

# Speech by FS at Salvation Army Charity Christmas Luncheon 2023 (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the Salvation Army Charity Christmas Luncheon 2023 today (December 1):

David (the Chairman of the Advisory Board, Salvation Army Hong Kong and Macau Command, Dr David Li), Colonels Philip (the Territorial Commander of the Salvation Army Hong Kong and Macau Command, Colonel Philip Maxwell) and Deslea Maxwell (the Territorial President of Women's Ministries of the Salvation Army Hong Kong and Macau Command, Colonel Deslea Maxwell), soldiers of the Salvation Army, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to join you all for the Salvation Army Charity Christmas Luncheon. Congratulations to the Salvation Army on organising this event to celebrate the festive season and raise funds for a worthy cause.

The Salvation Army has been serving Hong Kong for over 90 years. All along, it has demonstrated a deep commitment to transforming lives and caring for the community, bringing help – and hope – to those who need it most.

Famous author and humanitarian Helen Keller, who visited Hong Kong in 1955 and has a house named after her at St Paul's Convent School, said this: "Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement; nothing can be done without hope."

The Salvation Army creates hope for members of our community through its various services, with more than 100 social service units, schools, and education centres in Hong Kong and Macao. With subventions from the Social Welfare Department since 1958, the Salvation Army has expanded its reach to becoming ever more deeply rooted in our society.

In this financial year, the Salvation Army received more than \$600 million subvention allocation. The sum supports a spectrum of social welfare services covering different target groups such as family and children, young people, individuals with rehabilitation needs, and offenders.

All this good work helps the Government in building a caring and inclusive society.

Among your recent efforts, one of them is partnering with the Government on transitional housing. Indeed, providing short-term accommodation for those who need it is a priority.

To date, sites for building over 21 000 transitional housing units have been identified. And about 9 000 units are already in service, with the remaining 12 000 units (to be) available over the next two years.

The Sam Shing Transitional Housing Project, involving conversion of a seven-storey school building into 123 accommodation units for 400 tenants, is run by the Salvation Army. With your dedicated efforts, all 123 units were occupied by June this year.

Ladies and gentlemen, Christmas is about love and a season of giving. Look at the world at large which is filled with complexities, challenges and conflicts. Cliffhangers are everywhere. But Hong Kong has remained a safe and peaceful city. Our economy is bouncing back, and tourists and businesses are returning. So let us count our blessings and have a grateful heart.

The festive season reminds me of Acts 20:35: "It is more blessed to give than to receive". Let's share our joy, peace and blessings with our family, friends and colleagues, and let our blessings be the blessings to others too.

Once again, my heartfelt appreciation goes to the Salvation Army, to all of you, for your dedication to transforming lives and caring for the people in need.

And being part of that effort, I appeal to you all to vote in the DC election on December 10. Let us vote for those who are dedicated to serving the community and making Hong Kong a better home.

Finally, I wish you and your families a blessed Christmas filled with happiness, peace and love of family and friends. Thank you.



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## [DH's HIV Testing Service promotion vehicle launches today \(with photos\)](#)

In support of World AIDS Day, the Department of Health (DH) has arranged a Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Testing Service promotion vehicle to visit various locations in Hong Kong from today (December 1) to raise public awareness of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), promote HIV testing services and appeal to the public to care about people living with AIDS.

The World Health Organization has designated December 1 every year as the World AIDS Day to remind people around the world to stay united in fighting against the disease and to care about infected people and their family members.

The promotion vehicle themed "For your health, Get tested" will visit various locations in Hong Kong in December. It enlightens the public about the mode of transmission and preventive measures of HIV, and promotes the importance of HIV testing in an interesting way, featuring cartoons and games. Personal tablet computers are available on the promotion vehicle to showcase and introduce the two main functions of the DH's new HIV Testing Service website: the online booking for AIDS Counselling and Testing Service, and the online ordering of HIV self-test kits. The activities held on the promotion vehicle are free of charge and a reservation is not required. Members of the public are welcome to join. Souvenirs will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. For details about the promotion vehicle activities, please visit: [www.aids.gov.hk/english/new2023/nm05.html](http://www.aids.gov.hk/english/new2023/nm05.html).

A DH spokesman said, "HIV is the cause of AIDS. Without treatment, about half of HIV infected people will progress to AIDS within 10 years. The cumulative total of HIV infections reported locally since 1984 is 11 830. Despite the number of reports of HIV infection have decreased from the peak of 725 cases in 2015 to 409 cases in 2022, the number of AIDS cases have fluctuated between 62 and 139 cases per year, and over 80 per cent of AIDS patients progressed to AIDS after being diagnosed with HIV infection within three months during the same period. HIV testing facilitates early detection of HIV in infected people, and early treatment with antiretroviral drugs effectively prevents progression to AIDS and other complications."

The spokesman said that sexual transmission remained the major mode of HIV transmission. Members of the public with a history of unsafe sex should take an HIV antibody test early. Key populations with a higher risk of infection should undergo regular HIV screenings, while people who had sex but do not belong to these key populations should consider getting tested at least once.

Members of the public can visit the HIV Testing Service website ([www.hivtest.gov.hk](http://www.hivtest.gov.hk)) to make reservations for the AIDS Counselling and Testing Service or order an HIV self-test kit. HIV-positive people should seek specialist care and HIV treatment as soon as possible.

The public may visit the DH's Virtual AIDS Office ([www.aids.gov.hk](http://www.aids.gov.hk)), the Red Ribbon Centre page ([www.rrc.gov.hk](http://www.rrc.gov.hk)) and the Gay Men HIV Information website ([www.21171069.gov.hk](http://www.21171069.gov.hk)) for more information on HIV/AIDS.



## [Hospital Authority expands service of “BookHA” feature of “HA Go” \(with video\)](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) announced today (December 1) that the "BookHA" feature in the mobile application "HA Go" will be further expanded. Patients who are new cases of allied health outpatient clinics can book appointments for the services of six allied health specialties through "HA Go". Patients can complete the entire new case appointment booking process anytime and anywhere, which brings added convenience.

The Chief Manager (Allied Health) of the HA, Ms Priscilla Poon, said, "The HA commenced the pilot run of new case appointment booking for physiotherapy service and occupational therapy service through 'HA Go' in the second quarter this year. After reviewing the operational arrangements, the HA decided to further expand the arrangements to dietetics service, speech therapy service, podiatry service, and prosthetics and orthotics service. 'HA Go' users can make new case appointments anytime and anywhere. If users have registered their family members as 'Who I Care' in the application, users can also book new case appointments for them."

Generally, patients who submitted applications for booking new case appointments of allied health outpatient clinics through "HA Go" will receive notifications of the booking completion within 14 days. Patients will receive reminder messages as the scheduled appointment dates approach. Patients can cancel the appointments through the application at least 14 working days before the scheduled appointment dates instead of calling the clinics.

When making appointments, patients are required to provide referral

letters within three months of issue from the HA. Currently, most referral letters issued by the HA carry a QR code which can be scanned with the built-in function of the application to complete the process, saving time on photo-taking and uploading images of referral letters page by page.

The Chief Medical Informatics Officer of the HA, Dr Joanna Pang, said, "The HA will continue to advance 'HA Go', and add more new features. As at the end of November, there are more than 2.2 million registered users. For citizens who have not registered, they can download the application and input personal information anytime and anywhere, and activate the accounts through 'iAM Smart' or 'eHealth' for information verification. Patients can also activate their accounts with the assistance of our staff during their follow up appointments."

Hong Kong identity card holders aged 18 or above may register as "HA Go" users. Members of the public can visit the following website for more information: [www3.ha.org.hk/hago/](http://www3.ha.org.hk/hago/).

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## [LCSD to hold Performing Arts Carnival 2023 at Kwai Tsing Theatre \(with photos\)](#)

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department is presenting the Performing Arts Carnival 2023 from October to December at five of its performance venues in the New Territories. The last carnival will be held at the Kwai Tsing Theatre (KTT) in the afternoon on December 10 (Sunday), with the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) and venue partners of the KTT showcasing an array of free performing arts programmes. Members of the public are welcome to join.

The fascinating programmes of the Performing Arts Carnival 2023 will cover dance, drama, music and Chinese opera. HKAPA students will offer the Cantonese opera excerpt "Tryst in the Firewood Shed" from "Havoc at Guang Chang Long", performances of Chinese dance, ballet and contemporary dance as well as an excerpt of the original musical "Home Sweet Home" at the KTT. They will also perform Chinese music repertoires, including Shandong folk music, "Gold Rush Order"; an erhu ensemble, "Charge of the War Horses"; a silk and string quintet, "A Joyful Night"; a zheng ensemble, "Battling the Typhoon"; a small ensemble, "Blooming Flowers under Full Moon", and a Guangdong music medley.

Two fringe activities by the venue partners of the KTT will also be held at the carnival. The Chung Ying Theatre Company will perform excerpts of oral

history theatre from "Post-Southern Anthropocene" and the Wind Mill Grass Theatre will present play readings of excerpts from "Lazy People Love Traveling".

Admission to all programmes is free with limited places available on a first-come, first-served basis. Tickets for the fringe activities will be available at the foyer of the KTT on the event day from noon while stocks last. For details, please visit the website

[www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/ktt/performingartscarnival2023.html](http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/ktt/performingartscarnival2023.html).



# Social Welfare Department enhances support for carers through expanding respite service network for elderly persons

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has expanded the respite service network for elderly persons from today (December 1) to strengthen residential and day respite services for the elderly living in the community and relieve the pressure on their carers.

The Chief Executive announced in the Policy Address this year the expansion of the respite service network so that carers can take short breaks or attend to personal matters for temporary relief.

Starting from today, about 140 private residential care homes for the elderly under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme will, on top of residential respite services, provide day respite services for needy elderly persons in the community when vacant residential care places are available. Subsidised Day Care Centres/Units for the Elderly will continue to provide day respite service for elderly persons.

Upon implementation of the new initiative, the service points of day respite services for the elderly will significantly increase from about 50 to about 190; the number of service places will increase from about 260 to over 500 to cover all districts in Hong Kong. The new initiative will provide more support for elderly persons, their family members and/or carers in a comprehensive manner.

Needy elderly persons and their carers may:

1. call the Designated Hotline for Carer Support 182 183 for social workers to assist in arranging and matching respite services;
2. apply directly via the residential care homes/centres/units providing day respite services for the elderly; or
3. request referrals from Integrated Family Service Centres/Integrated Services Centres, Medical Social Services Units, or elderly service units (e.g. District Elderly Community Centres and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres).

Details are available at the SWD website:

[www.swd.gov.hk/en/pubsvc/elderly/cat\\_careersupp/drrr/dayrespite/](http://www.swd.gov.hk/en/pubsvc/elderly/cat_careersupp/drrr/dayrespite/).

In addition, starting from October this year, about 20 residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs) under the Bought Place Scheme for Private RCHDs are providing day respite services for persons with disabilities in the community when there are vacant residential respite care

places. Family members/carers may:

1. call the Designated Hotline for Carer Support 182 183 for social workers to assist in arranging and matching respite services;
2. apply directly to the RCHDs concerned; or
3. request referrals from Integrated Family Services Centres/Integrated Services Centres, Medical Social Services Units, special schools or rehabilitation service units.

Details are available at the SWD website:

[www.swd.gov.hk/en/pubsvc/rehab/cat\\_supportcom/othersupport/2respites/](http://www.swd.gov.hk/en/pubsvc/rehab/cat_supportcom/othersupport/2respites/).