

## **Autism Support Network for Mainstream Integration**

According to the Education Bureau (EDB), there are over 37,000 students with special educational needs in mainstream schools, of which approximately 16% are suffering from autism spectrum disorder. The majority of autistic students are of normal or higher intelligence. However, due to developmental disorders, they encounter difficulties in social communication, emotional management and classroom adaptation, which make school life less enjoyable to them.

o help autistic children integrate into mainstream education, Heep Hong Society pioneered schoolbased support services in 2000. Schemes which are tailormade for autistic students include the 'Star Programme', which was completed last year, and the 'Pilot Project on Enhancement of Support Services for Students with Autism in Ordinary Primary and Secondary Schools' commissioned by EDB since September 2012 (EDB Project). Both have yielded encouraging results and proven that, with appropriate training and professional support, autistic children are able to integrate into mainstream schools and make impressive achievements in academic, talents and personal growth. With the sponsorship of the Jockey Club Charities Trust and in collaboration with the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Hong Kong (HKU) and EDB, the Society will play a pivotal role in the 'JC A-Connect: Jockey Club Autism Support Network', which is to be commenced in 2015/16 to provide support to autistic children in mainstream schools.

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▲ Students learn to follow rules and cooperate through games as a way to improve their social communication and emotional regulation skills.



Autistic or not, children become friends.





 Heep Hong Society is one of the service providers for the Jockey Club Autism Support Network.

### **Deficiencies in Social and Emotional Skills**

Autistic students are weak in emotional management. Adapting to classroom routines and regulations poses huge challenges for them. Teachers have reported cases of emotional outburst and they were unable to calm down the student concerned or continue with the class and had to seek help from social workers.

Autistic students often have hard times in social situations because they are relatively stubborn and have poor communication skills. They may insist on their own way of doing things and fail to understand other people. Some schools may arrange 'playmates' for them but the problem cannot be resolved completely. Teachers find it difficult to help these students.

### **Pilot Project Helps Over 600 Students**

In the EDB Project, the Society provides systematic group training to autistic students in the areas of social communication, emotional regulation, self-care, study skills and executive functions. Through consultation services, workshops and peer activities, the project promotes transactional support from the school, parents and peers. In the past three years, the Society served 33 schools with over 600 students as beneficiaries.

### **Tailor-made Group Training**

Professional trainers are assigned to each participating school. They design and organise training activities according to the needs of autistic students. Experienced educational psychologists and speech therapists serve as advisors to observe training sessions regularly and review training plans to ensure service quality. Over the three-year project period, the trainers provided comprehensive training and set long-term training goals with the students. They developed mutual trust with the students, making the training more effective.

Ms Lau Kwan Kei, Coordinator of Special Education at ELCHK Ma On Shan Lutheran Primary School, pointed out, 'In the past, students might ask why their autistic peers were not punished for their behaviors and complained about unfairness. After joining this Project, autistic children have improved vastly in classroom adaptation and emotional

regulation, and their peers become more understanding. We no longer have to handle such conflicts and our burdens are lessened.'

### **School and Family Support**

While autistic students receive training, it is equally important for their schools, parents and peers to understand and support them. In the EDB Project, teachers or teaching assistants are encouraged to observe group training and consult the trainers, so that they apply consistent training strategies in their classes. Ms Yiu Ching Chi, Special Education Needs Teacher at Yan Chai Hospital Choi Hin To Primary School said, 'We like the Society's diversified, professional and interesting teaching materials and classroom activities. They benefit not only autistic students but also their peers.'

As part of the Project, autistic students are required to invite their peers to attend a group training session. The arrangement is intended to boost their motivation for socialising and encourage them to apply the social skills they acquire during group training. Friendship is fostered among students of different abilities in a fun environment. Ms Lau said, 'All participating peers had a great time and wanted to join again. Some autistic children who used to be alone now make friends with their peers. We are really glad to see this outcome.'

Consultation sessions are given to parents to keep them informed of their children's progress and learn basic training methods. In each group training session, the students record the training goals so that their parents can follow up on the progress.

### **JC A-Connect to Build an Inclusive Campus**

The Society will bring with it years of experience to the implementation of the 'JCA-Connect: Jockey Club Autism Support Network'. With the support from EDB and HKU, it will strengthen collaboration with schools to provide training and services of uncompromised quality, and to enhance the review mechanism of effectiveness. The ultimate goal is to provide autistic students in primary and secondary schools as well as their parents with better support services and to drive integrated education forward.

Source: Replies to initial written questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2015-16.

### Deople's Drofile







Heidi and Joyce support Flag Day Fundraising Event and win the best styling award.

## **A Forefront Companion**

Ninety-nine years of worry – There is no exaggeration in this old Chinese saying about parenting. This is especially true for parents of children with special needs. Heidi Chu was on a roller-coaster ride raising her daughter, Joyce. Having gone through moments of helplessness, she made the decision to live life with optimism and let Joyce receive timely support. Now that her shadow days are over, as the Vice-chairman of Heep Hong Parents Association (HHPA), she is in the vanguard of raising public awareness of special needs children and acts as the supportive companion for parents with similar experiences.

Soon after birth, Heidi found that Joyce, now six, was falling behind children of the same age in terms of developmental milestones and learning abilities. At one year old, Joyce could not raise her head with her wobbly neck and was diagnosed with global developmental delay, low muscle tone and speech delay. The following year, she was advised to quit kindergarten by the principal because she could not walk unaided. 'One month after quitting school, she began to walk. She is so tough!' Heidi said.

As a new mother, Heidi knew little about developmental delay and could only rely on professional training. Every day, she brought Joyce across Hong Kong for therapies. Later, she even quit her job at an international school and became a full-time mother. The stress was suffocating. She recalled, 'My world was small. I did not have a social life. All I did was raising my daughter, and my husband and I had different views on parenting. It put a strain on our relationship.' Thanks to her friend's suggestion, she regained her bearings. She enrolled in a course about dyslexia and went back to work, sharing the load of parenting with her husband.

In August 2012, Joyce was admitted to Heep Hong's Cheung Sha Wan Special Child Care Centre for intensive

training of five days a week. Heidi felt relieved and grateful witnessing significant progress in her daughter's bodily functions and learning abilities. In the coming September, Joyce will re-enter mainstream K3. Joyce is cheerful at heart. Her innocent smile has been Heidi's source of strength all along.

### **Promoting Integrated Education**

Heidi felt blessed that she had the support to overcome one challenge after another. 'Other than the professional services from Heep Hong, the support from parents with similar experiences has given me great comfort. I have met parents who did not let their children receive special education because they could not accept the fact that their children have developmental difficulties. Thus, their children missed the golden opportunity to learn.' This has prompted her to assume the role of Vice-chairman of HHPA and to encourage other parents by sharing her experience. Heidi said, 'Some parents find it hard to accept reality. When we share our stories with similar experiences, they are usually more receptive to our advice in this way. Parents should stay positive and seek timely support. Their children deserve to live a promising future.'

Heidi is also a member of the HHPA Special Education Concern Group. She attends meetings with the Social Welfare Department regularly to lobby for the welfare of special needs individuals. She is actively involved in the discussion on preschool rehabilitation services, youth employment and accommodation for adults with special needs. The issue of integrated education has been her primary concern. 'Although integrated education has been introduced in Hong Kong for years, it has not been fully implemented in all schools. Some special needs children admitted to mainstream schools have dropped out owing to the lack of support. I hope the government can allocate more resources to integrated education and benefit more students with special needs.'

### Developmental Disorder





My emotion: Children select the card to express their feelings and learn how to regulate emotions.



■ SCERTS Model Implementation Guide

## **Practical Training Materials**Launched for SCERTS Model

Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) lack the motivation and skills for socialising and communication. It is difficult for them to understand others' feelings or express their own needs, which often leads to emotional outburst and violent behaviors, and hampers their learning and social relationships. Teachers and parents are always looking for effective ways to help them.

At present, numerous training approaches and methods are used to train children with ASD at different developmental stages. The SCERTS (Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, Transactional Support) Model is a recent innovative approach to improve ASD children's social communication and emotional regulation competences.

### **Three Beneficial Features**

The SCERTS Model has three major features: it believes that there are reasons behind every behavior; it encourages trainers to observe and respect the needs of children: and it emphasises the supportive role of trainers. Ms Yvonne Lai Sau-king, Senior Speech Therapist of Heep Hong Society, said, 'In traditional approaches, trainers dominate the training and children are trained to follow instructions. The SCERTS Model stresses that trainers should observe and analyse children's behaviors and emotions, and constantly adjust training goals to assist children in emotional regulation. It also teaches children how to express their feelings and needs appropriately.' The SCERTS Model respects children's individual differences and emphasises the importance of transactional support children's social communication and emotional regulation competences will be enhanced when trainers adjust their interaction styles and provide appropriate visual cues for children during learning.

Yvonne continued, 'From our clinical experience, children's emotional and behavioral problems are significantly reduced after the implementation of SCERTS Model. They perform better in social interaction, emotional expression and regulation. Teachers reported that children become more attentive and more willing to communicate with others. The classroom environment becomes more harmonious as well.'

## **Teaching Materials Launched to Support Parents and Teachers**

In response to the overwhelming interest in the SCERTS Model, the Society invited Ms Emily Rubin, one of the collaborators of the SCERTS Model, to Hong Kong in 2014 to share the principles and application. In the same year, under the sponsorship of Ai You (Hong Kong) Foundation, the Society expanded the implementation of the SCERTS Model to all Special Child Care Centres and began conducting an effectiveness study.

The SCERTS Team of the Society has recently published the SCERTS Model Implementation Guide to facilitate professionals and parents to grasp the specific strategies to help children with ASD. The guide explains the principles of the SCERTS Model in details and provides step-by-step guidelines in applying the SCERTS Model in local settings through three case studies. A complimentary DVD of practical training materials is included. For better training effects, trainers can use the Guide with the free 'Social Emotion' iPad and Android app.

### 'Social Emotion' iPad & Android App

Equipped with electronic teaching resources, interactive functions and visual cues to arouse children's interest in learning how to regulate emotion:

- Visual aids: Timetable, procedures, task list, timer, waiting spinner, selection table, general regulation tips, drawing pad
- Emotional regulation: Learn more about emotions through cue cards, animations, stories, emotion thermometer, key-ringed emotion cue cards, games

Customised features:

Cantonese or Mandarin audio; Traditional or Simplified Chinese; dawing tools and camera for making new cards



### Guide to Children Development

The revamped P1 adaptation ▶ programme is especially helpful for children who enter EECTs in K3.





▲ The campus setting provides autistic children first-hand experience of school life before primary school begins.

Revamped Primary School Adaptation Programme

Kindergarten graduates have to adapt to primary schools in the areas of general routines, study, self-care, relationship with teachers and peers. For K3 children with special needs, they face even greater challengers. Over the years, Heep Hong Society has been providing children with appropriate training. Over 90% of children at Heep Hong's Early Education and Training Centres (EETCs) go on to mainstream primary schools.

### **Revamped Adaptation Programme at EETCs**

According to the statistics of the Social Welfare Department, close to 5,000 children were on the waiting list for EETCs as of 30 April 2015. For children who are diagnosed and put on the waiting list in K1, they normally have to wait until K3 to be allocated a place. They receive training for only one year before moving on to primary school. To address this situation and offer extended support service for K3 children, the Society has revamped its Primary 1 Adaptation Programme and benefited over 600 students this year.

### **Preparatory and Extended Support**

The year-long preparatory group training helps K3 children at EETCs build their basic learning, self-care, social and communication skills. The first term focuses on the basic competences, and the second term devotes more efforts to building mainstream curriculum skills and flexible problem-solving skills. The ultimate goal is to help children develop independent learning and social abilities. After they leave EETCs and study at mainstream primary school, they will receive another year of extended support, which helps them consolidate their foundational skills and further enhance independent learning and social abilities. This support service is open to all special needs children.

Learning & Social Abilities

Flexible Problem Curriculum Skills

Instrumental Work Habits Self Management Daily Living & Emotions

Independent

Functional Communication & Social Skills

### **Campus Experience Wins Praise from Schools**

Every summer, the Society conducts training at primary schools to let children experience school life in a real-world setting. For training that takes place at the same school where the child will be promoted, we will arrange for the teachers to get to know the child. School principals and teachers find our programme very practical and comprehensive. They reckon that it can help children adapt to the routines quickly and enhance their social skills, learning, emotional management and self-care abilities. The teachers can gain a better understanding of children with special needs.

### **Relieving Parenting Stress**

For smooth integration into mainstream schools, children's own abilities only account for half of it. Parents' attitude and support plays a vital role. Talks are held at EETCs to help parents understand the learning mode of primary schools. Reunions are organised for parents after their children are promoted to P1 to follow up on the progress so as to relieve their stress of parenting. After a year of training, most parents find their children become more confident with higher motivation to learn and greater social and problem-solving abilities.

### Support Programme for Prospective P1 Students with ASD

Thanks to the sponsorship of Van Tse Zung Charity Foundation, the Society will launch the one-year 'Support Programme for Prospective Primary One Students with Autism' in January 2016 for children with diagnosis or tendencies of autism spectrum disorder who will be promoted to mainstream primary school.

### Sponsorship & Fundraising Events

Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong, our longstanding partner, receives the honour.





▲ Nicholas Tse decorates cake with Heep Hong children .

## 65 Corporate Partners Conferred Caring Company Logo

Congratulations to the following 65 corporations and organisations who were awarded the 'Caring Company'/ 'Caring Organisation' logo for the year of 2014/15 by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service upon the nomination of Heep Hong Society. We extend our gratitude to our partners for joining our efforts in helping children with special needs.

SR
Adventure Sports Academy Limited
Bullet Films Production Limited
Canon Hongkong Company Limited
Career Times Online Limited
Catlin Hong Kong Limited
Center for Dr. Wu's Bunion Surgery
China Everbright Charitable Foundation
Chinese Estates Holdings Limited
Clifford Chance
Dah Chong Hong Ltd.
Delicious Chef King Catering Limited
Diamond Design Limited
Edico Financial Press Services
Eu Yan Sang (HK) Ltd.
Genting Hong Kong Limited

Good Hope Singers Limited

Grand Hyatt Hong Kong Hang Seng Bank Harbour Grand Hong Kong Harbour Grand Kowloon Harbour Plaza Metropolis Harbour Plaza North Point Hotel Hong Kong SkyCity Marriott Hotel Hongkong Land Hotel Jen Hong Kong Hyatt Regency Hong Kong, Sha Tin Hyatt Regency Hong Kong, Tsim Sha Tsui Island Resort Estate Management Company Limited Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong JW Marriott Hotel Hong Kong Kiehl's since 1851 Kowloon Shangri-La, Hong Kong Maersk Hong Kong Limited

with special needs.

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Miramar Hotel & Investment Company Limited
MSIG Insurance (Hong Kong) Limited
Natural Home Collections Ltd
Natures Purest Asia Limited
One Community Worldwide Limited
Pac-Fung Feather Company Ltd
Parklink Company Limited
PCCW Limited
Plaza Premium Lounge Management Limited
Prince Jewellery & Watch Company

Rotary Club of The Peak Rotary Club of Wanchai Rykadan Capital Limited Shanghai Commercial Bank Limited

Rotary Club of City Northwest Hong Kong

Soroptimist International of Hong Kong Standard Chartered Bank (Hong Kong) Limited Sunnyside Club Limited Swire Travel Limited The Dairy Farm Company Limited - Wellcome The Federation of Hong Kong Watch Trades and Industries Charitable Trust The Kowloon Hotel The Kowloon Motor Bus Co. (1933) Ltd. The Langham, Hong Kong The Ritz-Carlton Hong Kong

The Royal Garden Wai Yuen Tong Medicine Company Limited Weber Shandwick

Wyeth (Hong Kong) Holding Company Limited

### The 23rd Great Chefs of Hong Kong

The 23rd Great Chefs of Hong Kong was successfully held on 14 May at Grand Hyatt Hong Kong. Over 1,200 guests enjoyed the finest delicacies served by 47 leading hotels, restaurants and beverage sponsors. The Society was honoured to invite Mr Nicholas Tse and Mr Nick Cheung as 'Heep Hong Ambassadors' to support the event. We sincerely thank Grand Hyatt Hong Kong for their support; Mrs. Lucina Ho, Prince Jewellery & Watch Company and Albert Yeung Sau Shing Charity Foundation for their generous sponsorship; all the food & beverage supporters for their participation; and all the donors, sponsors and volunteers!

#### **Grand Raffle 2015**

Thank you for supporting the Grand Raffle 2015. The winners were drawn on 16 June at Heep Hong's Head Office. The results were published in *Sing Tao Daily, The Standard* and Heep Hong website on 24 June. The funds raised from the Grand Raffle will go to our non-subvented services for supporting children with special needs and their families.

### Heep Hong X CTgoodjobs Campaign Benefits Autistic Youths

In order to help more autistic youths adapt to their work environment, the Society has collaborated with CTgoodjobs in an online campaign to raise funds for pre-job training programmes and enhance public understanding of autistic employees. Our special thanks go to all donors who have supported the campaign.

### **Heep Hong Becomes Beneficiary of 'JESSICA Run'**

The Society was invited to be one of the beneficiaries of the 9th 'JESSICA Run'. On 15 March, 20 children from Wan Chai

Centre participated in the charity run and one of them won the First Runner-up in the Kids Challenge. Our sincerest gratitude goes to JESSICA Hong Kong and JESSICA Foundation for their generous support.



## Rykadan Capital and Lark International Group Sponsor 'X+Y Premiere'

Rykadan Capital and Lark International Group Limited generously sponsored the Society's 'X+Y Premiere', which was held at UA Cine Moko on 14 March. A total of 160 parents attended and enjoyed the story of an autistic math prodigy. In the post-film sharing session, Queenie, a member of the prejob training programme of the Society, and her mother Maggie shared their own story to encourage other parents and enhance public understanding.



### Corporate Partners



Heep Hong and Wellcome jointly celebrate the 200th session of 'I Can Do It Shopping Day.



Ms Lily Yuen (left) and Ms Sandi Poon (right), Director-Business Development of Phoelia (Far East) Company Limited.



## Heep Hong and Wellcome Celebrate the 200th session of 'I Can Do It Shopping Day'

Wellcome and the Society have jointly organised the social adaptation training programme — 'I Can Do It Shopping Day' for five years. Over 40 children and parents from Yu Ming Centre participated in the celebration of the 200th session at the Metrocity III Superstore on 22 May. In addition, Wellcome has generously donated the sales revenue generated during the one-hour event to support training services.

### Thank You for Supporting Our Monthly Donation Programme

Our gratitude goes to all monthly donors who have made our nonsubvented services possible. The annual receipt of year 2014-15 has been posted. For enquiries, please call our Donor Service Hotline at 3618 6320 or email us at donor.services@heephong.org.

Special thanks go to the following donors which made donations of HK\$10,000 or above to Heep Hong Society between December 2014 and March 2015 (in random order)

Ai You (Hong Kong) Foundation Cathay Pacific Airways Limited Catlin Hong Kong Limited Mr Chow Chi Hung Ivan Mr Jeff Chu Kam Ming

The Community Chest of Hong Kong

Diamond Design Limited

Fair-Rack Electrical Asia (HK) Limited

Ms Salina Fung Ho Yuk Yee The Hongkong Bank Foundation

Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong

Mr Lee Wing Wai

Mr Li Po Shan

Lion's Club of Tsuen Wan

Make It Marketing Consultancy

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Ms Tung Wai Mun Mary
Van Tse Zung Charity Foundation
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Ms Yvonne Wong Yuen Kee
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For online donation, please visit www.heephong.org/donation.

# Generous Support from Diamond Design Limited

Diamond Design Limited is one of the longstanding supporters of Heep Hong Society. Since 2007, it has sponsored three climbing walls and regularly donated therapy equipment and gifts to the service centres. Ms Lily Yuen, Director of Diamond Design Limited, said, 'Not only does Heep Hong provide timely intervention for children with special needs, but it also creates wonderful memories for the children and their families. We are very glad to partner with Heep Hong over the years.'

### **Blessings in the Festive Seasons**

For the past five years, Diamond Design Limited has donated gifts to families with financial difficulties at Heep Hong centres during festivals. Last Christmas, it donated sweaters to Leung King, Shui Pin Wai and Tung Chung Centres. The children were very delighted and wore their sweaters right away. Lily also visited service centres during the Lunar New Year and Mid-autumn Festival to celebrate with the children and their parents, bringing them red packets and moon-cake vouchers.

### **Donation of M6 Machine**

In 2008, Diamond Design Limited donated four LPG Cellu M6 Keymodule-I machines to the Society for treating children with endermotherapy. This year, it donated an extra of seven M6 machines. Upon Lily's invitation, Phoelia (Far East) Company Limited offers maintenance and repair services of M6 machines free of charge. Lily said, 'A parent once told me that her child no longer resisted therapy after using the M6 machines. We feel very pleased to contribute to this worthy cause.'







### Updates on Services

Parents convey their needs and difficulties to Mrs Lam and call for government attention.





(From left) Miss Annie Tam and Ms Carol Yip visit Yu Ming Centre.

## **Chief Secretary Examines Heep Hong's Pilot Kindergarten Support Programme**

To gain a deeper understanding of the support services for preschool children with special needs, Chief Secretary for Administration Mrs Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor visited New Jade Elementi Kindergarten and Heep Hong's Wan Tsui Centre on 13 April to observe the 'Early Intervention and Integrated Support for Kindergarten Students with Special Needs,' which was launched in August 2014 under the sponsorship of the Lee Hysan Foundation. In the forum following the visit, parents, kindergarten principals and early childhood education specialists discussed with Mrs Lam and urged the government to allocate additional resources to children with special needs and their kindergartens.

## Commission of Poverty, Labour and Welfare Bureau and Education Bureau Visit Heep Hong Centres

Chairperson of the Special Needs Groups Task Force, Commission of Poverty, Mr Chua Hoi-wai and Commission members, Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare Miss Annie Tam Kam-lan, Commissioner for Rehabilitation Mr David Leung, Director of Social Welfare Ms Carol Yip Man-kuen and Deputy Director (Services) Mr Lam Ka-tai, together with representatives of Education Bureau visited Yu Ming Centre on 15 April to observe the operation of and training services at the early childhood and education centre. Secretary for Education Mr Eddie Ng Hak-kim, Permanent Secretary for Education Mrs Marion Lai Chan Chi-kuen and Under Secretary for Education Mr Kevin

Yeung Yun-hung visited Wan Tsui Centre on 13 May and exchanged ideas on preschool education with kindergarten principals and parents.

Mr Eddie Ng shows concern about the education for children with special needs.

## 65% Parents of Autistic Children Stressed Out by Discrimination

The Society announced the findings of the 'Survey on the Participation in Community Activities of Preschool Children with Autism' on 30 March. The results revealed that 65% of

parents felt discriminated because of their children's emotional or behavioral problems. Some parents in deep emotional distress were unwilling to go out with their children. The study also found that longer period of social adaptation and emotional management training for the autistic children would increase parents' willingness to bring their children out.



Heep Hong parent Mr Cheung (right) shares on how social adaptation helps his autistic child.

## **Underprivileged Families with SEN Children Scheme Accepts Application**

Under the sponsorship of Koo's Giving Charitable Foundation, the Society launched 'A Timely Intervention for Underprivileged Families with Special Education Needs (SEN) Children' scheme in September 2014 and subsidised pre-school children aged two to sixwith special needs who were waiting for government-subvented services to receive pre-school training and speech therapy services from the Society. Thanks to the Foundation's continued support, the scheme will continue to subsidise 100 children this year. Please check out our website for details.

## Support Programme for Children with Specific Learning Difficulties

Sponsored by the Community Chest, the Support Programme for Children with Specific Learning Difficulties has launched Phase 9 to support children with specific learning difficulties at mainstream Primary 1. For details and enrolment, please visit www.heephong.org.

(If you do not wish to receive *Heep Hong Express* again, please write to us. 閣下如欲訂閱《協康匯訊》中文版本·請書面或以電郵通知我們。)