

Message from the Executive Director

Dear Hong Fook Community,

As we welcome the fall season, I want to take a moment to share some exciting updates about what we've been up to at Hong Fook.

Since our last newsletter, we have made some big strides in our strategic planning process. We have partnered with a mission-driven consulting agency, Openly, to help us create an engagement plan, which will set the stage for meaningful conversations with you—our community. Over the coming weeks, we'll be reaching out to gather your insights and perspectives on what matters most to you. Your voices are vital as we envision a future where Hong Fook can best support your journeys and mental health priorities.

We also have some wonderful news to celebrate! On October 19 and 20, we participated in the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon, where over 40 individuals—including clients, family members, friends, staff, and volunteers—came together for an inspiring weekend of walking and running in the 5K and half-marathon events. As one of the official charities, we collectively raised over \$35,000! More than the funds raised, it was heartwarming to witness our community unite for Asian mental health, sharing good vibes and support among fellow runners.

In addition, we recently hosted a wonderful lunch event for our housing community. It was a joy to gather together over a delicious buffet, and we were treated to impressive performances

from our talented clients—singing (no autotune!) and guitar playing! It was a special opportunity to connect in person and celebrate a year of community and community mental health care. Our supportive housing program is special because it's an opportunity to magnify the unique voices, experiences, and perspectives of our clients, who are not just participants in our programs but our neighbours and invaluable sources of wisdom.

I would like to thank you for being an important part of making Hong Fook a safe, healthy, and happy community. We are so grateful that we get to support and care for one another.

Until next time!

Andrew

A WARM INVITATION

*to our past Association members, former board and committee members,
previous staff members, peer supporters and volunteers*

*Your commitment to our mission has laid the groundwork for lasting
change, and we believe your voice and experience can help us create an
even brighter future for the Asian communities we serve.*

Welcome to a New Chapter with Hong Fook. Join us at

Hong Fook Alumni Circle Kickoff

Thursday, December 5

10:00am-12:00pm

International Volunteer Day, a meaningful occasion to honour your contributions

Cummer Park Community Centre (6000 Leslie St, North York)

For inquiry and RSVP, email whuynh@hongfook.ca

Over the past four decades, thousands of individuals have contributed to Hong Fook's growth, extending well beyond our current records. We deeply appreciate everyone's support in helping us reconnect with those who have been part of our mission—whether by inviting them to our Alumni Circle kickoff event or updating our alumni list for future gatherings.

Collaboration Spotlight: A Decade-Long Partnership Program with University Health Network

Since 2014, the University Health Network's Asian Initiative in Mental Health (AIM) has partnered with Hong Fook to co-deliver the Integrative Behavioural Group Therapy (IBGT) program, a culturally and linguistically tailored psychotherapy group for the Chinese-speaking community in the Greater Toronto Area.

This 12-week group therapy combines three types of therapy: Cognitive

Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and Mindfulness practices. CBT addresses mental health challenges by reshaping unhelpful beliefs and encouraging positive behavioral change. ACT helps participants explore meanings attached to thoughts, promoting psychological flexibility, while Mindfulness fosters non-judgmental, present-moment awareness.

With 12 groups delivered annually, this partnership has positively impacted over 1,000 lives in the past decade, especially for people who experience insomnia, pain, depression, anxiety, and psychotic symptoms. We are currently recruiting for upcoming Cantonese and Mandarin groups starting in January 2025. To register, please contact our Intake Worker at 415-493-4242, ext. 2252.

Sharing Our Cultural Competency Best Practices at the AMHO's Annual Conference

On October 21st and 22nd, the Addictions Mental Health Ontario (AMHO) held its 9th Annual Conference, themed "Stronger Together: Promoting Sustainability in Mental Health and Addictions." A standout moment featured Erica Wan, our Recovery and Community Programs Manager, who co-presented with Simone Arbour, Research Scientist at Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences (photo to the right). Their session, titled "Recovery College as a Peer-driven Means of Providing Culturally Responsive Mental Health Care," explored

the innovative approach of Recovery Colleges, which empower individuals with lived experience through peer-driven education.

With over 40 attendees, the packed room reflected a strong interest in Hong Fook's culturally competent Recovery College, showcasing its impact on mental health education and support in diverse communities.



Updates from the NPLC



Flu season is here—have you gotten your flu shot yet? Protecting yourself and those around you from influenza is easy, and everyone 6 months and older can benefit. For those new to the flu shot, like children from 6 months old to 9 years of age who have never received it, starting with two doses (four weeks apart) can ensure maximum protection.

Wondering why we need a new flu shot each year? Flu viruses evolve, and each season may bring different strains of influenza A & B. That's why the World Health Organization monitors global trends and recommends annual

updates to the flu vaccine for the best possible defense.

Getting vaccinated is just one part of staying flu-free. Practicing good hygiene and self-care—like staying home if you're sick, wearing a mask, and keeping surfaces clean—can help limit the spread of germs. Small habits like washing hands, using hand sanitizer, and coughing into your arm can make a big difference.

Our HF Connecting Health Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic encourages everyone to talk to their primary health care providers or visit their local pharmacy to learn more about the flu shot. Stay safe, healthy, and flu-free this season!

Our Training Team Leaves Footprints from Coast to Coast

With the growing immigrant population from areas such as mainland China and Hong Kong SAR moving to the Prairie and Maritime provinces, the need for mental health support is pressing. These areas often lack the culturally competent resources and capacity to support newcomers, particularly in addressing mental health needs associated with social isolation and trauma due to political uncertainties—needs that are more robustly supported by settlement agencies in Ontario.

In response, our Training Team has gone the extra mile, travelling to Calgary and New Brunswick to deliver the Journey to Promote Mental Health training. This program, funded by Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada, covers essential topics



Training to the Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens' Association team at a local heritage building

such as migration and mental health, cultural competency, workplace wellness and self-care, and crisis intervention for front-line workers serving vulnerable sub-population, such as immigrant seniors.

Through this training tour, nearly 100 staff members from the Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens' Association, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, and the Multicultural Association of

Fredericton Inc. gained valuable skills. Participants expressed appreciation for the real-life examples, storytelling, and practical concepts that made the training both hands-on and impactful.

Our training team with the settlement service team from the Multicultural Association of Fredericton Inc.



This summer, our **Youth and Family Services team** hosted "Being With Me," a Compassion-Focused Therapy course for youth. 11 youth participants created buttons and crafts to remind us that every part of our "circle" deserves attention and care to nurture a healthy relationship with ourselves. This course has also been adapted into one-time workshops that can be flexibly delivered to school student groups upon request.



The holidays are just around the corner, and our **Supportive Housing team** has already begun the celebrations! In late October, we brought back our housing client party, which was paused since the pandemic, at the Dragon Pearl Buffet. Alongside enjoying delicious food and a client talent show, our staff organized engaging activities focused on mental wellness and fall prevention, a timely seasonal topic. Each attendee also received a handmade knitted gift from our Recovery College peers.



Upcoming Programs & Activities



Conversation Connect

Wed., Nov. 6 - Dec. 11
@North York Office & Zoom
RSVP: nsuh@hongfook.ca

Cooking Class

Tue., Nov. 19
Rice Ball Making
@Downtown Office
RSVP: slui@hongfook.ca

Thur., Nov. 21
Kimchi Making
@North York Office
RSVP: nsuh@hongfook.ca

Men's Sky To Cantonese-speaking men

Mon., Oct. 21 - Dec. 16
@North York Office
RSVP: slui@hongfook.ca

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

For 1:1 mental health services, call 416-493-4242 with the extension number to the language-specific intake line:

English: ext. 3229	Korean: ext. 5227
Cambodian: ext. 3229	Mandarin: ext. 3259
Cantonese: ext. 2252	Vietnamese: ext. 5228.



Step by Step: Raising Awareness and Funds at the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon

This October, we are excited to be back as one of the official charities in the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon. In just two months, over 40 runners formed six Hong Fook teams—representing every essential part of our community, from staff and volunteers to clients, family members, youth ambassadors, and alumni. Together, we raised over \$35,000 through more than 400 donations. Each contribution is a true testament to our commitment to supporting our community members when they need us most.

If you would like to join our team next year, reach out to Wendy Huynh at whuynh@hongfook.ca to be added to our 2025 runner list. Be the first to get all the race details and join us in stepping up for our community!

Scan the QR to visit our team page



Our Half-Marathon Runners



Our virtual runners crossing the finish line around the world



Our 5K Teams

My Empowering Journey at the Toronto Waterfront

When my case manager asked if I was interested in participating in the 5K walk at the Toronto Waterfront Marathon, I hesitated. What did 5K really mean to me? What if I fell behind while everyone else raced ahead? What if I passed out and no one was there to help me? What if I needed to use the washroom in the middle of the course? My case manager reassured me and even signed up herself to accompany me.

As I started sharing the news of my participation with family and friends, I was blown away by their support. They cheered for me and even donated to my fundraising page. I couldn't believe I raised over \$700 on my own! I never realized how many people around me were so supportive and believed in my ability.

On race day, I completed the 5K in less than an hour! I wasn't the last one, and my teammates were right there with me! I want to thank the donor who sponsored my registration; without your support, I would never have had the chance to unlock my potential.

I invite you to join us at the Toronto Waterfront next year. At Hong Fook, nobody gets left behind, and together, we can all find ways to realize our value and contribute to our community.



Victor Wong
A proud 5k walker with Hong Fook's Steps of Hope team

Appreciation



We are proud to be chosen as the beneficiary charity by **Ontario Chinese Anglers Association** and **Chinese Ladies Golf Association (Ontario)** (photo above) respectively. It's exciting to see more local community associations championing mental well-being while promoting a healthy lifestyle in unique ways.

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Please visit our website www.hongfook.ca and subscribe for e-Momentum.

Please follow us @HongFookMentalHealthAssociation and @HongFookMHA