

## Workshop Presentation

Topic: Volunteering of Professionals

### Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants Accountant Ambassadors Programme and Community Services Theme for 2005

**Ms. Susanna CHIU**

*Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants  
hkicpa@hkicpa.org.hk*

#### **Abstract**

As a caring corporate citizen, the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants (the Institute) introduced the Accountant Ambassadors Programme (AA Programme) back in 1996. This is part of the Institute's commitment in community services to benefit the needy and the general public galvanizing the expertise and professional resources of the Institute's members to provide voluntary services.

At present, more than 800 Institute members have joined this programme in four main service streams including:

- (1) Free Advisory Services
- (2) Educational Support Services
- (3) Charitable and Social Services, and
- (4) Environmental Protection Activities

In 2005, the Institute initiates the "Rich Kid, Poor Kid" Financial Management for Youths Project which carries a wide array of activities for Accountant Ambassadors to help teenagers learn how to better manage their finance.

#### **Body of Paper**

##### **Accountant Ambassadors Programme**

The Institute's AA Programme includes four main service areas:

##### **(1) Free Advisory Services**

###### **a. Free Public Advisory Service Scheme (FPASS)**

Established since the early 1990s, FPASS has been providing a platform for Institute members to offer free advices on accounting, taxation, financial management and related issues to individuals and SMEs on a weekly basis. The advisory sessions are conducted either face-to-face or on the phone between the duty accountants and enquirers.

- b. **“Healthy Budgeting” Family Counselling Programme**  
Held in collaboration with the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals since 2001, the Institute’s AAs offer free counseling and advices to individuals and families facing acute financial difficulties regarding debt relief and IVS issues. This programme is a good success example on how cross cooperation between the accounting profession and social workers has benefited the desperately needy members of the society especially when economic downturn hit hardest on many families and companies during the time.
- c. **Financial Consultation Scheme for University Students**  
Co-organised also with the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, the service provides university students with the AAs’ professional advice on financial planning, investment analysis, loan repayment plan and start up of small business venture. This service, which points university students to the right direction of healthy financial planning which benefits them lifelong, proves highly valuable and appreciated by the students.
- d. **Building Management Resource Centre (BMRC) Duty Accountant Ambassador Service**  
The AAs render free face-to-face advice to owners corporations (OC) of properties at the BMRCs run by the Home Affairs Department. This widens the AAs’ outreach to many other locales and sectors of the community, and brings out the message on why effective financial management is important to the overall building management.
- e. **Other advisory and mentoring services for non-profit organisations and projects**  
The other many beneficiaries of the Institute’s Free Advisory Services range from Hong Kong’s aided schools, Parent-Teacher Association Federations, Employees Retraining Board, Trade & Industry Department, as well as small & medium agencies under the Hong Kong Council of Social Service.

## **(2) Educational Support Services**

- a. **AA English Plus Programme**  
Held in collaboration with the Caritas School Social Work Service to provide free oral English tuition to secondary school students on Saturdays. The Programme also organises visits to large corporations for the students to broaden their perspectives and knowledge of commercial operations.
- b. **AAs mentoring service for the Millennium Entrepreneurship Programme**  
The AAs participate in this programme, organised by the Hong Kong Youth Institute, by providing mentoring and advices for secondary school students to draw up business proposals.
- c. **The Hong Kong Network of Virtual Enterprises’ Training Programme**

The AAs are involved as business mentors for secondary school students to help them propose business plans.

### **(3) Charitable and Social Services**

- a. The Institute self-initiates and organises different charity events such as Family Fun Day, Charity Walk and themed play day to raise funds for various non-profit bodies as well as the Institute's Charitable Fund serving diverse target audiences.
- b. The Institute also regularly supports other external charitable bodies' fund-raising events through sponsorship and active participation.
- c. AA Self-initiated Community Projects-The AAs self-initiate, steer and conduct small-scale community projects covering children & youth, the elderly and rehabilitation services.

### **(4) Environmental Protection Activities**

- a. **Green Leaders Programme – Green Partnership**  
Held jointly with the Environmental Protection Department to host a wide array of environmental protection-related seminars and field trips for the Institute's members. This programme aims at mobilising the accounting profession to help promote a greener Hong Kong.
- b. **Supporting organisation of the Hong Kong Eco-Business Awards**  
The Institute participates in the Awards to help encourage businesses to generate and implement green ideas.

## **The Institute's Community Services Focus and Theme for 2005 – “Rich Kid, Poor Kid” Financial Management for Teenagers**

This year, the Institute initiates the “Rich Kid, Poor Kid” financial management for teenagers project that comprises a host of activities well participated by the AAs and students. The project aims to educate Hong Kong families and their children on the importance to practise good financial management, whilst accountants are one of the best qualified professionals to provide such advices. The project activities include:

### **(1) Survey for Teens**

A territory-wide survey on “Teens' Attitudes about Money” was conducted with 400 teens aged between 15-18 from end of May to early June this year to explore teenagers' attitudes towards money. The survey results were very interesting and showed that teens want to learn more about wealth management.

### **(2) Kick-off Forum**

A kick-off forum was held together with the Chinese University of Hong Kong – Tung Wah Group of Hospitals at its Community College in mid-July. The forum included an interactive on-site polling with students, presentation on financial management, panel discussion and drama performance. All students, parents and teachers attending this forum gave very positive feedback.

### **(3) Books launch**

The Institute has commissioned two English books, one for children aged 8-12 and the other for parents of children aged 3-12 for the “Rich Kid, Poor Kid” project. The first book is a fairy tale featuring a little girl who discovered how magical money could be and happiness could not be bought by money. The second book for parents presents easy to read and digestible tips to help raise financially responsible children. The Institute plans to publish and distribute the books to primary school students through different schools networks in the later part of the year.

### **(4) Road shows in secondary schools**

The Institute has created a standard presentation including video shows, advices on financial management tips and traps as well as interactive on-site polling for the AAs to conduct the financial management road shows in Hong Kong’s secondary schools starting November 2005.

Each Road Show student participant will receive bilingual bookmarks on financial management tips for teenagers and their parents as handy and easy reference to help them better manage money.

### **5) PlayStreet 2005**

The “Rich Kid, Poor Kid” Project will climax with a large-scale play carnival, called PlayStreet 2005, on Sunday, 4 December this year at Central’s Pedestrian Precinct. The event will tie in with the “Rich Kid, Poor Kid” theme in which young participants will experience the practices of earning, spending and saving in over 50 creative and hilarious play booths and activities resembling the daily city life and commercial operations. The kids will also receive “Happy Stones” for rendering voluntary services as rewards for their caring and thoughtful deeds. The event aims to raise children’s awareness and understanding of financial management and at the same time letting them know that wealth means much more than money. PlayStreet 2005 will also raise funds for Playright Children’s Play Association as well as the Institute’s Charitable Fund. The event is expected to be attended by more than 10,000 people.

## **Conclusion**

With its nearly a decade’s successful track record, the Institute’s Accountant Ambassadors Programme has been continuously well received and widely recognised

as an important voluntary service resource benefiting all walks of life in the local community. The Accountant Ambassadors' professional knowledge and caring spirit for the community are highly valued by the served audiences. This has sustained the Programme's momentum to reach an even higher ground in the future.

To recognise the outstanding contribution and selfless dedication of the AAs, the Institute organised the annual Outstanding Accountant Ambassadors Awards in 2003 and 2004 which were highly regarded and well participated by Institute members.

The Accountant Ambassadors Programme has furthered positioned the Institute's "Success Ingredient" brand promise in mobilising Hong Kong accountants to bring benefits to the lives of many Hong Kong families with a caring and pious spirit.