

Home Cooking and a Warm Chat: MAC Minister Chang Joins Mainland Spouses for a Lunar New Year Eve Dinner

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Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) Minister Chang Hsiao-yueh cares for mainland Chinese spouses living in Taiwan. As the year comes to a close, she invited several Mainland spouses to join a Lunar New Year Eve dinner at a restaurant opened by a Mainland spouse and to share the New Year's customs and cuisine of their homelands. Minister Chang also expressed concern for the living situation of Mainland spouses in Taiwan and listened to everyone's hopes.

The restaurant hosting the dinner is located near Neihu Technology Park and has achieved some fame in online food circles. The owner Li Xue, a native of Shaanxi, mainland China, was originally a Dunhuang dancer. She met her spouse, Mr. Hsieh, through a cross-Strait cultural exchange, and decided to follow her heart coming to a completely unfamiliar land. After moving to Taiwan, Ms. Li began to miss her mom's home cooking. To cure her homesickness, she made her first jar of pickled chili peppers using chilies from Hualien and Taitung and top-grade spices from Sichuan. Little did she know that this would be the start of new career. With the encouragement of her husband and good friends, Ms. Li entered the restaurant business. She faced numerous setbacks along the way, but by sticking to her principle of "making her parent's food for everyone to eat," she succeeded in winning the stomachs with hearts of people in Taiwan.

According to statistics from the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), there are about 330,000 cross-Strait married couples, about 190,000 of which are living in Taiwan. Every Mainland spouse in Taiwan has her own story and has worked hard to integrate into Taiwanese society. Among the Mainland spouses joining the dinner with Minister Chang were Li Yonghong, Li Dan, Zhang Yan, Mai Weitang, and Zong Jumei. Since marrying, these daughters-in-law of Taiwan have shined in their life journeys through their own efforts and with family support. For example, Ms. Li Yonghong experienced two miscarriages and contracted cancer. Through strength of will, she succeeded in beating the cancer and was chosen by the Formosa Cancer Foundation as the Sixth Anti-Cancer Crusader in 2012. Since then, Ms. Lee has been dedicated to social welfare activities. Ms. Zong is the chairperson of an organization for Mainland spouses and has always given first priority to serve Mainland spouses. Ms. Mai is an excellent cook and derives her greatest happiness from making delicious meals for her family. Ms. Zhang Yan, originally a high-level manager, decided to cross the

ocean and start afresh in Taiwan to raise her children and care for her in-laws. Ms. Li Dan says her greatest happiness is to be with her daughter as she grows.

Minister Chang enjoyed a friendly chat with the attending Mainland spouses. The participants shared their life experiences and happily talked about the New Year's customs of their homeland. Minister Chang wished a happy New Year not only to all of the participating spouses, but to all families formed by cross-Strait marriages as well. She hoped that every married cross-Strait couple would find the utmost happiness, courageously face life's challenges, and write a bright chapter for themselves and their families. True to the spirit of caring for Mainland spouses, the MAC will also continue to promote policies to help cross-Strait families and to strengthen guidance measures for Mainland spouses in Taiwan, providing warm support for these moving stories written through cross-Strait exchanges.