

Shirley Kan and Sun Yat Sen

Start with an educator and history buff. Add one move from Hong Kong to Singapore. Mix well with a love of volunteering, and you've got Shirley Kan, one of FOM's fabulous docents.

Before moving here with her husband and two children just over six years ago, Shirley was a secondary school history teacher. Like many expats, she found herself in a new role -- full-time mom. When her youngest started school, Shirley went back to school as well, to become an FOM docent at the National Museum of Singapore. NMS was Shirley's foundation for getting to know Singapore's history. It also enabled her to compare the histories of her old and new homes, both former British colonies. She fell in love with NMS, and passed that love along to her children.

Shirley's involvement with FOM only grew from there. She also became a docent at the Sun Yat Sen National Memorial Hall and will complete docent training at the Malay Heritage Center in July 2019. She's helped with research for exhibitions at both museums. At NMS, she's been on the docent training team and served as an evaluator and mentor. At SYSNMH, she has been co-head of training, serves as the docent scheduler, and helps in the student guide training program.

Shirley feels a special obligation to help others understand Singapore's Chinese community and its contributions. She's even been known to give tours of NMS and SYSNMH in Cantonese to the elderly, Cantonese-speaking parents of tour group members who made a special request.

While she loves NMS, Shirley's favorite museum is SYSNMH. She relishes the fact that Sun Yat Sen actually stayed there and feels his presence whenever she passes by his bedroom.

FOM has enabled Shirley to burnish the research and presentation skills she'd developed in her Hong Kong teaching years. It also has helped her to understand different cultures and enhance her sense of empathy. She values the passion and abilities of her fellow FOM members and the compassion they show one another. The friends she has made through FOM are now her best friends in Singapore.