

## Message from the Executive Director

Happy Spring!

And just like that, the promise of longer, sunnier and warmer days is upon us. The winter, however, was not without its warmer moments at Hong Fook.

On February 22, Hong Fook brought together nearly 200 of our friends, partner organizations, supporters and community members for "Unveiling Voices". An evening of multimedia storytelling about the personal journeys of Asian mental health from those within our community. It was such a powerful evening that illuminated both the heartbreak and triumphs experienced in both bigger and smaller ways. Thank you to all those who so generously shared their stories and to all those behind the incredible production of the event.

As Hong Fook aspires to provide a platform for more stories about Asian mental health to be shared, this Asian Heritage Month, we are so excited to launch "A Love Letter To Your Younger Self", a special digital call for submission that provides an opportunity to reach back to our younger selves with kindness and hope, letting them know things will be okay. By sharing these love letters on our social platforms, we hope to provide words of hope and healing for others. We will award five finalists with two tickets each to the Hong Fook Gala, which is themed, "Our Future. Redefined." – in support of Asian youth mental health.

As we celebrate Asian Heritage Month this May, I invite you to embrace and reflect on your own roots and identity with a sense of pride and celebration. I, myself, will be reflecting on my own Korean heritage in the context of being queer and Canadian-born, yearning for deeper connection

with my parents and their histories while also looking into possible futures where our Asian communities are even more resilient, visible and inclusive.

Before I sign off, I wanted to share some exciting news about recent changes to our team. Hong Fook is evolving and growing, and on this note, I am so proud to announce our new Executive Leaders and Senior Managers, most of whom have been with the organization between 2 and 20 years! Collectively, they bring our community deep expertise and commitment to ensure our organization

has a sustainable future and opportunity to deepen its impact. Please join me in congratulating these outstanding individuals whose leadership has already made a difference.

Warm wishes,

Andrew



*Email photo@hongfook.ca for photo submission details*

### Executive Leadership Team



**Cliff Li**  
Director, Operations



**Kennes Lin**  
Director, Clinical Services and Community Education



**Sunny Wang**  
Director, External Relations



**Sushma Subedi**  
Director, Finance



**Jenny Le**  
Board Administrator and Operations Manager

### Senior Management Team



**Doris Yang**  
Manager, Clinical Services and Intake



**Erica Wan**  
Manager, Recovery and Community Programs



**Kevin Lai**  
Manager, Clinical Services and Housing

# Advancing Diversity and Equity in Mental Health: Insights from the Conference

In partnership with the Society for the Study of Psychiatry and Culture, Hong Fook, along with nine collaborating hospitals and community mental health agencies, organized the biannual Diversity and Equity in Mental Health and Addictions Conference in Toronto on April 12th. With over 200 attendees, the event served as a dynamic platform for dialogue and learning, centred around the theme “Strengthening Cultural Psychiatry Through Community Engagement, Social Connection, & Interprofessional Collaboration.” A highlight of the conference was the panel discussion on “Cultural Psychiatry-Reflective Insights, Emerging Trends, and Future Directions,” exploring the integration of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles into mental health policies and practices, particularly within the context of global migration.

Featuring four cycles of concurrent workshops addressing EDI issues with an intersectional approach, the conference delved into subpopulations such as indigenous women, refugees, BIPOC youth (black, indigenous, and other people of color), transgender and gender-diverse individuals experiencing homelessness, and peers with lived experience. These workshops offered valuable insights and strategies for addressing the unique challenges faced by these communities within the mental health landscape.



Panel discussion on stage by Dr. Francis Lu, University of California, Davis, Dr. James Boehnlein, Oregon Health & Science University, Dr. Ted Lo, Asian Community Psychiatric Clinic, and Josephine Wong, Toronto Metropolitan University

## Collaboration Spotlight: Ensuring Timely Support for At-Risk Youth in Markham

Since January 2023, the Regional Municipality of York and York Regional Police have established Children, Youth, and Families (CYF) Situation Tables across York Region as part of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. This situation table brings multi agencies to meet weekly, leveraging on the team's professional expertise and judgement to determine cases that are of Acutely Elevated Risk (AER), and respond between 0-72 hours by providing culturally responsive supports and resources.

Our Youth and Family Services have actively participated in the South-Central Markham table, with service partners such as the John Howard Society and Your Support Services Network. Together, we aim to provide timely and appropriate interventions to youth identified with risk factors, including diagnosed or suspected mental health issues, antisocial and negative behaviours. Through the ongoing involvement, Hong Fook has successfully provided culturally responsive supports and resources to over 19 youth and families in the past year.

## Celebrating 5 Years of Impact Recovery College Five-Year Evaluation Released

We are thrilled to share the transformative outcomes of our Recovery College. After a successful recovery college fidelity review in 2021, we adopted the national recovery college survey with the support of Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences in 2022. The evaluation for 2019-2023 showed that our participants have been really benefitted, through making connections, learning coping skills, and understanding themselves better. Our College scored higher than the national average in areas such as recovery, connection, and self-esteem. Participants shared that our College is a safe and caring place for them. Almost everyone (93%) in 2023-24 said they would recommend our programs to other peers.

Our peer support groups are also making a difference by providing participants with a platform to be heard and accepted. The next cycle of the groups will continue this Spring with a break in July.



### Another Successful Community Tax Clinic at Hong Fook

Navigating tax obligations can certainly be stressful and anxiety-provoking for clients. A free community tax clinic like ours play a pivotal role in promoting financial stability and social inclusion among vulnerable populations. By ensuring access to tax-related services, we empower our clients to fulfill their civic duties while securing essential tax benefits that are crucial for their well-being.

And that's a wrap for another successful tax clinic for our clients and their families, as well as clients from the Mount Sinai Assertive Community Treatment Team. This year, we

had 88 clients and families attending the tax clinic in person. We also had a "virtual" option where another 34 clients submitted their tax documents ahead of time, and our volunteer accountants processed them during the clinic days.

Special thanks to our case aide volunteers and staff who were helping out on-site, but most importantly our volunteer accountants who devoted their time and energy to provide tax filing support to our clients.

### Sharing from the NPLC

Earth Day is an annual event on April 22nd. It is first held on April 22nd, 1970.

What did you do on Earth Day to show your support for environmental protection? What can we do to celebrate and show our appreciation of the earth's environment and raise awareness of the issues that threaten it?

According to earthday.ca, earth day is "leg day", symbolizing sustainable mobility and the importance of active transport and reduced GHG emissions.



What can we do in our daily living to care and protect the earth?

Here are what we can do to show how we care, not only on earth day, but everyday.

1. **Bike or walk instead of driving**
2. **Reuse your clothes**
3. **Don't waste water**
4. **Don't waste food**
5. **Bring your grocery bag and coffee cup**
6. **Donate your old furniture, toys, shoes, etc.**
7. **Help plant more trees**
8. **Turn off light when possible**

Can you think of anything else that you can do?

Protect our planet, preserve our future.

### Upcoming Programs & Activities



#### Community Garden Program

Every Thur, till Sept 26  
10am-12pm  
2330 Midland Ave  
RSVP slui@hongfook.ca

#### Playback Theatre

Cantonese Session  
@North York Office  
Sat, May 25, 2-5pm

English Session  
@Markham Office  
Sat, June 15, 2-5pm  
RSVP slui@hongfook.ca

#### Being with Me psychoeducation group

For Asian identifying youth age 12-25  
Wed, July 10, 17, 24, 31, 1-3pm  
@Markham Office  
RSVP lkwan@hongfook.ca

#### Walk-In Counselling Clinic

For Asian identifying youth age 12-25 and their families  
@Markham Office  
Every 1st Wed, 4-8pm  
@North York Office  
Every 3rd Wed, 4-8 pm

#### Stop, Drop, and Chill

For Asian identifying youth age 12-25  
@Markham Office  
Every 1st Wed, 1-8pm  
@North York Office  
Every 3rd Wed, 1-8pm

Visit our website [www.hongfook.ca/association](http://www.hongfook.ca/association) to check monthly calendars and Youth and Family seasonal program catalogue.

## Countdown to the 2024 Gala

As the 2024 Hong Fook Gala approaches on June 1, we extend a warm invitation to you to join us for an evening of inspiration and philanthropy, where together, we will make a collective impact on the well-being of our next generation.

Experience a refreshing gala this year like never before. The highlight of the evening will feature a keynote speech by Karen B. K. Chan, an award-winning sex and emotional literacy educator based in Toronto, who is dedicated to fostering real, transformative, and kind conversations. Furthermore, immerse yourself in an empowering art encounter with a live painting and music performance by Jin Zuo and Kemin Zhang, followed by a live auction of this improvisational masterpiece.

Secure your supporter table now to enjoy the event together with family and friends. If you are unable to attend on June 1st, we greatly appreciate any donations or participation in our Hong Fook e-affle at [www.hongfook.ca](http://www.hongfook.ca). Every contribution serves as a beacon of hope for our future.

**2024 HONG FOOK GALA**  
*Our Future. Redefined.*  
 Empowering the next generation of Asian youth mental health.  
 June 1, Saturday  
 Hilton Toronto Markham Suites  
 Conference Centre & Spa

Scan here to get your tickets!

Keynote Speaker Karen B. K. Chan  
 an award-winning educator  
 dedicated to transformative  
 conversations

MC Joseph Tsang  
 Sing Tao A1 Chinese Radio

MC Jee Yun Lee  
 CP24

Live Painting with Three Sounds  
 by Jin Zuo & Kemin Zhang  
 an immersive art experience of  
 empowerment

## Appreciation

During the Lunar New Year celebration period, we are deeply honoured to once again have the trust and support of **JF Insurance Agency Group Inc.** for the Asian mental health cause.

Our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who donated, volunteered, or tuned in to AM1540 from March 1 to 7, to make this **Hong Fook-Sing Tao A1 Radiothon** another success! A sincere Thank You to the Light Foundation, Le Van Duong and Cindy Tran, Annie Hu and Christopher Tam, Ka Tai Leong, Matthew and Judy San, Susan Tu, Peter and Elsa Chang, Peter Yeung, Terrie So, and four anonymous donors, whose contributions of \$1,000 or more have advanced our resources to provide direct caring support to everyone in our community.

In late February, Hong Fook, in collaboration with the Living Magazine, hosted a deeply moving multimedia storytelling event, Unveiling Voices. We shed light on the often overlooked and undervalued experiences of Asians and mental health. Visit our YouTube channel (@HongFookMHA) to watch the recordings and hear these powerful stories firsthand. Thank you for standing with us as we deliver care and ignite transformation in the lives of those in our community.

“The counselling services have been a source of comfort, stability, and support for me. With all of the distressing events happening in my life, the help I received has allowed my mental health to stay afloat and work towards feeling better. The service gave me a space to truly express myself without judgement, but with acceptance and understanding instead.”

– From a youth service user

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