

LIFE IS A CYCLE OF 'LEARN, EARN & RETURN'

A Corporate Partnership That Touches The Students

Interview with: Ronald Lau - Chief Operating Officer of Rockhampton Management Limited – Fund of Funds Group

Written by: Jasmine Kwok

Eric Forday, the founder of Rockhampton and Fitzroy Philanthropic Fund (FPF), first knew about Arnold, founder of Teach For Hong Kong, near the end of 2015 when he inadvertently came across a SCMP article. The article featured a number of top scorers from previous Hong Kong public exams, including Arnold. Impressed by his story and his subsequent founding of TFHK, Eric invited Arnold and his team to visit his company to explain TFHK's vision and details.

"And we ended up financially sponsoring two teaching Fellows in the academic year of 2016-17," Ronald recalled, "And in the following two academic years, we doubled our sponsorships to four teaching Fellows each year."

FPF believes in TFHK because Arnold's passion has immensely impressed the team. "Everyone knows that

Arnold can earn a lot more money with his outstanding resume and ability. He was a 10As scholar and worked at a top tier investment bank. But he resolutely resigned from his job to establish a non-profit organisation." Ronald and his colleagues deeply appreciate Arnold's devotion and commitment to founding an educational non-profit to help underprivileged students.

Ronald said affirmatively, "We want to make a positive impact on organisations we fund through mutual interaction and cooperation. In addition, we are remarkably satisfied with the quality of the teaching Fellows that we've worked with."

TFHK meets with FPF on a regular basis to update progress and provides documents including the budget, the financial statement and the annual report for FPF's review to ensure transparency.

"[Teach For Hong Kong] can help change the unbalanced allocation of resources between privileged students and underprivileged students in their education paths."

Ronald Lau

Chief Operating Officer of Rockhampton Management Limited – Fund of Funds Group



In addition to monetary support, FPF has been co-organizing with TFHK a project called English Rockers since 2016. Every month, secondary school students selected by the Fellows visit Rockhampton office in Central to interact with their colleagues in an English-speaking environment. In every session of English Rockers, Rockhampton's colleagues discuss different topics with the students, such as Hong Kong affairs, world news, personal hobbies, education, career, etc. Through their interactions, students can practice and gain confidence communicating in English, and build mentor-like relationships with Rockhampton's staff.

"Our founder, Eric, greatly advocates on an idea: Life's process is a cycle of learn, earn and return. No one can choose what kind of a family they are born into. Many children lack learning opportunities simply because their families cannot afford those opportunities," Ronald stated, "Eric encourages all our staff to participate in this project. We hope that the students who participate in English Rockers can increase their confidence, especially in terms of communicating in English."

FPF has worked with 10 teaching Fellows in English Rockers program. "These Fellows are stunningly enthusiastic and motivated," Ronald praised. "It is likely because they are all fresh graduates in their early twenties. They can closely bond with their students, and

their students can relate well to them."

Regular teachers are overwhelmingly busy with numerous different administrative works and need to handle many classes. As a result they pay less attention to individual students than that of the Fellows. And with only a handful of social workers available in each school, the Fellows act as not only teachers but also counsellors and mentors to their students who feel more open to sharing their true feelings with.

FPF believes that TFHK can act as a bridge between schools, corporates and other stakeholders in providing more support to underprivileged students. "We believe Teach For Hong Kong can independently voice out opinions to the education sector, especially to the Education Bureau," Ronald added, "Perhaps they can help change the unbalanced allocation of resources between privileged students and underprivileged students in their education paths."

FPF hopes that TFHK can nurture and empower more Fellows and students like Arnold, who have a passion to drive positive changes in Hong Kong's education sector and beyond.

About Fitzroy Philanthropic Fund, the philanthropic arm of Rockhampton Management Limited

Fitzroy Philanthropic Fund (FPF) was established in 2015 by the principals and colleagues of Rockhampton Management, focuses on meeting the education needs of individuals in Hong Kong and Japan who are in dire need. FPF has been one of our donors since the academic year of 2016-17. At the beginning it sponsored two teaching Fellows, and has increased to four Fellows. In addition, FPF and Rockhampton have partnered with TFHK to create "English Rockers" program which helps enhance English speaking abilities among secondary school students in TFHK's network.