

An Education



Above: Audrey and her mother Nancy Lee, Back to Borrett Road Founding Patrons

Audrey Lee, Einstein, Class of 2013, like many Islanders left school hoping to make a difference. Here she talks about her advocacy work with not-for-profit organisations, that help people to get equal access to education and housing.

"I don't think I would have thought of working in nonprofit management if I hadn't been exposed to community service projects when I was a student. I joined a lot of different community service activities. I volunteered at the St. Barnabas' Society and Home, an NGO for the homeless in Hong Kong. It was something really meaningful and impactful," explains Audrey. Audrey's teachers also influenced her. "I hadn't really explored Philosophy or Religion, outside of school but once I started to study it, I just fell in love with the subject. Mr. Tony Williams' class was always interactive and very multimedia oriented. He constantly asked us questions like 'what do you think?' rather than 'this is what you were supposed to do', my classmates and I loved his class." "English Teacher Ms. Teri Eves was another teacher who had a big influence on me, she sharpened my passion for English Literature. When I had questions, whether it be academic or just in general, she always had the right advice and I loved talking to her."

The IB course is very academically challenging, but Audrey explains that Ms. Eves was very encouraging and always enthusiastic and gives a lot to her students, which made her learning experience positive. "I definitely had the idea that I was going to do an English degree, but as it turned out I did something completely different," said Audrey.

Audrey went on to Princeton University to study a degree in East Asian Studies. Later she enrolled in a year-long Americorps programme and was placed on a project that "*related to critical capacity and community issues,*" specifically education. As a City Service Corps Member she met with different stakeholders to better understand how the Department of Education's policies and guidelines could tackle their concerns and provide equitable access to educational opportunities. "I would go to a lot of different community board meetings and talk to a diverse group of stakeholders including teachers, parents

Audrey Lee



Above: Audrey and her Year 13 class. Third row, third from right.

and minority communities, to discuss issues related to the education system in the City, ranging from: the gifted and talented programmes, to diversity and integration subjects.

I am more aware of the educational inequalities that exist nowadays, but I also understand much better why education and access to education is such an important marker for future success.

It was an amazing experience, especially for someone who grew up in Hong Kong." With the outbreak of Covid Audrey came back to Hong Kong and started work at the charity *Habitat for Humanity*, a nonprofit organisation dedicated to raising awareness of the need for decent and affordable housing for families in need across the Asia-Pacific region. As Senior Programmes Officer she assisted their transitional housing policy planning

project. Which helps low-income groups and families living in subdivided flats who have not been able to move to public rental housing. "I had responsibility for planning and executing the local transitional housing project. It pairs unique design prototypes created by a local university with individuals and families in need of affordable housing."

When asked Audrey what a good day looks like for her professionally, she recalled her days in New York. "The office that I used to work at was a jail converted to office space. I loved the amazing [historical] atmosphere there. We would meet with different stakeholders; talked to student leaders to hear their thoughts; we would have a lot of brain-storming sessions with the team, and I would then go to Chinatown for lunch with my friends!"

Audrey's mother Nancy Lee, became a Back to Borrett Road Founding Patron this year. Well aware of the importance of education the family have decided to invest in the future of Island School.