



Immediate release

Bring Me a Book embarks on new project to reduce language barriers for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong

HONG KONG [September 27, 2012] – Bring Me A Book™ Hong Kong (BMABHK) is pleased to launch a new programme specifically focused on improving Chinese as a second language for low-income ethnic minority children in Hong Kong. Learning to read and write Chinese and finding employment are the two biggest issues South Asians face, recent research by the Equal Opportunities Commission shows.

The pilot project was awarded to Bring Me a Book™ Hong Kong after a rigorous selection process jointly screened by The Ovolo Group and the The Hong Kong Council of Social Service Wisegiving Program. BMABHK will partner with The Yuen Long Town Hall Support Service Centre for Ethnic Minorities to implement the programme.

Based on scientific research in Second Language Acquisition, Ms. Pia Wong, Executive Director of Bring Me a Book Hong Kong explained the project's strategy, "Our approach is two-fold. First and foremost, we need to capture the child's interest. We will encourage the children to 'acquire' Chinese as their second language by exposing them to fun and interactive elements of the language through the use of storytelling and drama. Once the children have built up their confidence in reading and speaking the language, they can then focus on improving their Chinese writing skills."

One of the advisors for this pilot project is Dr. Stephen Krashen, Professor Emeritus at the University of Southern California. Best known for developing the first comprehensive theory of second language acquisition and the co-inventor of the Natural Approach, Dr. Krashen has been highly influential in this field having published more than 350 papers and books on bilingual education and reading. On a recent visit to Hong Kong he remarked, "This program is fundamentally cutting edge, it is a super idea to get the kids excited about the books. Reading for pleasure has been proven time and time again to be the most powerful tool in acquiring a second language."

A key component of the project is to engage Ovolo Group employees in meaningful volunteer opportunities. Regular reading sessions for the children will be conducted with the support of Ovolo Group volunteers, all of whom will receive training in storytelling from BMABHK.

“As part of Ovolo Group’s CSR initiative, we wanted to sponsor an after-school program to provide Chinese as a Second Language support to ethnic minority children. With their expertise in improving children’s literacy and second language acquisition, Bring Me a Book offers a comprehensive program covering all areas of language development. We hope that by improving their Chinese skills, these children will become better integrated with the Hong Kong community and become more competitive in the long-run,” said Avni Jhunjhnuwala, Ovolo Group’s Corporate Social Responsibility.

According to Mr. Wong Kam Yiu, the Principal of Yuen Long Long Ping Estate Tung Koon Primary School, “Most of the children are keen to improve their Chinese but their families simply can’t afford to send their children to extra- curricular classes or have tutors. This is such a wonderful opportunity and we are extremely grateful for the support we have been given.”

Photo 1: Ethnic Minority Project kick-off ceremony.

(from right) Ms. Avni Jhunjhnuwala of Ovolo Group’s Corporate Social Responsibility, Ms. Pia Wong, Executive Director of Bring Me A Book Hong Kong and Mr. Wong Kam Yiu, Principal of Yuen Long Long Ping Estate Tung Koon Primary School



Photo 2: celebrating an installation of bookcase library with all ethnic minority students



Photo 3: cheerful and lovely students



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About Bring Me A Book™ Hong Kong

Bring Me A Book™ Hong Kong (BMABHK) is a registered charity with tax-exempt status in Hong Kong. BMABHK is dedicated to improving family literacy in Hong Kong by facilitating easy access to the best children's books and empowering parents and teachers to read aloud with children for future success in school and life.

Through innovative library and training programs, BMABHK reaches underserved children and families in nurseries, kindergartens, community centres, shelters, health clinics and the workplace. Since inception, BMABHK has installed 175 libraries, served over 64,000 children and trained more than 7,700 parents through their award-winning "First Teachers Training" Program. For more details, please visit www.bringmeabook.org.hk.

About Ovolo Group Ltd.

The Ovolo Group is committed to providing business and leisure guests with the very best in effortless living. Award-winning intelligent design, ultimate comfort, personal service and state-of-the-art entertainment systems are all hallmarks of the Ovolo Group, which has grown from a humble business in 2002 to establish itself as a leader in Hong Kong's hotel and serviced apartment industry. A family owned business, Ovolo currently owns and operates six hotels and serviced apartment properties in Hong Kong Island and West Kowloon and one hotel in Melbourne Australia.

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