mission. "I take pride in being a Maryknoller not for the fame of the school but for its teaching us to give back to the society."