Feature Stories
Always Serving with Love

It is always a challenge when it comes to serving vulnerable communities, especially adults with severe intellectual disabilities. Fu Hong Society was founded 45 years ago by Father BONZI Giosué Giovanni who came from Italy and a group of enthusiasts. Since then, rehabilitation services have diversified to meet changing social needs and grown dramatically in scale. Through it all, the Society’s core value remains unchanged: “Serving with Love and Caring for the Vulnerable”.

Our co-founder Father Bonzi shares his thoughts about the genesis and commitment to this ‘love’: “Home is often where one finds love. This is why the Society’s services are inspired by the concept of ‘family’. We began as a modest home for our service users. Such residential care is really important for persons with intellectual disabilities.”

In the 1970s and 1980s, there was a dire need to serve adults with intellectual disabilities. This community often did not receive appropriate care because their family members were out making a living or lacked the knowledge and skills to take care of them. As a result, some were restrained by ropes and chains, and even kept in metal cages. These situations were nothing short of heartbreaking.

Setting Up Father Tapella Home
Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, there was a lack of day care and residential care services for adults with severe intellectual disabilities aged 16 and above. Although Siu Lam Hospital was set up in 1972 to serve this community, Father Bonzi felt the conditions were not ideal: “At Siu Lam, everyone wore the same set of pyjamas. Everyone’s head was shaved for hygiene! I asked the staff if that was how they would treat their family and friends.”

Father Bonzi and a group of enthusiastic individuals embarked on the Society’s first project, which was Father Tapella Home in Kwai Hing, after they found out about the predicament this vulnerable community faced. The idea was to create a home-like environment that would provide a nurturing and safe space for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Father Bonzi’s approach was to focus on celebrating the individuality of each resident, encouraging them to participate in activities that they enjoyed. His goal was to ensure that everyone felt valued and included in the community.

In conclusion, the journey of Father Bonzi and his team has been one of love, sacrifice, and commitment to serving vulnerable communities. Their dedication has made a significant impact on the lives of many individuals and families, and their legacy continues to inspire others to follow in their footsteps. As Father Bonzi once said, “These people were family, so we had to love and treat them as we loved and treated our own family.”
In the same year, the Society responded to the Social Welfare Department’s call to pioneer the residential care model. We set up adult training centres and hostels in Hung Wah and Lai Yu in 1979 and 1980 respectively. These were the first such projects for adults with severe intellectual disabilities in Hong Kong, and they set a new milestone in the rehabilitation services here.

Expanded Society, Same Spirit

Our founders put love at the centre of what they did, and for decades, we have been upholding the spirit of ‘Walk together with Love’ so that service users can be cared for in a homely environment. The Society started with a modest abode for about two to ten people and expanded to build hostels serving dozens of people. Our service users are able to enjoy higher quality family life as the Society expands and practices the concept of ‘Big Home, Small Family’. All of our service units will continue to implement this ‘quality family life’ model as they look after the body, mind and soul of service users, ensuring they are loved through daily interactions and care. As Father Bonzi puts it, “Fu Hong is a root of love that needs to spread.”

The provision of residential services was fraught with challenges and difficulties from the outset. After Father Tappeila Home moved from its rented premises to a tenement on Chung On Street in Tsuen Wan, it began to serve up to 12 people. According to Father Bonzi, resources were scarce and manpower was limited. That meant challenges had to be overcome with sweat and toils — sometimes literally. Being located in an old tenement meant the service users had to ride piggyback on their parents, staff or volunteers across quite a few floors whenever they went out or came back from an activity.

Helping with Love

Father Bonzi says the manpower and resource constraints were overcome with the support and help of kind individuals from various quarters, including religious, and the legal and medical professions. With their assistance, the residential services had a good foundation to expand, and earned broad acceptance and affirmation from society. To this day, Father Bonzi remains grateful to these kind souls.

In the early days, it was with love that Father Bonzi served persons with intellectual disabilities and brought like-minded people together. He also created a home that offered familial care and compassion. Today, Fu Hong Society’s service units are no longer the small homes of the past. With subsidies from the government, we now have bigger hostels.

The legacy of love has lived on through the decades, plugging a gap that large hostels often struggle with. When crafting strategies and plans, incorporating the compassionate concepts of ‘Love’ and ‘Family’ ensures we provide active support and appropriate services for adults with severe intellectual disabilities. This helps them integrate into society, realise their potential, and achieve mental and physical well-being. The Society’s founders, including Father Bonzi, would approve.

Not forgetting the past, Father Bonzi also believes that the “Family” service concept is not just for adults with intellectual disabilities, but for all service users, ensuring their quality family life.
'Walk together with Love' sums up Fu Hong Society’s service spirit. Apart from meeting needs with love, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Madam TSU Kwan Yin Frankie, who joined the Society more than 30 years ago, embraces change with it too. One can literally see the anticipation and hope all over her face as she shares her wish to make a greater difference to stakeholders during her tenure.

自2014年出任助理總幹事以來，隨着接觸層面逐漸廣泛並深入至不同層面，徐姑娘更覺，對服務發展思考良多，所以她希望能為服務使用者帶來全方位的正面改變。

Since becoming Assistant CEO in 2014, Madam Tsui has had many opportunities to deepen her involvement in a wide spectrum of work at the Society. These first-hand experiences have impacted her and given her much food for thought in service development. She hopes to create positive change for service users in all areas.

「服務逾三十載 擁抱愛的轉變」

Embracing Change
with Love over Thirty Years

扶康會從愛出發，以愛同行，加入本會逾三十年的總幹事徐姑娘強調：「愛的轉變」 - 「我希望」利用卸任崗位，（為持份者）帶來多變態改變。」說到，她臉上流露著期待和盼望。

Madam Tsui observes that various allied health services such as clinical psychology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, nursing and social work come together to bring about change by responding to service users’ needs. She notes that to most people, what service users need could be something that appears easily achievable. However, to help our service users fulfill their needs, it takes one project after another. In this case, the service units and allied health professionals work together and align on action plans to achieve the objectives, working within their pipelines and bandwidth, and by assessing the actual environments and conditions.

"It’s the goals that appear to be easy and yet difficult to achieve that bring our professionals from various fields together. For example, someone in a wheelchair may need the help of a physiotherapist and an occupational therapist. If he has difficulty in swallowing, he would need the help of a speech therapist," says Madam Tsui. She notes that even going to a restaurant for 'yum cha' with one’s parents may seem like an easy thing to do but it takes a lot of effort for some of our service users to do that precisely.

In the early 1990s, there was increasing awareness of causes such as equal opportunities for persons with intellectual disabilities and their rights to full participation in society. Fu Hong Society similarly sharpened its focus on the holistic developmental needs of this group. To help them integrate into society, we set up clinical psychology services, and provided professional support to address their emotional and behavioral needs.
Nine Milestone Projects
Noting how the Society’s services have evolved over the past half-century, Madam Tsui, who has witnessed Fu Hong Society’s developments since the 1990s, says the handover in 1997 not only turned a page in Hong Kong’s history, but also signalled a watershed in the transition of the Society’s services.

Madam Tsui recalls that society in the mid-1990s started to pay more attention to the holistic development of persons with disabilities. In 1997, Fu Hong Society organised an unprecedented art exhibition that showcased the creativity of persons with disabilities and demonstrated the difference holistic development could make, debunking stereotypes about the public mind of this group. Prior to 1997, the Society was never involved in community mental health rehabilitation services.

Following the establishment of FHS Rehabilitation Centre in Aberdeen, three Halfway Houses offering mental health rehabilitation — Yuet Chi Home, Yuet Hang Home and Yuet Kwan Home — were set up, as were Si Lok Adult Training Centre and Yi Lok Adult Training Centre, which are both day training centres cum hostels for persons with severe and intellectual disabilities. In addition, the Society also established Ngai Shing Workshop and Ngai Shun Home, the latter being a hostel for persons with moderate intellectual disabilities. All in all, the Society embarked on nine milestone projects post-handover.

According to Madam Tsui, these nine projects were key milestones for the Society. Apart from building the first Halfway Houses in Hong Kong, Fu Hong Society also ran two of the first three day training centres cum hostels for persons with severe physical and intellectual disabilities in Hong Kong. The setting up of Si Lok Adult Training Centre and Yi Lok Adult Training Centre, which together cater for up to a hundred service users, also showed a maturing of the Society’s services in the area of health services, nursing, social work and dedicated manpower resources.

by 2006, under the sponsorship of the Keystone Foundation, Fu Hong Society set up a development and support centre for persons with autism spectrum disorders, and this developed to become Hin Dip Centre within three years, serving persons with autism and other developmental disorders of different ages. A decade later, the Society set up its second service unit dedicated to serving children with special needs. This is the self-financing Hin Dip Yeh Centre that serves children who have not received preschool subsidies for rehabilitation.

及至2006年，本會獲凱健基金會贊助，再接再厲，設立自閉症人士發展及支援中心，開始為自閉症譜系障礙人士提供服務，並於三月後發展成為「希徑中心」，繼續為不同年齡的自閉症或有發展障礙的人士提供服務。2010年，本會自閉症人士服務踏入第十年，本會第二所專為有特殊需要兒童而設的自費監護服務單位「華發康樂中心」開幕，為有特殊需要的兒童提供服務。

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**Understanding and Tolerance of ‘In-Laws’**

In recent years, the coordination of various stakeholders has been something Madam Tsui thinks a lot about. In fact, this is also increasingly a priority for companies and social welfare organizations in general. To Madam Tsui, both the management team and frontline staff must appreciate that candor, mutual understanding and tolerance are key to building good rapport between the organisation and its various stakeholders. She believes that as long as colleagues, families and community partners stand united, we will be able to leverage our collective strength to deal with any problem that we encounter in frontline services or in driving social policy changes.

She cites a metaphor from the founder of Fu Hong Parents’ Association, Mr. CHEUNG Kwong Chi, whom she calls “Uncle Cheung”. “Fu Hong Society and the services users’ families are like ‘in-laws’ to each other, not opponents. After the parents entrust their children to the Society, the children typically spend the rest of their lives at the Society, just like how a bride lives with her in-laws. Both sets of in-laws must trust and respect each other, and be prepared to render support when necessary. Mutual understanding and tolerance are essential.”

As persons with intellectual disabilities generally face an earlier onset of physical ageing, they may be considered advanced in years once they reach 40. The ageing of service users with such disabilities is a major challenge in this sector. Madam Tsui is actively working towards having geriatricians visit the Society’s Care and Attention Homes, and driving changes in policies related to caregivers. The pandemic has underscored the shortage of residential care, facilities and resources for persons with severe disabilities. Madam Tsui believes the rebuilding or relocating of the relevant hostels should be a priority for the government. How to embrace the changes that life ahead? With love, no doubt.
Fu Hong Society Gives Hope to Families

If the most important thing to parents is the well-being of their children, then the saddest thing for them would be for their children to grow up not knowing joy and happiness. That is why parents feel relieved when they secure a place for their children with intellectual disabilities at a residential service unit because not only takes some of the caregiving responsibilities off their shoulders, but it also gives them space and time to plan and prepare for their children’s future. This was especially critical to parents in the 1980s. Mrs. LAM YUNG Yuk Chun (Mrs. Lam) remembers that all too well.

"In those days, it seemed like none of us as parents knew what to do. With our children leaving school and not having a residential service unit to go to, many families found it difficult to cope with looking after their children around the clock," recalls Mrs. Lam. Back in the day, places at service units were so rare that getting one’s child into a training centre was like winning Mark Six!

In 1990s Hong Kong, services for persons with intellectual disabilities lacked holistic planning. At the time, the government mainly referred to service models and practices overseas, especially those in the UK. It was only later that Hong Kong gradually came to have a clearer service framework. Sheltered workshops and activity centres had only just come into being, as was the case with residential services catering for persons with severe disabilities. True to the pioneering spirit of “Your Needs Is The Lead”, the Society established two subvented residential service units for persons with severe disabilities that could house 50 people under the sponsorship of the Social Welfare Department. The two service units were Ching Lam Home and Oi Wah Home.

In those days, there was no central referral system. Initially, Ching Lam Home accepted mostly former service users from the Society’s day training centres such as those in Chun Shek, Lei Yiu and Hing Wah. It was during that time that Sze Wai was accepted by Ching Lam Home. From the start, Ching Lam Home already had its own resident healthcare and rehabilitation teams staffed by personnel such as registered nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists. The fully staffed team at Ching Lam Home made it the rehabilitation home with the most comprehensive one-stop services at the time.
### 支持 遠離可成河

嚴重腦傷人士的服務使用者往往在院舍終生，員工與服務使用者及家屬已建立了一份深深的信任和默契，大家就像一家人。”

發掘服務潛力的人士潛能，讓他們的生命走向無限可能，發光發熱。多年來，林太協助本會的服務獲致成長的支點都始於在人的動力來源，讓哀傷在面對腦傷的勇往直前所帶來的挑戰，正確地為親的生活。她認為為社會人士在腦傷的障礙下勇敢迎接，及讓心中展開在生活上的支持及付出十分重要，都有助社會對腦傷人士的認同及包容，讓原本以為前路寂寥的家庭可像她一樣，擁有信心及正能量的光芒。

### Support Convergence

Service users with severe disabilities typically spend their old age at the residential service units. The staff often build deep trust and rapport with the service users and their families.

To develop the potential of persons with intellectual disabilities so that they too can have limitless opportunities and contribute to society. Mrs. Lam believes that society’s services, and support from family and friends have kept her going all these years and made it possible for her for the face the challenges arising from her daughter’s condition with a positive attitude. Mrs. Lam believes that society can be free of its ideas and volition remain strong, persons with disabilities will find greater acceptance and inclusion, and families who think their future is bleak, like hers had been, will embrace their situation and see light at the end of the tunnel.
支援精神復元 促進社區融合
Supporting Mental Health Rehabilitation and Promoting Social Inclusion

「康復對我來說就像是救生圈一般重要。」很難想像，當年窮困、離群的Coke曾深陷情緒的漩渦，難以自拔。

“‘日出’是人生的轉折點。”Coke說。Coke在早年接受精神科治療後多月後出院，受病情影響而從工作崗位退出來到社區時，他希望有一個新開始。然而，他必須面對，德治難以，彷彿之間，Coke找到了“日出”。這個“轉折點”，才得以與社會重新聯繫，掌握自己的生活節奏。

然而，康復之路，Coke重新起步的過程也為艱難。

當公園樹一張張都無人問津之後，康復仍然沒有活動的機會，他感到被一個一個活動排斥，真的好困擾！他想起工會組織康復社群的Coke時間感到很幫助，對“日出”的懷念尤為感激。

Coke was discharged two years ago after receiving psychiatric treatment for over a month. Mood disorder impacted so much that he stopped working for two long years. He hoped to start afresh but had a tough time starting from scratch. Just as he was feeling lost, he found "Sunrise", a "halfway house" for him. It was here that he managed to find a link with society and decide how he wanted to live.

Alas! The pandemic meant tough times for Coke. "At a time when there wasn’t even a bench in the park, I could sit on and ‘Sunrise’ still couldn’t organise regular events, I was really grateful that it could find an activity for me to participate in," recalled Coke, who felt extremely helpless when the whole of society was crippled by the COVID-19 pandemic. The compassion and care shown by “Sunrise” was something he was very grateful for.

Coke口中的“康復”，其實是扶康會位於港島東區的「康復天地」，是全港首個在公共屋邨開設精神康復機構的綜合社區中心。自2012年從位於灣仔的康復中心遷址至此後，便一直透過不同的方法及活動，推動精神健康，在社區內發揮著重要作用。

為回應社會對精神康復服務不斷增加的需求，扶康會的服務範圍也從原先的康復中心在於1997年減後，便積極地多元化擴展至精神康復中心成為其中一大範疇。透過精神康復人士重返社會，扶康中心以培訓社會生活為重點的康復中心內設有三所中途宿舍，以及精神康復人士逐步適應社區生活的不同嘗試。

在2019年康復中心的臨時服務間，「康復天地」更進一步配合政府在精神健康對社區的發展和「落實」為好，像Coke這樣的康復人士提供支援。

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By "Sunrise", Coke’s referring to Fu Hong Society’s Sunrise Centre, set up in Wah Fu Estate on Hong Kong Island. It is the first ever Integrated Community Centre for Mental Wellness built in a public housing estate in Hong Kong. Originally located at the FHS Rehabilitation Centre in Aberdeen, Sunrise Centre was moved to its present location in 2012, and it has since been advocating mental health causes and promoting social integration through different methods and activities.

Responding to the ever-increasing demand for mental health rehabilitation services, Fu Hong Society began to diversify its services actively since setting up its Rehabilitation Centre in Aberdeen in 1997. A major part of this effort was expanding service coverage to include mental health. To help persons in psychiatric recovery re-integrate into society, Fu Hong Society set up three halfway houses to help them adapt to life in the community. Apart from benefiting these persons in recovery, their family members also benefited as their caregiver burden was reduced. It was also beneficial for society, as the service users would have recovered and been prepared before they returned to the community.

Sunrise Centre in 2010 was a temporary service provider located within the Rehabilitation Centre. It helped to support government initiatives on mental health in the district, helping local residents who were recovering from mental issues. Coke was one of them.
**Stray Cat Therapists**

Fu Hong Society has always faced a gamut of challenges in the area of mental health rehabilitation, ranging from the development of halfway houses to the provision of community support. Staying true to the spirit of ‘Your Need is the Lead’, the Society has explored innovative methodologies that are effective for its service users. For instance, Coke got to know Sunrise Centre through one of its research projects: ‘Cat-watching’. Questions were asked to the animals about included: “How do animals help people to reduce their stress and improve their mood?” These animals “are none other than the ‘cat therapists’ who often visit Sunrise Centre. The two cats have built a bond with the staff over time and they have become ‘therapists’ at the ‘Cat Hub’ of the Centre. While Cat-watching may appear to be a frivolous concept, it is backed by science. Throughout Coke’s eight sessions of interaction with the strays, he had to fill in questionnaires both before and after each session. His responses and pulse data helped to track his mood and psychological changes. With such data, we hope to optimise our methods in uplifting persons experiencing mood disorder. Coke said he was really moved by Sunrise Centre’s ardent desire to improve its services continuously, and its focus on quality and outcomes.

Coke lived in Tin Wan and went to WaH Fu Estate twice a week to play with the cats. Each time, he spent half a day there. As he built a relationship with the cats, he started to sense that he was accepted, trusted and not judged. Perhaps that is the ideal relationship we all hope for and the best medicine for mood disorder. Through playing with the cats and his mobile phone, and fiddling with newspapers, he was able to enjoy his tranquil private moments.

**No Stress in Art**

While cat-watching allowed Coke to collect his thoughts, art provided the impetus for him to start afresh. Whether the medium was pastel or acrylic, or whether he was sketching or drawing murals, he was able to access varied visual art experiences. Coke may claim to have no talent in art but when he is sharing his artistic experiences, the happiness he feels is real: “The best thing about art is that there is no right or wrong way of doing it. It also allows me to focus. After the instructor has taught me what to do, I’m free to be creative. No stress at all!” ‘Sunrise’ sets aside a blank wall for us to draw on. There are lots of bubbles on it. After I finished drawing a bubble, the instructor encouraged me to draw another. This went on until I finished my sixth or seventh bubble. Then I realised I actually did it!” Coke was able to build confidence and find his drive through art which neither judged nor failed. That was an important first step out of the doldrums for him.

‘During the pandemic, ‘Sunrise’ gave me a room for me to draw my mural in peace and even provided the tools and colours! Where else could I find a space that was available to me all day? I’d be asked to leave if I sat in a Cantoneses cafe for too long. ‘Sunrise’ was like paradise to me!’ recalled Coke. This ‘Sunrise’ paradise was sensitive to Coke’s needs. He said, “I could join the drawing class anytime without waiting for a minimum number of participants to be gathered. I could also learn at my own pace. Even if I couldn’t finish something, I could always continue in the next lesson. No stress at all!” Hong Kong is a pressure cooker through and through. This parallel stress-free universe is something to be treasured indeed.

Managing his emotions was the first step. Reconnecting with society was the next. Under the encouragement of the staff at Sunrise Centre, Coke joined a group of volunteers that made up of service users at the centre. As people who had suffered from mental issues, they regularly visited patients in psychiatric recovery staying at halfway houses due to the pandemic. Coke feels the volunteer team was very positive, and they enjoyed the interactions and sharing so much that it did not matter who was receiving and who was giving anymore.
This is what Coke has to say about his first-hand experience at Sunrise Centre: “The staff at ‘Sunrise’ showed me so much love. I know this sounds abstract but I felt they were helping me with so much care!” Such is what the Society means by ‘Your Need is the Lead, Walk together with Love’. Coke says, “Before I was warded, I was so tired of everything that I had to make a huge effort even to go have breakfast outside. I was exhausted mentally and physically. When I was discharged after being warded for more than a month, I thought I’d start afresh but the pandemic happened and life stopped! That was a big blow to me. I’d say the immense help from ‘Sunrise’ was super meaningful to me.”

**Diverse Support and Services**

The volatility of the pandemic meant there were many variables beyond one’s control and this could leave people with pent-up feelings without an outlet. Sunrise Centre created a parallel universe for Coke in his hour of need, giving him peace and a breather. There, he was able to recollect his pace and regroup the pulse of life. Other than Cat-watching, visual arts and volunteer activities, Sunrise Centre also offers diverse options suited to the different needs of service users, including band performances, modern dance, arts and crafts and networking groups.

“I felt the pandemic was killing people in more ways than one. But ‘Sunrise’ gave me new hope. I was gradually able to interact with people and resume some regular activities,” Coke describes how the pandemic pushed him into a worse situation and how glad he was that Sunrise Centre ‘saved his life’ and prevented some very unfortunate events that could have unfolded otherwise. He hopes society would allocate more resources so that people who face the same predicament as he did would have more ways of being supported.