HKUST Signs MoU with Haven of Hope Christian Service to Forge Partnership and Collaboration on Research

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The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) is joining forces with Haven of Hope Christian Service (HOHCS) to gain further understanding and to develop solutions that could improve the quality of life for the elderly and their caregivers. The two parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) today to forge their partnership.

Combining HKUST’s research competence and HOHCS’ expertise and experience in healthcare and elderly services, the collaboration seeks to address the challenges brought by Hong Kong’s ageing population, and promote the city’s innovation and technological development, through application of gerontechnology. The collaboration also serves to address some major challenges of the local gerontechnology sector, such as lack of collaboration among academia, government and non-government organizations, as well as a lack of test beds for gerontechnology products [1].

Under the partnership, HKUST will aim to develop tailor-made solutions or products to meet the needs of HOHCS’ service users, while HOHCS will offer a testing platform. Seven projects are now under discussion: a study on the genetic risk factors for Alzheimer’s disease in the Chinese population for future development of diagnostics and therapeutics; a real-time 3D facial landmark recognition technology for early detection of mental and physical diseases; a virtual therapist that not only keeps the elderly company but also enables examination and monitoring of their emotional and stress levels; a study to quantify the therapeutic effects of garden spaces on the elderly; tap water disinfection by micro-PEF (pulsed-electric field) for prevention of water and droplet-borne diseases; a system that helps optimize HOHCS’ operations such as meal delivery services; and auto-guided wheelchairs and vehicles for logistic transportation.

The MoU was signed by Prof. Nancy IP, Vice-President for Research and Development of HKUST, and Dr. LAM Ching-choi, Chief Executive Officer of HOHCS, with witnesses including Prof. Wei SHYY, HKUST President; Dr. CHENG Hon-kwan, Honorary Court Member of HKUST and Honorary Chairman of Board of Directors of HOHCS; Prof. Joseph KWAN, Director of Health, Safety and Environment of HKUST and Chairman of Board of Directors of HOHCS and Dr. NG Sze-fuk, Chairman of Sai Kung District Council who helped facilitate this collaboration. Other HKUST faculty members, HOHCS management staff and community representatives also attended the signing ceremony held on the HKUST campus today.

Addressing the audience, Dr. Lam expressed his delight on the formal establishment of the partnership. “HOHCS and HKUST shared the common goal of improving elderly’s living quality by applying gerontechnology in health, social services and the community. Through our collaboration, we hope to set up gerontechnology testing platforms to serve as a role model to facilitate further cooperation amongst different stakeholders,” Dr. Lam said.

Prof. Ip said, “We are excited to collaborate with one of Hong Kong’s most experienced and pioneering elderly care organizations. By combining our scientific knowledge and expertise with HOHCS’ extensive care-giving experience, we hope to make a major impact on the health and well-being of the elderly and the wider community.”

A study to quantify therapeutic effects

Micro pulsed-electric field device

About The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) (www.ust.hk) is a world-class research university that focuses on science, technology and business as well as humanities and social science. HKUST offers an international campus, and a holistic and interdisciplinary pedagogy to nurture well-rounded graduates with global vision, a strong entrepreneurial spirit and innovative thinking. HKUST attained the highest proportion of internationally excellent research work in the Research Assessment Exercise 2014 of Hong Kong's University Grants Committee, and is ranked as the world’s best young university in Times Higher Education’s Young University Rankings 2018. Its graduates were ranked 16th worldwide and top in Greater China in Global Employability University Survey 2018.

About Haven of Hope Christian Service

In the early 50s, witnessing the desperate plight of the refugees in Tiu Keng Leng, Sister Annie Skau, the founder of Haven of Hope Christian Service helped untie their knots in lives by means of medical assistance. Not merely did Sister Annie care about their health, she endeavored to meet their psychological, social and spiritual needs. Nowadays, HOHCS has developed into a multi-services charitable organization offering medical, elderly, rehabilitation and services and evangelistic work. We make great efforts to enhance the physical, psychological, social and spiritual well-being of service users, in hope of sustaining the merits of holistic care inherited from Sister Annie Skau.

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