

Girls High School exclaimed, “Being here at the National Central Library has made me realize that there really is a lot more to know. I need to work harder at my studies.” This is precisely the reason that NCL decided to allow high school students to enter—so that the seeds of research and scholarship could be sown in younger and younger hearts.

In the past, due to NCL’s focus on research and scholarship, target patrons were naturally those with the ability and interest in such pursuits. The minimum age requirement was set at 19 (or younger if enrolled in a university or college). When it was announced that this requirement would be lowered to 16, some reacted with suspicion, worrying that high school students would change the strong research atmosphere in the library. In speaking with high school students who applied for library cards, many expressed their clear understanding of NCL’s purpose and stated that they came to apply for a card because, unlike school or community libraries, NCL has resources and databases that will assist them in their studies and research. NCL has plans to continue adding to its already extensive collections and databases, as well as addressing specific needs of different user age groups. In keeping abreast of developments in other national libraries throughout the world, NCL expects to establish a National Youth Library and a National Children’s Library.

■ *NCL’s Reading Theater Ignites Passion in over 100 Viewers*

In conjunction with the lowering of the minimum age requirement on July 1st, and as a way to encourage more reading by the public, NCL held a special series of events over the summer. From July 9 to August 27, five movies that encourage reading were shown to the public as part of “Books in Movies: Beat the Heat.” Activities began on July 9th by showing the documentary *The Hobart Shakespearians*, with Chu Wen-hui

leading the discussion. Chu first recounted the main points of the documentary, including Mr. Rafe Esquith’s adherence to his educational principles, the variety of ways that can pique kids’ interest in reading, and the benefits of an in-depth reading of world classics. The audience then viewed the documentary and saw how one teacher can create a passion in students. Many were obviously touched by the message. Chu’s offered a few insightful comments after the documentary was over that highlighted the readability of Shakespeare’s works and the importance of reading a variety of genres, which proved to increase everyone’s desire to read more.

The efforts of Mr. Esquith in promoting reading mirror, in part, those outlined the NCL’s Director-general Tseng, who believes that parents and teachers should more proactively encourage children to read, to get in the habit of reading, and to read a variety of books. Also, the length of books read should increase with age, instead of getting stuck on comics. Reading essays, stories, and novels are all excellent ways to improve reading skills. The Director-general also went a step further to encourage people to have a set time for reading—complete and buy at least one book a month. Reading must become an important, indispensable element in our lives.



Chu Wen-hui leads the discussion of “Rafe Esquith and The Hobart Shakespearians”