

Message from the Executive Director

Dear friends,

As we take time to enjoy the long summer days and rejuvenate, I'm reflecting on the amazing energy of our Hong Fook community. It's this energy that made our June 21st gala such a success! We had a record-breaking year thanks to our generous community. My deepest thanks goes to our incredible volunteer gala committee led by John Chemillian and Warren Yu, and to Kitty Wong, who graciously shared her powerful story.

As promised in my message to you in our last newsletter, I'm also pleased to share that our board has approved a new three-year strategic plan focused on providing culturally competent care to the East and Southeast Asian communities in the GTA. The plan provides us with clarity and focus through key strategic priorities that will ensure that our organization stays at the forefront of care and connection. Our team is now adding the fine details to each of our priorities and I look forward to sharing the comprehensive plan later this fall.

One of our immediate priorities, stemming directly from community feedback, has been to revisit and refresh our brand. Over the past few weeks, we've genuinely enjoyed connecting with many of you to understand how our brand can better reflect and embrace all the diverse communities and identities that make our organization a place of belonging.

Our 43-year history and incredible legacy give us the perfect foundation to evolve our identity, ensuring it not only represents those we serve today but is broad enough to welcome

future generations. Thank you for joining us on this exciting journey forward. I hope you all find moments of joy this season, and I'm excited to share more news with you in the fall.

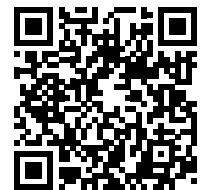
See you soon,

Andrew



Kitty shares her journey at the Gala, joined by a moving interpretive dance performance.

Scan this code to watch Kitty's story:



Congratulations

to Dr. Kenneth Fung on receiving the 2025 Chinese Canadian Legend Award, one of the most prestigious awards to promote and recognize the achievements and contributions of Chinese Canadians. As a psychiatrist dedicated to advancing cultural psychiatry and a public advocate for mental health education, fighting stigma and cultural bias, Dr. Fung exemplifies resilience, innovation, and community impact. Hong Fook board members proudly attended the July 19th ceremony to celebrate this wonderful achievement.

Collaboration Spotlight: Mood Walks Connect Peers Through Nature and Movement

This spring, our Recovery Programs launched their first-ever **Mood Walks** group — part of a province-wide initiative led by **Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Ontario** in collaboration with **Hike Ontario** and **Conservation Ontario**.

Over the course of six weeks from April to June, staff and peer supporters — newly trained by Hike Ontario as hike leaders — guided gentle, reflective walks through green spaces across Toronto. From Morningside Park to the Humber River Trail,

peers gathered each week to breathe and connect.

Mood Walks nurture emotional well-being. Participants shared that walking together helped reduce anxiety and brought a greater sense of calm. In fact, one peer described it as “a mini vacation.” For others, simply showing up was a major personal milestone.

By the final week, they were smiling, sharing stories, and even making plans to keep

A Mood Walks session at Guild Park and Gardens



walking on their own. Responses have been so encouraging that a new cycle is already scheduled for September to October, with a growing waitlist of eager participants.

Mood Walks is open to adults, seniors, and caregivers in our Recovery Programs. To learn more or join the waitlist, please contact our Recovery team.

Honouring Diversity, Connection, and Joy



This summer, Hong Fook's Youth and Family team was proud to join as a partner agency at the Scarborough Pride Celebration — a joyful, community-driven event that brought together over 200 attendees to honour 2SLGBTQIA+ voices, visibility, and belonging.

Held in collaboration with several local organizations, the event became a celebratory and vibrant space for people of all ages. Hong Fook's booth welcomed

participants with interactive activities, resources, and of course, face painting. Nearby, music and community-led programming fed into the joyously colourful atmosphere.

Events like this remind us that inclusion is something we build together. We're grateful to our community partners for their leadership, and to every person who showed up in support.

Updates from the NPLC

Chinese Calligraphy at NPLC

At our HF Connecting Health Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic (NPLC), wellness comes in many forms — including the graceful, centuries-old art of Chinese calligraphy.

Led by a senior calligraphy master, this program has been running since summer 2024, welcoming participants into a creative and calming space where brush meets breath. Each stroke becomes a meditation in motion — blending language, rhythm, and emotion into a visual art form that invites patience, focus, and self-expression.

From seal script to flowing cursive styles, participants explore both the technical beauty and deep cultural heritage embedded in this traditional practice. Many find that it not only builds skill, but also cultivates inner calm and a sense of connection — to culture, to self, and to others in the room.

To learn more or join an upcoming session, please contact **Joy Fang**, the Health Promoter, jfang@hongfook.ca.



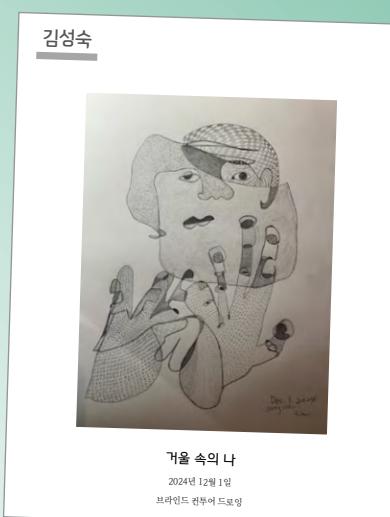
Calligraphy by our senior group leader, Changjiang Gao, reads from right to left: "Slow your steps, let your desires follow, calm your heart."

A Collection of Stories Through Art and Writing

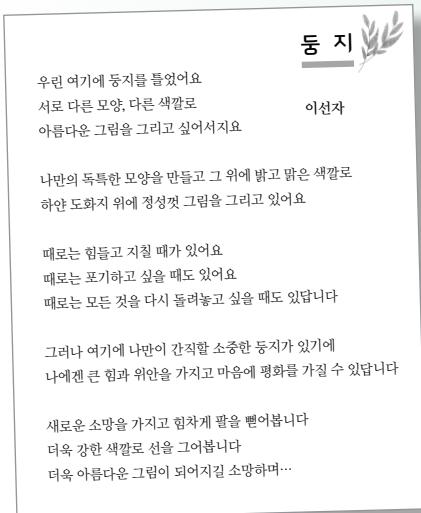
This special new collection brings together the voices and visions of participants from three of Hong Fook's recent cultural wellness programs: Korean Culture Circle, Art of Writing, and Healing Art.

During the pandemic, poet Chunhak Kwon led a Korean Culture Circle, offering rich reflections on Korean literature, values, and tradition. In 2023, forest educator Okguem Lee guided participants through the Art of Writing — a journey of self-exploration through words and memory. Healing Art, launched in the same period, invited participants to express emotion through colour and form, supported by artists Yookyung Cha, Youngin Jung, Kyungsun Kim, and Doim Heo.

Whether through brush, pen, or shared reflection, participants found ways to process experience, connect with others, and care for their mental well-being. We hope this collection encourages others to express themselves with courage and heart.



*"Me in the Mirror" —
Blind Contour Drawing by
a Healing Art participant*



This poem, composed by an Art of Writing participant, describes finding a personal "nest" (a place of belonging or inner sanctuary) where one can express their unique self, like painting a beautiful picture with distinct shapes and colours. Despite facing moments of hardship, exhaustion, or the desire to give up, the existence of this precious, personal nest provides great strength, comfort, and peace. It concludes with a renewed sense of hope, reaching out and drawing with stronger colours, aspiring for an even more beautiful outcome.

Upcoming Programs & Activities



Run for Health (for youth)
Sept 6, 20 & Oct 4 (Practice Sessions)
Oct 18 (5km Run/Walk)
RSVP: iankwok@hongfook.ca

Youth Summer Celebration
Wed, Aug 28, 3–5pm
@North York Office
RSVP: iankwok@hongfook.ca

Ballroom Dance
Tue, Aug-Oct, 2-3:30pm
@North York Office
RSVP: slui@hongfook.ca

Chair Myo Stretch (Cantonese)
Tue, Aug-Oct, 11am-12pm
@North York Office
RSVP: slui@hongfook.ca

Nourished by Nature
Aug 18, 27 & Sept 3
@North York Office
RSVP: slui@hongfook.ca

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

Celebrating Our Peer Supporters

Last month, we gathered for an evening dedicated to a vital part of our Hong Fook family: **our peer supporters**. These are the individuals who bring their lived and caregiving experience, compassion, and time to walk alongside others on their mental health journeys.

At this year's **Peer Supporter Appreciation Event**, we brought together both youth and adult peer supporters — a rare opportunity for connection across generations and programs. Over food, small gifts, and heartfelt moments, we shared in the deep

sense of community that peer supporters help build every day.

From welcoming visitors at the front desk to co-producing Recovery College courses and supporting group facilitation, peer supporters shape the work we do — and remind us that healing happens through connection.

To each of you who gives their heart and time so generously: **thank you**.

Your presence is a powerful reminder that no one has to walk this path alone.



FUNDING A FUTURE

Hong Fook Gala 2025

On June 21, nearly 400 guests gathered to celebrate Hong Fook's 2025 Gala — Together for Tomorrow. It was an unforgettable evening, filled with stunning performances and powerful storytelling.

The night opened with an exquisite Asian fusion dinner crafted by Chef Eric Chong, winner of the very first season of MasterChef Canada. Guests were then moved by the story of Kitty Wong, a Hong Fook peer supporter, who took the stage to deliver a raw and heartfelt performance that captured the hearts of our audience.

From stirring live music to dynamic cultural dance, every moment reflected the strength and spirit of a community building toward a more compassionate future.

Our live appeal went above and beyond in support of Asian mental health



Thanks to your generosity, we raised over **\$400,000** to support Hong Fook's culturally competent mental health programs. Your support helps ensure individuals and families across our community receive care that truly reflects who they are.

To learn about our sponsors and donors and see more photos, please scan this code (right).



Join Team Hong Fook at the Toronto Waterfront Marathon



Hong Fook is proud to return as an official charity partner in this year's TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon. Whether you're running, walking, or cheering from the sidelines, your support helps expand culturally competent mental health services for Asian communities across the GTA.

This isn't just a race — it's a chance for our clients, family members, volunteers, alumni, youth, and staff to come together and declare that together, we are stronger.

And time is running out!

We've reserved some extra spots for the Half Marathon and Full Marathon. You can e-mail Wendy Huynh at whuynh@hongfook.ca to secure your spot before they're all gone.

Otherwise, you can scan the QR code (left) to sign up directly for any available race categories.



“ Last fall, while on a family trip to Japan, **Ben Chan** quietly joined Team Hong Fook — walking through bamboo forests and train stations, logging his daily steps on an Apple Watch. At the time, few knew Ben was living with a chronic kidney condition. “I wanted to stay active in a way that felt meaningful,” he said. He set a modest fundraising goal of \$500.

In the end, he was delighted when an outpouring of support from his family and community led him to raise over **\$4,000**.

Now retired, Ben continues to give back through nonprofits like Hong Fook, which support youth and mental health.

“I think seniors are underutilized,” he told us. “We all want to feel like we have a purpose. And we all have something to offer.”

We're grateful for Ben — and for every Team Hong Fook member who moves, in their own way, to make our community great.

Join us this fall, and help turn every step into support for Asian mental health. **”**



“...we all want to feel like we have a purpose. And we all have something to offer.”

— BEN CHAN,
HONG FOOK BOARD MEMBER AND
2024 VIRTUAL MARATHON PARTICIPANT

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