



Three world-renowned autism experts speak about the latest support and intervention strategies.

World-renowned autism scholars inspire audience at Heep Hong Society 55th Anniversary Conference

Presenting latest developments in SEN interventions

A highlight of the 55th Anniversary celebration of Heep Hong Society, the “Life-long challenges, life-long support – Unleashing the Potential of Individuals with Special Educational Needs” Conference was held on 1 December 2018 at the Jockey Club Auditorium in The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Three internationally acclaimed autism experts delivered keynote speeches about the latest development of intervention strategies for individuals with Special Educational Needs (SEN), inspiring an audience of multi-disciplinary professionals, teachers and parents. The conference also enabled us to gain a deeper understanding of the two pioneering support strategies which are being implemented in the United States and explore the possibility of adopting them in our services. Officiated by Mr Lam Ka-tai, Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services), the conference attracted over 1,000 participants from the Greater China region, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. Over 85% of the participants expressed appreciation for the programme.

T-STEP strengthens support for SEN young adults in transition

As there is an increasing concern on how to support individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) transitioning from school to young adulthood, we invited Dr Laura G Klinger, Associate Professor, School of Medicine of The University of North Carolina (UNC) and Executive Director of UNC TEACCH Autism Program to talk about the “T-STEP Programme—Strategies for Supporting Transition-Aged Adolescents and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder”.

Dr Alfert Tsang, Specialist in Psychiatry, who is a member of Heep Hong’s Working Group on Support Project for Individuals with Autism, remarked that T-STEP was based on the scientific understanding of the learning and cognitive styles of young adults with ASD. He pointed out, “Young people with ASD have to face a lot of challenges when they go through the transition to employment or post-secondary education. Anxiety and depressive reactions are common to them. T-STEP covers four intervention areas: goal setting, executive function, emotional regulation and social communication. It provides clear and practical techniques for the young adults to apply at home or in other daily life situations to help them overcome the challenges. T-STEP is very suitable for young adults with High-Functioning Autism. It is a practical strategy for all mental health professionals.”

The principles of T-STEP are along the same line as the service principles of the Society. We will conduct in-depth research on how to incorporate the support strategies of T-STEP into our current youth support programmes to benefit young people with ASD.



Dr Laura G Klinger explains how to support transition-aged young adults with ASD by adopting the T-STEP programme.



American autism expert Ms Emily Rubin elaborates on the importance of social emotional engagement in enhancing learning.



Professor Xiaobing Zou speaks about the use of artificial intelligence in the screening of ASD.



The nine concurrent workshops hosted by the Society’s professional teams received favourable feedback.

Introducing SEE-KS model to enhance integrated education

Heep Hong Society first adopted the SCERTS model in 2011. Given the impressive outcomes, we invited Ms Emily Rubin, Co-author of SCERTS Model and Director of Educational Outreach Program, Marcus Autism Center, to visit Hong Kong again to introduce the SEE-KS (Social Emotional Engagement-Knowledge and Skills) model in the Conference and Post-conference Certification Workshop. The SEE-KS model helps students with SEN at mainstream schools improve their learning through three elements, namely *Investment*, *Independence* and *Initiation*.

The implementation of integrated education in Hong Kong has been challenging for schools and teachers as they find it difficult to take care of the general students at the same time as they provide adjustments or training for students with SEN. Clinical psychologist and member of the Research and Development Working Group of Heep Hong Society, Dr Lorinda Lam reckoned that it was worthwhile to introduce and adapt the SEE-KS model in local education system for the benefit of our children and teaching professionals. She elaborated, “The SEE-KS model makes reference to the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework. It benefits not only children with SEN, but all children in the classroom. The approach addresses individual differences and makes the classroom a happy and lively environment to learn for all and facilitate all children to have better participation, initiation, and build up their independence in learning. SEE-KS adopts a positive, collaborative approach to engage teachers in reviewing what are the positive elements in classrooms and what more can be done. This approach helps reduce resistance among teachers and foster their efficacy and self-initiation in implementing integrated education.”

The educational psychologist team of the Society is actively researching on the adaptation of SEE-KS model to the local setting and the possibility of launching a pilot project in local kindergartens in an effort to enhance integrated education in Hong Kong.

The audience also heard from Professor Xiaobing Zou, Department of Pediatrics of the Third Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-Sen University, who presented on how to use artificial intelligence with big data biometrics in the screening of ASD. In the second part of the Conference, the cross-disciplinary professional teams of the Society conducted nine concurrent workshops, which received enthusiastic responses from participants, appreciating the practical skills covered in the training. ■

A caring pioneer in the rehabilitation sector

Interview with former CEO Nancy Tsang

"I consider it my greatest privilege to be given the chance to work at Heep Hong Society to serve children with special needs and their families." It takes tremendous perseverance and resolution to be at the helm of one of the largest rehabilitation organisations in Hong Kong. Ms Nancy Tsang, the retired Chief Executive Officer of Heep Hong Society has played an influential role in spearheading the development of the Society as well as the local rehabilitation sector. What inspired her to commit her life to this meaningful cause?



Seeing children flourish in the environment which she designed always brings a smile to Nancy's face.

Witnessing children and families' transformation

From a young age, Nancy has found her calling of helping the people in need. She was doing her first practicum for her Rehabilitation Science degree in the United States when she met children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and their families. She noticed that this disadvantaged group needed acceptance and help from society. As she witnessed the children's progress, she found fulfillment in her work, which was what first sparked her devotion to the rehabilitation sector. She joined Heep Hong Society in 1981 as the first Director of the organisation, a position which she held for 37 years.

"Human services must come from the heart." It was the teaching of Nancy's mentor, which she has taken to heart as her service philosophy. Even though her work focused on service management, she insisted on visiting each centre every year to listen to the parents' opinions and needs in person. What touched her most remained the unconditional love the parents have for their children and witnessing the transformation of the families. She recalled, "Many parents feel despair when they first bring their children to Heep Hong, but as they see their children making progress and going to school with a big smile every day, they become more optimistic and confident in facing the challenges laying ahead of them. We do not only help the child. We help the whole family."



Nancy receives the honorary retirement award at the Annual General Meeting 2018 and 55th Anniversary Dinner.



Over 100 parents and their children attend her farewell party and offer her their best wishes.

Determination and innovation

In March 2018, Nancy's dream came true when the Heep Hong Society Integrated Service Complex officially opened, providing one-stop whole-person education for children and families. In the opening ceremony, Mrs Carrie Lam, Chief Executive, praised Heep Hong Society for its "determination, innovation and caring spirit... Sometimes, before the government takes action, Heep Hong Society has taken upon itself to find the resources and ways to develop and pioneer new services with utmost determination. They demonstrate to the public and the government that these service models are applicable and feasible." This perfectly captures Nancy's fortitude and aspirations during the 37 years when she was leading Heep Hong. The needs of parents were always on her mind. To help them relieve stress and foster mutual support, Heep Hong Society opened the first Parents Resource Centre in Hong Kong in 1990. To make early intervention accessible to waitlisted children, Nancy left no stone unturned. She established the Supportive Learning Project (SLP) in 2000 and played a pivotal role in facilitating the government to launch the Training Subsidy Programme for Children who are on the Waiting List of Subvented Pre-school Rehabilitation Services. Her most notable effort was pioneering the model of the On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services (OPRS) in 2014. With great success, the service model was adopted by the government, which promised to achieve the goal of "zero waiting time" by allocating abundant resources to pre-school rehabilitation services. As she achieved her aspirations one by one, Nancy felt it was time to step down, but she still put the welfare of children and families foremost upon retirement. There is one thing lingering in her mind — she hopes that there will be stronger support for young people with SEN.

Continuing her life work

Nancy handed over the baton to long-time working partner, Mr Peter Au Yeung, after she retired from Heep Hong Society and public services. She would like to thank her colleagues for their camaraderie, support, encouragement, inspiration and blessings over the years. Starting from January 2019, Nancy hopes to continue her pursuit of her life mission by supporting children with SEN and their families as a volunteer. ■

Peter Au Yeung appointed as new CEO

Ms Nancy Tsang retired from her position as Chief Executive Officer of Heep Hong Society on 31 December 2018. She is succeeded by Mr Peter Au Yeung, who was previously Deputy Chief Executive Officer. Ms Rachel Leung, Regional Manager, was appointed as Deputy Chief Executive Officer. Mr Au Yeung and Ms Leung began their tenure on 1 January 2019.

Mr Au Yeung (right) is active in public services, he is non-official member of the Commission on Children, Chairman of Network on Services for Pre-school Disabled Children of the Hong Kong Joint Council for People with Disabilities and member of the Specialized Committee on Rehabilitation Service of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service. Both Mr Au Yeung and Ms Leung have joined Heep Hong Society and assumed senior management positions for over two decades. With extensive experience in service planning and leadership, they have made sizable contribution to not only the Society but also the rehabilitation sector. They are honoured by the appointment and aspire to lead the Society to reach new heights.



New centre and pre-school pilot project

Heep Hong Society Lei Yu Mun Centre opened in January 2019, which offers 60 Special Child Care Centre places and 66 Early Education and Training Centre places. Starting from February, the Society also began providing school-based support for children, families and teachers at 16 kindergartens through the "Pilot Scheme on Social Work Service for Pre-Primary Institutions" implemented by the Social Welfare Department. This new service is offered in conjunction with the On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services (OPRS).

Heep Hong and PolyU take lead in establishing a clinical education unit together



On 31 December 2018, Heep Hong Society and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)'s Department of Rehabilitation Sciences signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU), providing a framework for setting up a clinical education unit in our new Integrated Service Complex for their occupational therapy and physiotherapy students.

The Society and PolyU have established a close partnership since 1983. It is hoped that the signing of the MoU will further enhance the collaboration between the two parties and promote the development of rehabilitation services in Hong Kong.

Ms Nancy Tsang, then Chief Executive Officer of Heep Hong Society (right) and Professor Hector Tsang, Head of Department of Rehabilitation Sciences of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (left) sign the MoU.

Launching two new projects to support ADHD students

The Society has launched two projects to support the students with Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in mainstream primary and secondary schools:

Jockey Club Kindling Active Kids Project

Sponsored by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, the "Jockey Club Kindling Active Kids Project" was launched in January 2019. The educational psychologists, social workers and counsellors provide school-based group training for students and support for teachers and families. It is expected to benefit over 200 students and parents as well as 80 teaching staff.

Brain Challenge Intervention Program for ADHD Secondary School Students

Under the sponsorship of the Lee Hysan Foundation, the Society will kick-start the "Brain Challenge Intervention Program for ADHD Secondary School Students" in May 2019. The professional team, comprising occupational therapists and social workers, will provide individual and group training to enhance the executive function and emotional regulation skills of students, who will then practise these skills by participating in the inter-school Brain Challenge competition. Home visits and seminars will be conducted to enhance the knowledge and skills of parents and teachers in helping the ADHD students.



Students will participate in the inter-school Brain Challenge competition as teams, which help them gain a stronger sense of identity and peer acceptance.

Together We Are Stronger: The true stories behind six families with SEN children

Together
We Are Stronger

同行 障礙賽

六齣短片 · 六個觸動心靈的真實故事

For parents of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), the journey of raising their children is often bittersweet with joy and worry. We hope that through six stories of families with SEN children, including a mother of autistic twins, a girl with dyslexia, a girl with Costello Syndrome, a pre-term infant, an SEN youth and a retired Paralympian swimmer, the public can take a glimpse of their world and walk the path of growth together with them.

Watch the six true stories on the Together We Are Stronger website now.



Watch the videos



[www.heephong.org/
together-we-are-stronger](http://www.heephong.org/together-we-are-stronger)

Highlights of 55th Anniversary events



Over 500 families from the Society, local kindergartens and special schools enjoy a great time at the Family Fun Day at Kwun Tong Promenade.



The guests propose a toast at the 2018 Annual General Meeting cum 55th Anniversary Celebration Dinner.



The Society organises the largest exchange tour ever. Leading by the then CEO, our professional team, composed of psychologists, therapists, social workers and teachers, visits six partner organisations in Guangzhou and Dongguan.

Heep Hong awarded outstanding employer recognitions

At Heep Hong Society, human capital is the most important asset. The Society is honoured to receive two awards in recognition of its outstanding performances as an employer: the "Certificate of the Good Employer Charter 2018-2019" and "2018-2019 Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme — Special Mention (Gold)".



Special thanks to supporters of “Let’s Be A Santa”

Heep Hong Society organised the “Let’s Be A Santa” fundraising campaign during last Christmas. Our special thanks go to the supporters for enabling children and young people with special needs to enjoy equal opportunities for learning and developing their full potential.

The proceeds have gone to the Monthly Donation Programme, where the funds will be used in supporting the non-subservent services, including the operation of numerous Parents Resource Centres. We hope you will continue to support our efforts in helping children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in future.



Island Shangri-La tree lighting ceremony

The Society has been collaborating with our long-standing partner, Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong to celebrate the Christmas season. This year, the hotel invited the Society to join its Christmas tree lighting ceremony for the tenth consecutive year. Held on 6 December 2018, Mr Julian Darisse, Resident Manager of Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong and Mr Peter Wan, then Chairman of the Board of Directors of Heep Hong Society lit up the Christmas tree. Our children from Catherine Lo Centre also performed a few Christmas carols to wish the audience a Happy Christmas.

The hotel’s volunteer team also helped decorate our Integrated Service Complex and organised a Christmas party for our children and parents with joyful games, such as obstacle race, wall painting and balloon twisting.

In an effort to raise funds for the Society, the hotel organised the “Finding Shangri-La” Charity Exhibition and Raffle. The draw results were announced on 10 January in *South China Morning Post* and *Mingpao*.



Mr Julian Darisse (fourth from left) and Mr Peter Wan (third from left) officiate at the tree lighting ceremony. Mr Ulf Bremer, General Manager of Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong (second from left) also attends the event to show his support.



Special thanks go to the supporters of the “Finding Shangri-La” Charity Exhibition and Raffle.



The children and parents break into a smile as they receive presents from the Santa Claus of Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong.



The children’s delightful performance brings joy to the audience.

natures purest organises Christmas charity sale

For 11 years in a row, the organic nursery product brand natures purest organised a Christmas charity sale to benefit Heep Hong Society. Under the theme "A Gift A Joy A Give", it offered four products for charity sale. Each came with a greeting card painted by Heep Hong children and a 15% discount voucher of the brand. All proceeds went to the Society for supporting children and young people with SEN for receiving professional training. Our special thanks go to all the donors who supported this charity sale.



Each product of the "A Gift A Joy A Give" collection comes with a greeting card painted by Heep Hong children.

Shanghai Commercial Bank sponsors special screenings of Distinction

Shanghai Commercial Bank sponsored two charity screenings of *Distinction*, a local film about students studying in special schools, in October and November 2018 and invited 200 parents and children from six Parent Resource Centres to attend with their volunteers. Mr David Kwok Sek-chi, Managing Director & Chief Executive and Mr Tang Nai-pan, Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Risk Officer of Shanghai Commercial Bank also attended the screenings to show their support.

The parents were touched by the film. The volunteers of the bank also expressed that the film allowed them to get a better understanding of SEN children.



Distinction resonates with the parents and allows the corporate volunteers to understand SEN better.



The director and actors appear at the screening to thank the audience for their support.

26th Great Chefs returns in May

Heep Hong Society's signature charity culinary event — The Great Chefs of Hong Kong will return for its 26th year on 6 May 2019 at Grand Hyatt Hong Kong. The event will bring together the star chefs from the top restaurants and hotel in the city to serve their signature dishes in food stall style in support of charity. The proceeds raised will be used to support children and young people with SEN and their families. Stay tuned on our website for details!



The guests can enjoy top-notch food and wine and meet the chefs at the food stalls.

Special thanks go to the following major donors for their contributions during July to November 2018 (in alphabetical order):

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How hydrotherapy helps children with Developmental Coordination Problem

When “hydrotherapy” is mentioned, a hot massage bathtub comes to mind, but hydrotherapy is not only about relaxing the mind. For children with Developmental Coordination Problem (DCP), hydrotherapy can enhance their body control and motor coordination. It acts as a stepping stone for children with DCP to learn and enjoy swimming. Thus, it helps them move on to mainstream swimming class.

What is hydrotherapy?

Hydrotherapy is physiotherapy conducted in water. Paediatric physiotherapists utilise the properties of the indoor hydrotherapy pool to design individual and group aquatic activities based on the children’s developmental needs. Hydrotherapy can help them improve their fitness and sports performance. In the social aspect, the ability to swim with peers facilitates the children’s integration into the community.

Unique advantages of hydrotherapy

Most children enjoy water fun. They have greater motivation to participate in training activities in the pool than on land. Activities in water with specific temperature ranging from 32 to 34 degree Celsius can improve blood circulation, relax muscle and ease tense emotions. Water also boasts unique properties which can help children: water pressure improves children’s body awareness and spatial perception; water buoyancy and fluidity stimulate children’s balance and postural control; water resistance enhances children’s muscular strength and endurance. These sensory signals are unique to the aquatic environment and are not available on land.



After participating in hydrotherapy, Ka-nam overcame his fear of swimming and improved his motor coordination skills. He can now swim 25 metres on his own.

Successful case: Child shows significant improvement in six weeks

Ka-nam, a Primary Four student of a mainstream school with DCP, was afraid of swimming. He still could not swim after participating in community swimming classes for a year. By professional assessment and analysis of Ka-nam’s motor development and performance in aquatic activities, the paediatric physiotherapist of Heep Hong Society tailor-made training activities founded on neurodevelopmental strategies to improve his coordination response, cardiopulmonary endurance and agility. The physiotherapist adopted Watsu techniques, the Halliwick method and visual cues to help Ka-nam relax, control his breathing, coordinate his limbs movements and eventually master basic swimming skills.

After six weeks of hydrotherapy, Ka-nam was no longer afraid of moving in the water. His motor coordination skills showed significant improvement. He could even swim 25 metres in backstroke and freestyle unaided. The physiotherapist expected that he would be able to transfer to community swimming classes after completing the second phase of training and enjoy leisure swimming with friends and family.



The physiotherapists of Heep Hong Society use Watsu techniques, the Halliwick method and visual cues to help children relax and adapt to the water.

Enrol in hydrotherapy programmes

Heep Hong Society is one of the few rehabilitation organisations which has its own hydrotherapy pool. Hydrotherapy programmes are now available in the Heep Hong Society Integrated Service Complex in Sandy Bay. Enrol now. ■

What is Developmental Coordination Problem?

Children with Developmental Coordination Problem (DCP) have normal intelligence. Due to weaker motor coordination and organisation skills, they often look clumsy, which affects their daily living, academic performance, and social-emotional development. DCP often appears with other developmental disorders, such as Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), High-Functioning Autism and Dyslexia. Early identification and intervention are imperative.

Service information



bit.ly/SLP_hydrotherapy

Watch demo video



bit.ly/video-hydrotherapy

Sources: Heep Hong Society physiotherapist team

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