

THU Aug 28, 2014 Updated: 12:49pm

Dietitian with a taste for social media and networking

Heather Chan
familypost@scmp.com

PUBLISHED : Sunday, 07 August, 2011, 12:00am

UPDATED : Sunday, 07 August, 2011, 12:00am

Name: Charmain Tan
Job: Registered dietitian and nutrition consultant

SHARE

Where did you go to school?

I went to the University of Texas Health Science Centre in Houston [for a BSc in nutrition and dietetics]. I am a registered dietitian in the US. When applying for my major, nutrition was where I wanted to go. But I followed others and went for nursing instead. After one semester, I found it wasn't what I wanted. So I changed my major to nutrition.

What is the secret of your success?

After graduating I was a clinical dietitian for almost nine years, so I worked mainly in hospitals. But after having a baby, I decided to work part-time, and became a private dietitian. In private practice you do a lot of community work. I also do a lot of out-patient work and consulting for nursing homes. What



0

Most Popular

[VIEWED](#) | [SHARED](#) | [COMMENTED](#)

US spy plane may have triggered Chinese jet interception by dropping sonar buoy: state media

Shanghai to San Francisco in 100

has been your most memorable experience as a dietitian?

My time at the hospital. After returning to Hong Kong, I worked at the Princess Margaret Hospital for two years. That was when I got to meet interdisciplinary groups. We worked as a team in the hospital setting, and I enjoyed that.

In private practice, I enjoy the fact that I work with people. Some of my clients have become my friends. I use my smartphone to keep in touch with them and make sure they are keeping to their diet and doing their exercises.

What is the best thing about being a dietitian?

The way I do business right now is more like networking. I keep e-mail and Facebook open. I have found that in one-to-one consultations, the time can be too limited.

The next session might not be for another one to two weeks or even one month. Sometimes I need to follow up with them. So these new applications help me.

Because of the popularity of health checks, many people know when they are obese or overweight and whether their cholesterol or blood sugar levels are high. So they know how to find dietitians themselves. They don't wait for doctors to refer them. Before that, we were hesitant to accept patients who came without a doctor's referral. But now people like to look for their own dietitian.

What is the most important thing you have learnt over the years?

Probably communication. I used to be a very quiet person but dietitians need to talk a lot. I do a lot of public speaking, so there's no way I can be shy. How you communicate with your clients and deliver a speech is very important.

What would be your advice to people who are thinking of becoming dietitians?

The work of dietitians is changing. There are not a lot of vacancies in hospitals now. But clinical experience is very important before you can do something else. I suggest that graduates try to find a job in a clinical setting to get more experience. Then from there you can go into private practice, research or education.

Email

Print

RELATED TOPICS

Health
Dietetics
Nutrition

RELATED ARTICLES

Pfizer trial shows experimental drug doubles time until breast cancer tumours grow worse

7 Apr 2014 - 4:52pm

Doctors attacked by knife-wielding patient in Shanghai, latest in series of assaults on medics

21 Mar 2014 - 5:00pm

Teaching pupils about benefits of rest has no effect on their sleeping habits: study

14 Mar 2014 - 6:15pm

Weeping doctor paraded around hospital by angry mob after patient dies

6 Mar 2014 - 5:07pm

minutes by Chinese supersonic submarine

Cyber queue-jumper snapped up HK\$100 Cathay tickets while 150,000 waited in line

Pan-democrats vow to fight 'more stringent than expected' NPC 2017 poll plan

Anti-corruption officers swoop on Jimmy Lai's home

We recommend



NEWS

Irish force foreign woman into caesarian birth at 25 weeks

18 Aug 2014



NEWS

In new tack, Japanese police target teens selling sex, not their...

22 Aug 2014



NEWS

Malaysia Airlines steward put hand down my pants, weeping passenger...

25 Aug 2014



NEWS

24 years on, an arrest at last in witness murder case

What is the main message you have about nutrition?

I have seen people working long hours and having their dinner late at night. They probably stay up late, too. Our eating habits and exercise all have to adapt to our daily life. It's a good idea to walk more to increase your daily activity.

You founded the Hong Kong Nutrition Support Interest Group. Why did you think this group was necessary?

When I came back to Hong Kong in 1995, I was the only certified nutrition support dietitian here. Nutrition support means artificial feeding through the nose, tube feeding, techniques like that.

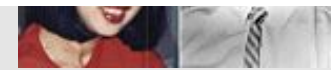
My boss and my colleagues, along with the doctors in the hospital, liked me to share my knowledge with them. The dietitians in Hong Kong want more knowledge of nutrition support.

So I formed an interest group and we met once a month to share our ideas with each other.

HKU SPACE offers an Advanced Certificate in Nutrition; for details visit <http://hkuspace.hku.hk/prog/adv-cert-in-nutrition>. Students can advance to earn a Bachelor of Science (honours) food and nutrition. For entry requirements, visit <http://hkuspace.hku.hk/prog/bsc-hon-in-food-and-nutrition#general-inform....>

Organ donor saves two lives as doctors perform ground-breaking operation

27 Feb 2014 - 1:57pm



16 Aug 2014



LIFESTYLE

Doubts raised about using Putonghua as medium of instruction for...

17 Aug 2014



COMMENT

Guo Meimei scandal shows Chinese Red Cross must clean up its act

11 Aug 2014



LIFESTYLE

Thousands of Hongkongers join sex club to fulfil their X-rated...

04 Aug 2014



LIFESTYLE

Fight star wants to knock out films' image of Asians

17 Aug 2014



LIFESTYLE

Top tips to turbocharge your metabolism

25 Aug 2014



COMMENT

Prostitution thrives as officials say one thing and do another

For unlimited access to:

SCMP.com

SCMP Tablet Edition

SCMP Mobile Edition

10-year news archive

Subscribe now

Existing subscribers, [login here](#)

FROM SCMP (LAST 24HRS)



BUSINESS

Garage sale on cards as fund managers make room for Alibaba

27 AUG 2014



PROPERTY

South Korea's homebuyers buoyed by eased mortgage curbs

27 AUG 2014



PROPERTY

US home flips dwindle as bargains dry up

27 AUG 2014



SCMP

A Rose Reborn – Creation of a Better World

27 AUG 2014



SCMP

Worse than David Moyes? Louis van Gaal's United hit new low with...

27 AUG 2014

MULTIMEDIA



ASIA

Viral video of Chinese official harassing woman on train

10 Jul 2014



YOUTUBE

See Why Velda Shops Only With Paypal

09 Jul 2014



HONG KONG

No jet skis, no bikinis -- welcome to Baywatch, Gaza style



BBC

Can a film be banned in the US?



10 Aug 2014



BUSINESS

Airbus to test-run newest passenger aircraft in Hong Kong

30 Jul 2014



SPORT

French athlete loses gold medal for removing his shirt before...

15 Aug 2014



COMMENT

Ice Bucket Challenge is for charity ... and politicking

24 Aug 2014



PROPERTY

For sale: HK\$819m house on Hong Kong's Peak is world's most expensive...

07 Aug 2014



COMMENT

Meat of the McDonald's problem lost in McFlurry

01 Aug 2014

Recommended by



24 Aug 2014



CHINA
World leaders mark
WWI centenary in
Belgium's Liege

05 Aug 2014



27 Jun 2014



KNOWMORETV
How Sugar Wreaks
Havoc With Your Heart

16 Jun 2014



ASIA
'I like to show off':
Chinese celebrity Guo
Meimei confesses to...

04 Aug 2014



CNN HEALTH
You want believe their
'after' pics: Couple shed
280n pounds

14 Jul 2014



WORLD
How two men have spent
decades rescuing snakes
in Hong Kong

30 Jun 2014

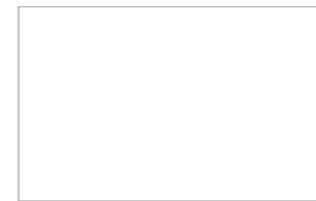


**REVIEWED: LATEST
ARTICLES**
Scientists Defy Physics,
Make No-Freeze Ice
Cream

24 Jul 2014

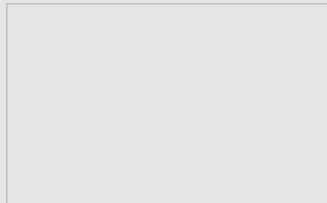
Recommended by 

Promotions

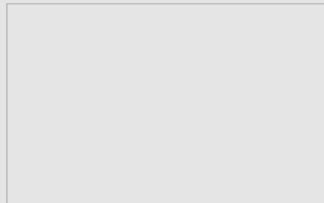


48 Hours
giveaway – Ice
Hockey training
course

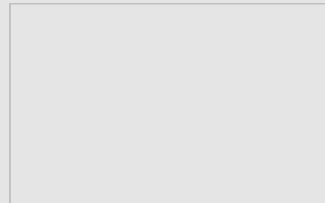
In Case You Missed It



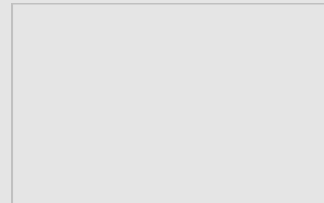
In the eye of the storm: How deadly typhoons have changed the face of Hong Kong



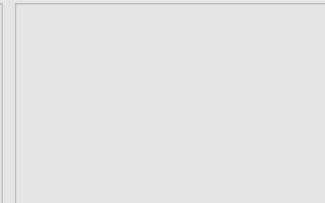
Chic Chat with Hugh Jackman



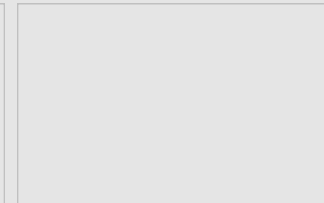
The forgotten army of the first world war: How Chinese labourers helped shape Europe



INFOGRAPHIC: Why China is the real winner at the World Cup



Multimedia: Edward Snowden in Hong Kong



Voices from Tiananmen: Eyewitnesses look back to the spring of 1989

Sections

Hong Kong News
Asia News
China News
China Insider
China Digest

Technology
Sport
Property
Photos
Video

Racing Post
Young Post
南华早报中文网
Weather
Most popular

Subscriptions

South China Morning Post
SCMP.com
Corporate subscriptions

Find a Job
Career Centre

Find a course
Featured Institutions
The MBA Centre

Services

[World News](#)
[Business](#)
[Money](#)
[Comment](#)
[Insight & Opinion](#)
[Blogs](#)
[Lifestyle](#)

[Magazines](#)
[Post Magazine](#)
[Style](#)
[Money](#)
[Good Eating](#)
[Faces](#)
[48 Hours](#)

[Homepage Time Machine](#)
[7 Day Index](#)
[Crossword](#)
[Sudoku](#)
[Bridge Puzzle](#)
[Promotions](#)
[Special Reports](#)

[SCMP Mobile Edition](#)
[SCMP Tablet Edition](#)
[SCMP ePaper Edition](#)
[Buy SCMP Photos](#)
[Copyright Licensing](#)
[10-Year News Archive](#)

[Find a Job](#)
[Catering, Hotel & Tourism](#)
[Retail](#)

[Directories](#)

[At Your Service](#)
[Business Services](#)
[HK Restaurant Directory](#)
[Mice Biz](#)
[The Directory](#)
[LuxeHomes](#)

[Advertising Opportunities](#)

[Hong Kong Rate Card](#)
[Overseas Rate Card](#)
[China Rate Card](#)
[The Marketer](#)
[SCMP Marketing Solutions](#)
[Recruitment Advertising](#)
[SCMP Outdoor Media](#)

[Events](#)

[SCMP Events](#)
[Operation Santa Claus](#)
[Homes For Hope](#)

[Magazines](#)

[Cosmopolitan](#)
[CosmoGIRL!](#)
[Elle](#)
[Harpers Bazaar](#)
[HK Magazine](#)
[The List](#)
[Destination Macau](#)

[Connect with Us](#)

[SCMP on Facebook](#)
[SCMP on Twitter](#)
[Newsletters](#)
[RSS](#)