



Coming out of the Speechless World

“**Heep Hong Society launched the Support Programme for Children with Autism in the East and West New Territories respectively. Through the provision of speech therapies, parent workshops and consultation services, over 300 autistic children waiting for government-funded training and their families will benefit from the programme, which charges 90% less than that of the private sector.**

”

Since 18-month old, Yan's verbal communication ability has not come close to his peers. He resorted to hitting his head and making a scene to get his needs across. His sparkling eyes seldom made contact with others. He might say a few words but the words rarely match the context.

Two years elapsed before Yan was given an assessment. When Yan was diagnosed with autism, Mrs Ng's world was turned upside down. She said, "The puzzle was solved when I realised that his communication and behavioural problems were developed from autism; but my heart sank as I learned that autism is not curable. My instant thought was to keep him hidden."

Mrs Nancy Tsang, Director of Heep Hong Society, remarked, "Children with autism are characterised by social and



▲ The Speech Support Programme for Children with Autism in the East New Territories was officially launched on 19 December 2010



◀ Parent workshops and individual consultation are provided

communication problems and repetitive behaviours. Though not curable, there are proven treatment approaches to enhance their abilities, and reduce improper behaviours. Years before six, when their brain wiring develops at the fastest pace, represent the best time for intervention."

Heep Hong Offers Timely Help

Regrettably, as at October 2010, over 4,000 children with special needs were in the queue for pre-school training services subsidised by the Government. The majority of them have to wait their turns for 1.5 to 2 years and might have missed the best time for intervention. How many children in the waiting list are with autism? No official figures have been disclosed, but taking Heep Hong Society, the sector leader, as an example, out of 2,000 students being trained at its 26 special child care centres and early education and training centres, children with autism accounts for 30%.

While waiting for government-funded services, some parents would seek private therapies, which cost HK\$600 to HK\$1,000 or more per session. Such expensive fees are far beyond the means of most low-income families.

Sponsored by the Autism Children Foundation and other donors, Heep Hong launched the Speech Support Programme for Children with Autism in the East New Territories in October 2010. Under the programme, eight group sessions of speech therapy are given to children with autism on the waiting list. Workshops and individual consultation services are also provided to enable parents to train their children's social communication skills outside classes. The programme is charged at around one tenth of the private market rate, and further sponsorship is available for families with financial difficulties.

Early Intervention & Daily Practice Essential

Why is speech therapy employed as the first step of intervention in this programme? Ms Yvonne Lai, Senior Speech Therapist of Heep Hong, stated, "Speech ability is inextricably linked with cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural management skills. If early speech intervention sets in, children's performance in those areas would also be enhanced. In the long run, it helps reduce their needs for rehabilitation services and special education, and enable them to live an independent life. On the contrary,

if the speech problems were untreated, their verbal communication ability would remain where it is, and even deteriorates to the extent that self-mutilation is applied to express their dissatisfaction."

Speech therapy starts with the existing stage of speech development of the children. Through intriguing activities, the therapist enhances their comprehension, expression and social-communication skills, and equips parents with skills to stimulate the speech development of their children. "Comprehension ability is enhanced through clear instruction and emphasis of key words; expression ability is upgraded via demonstrations and strengthened motivation; social-communications skills are improved through invitation, appreciation and answering requests in group activities. Parents are encouraged to practise what has been learnt in classes, and keep describing the surroundings to children, and patiently wait for children's responses," Yvonne explained.

Having completed the programme, Mrs Ng considered it as "a first-aid class", whereby she had learnt to communicate with Yan through gestures, intonation, multi-sensory means in all daily situations. "In just two months, Yan has learnt to share with others and observe the facial expressions of others. He even gave me a shoulder massage when I was tired. Twice in the bank, he lined up quietly. Clearly, he understands what I have told him. The progress my son has made gives me hope," Mrs Ng smiled.

Count on You for Extension of Support Programme

The Programme has transformed many families, lowering the anxiety level of parents, and repairing the broken relationship between spouses, children and their grandparents. The sponsor was also satisfied with the progress children had made.

In March 2011, sponsored by the Love Ideas Love HK programme of the Li Ka Shing Foundation, Heep Hong will launch a similar programme in the West New Territories. Together with the one in the East New Territories, a total of 300 children with autism and their families will benefit. "We hope to get support from more donors so as to sustain and extend the programme to all districts in Hong Kong and provide immediate support to more children in line for services," Nancy kept her fingers crossed. 🍀



► Nick and Heep Hong children at Great Chefs



◀ Nick created his debut comic book to raise funds for Heep Hong

Love • Changes the World

Japanese comics always centre on penalising the evildoers and rescuing the world. The first comic book created by Mr Nick Chung is apparently under the same influence. Yet, by taking a closer look, you will find something deeper and different.

At the outset, Nick intended to tell a heroic story. As life goes on, his heroic figure is no longer obsessed with heroism, but driven by humanism. "Hurting others entails hurting oneself. The only way out is love, and in action," Nick said.

As early as 5 years ago, Nick had begun to live out his belief. He rendered voluntary services at centres, assisting children in playing puzzles, drawing and other gross motor training. He remarked, "I can never forget the facial expression of a child with cerebral palsy undergoing treatment. At one moment, he looked amused when he's being helped to move and at another moment, he was in agony because passive stretching caused severe pain."

Nick also helped with feeding children at centres. "Some autistic children easily lost their temper. Some physically handicapped children were short of strength and could only be spoon fed slowly. This made me realise the difficulties parents confronted with in caring for their children with special needs year after year."

In another capacity, Nick had served as a fundraising ambassador going around Hong Kong to introduce Heep

Hong to the public. Once there was a lady who looked full of doubts after listening to his introduction. Nick, immediately, invited her to visit a Heep Hong centre nearby. Witnessing the needs of and training received by children, the lady was moved to become a supporter of the monthly donation programme.

Some families seldom bring their special needs children out due to various concerns. Nick called on the public to take the initiative to care for them. He said, "Compared with their normal peers, some children are born handicapped, either mentally or physically, and are in dire need of timely training and support. Unfortunately, the funding from the Government is far from sufficient." That's one of the reasons he made personal donations to Heep Hong.

Help could be offered in many ways, including volunteering, donation and community education. Nick said, "No need to be a hero. Doing good in every small ways could leave big marks on the earth." Why? Because "Love • Changes the World" as the book title spells out. 🌍

Charity listed on
WiseGiving
惠施 • 慈善機構

Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral palsy is a developmental disability caused by damage to the sensorimotor control areas of developing brain in early years of life, resulting in abnormal motor movement including oral and visual motor control, disturbances of sensory systems and other learning capabilities, such as concentration, memory and speech development. The brain damage may be attributed to the hypoxia of the brain during labor, infection caused by encephalitis, inborn hydrocephalus and tumors.

The major problem caused by cerebral palsy is abnormal movement ability, which is divided into four classifications, namely the spastic, hypotonic, ataxic and athetoid cerebral palsy. The most common type is spastic cerebral palsy, which can impair all four limbs, lower extremities, one side of body or one single limb, depending on the region of brain damage. Children with spastic cerebral palsy are characterised by hypertonic muscles in some part of the muscle groups while others have weak muscular control. This abnormal control pattern will lead to soft tissue tightness (STT) and deformities in the long term.

Physiotherapists who work with children with cerebral palsy always struggle against STT. The treatment techniques used to handle STT include positioning and joint mobilisation and passive stretching, which is most frequently used, also at home by parents. Unfortunately, passive stretching is not welcomed by children as severe pain is caused during the treatment. Parents are also left with helplessness in view of this.

Effect of Endermotherapy Comparable to Conventional Treatment

Sponsored by Ms Yuen of Diamond Design Ltd., a corporate partner, Heep Hong Society started to use endermotherapy to decrease STT since 2008. Endermotherapy is a soft tissue mobilisation treatment by the application of LPG Cellu M6 Keymodule I machine. Through treatment heads of different sizes, the machine gives a combination of powerful vacuum suction, skin rolling and vibration on fascia. Ms Lily Yuen, Senior Physiotherapist of Heep Hong, said, "The effect of endermotherapy is comparable to and more long-lasting than conventional manual passive stretching. In



addition, based on clinical observation, children felt much less pain during the treatment than manual stretching."

The machine was designed originally for scar treatment of burn patients in France, and not specified for physiotherapy. To find out the effect of endermotherapy on passive range of motion in children with cerebral palsy and other developmental disabilities, the Physiotherapist Team of Heep Hong Society conducted a research study with the Rehabilitation Science Department of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University from January to July 2010. The research results, showing that the immediate effect of endermotherapy and manual stretching is comparable, were presented at the 7th Pan-Pacific Conference on Rehabilitation on 24 October 2010. Sponsored by the Beauty Group, three LPG machines are in use at Tung Chung Centre, Shui Pin Wai Centre and Tai Wo Hau Centre for children with cerebral palsy and other special needs. 🧑‍⚕️



◀ Soft tissue is tight before endermotherapy

► Soft tissue tightness is improved after endermotherapy



► Sensorimotor playgroup facilitates holistic development of children

To Play to Go Far

In recent years, there has been a surging demand for playgroups. Is attending more playgroups necessarily good for kids? Ms Karan Weng, Occupational Therapist of Heep Hong, said, "Attending many playgroups and interest classes at the same time will leave children with no time to digest and consolidate what they have learnt. They will end up receiving information in a passive manner." As such, the key to success lies in picking the right one and focusing on it.

According to Piaget's theory, children aged up to 2 acquire knowledge of the world through sensory perceptions and motor activities. Playgroups for this age group should centre on giving sensory stimulation in a bid to build up the synapses, whereby a neuron can pass messages to another neuron, and facilitate holistic development.

The sensorimotor playgroups, designed by experienced occupational therapists of Heep Hong, serve these purposes. Through sensory activities consisting of visual, auditory, touch, proprioceptive (joint sensation) and vestibular (body balance) stimulations at the appropriate developmental levels, these playgroups can facilitate the holistic development of kids and enhance their social skills through interaction with other kids. On top of that, kids also learn the basic self-help skills such as self-feeding, washing hands and simple dressing. To prepare these kids for kindergarten, therapists will also facilitate them to pay attention, follow simple commands, raise their hands to express their needs and develop appropriate play skills in a group situation. Parents are invited to take part in the playgroup to strengthen the parent-child relationship and learn ways to tackle children's behavioural problems.

Progressing along Developmental Stages

One special feature of these sensori-motor playgroups is that the content is adjusted according to the developmental stages of children. Take playing with toys as an example, kids aged 6 months to 1 year are given simple toys to play in the company of adults; while those aged 1 to 2 are encouraged to follow commands, choose the toys that they like and play attentively; and those aged 2 to 3 learn to observe rules in a classroom setting and tidy up the toys after play. Parents are also reminded to adjust their parenting styles as their children develop. For example, kids fed



▲ Encouraging exploration



on blended foods in the first few months should be given soft solid foods to learn how to chew after 1 year old to facilitate their oral motor development. Starting from the age of 2, they can learn to self-feed with ordinary food.

Help Identify Signs of Delay

Given early identification, children with developmental problems have a good chance of recovery. In the playgroups, occupational therapists educate parents on the skills that children develop at each developmental milestone, and to watch for signs of developmental delays. Karan said, "Over the last 5 years, we identified a number of cases of autism, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, speech delay and global developmental delay, and referred them to the Government for assessment. Some borderline cases showed signs of improvement and even caught up with their peers after practising home training activities suggested in the playgroups."



▲ Playing on swings could give rich vestibular and proprioceptive stimulation

Encouraging Exploration & Trying

It is important for parents to practise what has been learnt in the playgroup. Karan encouraged parents to bring their children out for exploration with all their sensory means. A simple activity like playing on the swings could give rich vestibular and proprioceptive stimulation to children. Besides, parents should pay attention not to hinder the self-care development of their kids, in particular if a domestic helper is hired. In general, children are full of curiosity when they reach 1 to 2 years old and eager to try eating, dressing and tidying by themselves. If adults deprive them of the opportunities for the fear of troubles, children will get used to be dependent and lose their drive to take care of themselves when they get older to 4 to 5 years old.

Mr Lam, who has recently attended the sensorimotor playgroups with his son, said, "Some playgroups admit as many as 30 children and parents. The instructors may not have therapeutic skills or sufficient time to attend to individual needs. The playgroups offered by Heep Hong take no more than 6 to 8 pairs of children and parents. They have professional and advanced training facilities. The occupational therapist pays attention to individual children and explains in detail the rationale behind each game and activity. My son and I take much delight in attending the playgroup!"

For information of sensorimotor playgroups, please visit the website of the Supportive Learning Project of Heep Hong at <http://slp.heephong.org>.

Sponsorship & Fundraising Events



▲ Manulife unveiled Adventure Land at Shun Lee Centre



▲ Hutchison Telecom Hong Kong visited Mary Wong Centre



◀ Hang Seng Bank sponsored the Christmas social adaptation programme

The 20th Great Chefs to be Held in June

The 20th Great Chefs will be held on 2 June 2011 (Thursday) from 6:00 to 9:00 pm at Grand Hyatt Hong Kong. Extravagant food and beverage will be served by over 35 top hotels, restaurants and beverage sponsors with proceeds going to Heep Hong's Parent Resources Centres. Ticket information will be available at www.heephong.org.

3,000 Volunteers Helped at Flag Day 2010/11

More than 3,000 volunteers participated in Heep Hong's Flag Day on the Hong Kong Island on 4 December 2010. The event successfully raised more than HK\$900,000 for our Parent Resource Centres. Thanks for your support!

Manulife Unveiled Adventure Land at Shun Lee Centre

Thanks to a HK\$400,000 sponsorship from the Manulife Charitable Foundation, an Adventure Land was established at Shun Lee Centre and commenced service in January. A matching grant was also successfully sought from the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged to set up another "Adventure Land" at Mary Wong Centre. Besides, Manulife also sponsored and helped with the mural painting at Shun Lee Centre.

natures purest Charity Sale

The specialty store of organic baby products, natures purest, launched a charity sale for Heep Hong for the third consecutive years. The company sold mini-Christmas trees imported from Holland at its three stores and donated all proceeds, totalling HK\$80,000, to Heep Hong in support of children with special needs.

Festive Celebrations

Hutchison Telecom Hong Kong made a donation of HK\$50,000 to Heep Hong and visited Mary Wong Centre with Christmas gifts for children on 17 December 2010.

Hang Seng Bank sponsored the Christmas Social Adaptation Programme of Hong Kong region with a donation and a team of volunteers. Some 500 children and their family members watched a movie at CyberPort and enjoyed lunch at Jumbo Floating Restaurant in celebration of Christmas.

Cooperation with School of Design, PolyU

Students from the School of Design, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, helped Heep Hong design an e-communication package, e-greeting cards and several videos. The design works are available for viewing on www.facebook.com/heephong.

► PolyU students produced videos for Heep Hong



◀ natures purest held a charity sale for children with special needs





▲ Staff volunteers celebrated the Mid-Autumn Festival with Heep Hong children



▲ The "A" Hamper Fundraising Raffle



▲ Heep Hong children performed carol singing

From Good to Perfection – Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong

Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong entered into partnership with Heep Hong in November 2009. Since then, through a wide spectrum of charitable causes for the benefit of children with special needs, the Hotel has honored its corporate culture as being caring and innovative.

On the heels of a HK\$400,000 donation raised from an auction of an exclusive collection case of wines in 2009, Island Shangri-La pioneered an "A" Hamper Fundraising Raffle in partnership with Mercedes-Benz Hong Kong in 2010. Mr Darren Gearing, Vice President & General Manager of the Hotel, expressed, "We hope to surpass last year's donation so that better training facilities can be purchased for the benefit of children with special needs and their families." Staff members of the Hotel also took the initiative to promote ticket sales to clients and friends. Exceeding all expectations, a total of HK\$600,000 was raised.

Educational & Entertaining Activities

In celebration of the Mid-Autumn Festival, Island Shangri-La relived the legend of "the Lady in the Moon" for Heep Hong children. Some 20 staff volunteers sourced costumes and props after work hours, and dressed themselves in legendary figures at the Mid-Autumn Festival party. They also prepared exciting games, such as shooting arrows, going through tunnels and carrying lanterns in relays. Children were received with delicious dishes and presented with a box of moon cakes to bring home to their families.

As enlightening as it could be, the staff volunteers also devised educational games to play with children with special needs during their centre visit. They imparted nutritional knowledge to the kids with the aid of a hand-made food guide pyramid; and collected used cans, plastic bottles and

tissue boxes ahead of time to help the children separate waste for reuse and recycling. After that, they made handicrafts out of the materials with the children.

Chances to Shine for Children & Teenagers

At the Hotel's annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony, Heep Hong children were invited to perform festive songs for guests from the business and social community. To promote social acceptance and understanding of people with special needs, the Hotel also provided job opportunities for two autistic teenagers to take part in moon-cake packaging. Briefings were given to management across divisions to familiarise them with the characteristics of those teenagers and the ways to work with them.

The Hotel also took part in Heep Hong's Flag Day, the Great Chefs and other charitable causes. Leveraging their innovative and caring culture, the Hotel is poised to make further contribution towards building a more inclusive society and help more children with special needs. 🇭🇰

Special thanks go to the following donors*

Autism Children Foundation
Breakthrough Classes 27 & 29
Dickson Trading (Asia) Company Limited
Ms Esther Wong
Fung Yuet Ngor Charitable Foundation
The Hong Kong Golf Club Charitable Foundation Ltd.
Hutchison Telecom Hong Kong
Li Ka Shing Foundation – Love Ideas, Love HK
Mr Lin Kwok Keung
Manulife Charitable Foundation
MSIG Insurance (Hong Kong) Limited
Mr Nick Chung
楊國樑先生

* which made donations of HK\$10,000 or above to Heep Hong between October 2010 and February 2011.



▲ The latest Professional Training and Parent Education Programme is open for enrollment

► Free talks on developmental problems



◀ Heep Hong projects voted tops



Professional Training and Parent Education Programme Open for Enrollment

The latest "Professional Training and Parent Education Programme (March - August)" is open for enrollment. A number of professional courses on physical and sensory integration training, and support for children with dyslexia, ADHD, and parent workshops on support for autistic children, eye-hand co-ordination, and vocabulary learning will be held. Further details are available at www.heephong.org.

Wan Tsui Centre Expanded

Wan Tsui Centre will complete its expansion soon to serve 84 children and provide support services to 100 children on the waiting list. The facilities will also be open to public on weekends for social adaptation activities and benefit another 200 children in the district.

Free Talks on Developmental Problems

A series of parent workshops on language learning will be jointly organised with the Hong Kong Central Library in April. The talks will be conducted by Heep Hong's educational psychologist, occupational therapist and special child-care teacher. Free tickets will be available from 19 March. Enquiries: 2921 0385

Training Course in Shandong Held Successfully

A number of experienced teachers of Heep Hong Society were invited by Shandong Disabled Persons' Federation to conduct a three day training course on assessment and TEACCH for 70 teachers during 18-20 December 2010.

Parent Seminar on Support for Children with ADHD

A parent seminar on support for children with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) will be held in June. Admission is free. All participants will be given complimentary copies of a parent's handbook on the subject sponsored by the Quality Education Fund.

2-Day Workshop on the SCERTS® Model

The SCERTS® Model is a new, innovative approach that offers a framework of specific goals and procedures for assessment and educational programming for children with autism. A two day workshop on the SCERTS® Model will be held by Heep Hong Society in May. Details are available at Heep Hong website.

Heep Hong Projects Voted Tops

Thanks to the support of partners, donors, volunteers and parents, Heep Hong succeeded in obtaining a total grant of nearly HK\$650,000 from the Love Ideas Love HK programme to implement five new projects to provide 1,500 children and parents with a broad spectrum of training and support services in year 2011-2012. 🌟