

Date: 4/3/2023
Media: Young Post
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The Power of Mathematics Exploration: HLMA Winners Share Life Lessons

Leading up to the 2023 Hang Lung Mathematics Awards (HLMA), a sharing session was organized on 11 March which featured past winners, Dr. Brian Chung, 2010 Silver Award winner and Ms. Dorothy Cheng, 2016 Bronze Award winner. The session was moderated by Professor Shing Yu Leung, Associate Dean of Science at HKUST and over 100 students

signed up. Brian and Dorothy shared what they learned from their HLMA experience, their current work, and how mathematics has helped them in their careers.

After secondary school, Brian pursued a Ph.D. in Mathematics and is now working in finance in the U.K., while Dorothy is currently a Ph.D. student at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory in Heidelberg, Germany. With a strong foundation in mathematics, they have taken very different paths.

HLMA encourages participants to develop their own mathematical questions and conduct research independently or as part of a team, an approach different from traditional schools where students are being presented with mathematical problems and answers. The experience made Brian realize that there may be more than one answer to a mathematical problem and that exploring a topic may lead to more questions. The winners encouraged students to enjoy the learning opportunities, even if not all the questions are answered.

The research experience also helped Brian and Dorothy develop lifelong skills which are essential to their careers. Brian's work in finance is result-oriented with shorter timelines, whereas in academic research, studies may take several weeks, months or even years, but the same problem-solving and critical thinking skills are required.

"Studying math provides you with the skills to find solutions. With a strong foundation, I understand how to analyze and apply data," said Dorothy, about how mathematics has helped her current work in biology.

Both winners stressed the importance of approaching challenges with an open mind, which is key to their current work. They also emphasized the benefits of collaboration and sharing of ideas, which can lead to breakthroughs.

Brian and Dorothy encourage students to follow their interests and explore opportunities. The skills learned from mathematical explorations are lifelong and essential in different careers.



The biennial HLMA competition provides an opportunity for secondary school students to hone their research skills in mathematics and compete for a share of HK\$1 million in prizes. The deadline for registration is on 31 March. Don't miss the chance to deep dive into the fascinating world of mathematics and research! For 2023 HLMA registration, please scan the QR code below :

