

CHINA

Stories of success warm hearts

Students overcome disabilities and accidents to gain top marks in exam

By ZHU LIXIN in Hefei and DENG RUI in Chongqing

As the results of this year's college entrance examinations, or *gaokao*, are released across the country, the stories of some of the candidates are warming the hearts of many people.

Take Deng Xiansong from Southwest China's Chongqing for example. His parents were thrilled to learn that their son had scored 592 out of a possible 750 points, and although the young student himself took things in his stride, his result is sufficient to gain him admittance to a high-ranking university.

When he was 3, Deng was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease, a rare, incurable condition also known as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. The progressive condition attacks the nerve cells that control muscles, and when he was 10, Deng lost the ability to walk.

Although he cannot play basketball himself, like many of his classmates, he is an NBA fan. His favorite player is Stephen Curry, who he says "is not tall compared to the others, but very good at making three-point shots".

The disease has also deformed his fingers, making writing difficult. Prior to the three-day examination, which began on June 7, his father had planned to ask for a half-hour extension for each of the six tests on his behalf, but Deng refused.

"He told me that he could manage. He's very wary of being treated differently," Deng Jun said, adding that his 18-year-old son has benefited from some special arrangements in the past.

Because climbing stairs was



Zhou Tong (second from right) and his classmates at a park in Huoqiu county, Anhui province. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

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Deng Jun, Deng Xiansong's father

impossible, from primary school to high school Deng's classes were always held in first-floor classrooms and during school, which lasted from 8 am to 5 pm, he drank as little water as possible because going to the toilet was complicated.

"When other students went to play sports, or to the computer rooms and the laboratories, my son had to remain in his classroom alone in his wheelchair," Deng Jun said.

After school, the boy continued studying at home and rarely went to bed before 11 pm. While his father continued to work as a mathematics

teacher at his high school, Deng's mother, Xian Jie, quit her job to take care of him. "Occasionally, he loses his temper, but he always calms down quickly and apologizes," she said.

The story of Zhou Tong, who comes from the eastern province of Anhui, has also been touching hearts.

The student at the No 1 High School in Huoqiu county scored 684 out of 750 and said that he is satisfied with his performance, which comes despite a more than six-month absence from the classroom due to an accident. He hopes his score will be enough to gain him entrance to Beijing's Tsinghua University.

Back in 2019, Zhou's left leg was crushed when a truck accidentally ran onto the sidewalk. According to the report that appeared in the China Youth Daily, the driver panicked and was unable to help.

So, despite the severity of his accident and unable to feel anything in his left leg, Zhou calmly took care of matters himself. He pulled his wounded leg toward him, removed the lace from his shoe and used it to

bind the wound. Then, he called the police.

His teachers, who rushed to the hospital to see him, said they were shocked by what had happened.

Over the next six months, Zhou received multiple surgeries, but doctors were unable to save the lower half of the damaged leg, which had to be amputated.

Now 18, he lives with a sister and his grandmother in a village. "His parents migrated to the city for work," said Li Jiasheng, Zhou's head teacher.

He was determined not to allow the accident to deprive him of a future. Two days after he was taken to the hospital, and still in intensive care, Zhou asked his aunt to bring him his schoolbooks, so that he could keep studying. His six teachers and 39 classmates all began to take turns helping him, and this allowed him to sit the exams, for which Zhou said he will always be grateful.

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Shanxi aims for trade hub status through international trains

By SUN RUISHENG in Taiyuan and ZHOU HUIYING

A freight train hauling 50 containers of cargo worth 12 million yuan (\$1.87 million) began an 11,000-kilometer journey on June 2 from Zhongding Logistics Park in Jinzhong city, Shanxi province, to Paris, marking the launch of the first freight route between the northern Chinese province and France.

The train left via Ereenhot in northern China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region and traveled through Mongolia, Russia, Belarus, Poland and Germany before arriving at its destination on Monday.

The new freight rail service is operated by Shanxi Jinou Logistics. "The train carries over 700 metric tons of goods, including fitness equipment, clothing, shoes and nearly 90,000 syringes," said Wang Guoqing, a company manager.

"The goods will help meet the needs for daily necessities and medical supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic, and around 30 percent are made in Shanxi."

"On the return trip, it will be loaded with timber for local construction and timber processing companies in Shanxi," he said. "The train is expected to complete 100 return trips carrying timber from Europe this year, and we will set up timber trading centers in Shanxi and other regions in North China to serve local markets."

Since being founded in 2017, the company now operates nine international freight routes between Shanxi and 26 cities in 11 European countries involved

in the Belt and Road Initiative.

In its first year, the company dispatched 10 freight trains, a figure that increased to 206 last year.

300 freight trains

are set to be operated by Shanxi Jinou Logistics this year.

Various goods, including daily necessities, machinery, ceramics, and cotton yarn are sent abroad, opening up a new international logistics mode that has also helped promote the "Made in Shanxi" brand.

As of June 2, the company had handled 74 China-Europe freight trains and 7,148 containers, a 48 percent increase on the same period last year. "At present, around three China-Europe freight trains depart from Zhongding Logistics Park every week," said Zhou Zhifei, vice-general manager of the park. "And we are also planning new routes to countries like Spain, Belgium and Denmark."

In future, Jinou aims to turn Shanxi into an assembly hub for China-Europe freight train services and has set a goal of operating 300 trains this year, improving the province's ability to serve foreign trade and import and export enterprises, and making greater contributions to the high-quality transformation and development of the economy, the company said.

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Shenzhen maintains edge and ramps up funding for scientific R&D

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Huang Kai joined the Shenzhen Bay Laboratory, or SZBL, a newly established government-backed institute that focuses on the development of the biochemistry sector from fundamental research to transformative achievement potential, in 2020.

The 33-year-old postdoctoral researcher, whose studies took place at Northwestern University in the United States, is working on a type of software capable of stimulating DNA folding in a three-dimensional space. He believes that China is in great need of advanced biochemical calculation software, according to a report from Economic Daily.

"Neither universities nor companies can develop the software independently because it's hard for the universities to produce papers and it takes too much time for companies to generate profits," Huang told the Beijing-based newspaper. "Only new-style research institutes like SZBL can undertake the tasks. That's why I chose Shenzhen."

Shenzhen, a Chinese vanguard in reform and opening-up located in South China's Guangdong province, has set a goal to become a city of innovation and creativity with global influence, according to Wang Weizhong, Party secretary of the city.

The city is home to a group of world-leading high-tech companies such as telecommunications giant Huawei Technology, internet company Tencent, medical device provider Mindray, new energy vehicle manufacturer BYD and commercial and civilian drone developer DJI.

Research, industry and talent should be interactively connected and supported in the systematic project of innovation, Economic Daily quoted Wang as saying.

He noted the city has advantages in its industrial system and innovation environment, but the integrity and synergy of the industry must be improved.

To enhance innovational capability from the very beginning would be a decisive move that could lead to an apparent advantage in the competition, Wang said, adding that the city will develop fundamental research and applied basic research.



Xili Lake International Science and Education City is among the key projects that support Shenzhen's efforts to advance the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



From left: An innovation center near Shenzhen Bay has become a magnet for innovators from around the world to start up their businesses. Researchers work at the National Supercomputing Center in Shenzhen.



"We have learned from experience that only by embracing key and core technologies can we take control of the initiative of innovation and development," Wang said when addressing the root technical problems.

The city government has allocated at least 30 percent of the city-level scientific development and research funds to fundamental and applied basic research since 2018, Wang said. The proportion was fixed through a local law in 2020.

As a result, the city's fiscal inputs in these types of research reached 2.8 billion yuan (\$433.4 million) and

4.8 billion yuan in 2018 and 2019 respectively, accounting for 30 percent and 37.2 percent of the city-level funds that went to the research and development sector. In 2020, the amount increased to nearly 5 billion yuan, representing 42.7 percent of the city-level expenditure on R&D, official data show.

The total investment in R&D from all channels in Shenzhen surged from 73.2 billion yuan in 2015 to 136 billion yuan last year. The figure in 2020 accounted for 4.9 percent of its GDP, a level equal to or even better than some developed countries.

According to a government mid-to-long-term plan for 2025-35, issued on June 9, the R&D investment in Shenzhen is projected to be further raised to 200 billion yuan in 2025, accounting for 5 percent of its GDP.

"The dynamic innovation system and generous financial inputs of Shenzhen allow scientists to explore freely to their hearts' content," said Hu Xiaojun, Party secretary of SZBL.

More than 60 high-level laboratories and R&D institutes as well as more than 2,700 innovational platforms and entities have been set up

in Shenzhen, according to official statistics.

Meanwhile, the city, though facing a land shortage problem to prop up further industrial development, has designated the best locations to build universities and scientific parks.

The young city, which was officially established in 1979, opened its first university in 1983. Now a couple of domestically leading universities, including Peking University and Tsinghua University, have set up campuses for graduate schools in Shenzhen.

Together with some new universities, a total of 15 colleges and universities operate in the city with about 113,200 full-time students. The city is expected to add an additional five universities in the next five years to establish a stronger reserve of talent, according to the government plan.

The latest rankings for young universities by Times Higher Education show, Southern University of Science and Technology, also known as SUSTech, founded in 2010 in Shenzhen, has entered the top 30 in the world and placed first on the Chinese mainland.

Xu Zhenghe, dean of College of Engineering at SUSTech, said the research-based university has developed a flexible system to encourage innovation of the faculties.

They are allowed to work on their technological research and practices outside the university one day every week, Xu said.

The scientific achievements of the faculties can be priced in shares in a company so that the faculties, the university and the company can all enjoy the benefits of the cooperation, he added.

Wu Delin, Party secretary of the Shenzhen campus of Harbin Institute of Technology, said the school has set up more than 60 laboratories together with a group of famous companies, including Tencent, telecommunications leader ZTE and BGI, a world leading life science and genomics organization. Meanwhile, it has built industry research bases with another 60 companies.

The university has opened its large-scale instruments and equipment to the companies and solved more than 1,400 technical problems for them, Wu said.

Members of the Communist Party of China have also played an important role in innovative research in Shenzhen.

Teng Chao, a distinguished professor of the applied technology department at Shenzhen Polytechnic, has led his team to develop a new kind of polyimide alignment agent, which is a key material in producing liquid crystal display.

Teng said the spirit of the CPC inspires him to conquer the technical difficulties.