

**Press  
release**

Note to editors  
For immediate release

10 April 2012

**CADENZA Community Project:  
AIMS-Active Interest Mentorship Scheme  
helps improve quality of life after retirement**

Every year about 60,000 working adults in Hong Kong enter retirement. Due to the influence of the 1950s baby boom, the retirement population will peak around 2018, when up to 300,000 people will leave work within a few years.

Successful adjustment to retirement is the crucial first step to quality aging. On the other hand, poor adjustment is a major risk factor for mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. Therefore adjustment and preparation to retirement is a major social issue. However, because of limited resources, most corporations can only provide basic preparation such as leaflets or one-off seminars for soon-to-retire employees. In order to promote a behavioural change for retirement preparation, practical support along with universal and cost-effective strategies are required.

In response to the challenge, The University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Christian Service jointly launched a two-year project, CADENZA Community Project: AIMS – Active Interest Mentorship Scheme in 2011, funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. By introducing a mentorship intervention model, individuals who will retire soon or have just retired are assisted to develop active interests, participating in interactive and meaningful activities to derive satisfaction and motivation for a healthy and positive retired life.

After the first batch of mentorship training in June 2011, 27 mentors who completed the programme were matched with 48 soon-to-retire mentees. For each trained mentor, one to two mentees were assigned and on-going meetings and supervision provided. Mentees received encouragement and support and were assisted to develop active interests before retirement.

The Research Project Director of AIMS, CADENZA Fellow, Assistant Professor of the Department of Social Work and Social Administration at The University of Hong Kong, Dr Ng Siu Man reported the preliminary results of AIMS today (10 April). He emphasised the importance of developing and continuing active interests in retirement in order to maintain overall physical and mental health. Active interests also improve the sense of worth, level of life enjoyment, and social connection. The strategic model of AIMS is to train up retired people to become mentors so that they can facilitate soon-to-retire people to develop active interests. Mentees who adjust well after retirement can join the programme as a mentor, making retired people valuable social assets.

To provide a comparison of their self-esteem, life satisfaction, physical and mental health between the time of joining and four months after joining the programme, 25 soon-to-retire mentees completed questionnaires at two time points up to the end of February this year. Results indicated that the mentees had stable mental health, without signs of deterioration in the process of retirement. There was also a significant improvement in their physical health, and about 70% of them developed new active interests. Over 50% of them reported that they received adequate support and encouragement from mentors through (1) sharing active interest information; (2) care, concern and listening with patience, and (3) sharing of retirement experiences. About 50% of the mentees planned to become a mentor in the coming year.

Four of the participants, Mr Albert Wong, Mr George Yeung, Ms Connie Chan and Ms Georgiana Cheung shared their views on the benefits of joining AIMS at today's press conference. They remarked that AIMS offered encouragement and training through the well-adjusted retirees who had been trained as mentors, enabling mentees to develop positive and optimistic views towards retirement preparation and different active interests. They had made many new friends, enlarged their social exposure, and developed new lifestyles for a prosperous and meaningful retired life. (Appendix 1)

To further investigate the benefits of the programme for retirees, AIMS is recruiting more people who will retire soon or have just retired to participate in the research project. All mentees are required to complete four sets of questionnaires, for assessing their quality of life before and after retirement, and the impact of AIMS on them. A four-session mentorship training will be provided at the end of May for well-adjusted retired people who are interested in becoming a mentor of AIMS. (Appendix 2)

The Consultant to the Employee Development Service of the Hong Kong Christian Service, Mr Anthony Guen announced that AIMS will hold the First Hong Kong Active Interest Expo on 15 April from 11 am to 5 pm, in East Point City, Tseung Kwan O. The Expo includes active interest performances, sharing of retired life experiences as well as active interest promotional booths. All are welcome. (Appendix 2)

### **About CADENZA: A Jockey Club Initiative for Seniors**

**CADENZA: A Jockey Club Initiative for Seniors** is launched and funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust in light of the rapidly aging population. It is a HK\$380 million project in partnership with the Faculty of Social Sciences of The University of Hong Kong and the Faculty of Medicine of The Chinese University of Hong Kong. The project aims at creating an elder-friendly environment in Hong Kong to foster positive community attitude towards ageing and continuously improve the quality of care and quality of life of older people. CADENZA has four major components: public education, community projects, training, and leadership training programme and research. Details of CADENZA are available at [www.cadenza.hk](http://www.cadenza.hk).

Enquiries: Trinni Choy Pui Ying, Assistant Director (Media), Communications & Public Affairs Office, The University of Hong Kong (tel: 2859 2606, email: [pychoy@hku.hk](mailto:pychoy@hku.hk))

## Appendix 1

### AIMS mentors and mentees -- Case sharing

#### Mr Albert Wong (Mentor)

Mr Wong was the manager of a public organisation who retired in 2009 after 30 years' service. After adjusting to his new life, he accepted the invitation of a colleague from the Human Resources Unit to join the pilot programme of mentorship training at AIMS. He found the programme offered useful support, helping him develop a positive and optimistic view for managing a harmonic and interactive relationship with mentees. He was happy in the process of acquiring new knowledge, developing more active interests, and making new friendships. All these experiences had a great impact on Mr Wong and have made his retired life more fruitful.

#### Mr George Yeung (Mentee and mentor)

Mr Yeung was working in a public organisation when he joined AIMS in 2009 to prepare for his retirement. He had been too busy to plan ahead and had no idea how to handle the transition to a new stage of life. His social network was limited to friends and partners related to his work. Although he tried to work on his retirement plan and look for support, he still worried that it was not realistic. During his journey of exploration, he found AIMS offered a good guidance. He established a new pattern of retired life filled with active interests and activities. In 2010, Mr Yeung was trained as a mentor. Although he has since returned to work in his previous workplace, he is still participating in AIMS as mentor to share his experiences with others.

#### Ms Connie Chan (Mentor)

Ms Chan retired from her own beauty care business in 2009. She learned about AIMS in a radio programme. After becoming involved, she met three soon-to-retire people and encouraged and supported them to develop active interests such as singing, dancing, hiking, yoga, and volunteer service. Now she has developed a close friendship with them. She found that participation in AIMS made her retired life more meaningful and joyful. She expects to contribute more with her newly acquired knowledge and skills, and to help more soon-to-retire people to develop active interests and to enjoy their retired life.

#### Ms Georgiana Cheung (Mentee)

Ms Cheung was a registered nurse before she retired in 2011. She found retirement a crucial turning point to her. Before retirement, she heard some friends complaining that retired life was boring and there was a loss in direction. She echoed that it was important to promote awareness of retirement preparation to soon-to-retire people, and to facilitate their early preparation. Through AIMS, she acquired more knowledge on retirement preparation, experienced the benefits of active interests and made a lot of new friends.

## Appendix 2

### The First Hong Kong Active Interest Expo

Date: 15 April 2012 (Sunday)  
 Time: 11 am to 5 pm  
 Venue: 1/F, Exhibition Hall, East Point City, Tseung Kwan O (MTR Hang Hau Station Exit A)  
 Objective: Provide a platform to exchange information about active interests for the public and soon-to-retire people  
 Activities: Active interest performances, sharing of retired life experiences, active interest promotional booths  
 Project: 1 pm to 2 pm  
 Launching (Officiating guests:  
 Ceremony Prof. Alfred Chan Cheung Ming, BBS JP, Chairman, Elderly Commission  
 Ms Cecilla Li, Assistant Director (Elderly Service), Social Welfare Department)  
 Entrance: Free of charge

### Active Interest Mentorship Scheme 2012 Training Programme

Target: People who are interested in becoming a mentor  
 Criteria: - Retired for more than half a year  
 - Good adjustment to retirement  
 - Keen to participate in active interests  
 Date: 23 & 30 May, 6 & 13 June (Wednesdays)  
 Time: 2 pm to 5 pm  
 Venue: Hong Kong Christian Service (33 Granville Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon)  
 Content: - Psychosocial changes and management of retirement transition  
 - Common active interests in Hong Kong  
 - Mentorship skills, common difficulties and their management  
 Fee: Free of charge

### Active Interest Mentorship Scheme 2012 Briefing and Matching Meeting

Target: Soon-to-retire people  
 Criteria: - Aged 50 or above  
 - Retired for less than half a year or to be retired within half a year  
 - Stay in Hong Kong after retirement  
 - Keen to develop active interests  
 Date: 20 June (Wednesday)  
 Time: 7 pm to 9:30 pm  
 Venue: Hong Kong Christian Service (33 Granville Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon)  
 Content: Introduction to AIMS, matching of mentors and mentees  
 Fee: Free of charge

### Enquiries & Enrolment:

2241 5582 (The University of Hong Kong)

2731 6366 (Hong Kong Christian Service)