Organiser：

Supporting Organisation：

Press Conference on "Research on Hong Kong Students' Character Strengths and Virtues" by Character Day Hong Kong

For Immediate Release **Press Release**

As they study higher grade, Hong Kong students' Hope Scores Go Down

Character Education Foundation Urges the Public to "Bring Hope" to the Next Generation through 2018 Character Day Hong Kong

Hong Kong, 19th June 2018 A press conference on "Research on Hong Kong Students' Character Strengths and Virtues: Hope and Happiness" organised by Character Education Foundation (CEF), who is the organiser of Character Day Hong Kong (CDHK), and supported by the Centre for Religious and Spirituality Education of The Education University of Hong Kong (the Centre) took place in the Grand Hall of Hong Kong Playground Association on 19th June. On the press conference, CEF and the Centre released the findings of the research, and representatives of both parties, including (1) Ms. Christine MA-LAU, Founder and Chairperson of Character Education Foundation; Adjunct Professor (Practice) and Advisor of Centre for Religious and Spirituality Education of The Education University of Hong Kong, (2) Ms. Virginia MAK, Director of Character Education Foundation, (3) Ms. Connie MAK, Director of Character Education Foundatio, (4) Professor John LEE, Director of Centre for Religious and Spirituality Education cum Chair Professor of Curriculum and Instruction of The Education University of Hong Kong, and (5) Dr. Esther LAU, Assistant Professor of Department of Psychology of The Education University of Hong Kong; Registered Clinical Psychologist, provided a list of suggestions.

Participants agreed that previous CDHKs has shown effectiveness

Before announcing the theme of and other details of "2018 CDHK", representatives of CEF and CDHK reported on the first two CDHKs, including the aims, effectiveness, and number of participants of the first two CDHKs. Among the figures, a majority of representatives of participants agreed that CDHK has deepened participants' understanding of Character Strengths. For example, in Kindness-themed 2017 CDHK, when asked how much their

Organiser：

Supporting Organisation：

Press Conference on "Research on Hong Kong Students' Character Strengths and Virtues" by Character Day Hong Kong

For Immediate Release **Press Release**

students/employees grew in their understanding and display of Kindness, on a scale from 1 to 10, an average mark of 8.1 was indicated.

Growing concern about mental health of Hong Kong students; Hope has a positive correlation with Happiness

In recent years, there has been a trend of suicide cases at younger ages, which has led to a growing concern about the mental health of Hong Kong youth. In the hope that synergised effort can be paid on taking care of the current situation, CEF consulted the Centre on planning for "2018 Character Day Hong Kong (CDHK)". The Centre supported CEF by sharing the findings of a research they conducted during March to June 2018, titled "Research on Hong Kong Students' Character Strengths and Virtues: Hope and Happiness", which had received responses from around more than a thousand of students from 35 primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong.

The overall mean score of Children Hope scale (six-point Likert scale) is 3.87. The overall mean score of Subjective Happiness scale (seven-point Likert scale) is 4.45. The study shows a correlation between Children's Hope scores and Subjective Happiness Scores of Hong Kong students, meaning that students with higher hope scores tend to feel happier, and vice versa.

The overall mean score for Hope for senior form students particularly low

Professor John LEE points out that start from Primary 6, the overall mean score for Hope for senior form students particularly low. For example, the overall mean score for Hope for a Primary 4 students is 4.55 (six-point Likert scale), but for Secondary 1, the overall mean score for Hope is 3.71. Professor LEE suggests that transition in the learning and schooling environments may be a challenging period for students to remain hopeful.

A negative correlation between Sleep Quality and Hopefulness; Threaten mental health of Hong Kong students in long term

Organiser：

Supporting Organisation：

Press Conference on "Research on Hong Kong Students' Character Strengths and Virtues" by Character Day Hong Kong

For Immediate Release **Press Release**

According to the study, more frequent sleep problems are associated with lower Hope scores. Dr. Esther LAU, Assistant Professor of Department of Psychology of The Education University of Hong Kong; Registered Clinical Psychologist, warned that lacking good sleep might affect mental health. Both sleep and hopefulness has been shown to be reliable predictors of well-being and mental health problems. Quality sleep induces optimism and positive emotions, and hopeful thinking enhances self-esteem and resiliency. Promotion of students' sleep health and hopefulness is of prime importance and deserves public attention.

2018 CDHK chooses Hope as theme; Urges the public to Bring Hope to next generation

Based on the findings of the study, Hope is a character strength that Hong Kong students urgently need to strengthen now. Therefore, CEF has chosen "Hope" as the theme of "2018 CDHK", and called for action with its slogan "Bring Hope", hoping to increase the Hope scores and Happiness of participants.

Attendees said that if the public can work together to bring hope to the next generation, it is possible to increase the low overall mean score for Hope and avoid the decrease of overall mean score for Hope for Senior form students.

Ms. Christine MA-LAU, Founder and Chairperson of Character Education Foundation; Adjunct Professor (Practice) and Advisor of Centre for Religious and Spirituality Education of The Education University of Hong Kong suggested three aspects that the society can help to increase the Hope scores of Hong Kong students. First of all, adults should remind students that they can have various kinds of goals. Hong Kong students often have their goals set to have high scores in exams. But the public, educators and parents need to remind them that apart from academic performance, they can also set goals in other areas like hobbies, interpersonal relationships, and cultivating characters. Therefore, even if they may not be able to achieve one goal today, they can still have hope in other goals. Secondly, even for the same goal, students can achieve it through different means. Sometimes when students encounter barriers on the way to their goals, they think it has to be a dead end, and thus they lose hope. But adults should remind them that barriers

Organiser：

Supporting Organisation：

Press Conference on "Research on Hong Kong Students' Character Strengths and Virtues" by Character Day Hong Kong

For Immediate Release **Press Release**

are actually opportunities for them to open up to other possibilities. They should try to achieve the goal through other ways. Lastly, adults should teach youngsters that past experience can give them confidence to overcome future challenges. Therefore, students should be allowed to do more of what they are capable of doing, so that they can believe that there are things that they can accomplish. When they face other challenges in the future, they can use this confidence to encourage themselves.

Professor John LEE, Director of Centre for Religious and Spirituality Education cum Chair Professor of Curriculum and Instruction of The Education University of Hong Kong prompted school sponsoring bodies, schools and educators to build caring environments in schools and implement Character and Values Education. At the same time, implementing systematic Life Education curricula, and strengthening Life Competence of teachers and students can help students to grow in positive life.

Prof LEE also encouraged parents to put children's character cultivation as a priority, and to learn and support about the development of their children by actively taking part in Character Education and Life Education activities held by schools or organisations. As the study finds that the quality of sleep has a strong correlation with the Hope scores of Hong Kong students, Dr. Esther LAU, Assistant Professor of Department of Psychology of The Education University of Hong Kong; Registered Clinical Psychologist suggested parents to nurture healthy sleep in their children by careful planning of children's sleep-activity schedule and building an active life-style. Dr. LAU also recommended parental coaching of effective stress management, support of children's attainment of their own goals, and a loving and calm environment at home, to facilitate the development of hopeful thinking.

About CEF

CEF was founded in 2016 with the mission and vision of seeing Hong Kong as a city that recognizes, values and promotes Character Education and values such as Gratitude and Kindness.

Organiser：

Supporting Organisation：

Press Conference on "Research on Hong Kong Students' Character Strengths and Virtues" by Character Day Hong Kong

For Immediate Release **Press Release**

The work of CEF can be divided into three pillars: (1) Advocacy – Holding the annual CDHK; (2) Training – Provide trainings to parents, educators and students about Character Education in forms of workshop and talks; and (3) Resources – Provide free resources of Character Education to the general public of Hong Kong regularly.

About CDHK

CEF introduced the internationally renowned annual "Character Day" to Hong Kong in 2016, which is now moving onto its third year. Each year, CDHK chooses one character strength as the theme, and encourages participants to focus on cultivating the theme character strength all year round. Currently, most participants are schools and organisations. "Gratitude" and "Kindness" were chosen as the themes of the past two years respectively.

For the latest news of CDHK, please visit its official website characterday.hk and Facebook page www.facebook.com/characterday.hk .

Media enquiry

Please contact
Miss Vivien LEE
Tel. no.: 3705 8680
Email: info@characterday.hk