

Press Invitation

Launch Ceremony and Press Conference for “JC A-Connect: Jockey Club Autism Support Network”

29 May 2015

In recent years the number of people diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has risen globally. This trend has been especially marked in developed countries. According to the latest statistics of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 1 in 68 children were identified with ASD in the USA. This is a stunning increase since 2000-02 when the CDC first began tracking the disorder and estimated the rate to be 1 in 150 children (National Health Statistics Report, 65, March 2013).

In Hong Kong, a similar trend of rapid increase in the number of students with ASD has been observed. According to statistics from the Education Bureau (EDB), in the four years from 2009/10 to 2013/14 the number of students diagnosed with ASD in public schools has increased from 2,050 to 4,970, more than doubling in 4 years. Many of these children with average or above intelligence are attending mainstream schools in Hong Kong. With greater public awareness of the disorder and improved detection and diagnosis, the number diagnosed is projected to raise by 20% each year.

In view of the increasing number of ASD students in Hong Kong’s primary and secondary schools, the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust has earmarked HK\$167 million to pioneer a three-year programme entitled “JC A-Connect: Jockey Club Autism Support Network” starting from the academic year 2015/16. The Jockey Club is collaborating in the programme with the Faculty of Social Sciences of The University of Hong Kong, the Education Bureau and six non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with solid experience in serving ASD students. The NGOs are Caritas - Hong Kong, Heep Hong Society, New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association, SAHK, The Salvation Army and Tung Wah Group of Hospitals and the programme seeks to provide better support for these students, their families and schools. Coaching programmes, teacher training and research will be conducted to improve the social communication, emotional regulation and learning strategies of ASD students to help with behavioral problems, enhance their learning ability and social skills and improve their quality of life. The programme will involve 250 public sector primary and secondary schools, covering about half of the students with special needs. Education and assistance for their parents will be also provided through 18 satellite centers and other educational programmes.

A press conference will be held to brief press members on the programme. Representatives of participating NGOs and principals will join the case sharing session.

Media representatives are invited to join the event, details is as follows:

Date: June 2, 2015 (Tuesday)

Part 1: Launch Ceremony

Time: 10:30am

Venue: Hall 2, Lee Shau Kee Lecture Centre, Centennial Campus (Map)

Part 2: Press Conference

Time: 11:15am

Venue: CPD-LG.17, Centennial Campus (near the Hall 2)

Speakers: Mr Leong Cheung, Executive Director, Charities and Community, The Hong Kong Jockey Club

Dr Irene Ho, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, HKU & Project Director (School Support)

Dr Sandra Tsang, Associate Professor, Department of Social Work and Social Administration, Faculty of Social Sciences, HKU & Project Director (Family Support)

Case Sharing: Representatives of participating NGOs and principals

For media enquiries, please contact

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