



Chi-hin: "I am now in charge of the salad bar all by myself and find the job very satisfying. I give 100 marks to my job."

Empowering youth through holistic vocational training and life planning

Three major schemes to support autistic youth

The demand for vocational training and employment services has ever been increasing. Heep Hong Society has implemented three vocational training schemes under the STAR Project to provide holistic support for autistic youth over 15 years old. These schemes are: "A Holistic Employment Support Scheme for

High-functioning Adolescents and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders" sponsored by The Community Chest of Hong Kong, "Employment Support for High Functioning Individuals with ASD and Their Parents/Caretakers" sponsored by The Hong Kong Jockey Club, and the most recent "Pilot Project on Strengthening Support for Persons with Autism and their Parents/Carers" (SSAP) sponsored by the Social Welfare Department. Our services include career planning, vocational assessment and training, internship, career matching and workplace support helping the autistic youth in areas such as academic adjustment, gender relations, social communication and family relationships. All three schemes are carried out by our social workers, occupational therapists and psychologists benefitting more than 500 youth. From October 2018, the Social Welfare Department will regularise the SSAP in order to enhance the youth's life skills, social communication and vocational skills, as well as to support their carers.

Chi-hin, aged 23, joined our STAR Project in 2015 as a trainee. Referred by our social worker, he was then hired by Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong as a part-time kitchen assistant in their staff canteen. Our professional team visits his workplace and follows up on his situation on a regular basis. Having worked at the hotel for a year, Chi-hin's performance has impressed his seniors, and the hotel increased his working days. With the encouragement from his seniors and assistance from the social workers, Chi-hin is passionate about his job and no longer dislikes working.



Occupational therapists give recommendations on the adjustment of the workplace environment and supportive measures to enhance our youth's performance.

Personal pre-job training boosts employability

In the past, Chi-hin lacked initiative to learn and was unsure about his career path. He once had a cleaning job in a fast food restaurant but was often absent without reasons. Our social worker kept encouraging him to try out new jobs in the catering industry, and later referred him to Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong where he was eventually hired as a kitchen assistant. Our cross-disciplinary professional team has been following up Chi-hin's performance at work regularly. The results have been encouraging. Our occupational therapist assessed his working skills as adequate and his problem-solving skills improved. He could work in accordance with instructions and now manages the salad bar by himself. His supervisor, Chef Yeung, praised Chi-hin for his humble attitude and increased his working days from half-days to two full days in order to help him ease into a full-time career. Chi-hin has developed a passion for his job.

Personal growth and family support

Autistic youth require diversified support for their growth in aspects such as financial management and social interaction. Our social workers of SSAP taught Chi-hin essential financial management skills. The STAR Project organises social gatherings and recreational activities for their youth trainees so that they can make friends and build a social network for mutual support. In terms of personal growth, psychologists and social workers meet with the youth and provide counselling. Furthermore, the STAR Project also addresses the needs of the parents through parent workshops and family activities to provide a platform for families to share experience and gain positive energy.

Mentorship scheme encourages social integration

Autistic youth face various challenges in their personal growth and employment. Through our one-on-one mentorship scheme, each of our youth trainees is assigned a mentor, who share their life experience and become a buddy to them. The voluntary mentors keep in touch with trainees and participate in activities organised by the Society. They also communicate the situation of the youth to our social workers. This scheme was so well-received that about 70 mentors were recruited last year.



Voluntary mentors establish friendship with our trainees through activities.

Professional support and consultation for practitioners

SSAP provides professional consultation service for rehabilitation organisations and assistance to cases of autistic youth with behavioural and emotional issues. In the past year, the Society organised around 10 sharing sessions to introduce to co-workers and parents the characteristics and special needs of autistic individuals. The project set up a hotline and on-site consultation service. We collaborated with rehabilitation service organisations to hold the "SEN Career Planning" seminar attended by more than 240 practitioners and teachers from Hong Kong, mainland China and Macau to exchange experience in counseling.

Extending services to more SEN youth

With the solid experience in supporting autistic youth with the existing service model, we will extend our employment support programme to serve youth with other special education needs (SEN) such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and dyslexia. The newly built Heep Hong Society Integrated Service Complex will be the major service point to provide holistic support. It is expected to serve more than 1,000 youth.



The youth learn how to operate as a team and resolve problems through adventurous activities.

Sandy Bay Early Education Training Centre now in operation

The Heep Hong Society Integrated Service Complex (ISC) is the first of its kind in Hong Kong providing one-stop education and training services for children and youth with diverse needs.

Located in the ISC, the Sandy Bay Early Education Training Centre commenced services in October 2017. The Centre offers a total of 180 places as the largest Early Education and Training Centre (EETC) in Hong Kong. The ISC is equipped with various training facilities providing occupational therapy, speech therapy and physiotherapy services, as well as other special needs educational tools and resources.

More about ISC



The new Sandy Bay Centre is the largest EETC in Hong Kong.

Project PRETERM kicks off



Project PRETERM, organised by Heep Hong Society and sponsored by Mead Johnson Nutrition Community Care Program, was launched on the World Prematurity Day on 17 November.

Designed by Heep Hong Society's team of physiotherapists, Project PRETERM establishes the first and most comprehensive platform to support premature babies in Hong Kong through an informative webpage that answers frequently asked questions and provides expert tips, a series of seminars for parents, and home training practice sessions. The Project aims to arouse parents' awareness of the developmental difficulties of premature babies and provide holistic support for the parents, so that preterm infants can receive appropriate training as early as possible in their golden learning period.



Early intervention and home training effectively facilitate premature babies' physical development.

More about Project PRETERM



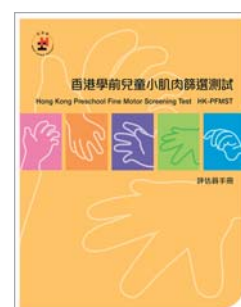
Occupational therapist team publishes HK-PFMST

Sponsored by the Social Welfare Development Fund, our occupational therapist team published the *Hong Kong Preschool Fine Motor Screening Test* (HK-PFMST) in October, providing an effective set of tools to assess the fine motor development of pre-school children. Held on 19 October, the conference was attended by around 120 occupational therapists who gave positive remarks on the research findings and the conference. This is a recognition of the contribution made by our occupational therapist team to the sector.

The HK-PFMST *Examiners' Manual* is used in identifying the potential difficulties in the fine motor development of children aged two-and-a-half to six years and in the follow-up. The HK-PFMST kit comprises the *Examiners' Manual*, assessment record sheets and assessment tools in order to provide occupational therapists with a standardised and localised tool which is both practical and effective.



Speakers include (from left) Dr Cynthia Lai, Assistant Professor of the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences in the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Ms Ho Yee-wan, the Society's Occupational Therapy Supervisor, and Mr Lam Wai-hon, the Society's Occupational Therapist.



HK-PFMST Examiners' Manual
Price: HK\$640

“Be a Santa • Sharing your Christmas Love” campaign

Being healthy, happy and smart is parents' common wish for their children. However, some children may not be able to express themselves, understand or get along with others. Their development is fraught with frustration.

This Christmas, Heep Hong Society launched “Be a Santa • Share your Christmas Love” in collaboration with corporate partners to share blessings to children and youth in special needs.

Thanks to the support from Computime Limited, Crayola, Hotel Jen, L'Hotel Group, Hasbro, OPPO System Consultants Limited, Hang Seng Bank, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Nippon Paint, Natural Direct, SCAD Hong Kong and many more, children celebrated this festive season in a true Heep

Hong style! Social adaptation activities with a hint of festivity such as outdoor organic farming, mini sports day, tour to the Peak and Noah's Ark Hong Kong, movie



watching and mural painting were organised, allowing children and their parents to enjoy a warm Christmas, as well as to improve their adaptability to different community situations.

Proceeds raised through “Be a Santa • Share your Christmas Love” will be donated to the Children and Youth Training Fund to support children and youth with autism, attention-deficit / hyperactivity disorder and dyslexia, helping them with professional training and social adaptation activities, and facilitate their integration into the community. The Fund provides support to children and youth from low-income families with financial difficulties, and gives them the opportunity to receive professional training and development.

Every single dollar you donate to the Children and Youth Training Fund supports our children and youth with special needs. Act now and send your warm blessings!

Donate now



Raising SEN knowledge with roving exhibitions

In view of the favourable response of our roving exhibitions held from early September to mid-October, three additional exhibitions themed “Be a Santa • Sharing your Christmas Love” were organised in Lok Fu Place, Lee Theatre Plaza and Laguna Plaza to raise public awareness and knowledge of SEN children and youth. Visitors learned about the stories of SEN students and their parents, special education needs in Hong Kong, and Heep Hong Society's diversified support services; as well as tried out our mobile learning applications, and wrote down encouraging words on the specially designed Santa Claus greeting cards to share their blessings with our children and youth.



Heep Hong Society Flag Day

The Flag Day was successfully held on Hong Kong Island on Saturday, 16 December, with over 3,000 enthusiastic volunteers participated. To celebrate Christmas, the flags adopted the Christmas paintings of the Society's children and youth.

The funds raised will support the operation of our Parents Resource Centres, which provide holistic family support for children and youth with special needs. We would like to express our gratitude to our corporate partners, schools, organisations, parents, children, volunteers and staff for their support, as well as the public for their generous donations.



“Training Subsidy” programme opens for application



Heep Hong Society offers free services to children eligible for the “Training Subsidy for Children who are on the Waiting List of Subvented Pre-school Rehabilitation Services” programme (TSP) so that they can receive proper training and support during their formative years under the age of six. Application is now open.

We now admit children from birth to six years old who are on the waiting list of subvented pre-school rehabilitation services. There are two types of subsidies: General subsidies are applicable for children who are on the waiting list of Early Education and Training Centres or Integrated Programmes in Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres and Special Child Care Centres, and come from a

family whose monthly household income does not exceed the limit with reference to 75% of the Median Monthly Domestic Household Income (MMDHI) applicable to the applicant's household size. High Subsidies are applicable for children who are on the waiting list of Special Child Care Centres or Special Child Care Centres with accommodation. The Social Welfare Department will issue a letter to the parents/guardians of the eligible children to invite their application for TSP.

More about TSP



Adopting parent-mediated communication-focused intervention in autistic children treatment



Heep Hong Society introduced the Pre-school Autism Communication Therapy (PACT) jointly developed by a consortium of universities and medical institutes in the United Kingdom. The research findings of PACT have been published in the world's leading medical journal *The Lancet*, which is an acknowledgement of the effectiveness of the intervention. Thanks to the sponsorship of the Fu Tak lam Foundation, we launched the “PACT Parent-mediated Communication-focused Intervention Programme for Children with Autism” through which our PACT therapists guide parents on strengthening the social communications skills of children with autism aged between two and six years. Each family meets with the PACT therapist every other week. Parents play games with their child in each session, which is videotaped. The PACT therapist then provides video-feedback to help the parent recognise his/her strengths and shortcomings and grasps the relevant skills gradually.

Professional Development Programme for Kindergarten Teachers on Catering for Learner Diversity commissioned by EDB



Commissioned by the Education Bureau (EDB), the Society offered the “Professional Development Programme for Kindergarten Teachers on Catering for Learner Diversity” for the third consecutive year. The programme commenced on 25 November and received enthusiastic response and the 80 places were filled quickly. Designed

and conducted by experienced educational psychologists and therapists, the programme was tailor-made for kindergarten teachers with the aim of equipping them with knowledge and skills, both theoretical and practical, to identify the children with learning difficulties and provide appropriate support.

Also commissioned by EDB, the Society will organise the “Thematic Course of the Programme on Supporting Social Communication and Socioemotional Development in Kindergarten Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder” in April 2018. Enrolment opens in early 2018 with a quota of 20. For details, please stay tuned on the EDB's Training Calendar or Heep Hong Society's website.

Step by Step: A Guide to Enhancing Autistic Children's Communication Skills

The book *Step by Step: A Guide to Enhancing Autistic Children's Communication Skills* written for parents children with autism spectrum disorder was revised and republished by our speech therapist team. It helps parents to grasp the language features and communication styles of autistic children as well as their own communication styles. Parents can design activities based on the recommendations in the book to help children develop communications skills. The book is priced at HK\$60 each, members of the Society can enjoy a discounted price of \$54 at our centres.



Friends of Hope Education Fund

Heep Hong Society has been one of the beneficiaries of Friends of Hope Education Fund since 2000. The Fund aided centres' facilities, activities and trainings for mainland teachers for the TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children) approach in 2002. They also sponsored the sensory integration rooms in Wan Chai Centre and Cheung Ching Centre in 2005 and 2007 respectively. In recent years, they sponsored Shui Pin Wai Centre's game workshop and art therapy for parents and subsidised autistic children who await subvented services to receive immediate training through our Supportive Learning Project.

The Friends of Hope Education Fund will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2018, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for their continuous support for SEN children and their families.

The Friends of Hope Education Fund was founded in 1993 by a group of volunteers who were current or retired policemen. It is dedicated to supporting educational programmes which benefit children and youth in need.



The Fund sponsored the sensory integration room in Cheung Ching Centre in 2007.



The majority of members are current or retired policemen. Many of them have been volunteering at the Society for over 10 years.

Zonta Club of the New Territories extends sponsorship for “Stress Management for Parents Programme Series 2018”

Thanks to the sponsorship of Zonta Club of the New Territories, the “Mindful Parenting Project” launched in 2015 provided over 180 parents with the opportunity to better manage their stress and emotions through a series of training. With such positive response, Zonta Club of the New Territories extended its support to the “Stress Management for Parents Programme Series 2018” where parents from six centres will be able to learn innovative stress relieving techniques such as horticulture therapy, expressive art and aromatherapy. The Club also named a play therapy room at the Heep Hong Society Integrated Service Complex which is set to come into service early next year.



Career talk by The Langham, Hong Kong

A total of 25 youth with autism spectrum disorder from the Society and their parents attended “The Langham, Hong Kong Career Talk” jointly organised by The Langham and Heep Hong Society for the first time at Jockey Club Star Resource Centre in early November.

Delivering the talks were The Langham’s Human Resources Manager and Sous Chef. The youth were introduced to hotel careers such as F&B and housekeeping, and they also gained some interview skills, which would be beneficial to their career development. The youth will visit the hotel in January 2018 to observe and understand the hotel’s daily operations.



Christmas charity sales

This Christmas, the Society collaborated with long-time partners Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong and natures purest in organising Christmas charity sales. Like previous years, the proceeds will be donated to the Society to help children and youth with special needs, as well as their families.

Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong had a few gift sets for sale, including the limited-edition McDull Twinkle Twinkle Little Pig plush hand warmer and G.O.D. Bird Cage oil burner with Essence of Shangri-La fragrance oil. The gift sets are available at the hotel’s festive counter and restaurants, and the Society’s centres.

natures purest launched the “A Hug A Wreath—Christmas Charity Set”. Each set comes with a “Hug Me Bear with a Christmas Wreath”, a 10% discount card and a hand-made thank you card by the children of Heep Hong Society. You can buy this adorable bear home from the four outlets and official website of natures purest until 31 December.



Acknowledgement | Special thanks go to the following donors for making donation of HK\$10,000 or above to the Society between June and November 2017:

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*In alphabetical order

Mindful Parenting relieves pressure

Illustration: Ah Ko



Source:
Mr Stanley Chan Kam Chung,
Educational Psychologist at
Heep Hong Society

In the past decade, many studies found that mindfulness exercises significantly reduce parents' pressure and nurture the health and happiness of children and family members. So what is mindfulness? How do we apply it to parenting?

From oriental wisdom

The Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme was founded by Professor Jon Kabat-Zinn over 30 years ago in the United States. Mindfulness originates from oriental wisdom such as Buddhism. It adopts the practices without the religious elements. Many studies showed that mindfulness is effective in relieving anxiety, depression and stress.

Mindfulness is "consciously paying attention to the feelings in the moment without judgment, so that one can understand oneself and nurture wisdom and affection". After years of academic research and development, mindfulness has proven to be a systematic process of self reflection and self-understanding, as well as an effective psychological treatment.

Promoting family health

Parenting is often stressful. If the negative emotions are not handled properly, not only the physical and mental health of parents but also their children will suffer. Academics believe that mindfulness enables parents to overcome difficulties in parenting, resolve arguments between spouses, and accept children's special needs. There are five aspects of mindful parenting:

1. Improving awareness of unpleasant feelings: Handle emotions before they get out of control, avoid conducting corporal punishment and yelling spurred by strong emotions;
2. Self-regulation: When in a bad mood, regulate their own emotions and then help children cope with theirs;
3. Listening wholeheartedly: Put themselves into their children's shoes, understand the children's feelings, thoughts and emotions from a child point of view;
4. Be sympathetic: Accept children's needs and difficulties; recognise their own limitations and learn to appreciate themselves;
5. Accepting themselves and their children non-judgementally: Accept the fact that parenting and children's growth are difficult, and that making mistakes is part of life.



Acceptance: Every moment in life pieces together your life.

不加批判



Non-judgemental: There is no good or bad, only thinking makes it so.

In collaboration with the City University of Hong Kong, Heep Hong Society developed the "Mindful Parenting Project" in which 180 parents were invited to participate in the effectiveness study over the past two years. Research findings revealed that after completing the mindfulness course, parents showed significant improvements in reducing parenting stress, family interaction and relieving depression symptoms.

A parent shared, "Of course I didn't become 100% resilient. At times, my emotions fluctuate. But what mindfulness has helped me is that I can deal with negative emotions more easily, and I have learnt to let go. It helps me embrace myself." We encourage everyone to practise mindfulness with us, learn how to cope with stress and cater for the needs of themselves and their children.



Believe in yourself: Trust your feelings and your strength. Embrace your life.

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