

Message from the Executive Director

By Andrew Chung

Who said the winter months were slow! 2024 is shaping up to be such a wonderful year already and Hong Fook has been on the move since coming back refreshed and recharged from the holiday break. On January 24th, we had the pleasure of having a double-header event recognizing our peer supporters at our annual Peer Supporter Appreciation Day, which also coincided with the annual Bell Let's Talk Day. This year, we were fortunate to have the Honourable Michael A. Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Mary Deacon, Chair of the Bell Let's Talk mental health initiative, and Alisha Tharani, CEO of Addictions and Mental Health Ontario for a special cheque presentation.

Bell Let's Talk has been a sustained supporter of our Recovery College, and this year, we were awarded with a generous grant of \$100,000. We are so grateful for the ongoing support and for the incredible work the Recovery College peer supporters and staff team have done to co-create recovery journeys that help people in our community thrive.



Hong Fook profiled as one of the featured charities in the Bell Let's Talk campaign

This February marks Black History Month, a month where people across Canada participate in BHM events and festivities that honour the legacy and ongoing contributions of Black people in Canada. In solidarity as racialized Asian immigrants, Hong Fook recognizes the impact of overt and covert anti-Black racism on the mental health and well-being of Black individuals, families and communities. Hong Fook is committed to advancing inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility through raising awareness and having tough conversations on how anti-Black racism manifests in the Asian community. We look forward to being a part of advancing such conversations and also helping to create such solutions in our mental health care system.



Cheque presentation for the Bell Let's Talk Diversity Fund, with Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Mary Deacon, Chair, Bell Let's Talk mental health initiative, Andrew Chung, ED, Hong Fook Mental Health Association, and Alisha Tharani, CEO, Addiction and Mental Health Ontario (from left to right)



A special visit from Raptor, sharing Raptors game tickets with Hong Fook

Last but certainly not least, the Lunar New Year is fast approaching! For me, this usually means getting together with some friends, seeing family and making sure there's plenty of delicious food to share together! The Asian diaspora is broad and many of us are looking forward to celebrating with our family and friends whether here in Canada or abroad. Wherever you end up this year, I hope the Year of the Dragon brings you meaningful connection, good health and happiness to you and your loved ones.

Warm regards,

Andrew

Hong Fook hosted the first Korean Mental Health Forum in Toronto

Empowering Minds, Creating Changes Together

Last November, the first Korean Mental Health Forum was hosted by Hong Fook in partnership with the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea. Over 50 community partners and stakeholders, who play pivotal roles in leading mental health initiatives in the Korean Canadian community, joined us and engaged in discussions with mental health experts and stakeholders. Greetings echoing the significance of this forum were delivered by Senator Yonah Martin, Raymond Cho, Ontario Minister of Seniors and Accessibility, and Stan Cho, Ontario Minister of Long-Term Care.

A panel, consisting of mental health experts, community leaders and local police, shared ideas on providing practical support for the local Korean senior population, expanding mental health promotion and education programs especially for adolescents and parents, enhancing the cultural competency

of Korean-speaking physicians, and increasing Korean-speaking mental health professionals. Collaborative efforts among community agencies, mental health organizations and local police are highlighted as crucial when providing timely response and mental health support to community emergencies.

The Korea Times Daily, the Media Sponsor, also published a series of editorials following the forum, to promote mental health awareness and introduce mental health programs and other social services in the Korean community.



Keynote speaker Dr. Jae-Hon Lee, Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry, Division of General Adult Psychiatry at Western University sharing at the forum together with other five panelists

Our newsletter invites Hong Fook staff, volunteers, clients and family members to write a short article in their preferred language. In this issue, we have included two sharing from family members with different programs.

Our Supportive Housing Program is not the last stop of our clients' journey. When they live in the housing units supported by our rental subsidy, the clients are encouraged to start applying for senior social housing or long-term care which may better address their needs while aging. When the clients are accepted into the new residential space, our team walks them through the transition to make sure the continuous care and resources are in place.

“ I joined the Parent Support Group since 2021. I feel incredibly fortunate to receive mental health support while living in a new country. Most of us in this group are parents of teenagers. This bi-monthly group is highly practical and tailored to the characteristics and interests of teenagers. I can tell the staff invests a lot of time researching a wealth of information. Even when the sessions run overtime, the staff always patiently answers questions and provides plenty of practical resources and books suitable for teenagers. The sharing among parents is also incredibly valuable for educating our kids. ”

A healthy relationship between parents and their children is key to mental wellness and critical to supporting recovery when mental illness occurs. Our Parent Support Group supports newcomer parents to better understand their children's needs and have more effective communication with them.

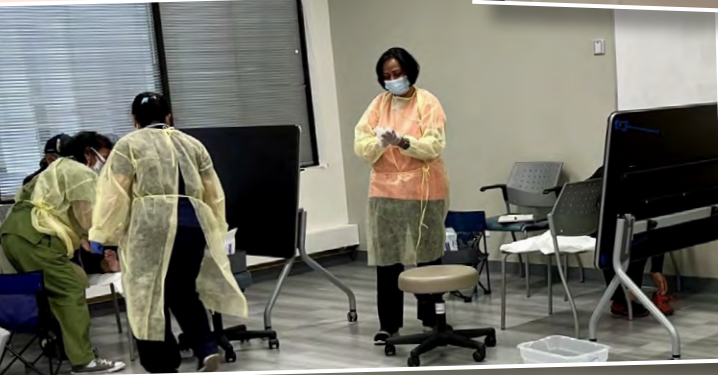
“ I am very grateful for the housing team's support these few years in helping my sister deal with all sorts of matter with great care, ultimately leading to a successful transition into long-term care.

The manager has dedicated a lot of time and energy to help us with our difficulties. He arranged a moving company to help my sister clean up the remaining belongings in the unit, and helped her with the social benefits. On behalf of our family, we are truly thankful for his help and care!

I am also thankful for the mental health workers who helped to escort my sister to various appointments, visited her when she was unwell in hospital, and translated and explained important government documents for us so that we are fully informed. ”

COMMUNITY NEWS

Our commitment to support youth in the 2SLGBTQI+ community continues as our youth team promoted our peer group, Hot Pot SQuATS (Supporting Queer And Trans Stories), and other youth services, at the annual **SpeakOUT conference** held by the York Region District School Board in November. Over 200 students from Gender and Sexuality Alliance groups attended the conference.



A big thank you to Seneca Medical Foot Care Inc. who have offered **foot care service and health information** to 15 seniors in November at our **NPLC**.



The festive spirit has enveloped us since December, as we celebrated the holiday season with each of our program groups. In particular, our **Mandarin senior wellness group** gathered for a heartwarming reunion of 50 people at the Cummer Park Community Centre in December.

Our Peer Supporters hosted the **annual appreciation party** in January with the theme "From the Heart". The party brought together peer supporters who have given from their hearts to help improve mental health and address stigma in the Asian community. This year's event was a special one as we celebrated the grant from the Bell Let's Talk Diversity Fund to support the growth of our Recovery College.



Upcoming Programs & Activities



Program Updates

Visit our website www.hongfook.ca/association to check monthly calendars and Youth and Family seasonal program catalogue.

Our **Recovery College** courses will be more diversified with topics that focus on building life skills relevant for recovery. Our **peer support groups** are also in transition to a better quality-based structure, running by an 8-week cycle instead of ongoing basis. To register for a new cycle, please email to programs@hongfook.ca or contact your peer supporter or the peer coach.

Our **NPLC** has expanded the **55+ Fit program** to Cantonese seniors every Thursday, 10am-11am. A series of topics have been lined up to help seniors stay active through exercise, mutual learning and support. To register, please email to annietse@hfchnplc.ca.

Board and Committee Nomination

Hong Fook has kicked off the board and committee nomination process. Please find more details on www.hongfook.ca/association/join-us/membership and complete the online nomination forms for nominees and nominators respectively. For further details, please contact nomination@hongfook.ca.

Annual Volunteer Drive

Case Aide positions are back! Please check the 2024 available volunteer positions including Gala volunteers and program support volunteers on www.hongfook.ca/association/join-us/volunteers and send your application to volunteer@hongfook.ca.

Hong Fook Raffle



Our Hong Fook Raffle is launched online this year! Visit www.trellis.org/hongfook/raffle or call 416-493-4242 for a chance to win one of the eight prizes, while helping accelerate the right care at the right time for our communities! The prize draw will be hosted at the Hong Fook Gala. All winners will be informed within one week after June 1.



Appreciation

Thank You to **PAT Supermarket Mississauga**, donating 80 bags of rice to our clients in need, a heartfelt gift during the holiday season. Appreciate their support to our clients for five consecutive years.



We are grateful for the 65 donors who have contributed in our 2023 year-end campaign. Special thanks to our corporate supporters **Guide Valve Limited** and **Sephora Canada**.

Hong Fook Radiothon



Our Hong Fook Radiothon returns in collaboration with Sing Tao A1 Radio! Tune in to AM1540 from March 1 to 7 as our staff, clients, and mental health experts share their experiences and mental health issues within our community. Your compassion through your donation is greatly appreciated.

Hong Fook Gala



Our Hong Fook Gala is fast approaching, where we will shed light on the experiences of Asian youth grappling with the model minority myth and facing lower mental well-being compared to their peers from other racial groups. With over 400 guests attending this signature event every year, there must be one of the ways for you to get involved! Visit www.hongfook.ca/foundation to explore sponsorship, donation and volunteer opportunities. And **order your gala tickets now to enjoy the Early Bird Rate \$275 till April 5!**



Thank you for giving with an open heart.



Downtown Toronto Office
407 Huron Street, 3rd Fl
Toronto, ON M5S 2G5

North York Office
1751 Sheppard Avenue East, G/F
North York, ON M2J 0A4

Markham Office
3621 Highway 7 East, Suite 301
Markham, ON L3R 0G6