

## 2019-2020 President's Report

During 2019-2020, the Foundation continued its support of several successful ongoing programs, while also initiating new ones to address real issues facing children.

In Canada, we continued to support programs at **Britannia Secondary School** and the **Tupper Community Hub**, schools which operate in challenging environments with many at-risk students. **At Britannia**, we provided \$12,000 in 2019 to continue the very successful **Brite 8 Program** for students in Grade 8. This program has demonstrated its success in helping students with their entry into, and successful navigation of, the high school years. We also provided \$5,000 to initiate a "**Boys Who Dare**" program, drawing on and continuing the experience of Britannia's existing "Girls Who Leap" program. These two programs, open to any self-identified vulnerable youth, use mentoring models to foster community engagement and teach leadership skills. **At the Tupper Hub**, we provided \$3,500 for the 2019-20 academic year to continue running the successful **Nutrition and Cooking Program**. We also for the first time provided \$4,500 for a **Girl's Group**, run jointly by Tupper School with local neighbourhood houses. This group, meeting weekly, helps girls who are at risk of engaging in negative behaviour or relationships to discuss sensitive subjects and receive guidance and counselling.

In China, we continued to support two successful programs. The first is the **Ciwei Migrant Children's Choir** project in Shenzhen, Guangdong, which the Foundation has supported for the past six years. We continue to feel that this program provides a good way to build social skills and self-esteem among disadvantaged children of migrant workers by using music and group activities. While scaling back our funding to allow them to step up and find new sources of funds, we continued to support them at a level that would ensure continuation of the project. In 2019, the Foundation provided CNY50,000 (approximately CAD \$10,000), and in 2020, CNY60,000 (CAD \$11,000). The **Sunrise iRead program** received its second year of support from the Foundation. This program builds libraries and trains teachers from schools in poor rural areas to improve children's critical thinking and build their love of reading and learning. Based on the success observed in the previous year, the Foundation decided to continue funding the Dajing Elementary School with CNY43,520 (approximately CAD \$8,500), while also providing CNY36,010 (CAD \$7,000) to permit expansion of the program to Lu Zhuang Elementary school, also in Henan Province.

In the first half of 2020, many things changed with the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Schools were closed, and education shifted to on-line learning. It became impossible to continue our projects in a "business as usual" manner. The Foundation rose to the challenge, quickly stepping up to support students during these unprecedented and extraordinarily challenging times. We immediately contacted our partner schools in Vancouver to learn about their new needs and agreed to allow the shifting of unspent funds at Tupper Hub from the Cooking and Nutrition program to ensuring students' food security at home. At Britannia School, where the largest problem was identified as widespread lack of access to necessary devices for on-line learning, the Foundation allowed the school to repurpose funds previously allocated to the Brite 8 program, and at the same time provided an additional \$20,000 to purchase 120 chromebooks

for distribution to students who needed them. \$8,000 was also redirected to a joint undertaking of the Britannia Community Centre and the Vancouver Basketball Foundation to provide more chromebooks to Grade 7 students expected to enter Britannia School in the fall. Through its quick action and flexible response, the Foundation ensured that the educational and other basic needs of some of Vancouver's most needy children would continue to be met.

In July 2019, I represented the Foundation in attending a 3-day forum in Shanghai titled **"Renovation and Innovation of the Soong Ching Ling Spirit."** There I was able to meet with representatives of similar organizations from China and other parts of the world to share experiences in working to help children.

At the 2019 AGM, we said goodbye to retiring Board Member Bill Gooderham, while expressing gratitude for his long service. We are pleased and grateful that other Directors have agreed to continue serving on the Board.

The Foundation ended 2019 in a relatively healthy financial position, with approximately \$85,582 in the General Fund, and another \$33,674 allocated to Vancouver School Projects and \$41,074 allocated to projects in China. Unfortunately, while we had hoped to mount a fundraising event during 2020 to replenish spent funds, with the outbreak of COVID-19, these plans have had to be put on hold.

Now more than ever, as we together face these extraordinary new challenges, we are grateful to our supporters as well as to all those who work to make a better life for the children.