



Press Release (For immediate release)

Fresh food packs from social-business collaboration provide physical and emotional relief for families in pandemic-induced economic duress

(21 September 2020) Christian Family Service Centre (CFSC) and The Hong Kong and China Gas Company Limited (Towngas) joined hands to launch the Food Packs for Families in Need programme to address the needs of underprivileged families faced with decreased income as a result of job loss or underemployment since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. About 30,000 fresh food packs will be distributed to 1,000 families to address their daily necessities and offer immediate food expense relief during the pandemic. The programme also provides a channel for social workers to connect with these families through a dedicated social media platform and food pack pick-up points in order to better understand their impending needs and provide timely assistance.

A survey in August 2020 was conducted on participating families as part of the programme. Out of the 442 questionnaires collected, 81 per cent of the respondents reported adverse impact on their income as a result of the pandemic, citing factors such as fewer working hours, job loss, salary reduction and wage payment in arrears. Regardless of their income level, food costs take up 40 per cent or more of family expenses for over 66 per cent of respondents, with 60 per cent spending over HK\$90 a day on family meals reportedly in a bid to provide a healthier diet for their loved ones.

Social-business collaboration the new normal under COVID-19

Mr Kwok Lit-tung, Chief Executive of CFSC, remarked, “The pandemic has brought enormous challenges to the social services we offer. Social distancing hinders our service provision at a time when the underprivileged need it most. That is why we have continuously explored new ways of serving those in need during this period. The Food Packs for Families in Need programme is an example of social-business collaboration, which is the new normal in the face of the pandemic. As many public services grind to a halt amidst the volatile COVID-19 situation, we have taken the

initiative to collaborate with our business partners to care for and provide concrete assistance to those in need. During these pressing times, most underprivileged families are confined to their homes. The lack of community interaction means that social workers have to be creative, reaching families through online channels such as Facebook to promote their services and host online activities that provide information on education and nutrition. For instance, we advertised the programme's food packs online while providing a list of social service contact points in a bid to simultaneously alleviate our beneficiaries' economic and psychological pressure. This allows social workers to keep in touch with them when the pandemic situation worsens through the virtual network they have built. New models of providing social work like this are set to become the new normal and deserve more emphasis. What delights us even more though is seeing our beneficiaries sign up as volunteers, helping out at the food pack distribution points and caring for other underprivileged individuals. Beneficiaries transforming themselves into a service provider is the most valuable feedback we have received for the programme.

Mr Isaac Yeung Chung-kwan, General Manager - Corporate Affairs of Towngas, added, "Towngas is deeply concerned about the current plight of the underprivileged. Aside from job loss and underemployment facing the adults, their children's physical and mental development also warrant particular attention. With the continued pandemic, Towngas has offered anti-virus supplies as well as food aid in the form of fresh food packs to ensure their nutritious diet. At the same time, we have launched the Food Packs for Families in Need Facebook page to regularly publish relevant information, such as Towngas job openings, gas safety knowledge and environmental protection news, and created videos to share cooking techniques. While Towngas volunteers may not be able to meet the beneficiaries in person, they have been able to serve them as volunteers online, or VOL. This collaboration with CFSC has proven much more than merely an act of sponsoring food packs, but rather a continuous effort to provide emotional and spiritual support for participating families."

Co-organised by Towngas and CFSC, the Food Packs for Families in Need programme took place over two phases. The first phase drew to a close in August, with 15,000 food packs distributed, while the second phase was launched on 14 September. Food packs are distributed twice a week throughout a 15-week period in each of the phases to underprivileged families in Kwun Tong, Ngau Tau Kok and Sham Shui Po with a view to alleviate their economic pressure. About 1,000 families will have benefitted from the programme by the end of the year.

Comprehensive pandemic care for underprivileged families

Since the launch of the programme, numerous beneficiaries have confirmed their experience of enjoying a quality family meal after receiving the food packs. The programme's online activities such as cook-offs and Mid-Autumn Festival colouring competitions have also served as a channel to strengthen family bond. With such rewarding outcomes in mind, the organisers hope that social service organisations and the business sector can continue to work together to support underprivileged families in a comprehensive manner in view of the new normal that is the pandemic:

1. In spite of anti-virus measures, the social service and business sectors can put their respective strengths to good use to continue helping those in need. Social service professionals can learn about beneficiary needs through various networks and online platforms, while corporations can apply their business edge to offer different kinds of support through a range of models to cater for the needs of the underprivileged.
2. In addition to economic pressure, underprivileged families have faced psychological, emotional and health challenges as a result of the pandemic. Aside from anti-virus supplies, those who are looking to help can also spare more attention for their physical and mental needs in order to source for adequate resources in response.

Press photos:

Photo 1



(From left) Mr Isaac Yeung Chung-kwan, General Manager – Corporate Affairs of Towngas and Mr Kwok Lit-tung, Chief Executive of CFSC, sharing questionnaire findings and outcome of the Food Packs for Families in Need programme with beneficiary families.

Photo 3



Mr Isaac Yeung Chung-kwan, General Manager – Corporate Affairs of Towngas remarks that even though the Towngas Volunteer Service Team cannot meet in person with the beneficiary families due to the pandemic, they are still able to offer their services through the newly established Volunteer Online (VOL) initiative.

Photo 2



Mr Kwok Lit-tung, Chief Executive of CFSC, remarks that greater creativity is needed to provide social service during volatile times such as the pandemic. The Food Packs for Families in Need programme is an example of social-business collaboration, which has become the new normal in the face of the pandemic.

Photo 4



(From left) Beneficiaries Ms Lee and Ah Sim sharing their experience of having their food expenses significantly reduced by the Food Packs for Families in Need programme as they suffered income loss during the pandemic.

Photo 5 and 6



Towngas Cooking Centre prepares nutritiously balanced fresh food packs in vacuum sealed or airtight packaging that are directly transported to distribution points to ensure freshness and hygiene.

Photo 7



Photo 8



Children enjoying a dinner made from Towngas Cooking Centre food packs.

Food pack pick-up points offer a channel for social workers and participating families to keep in touch and ensure timely assistance.

Photo 9



Beneficiaries applying their creativity to craft a dish out of a food pack in the shape of Towngas' logo.

Photo 10



Pauline Wong, Towngas Cooking Centre Manager, hosting a live broadcast on the programme's Facebook page to share cooking tips with the beneficiaries and address their questions about daily cooking.

Photo 11

家謎愛·添溫馨計劃
8月25日 · 🌐

煤氣公司現提供以下職位空缺，有興趣朋友可以與各「家謎愛·添溫馨」計劃單位聯絡。

職位詳情如下：

#煤氣立管檢查員 (短期合約)
工作職責：
- 主要於室外翻新煤氣立管
- 清除立管上的招紙或廣告及清潔喉身
- 於喉身掃上油漆及貼上公司色帶及告示
- 協助工程監督/技術員進行其它的指定工作

職位要求：
- 能閱讀、書寫中文及操流利廣東話
- 性格主動積極，儀表整潔，親切有禮
- 有工藝經驗者及失業人士優先

工作時間：星期一至五：8:30 to 17:30 及星期六 8:30 to 12:30.
薪金：\$60 /小時
合約為期 8 星期

Towngas providing information on job openings through the Food Packs for Families in Need Facebook page.

Photo 12



Towngas Volunteer Service Team sharing household anti-pandemic tips through the Food Packs for Families in Need Facebook page.

Photo13



CFSC social workers also share information on a variety of daily topics via the Facebook page to address beneficiaries' everyday needs.

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Information available for download on CFSC's website at www.cfsc.org.hk and Towngas' website at www.towngas.com. Photos download: <https://bit.ly/3hCVUJW>.

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