



2016-2017
IMPACT
REPORT

years
of changing life stories



母親的抉擇
Mother's Choice

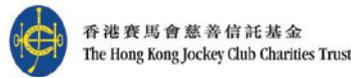
About Mother's Choice

Mother's Choice is a local charity serving the many children without families and pregnant teenagers in Hong Kong. Since 1987, we have joined hands with our community to give hope and change life stories. Our vision is to see every child in a loving family.



PARTNERS

Mother's Choice is proud to be supported by these organizations:



Mother's Choice has had Hong Kong IRD s88 charitable status since 1987.

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Letter from the Co-Chairs

Dear friends,

As we celebrate our 30th Anniversary, we would like to honor our co-founders, who chose not to turn their backs on a desperate situation in Hong Kong. With little resources and expertise, they courageously stepped in to meet a need. What opened as a safe home for pregnant teenagers in 1987 has become a pioneering and professional organization, that gives hope and changes the life stories of so many each year.

We are extremely proud of today's Mother's Choice leadership, staff, and volunteers for continuing with the same spirit of love and conviction as our co-founders. The team shows great courage as they fight every day for children and families. They show transparency and accountability in their financial reporting. They show a commitment to collaborating with community partners to tackle complex problems, which couldn't be resolved alone.

As we celebrate the past, and look to the future, we would like to express our gratitude for your continuing support as we work towards our vision of seeing every child in a loving family.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

Thank you,

LILY J. NG AND RONALD LEE

Co-chairs of the Board of Directors



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Letter from our CEO

Dear friends and family of Mother's Choice,

For 30 years, you have helped us to believe that we can give every child a loving family. Thank you for putting your faith in us, and for your extraordinary commitment to our work at Mother's Choice. As you read our stories from the past year, I hope you are encouraged by what I see on a daily basis – you, our community, joining together to show radical love and hospitality to children, youth, and families in crisis.

In 2016-2017, we doubled the number of volunteer Project Bridge families who temporarily open their homes to a child in need, and we celebrated our 100th local adoption since we were licensed in 2010. We strengthened our child protection initiatives, hosted our first Child Protection Conference in partnership with The University of Hong Kong, and published a manual, equipping social workers to navigate our legal system when serving vulnerable children. 30 years after the opening of Mother's Choice, we continue to break new ground.

What we do has never been straightforward, and we cannot provide a “quick fix” to problems. We work in the midst of crisis, stepping into the darkest moment of someone's story, and we give them hope. Only then, can we walk with them to a place where their life story is totally changed, never to return to that crisis. But we are increasingly called into more difficult and complex family situations, and almost every month we have to learn to adapt to something new. Despite this immense pressure, our team has grown stronger this year, and I have never been prouder of them.

I hope you are encouraged by the stories in this report, stories told by those who were there. Our social workers, our volunteer Bridge Families, our child care team, our child therapists, our adoptive families, our parents, and grandparents. I am more convinced than ever that it takes a village to raise a child, and everyone has a role to play. The love and support that you have shown to children without families and pregnant teenagers in our community gives me great hope for future generations of Hong Kong.

With sincerest gratitude,

ALIA EYRES
CEO



2016 - 2017 Highlights

58 children joined their safe, loving, and permanent families in the past year!

SERVING CHILDREN

150

children received safe and loving temporary care through our Child Care Home, Foster Care, and Project Bridge.

2,000+

hours of early intervention therapy given to children by our professional team.

625

volunteers worked in our Child Care Home, donating over **65,255 HOURS** of their time, saving Mother's Choice around **HK\$3.85 MILLION**.

SERVING FAMILIES

50

parents and family members received individual child care training and support.

54

interactive workshops were held to support adoptive families.

18

families were built through our Local Adoption Services, including our milestone – **100TH LOCAL ADOPTION!**

21

new volunteer families joined our Project Bridge program to open their home to a child in need.

SERVING YOUTH

242

girls received holistic care and support through our programs during and after their pregnancy.

79%

of girls we serve are **UNDER 21 YEARS OLD**.

2,097

girls facing crisis pregnancy received help through our crisis hotline.

10,000+

learned about their values and their health through **142 SEXUALITY EDUCATION WORKSHOPS**.

SERVING COMMUNITY

280

child welfare practitioners attended our first ever Child Protection Conference.

1,480

child welfare professionals and university students learned to support youth through sexuality education workshops.

588

staff and volunteers received child protection training.

1

legal manual was published to help social workers support children in crisis.

Why does Hong Kong need us?

Despite Hong Kong's reputation for wealth and business, the needs of our city are overwhelming. One in five children in Hong Kong live in poverty¹, and thousands are at-risk due to family breakdown, neglect, abuse, and abandonment.

At Mother's Choice, we focus on a key group of vulnerable people in our city – children without families and pregnant teenagers. Over 3,500 children in Hong Kong live in institutional care², and are growing up without the presence of a safe, loving, and permanent family, which is detrimental to their development. Of Hong Kong's 7,000+ girls facing crisis pregnancy each year³, the majority are young girls with no one to turn to.

The challenges of children living in institutional care, teenage crisis pregnancy, and family breakdown are a vicious cycle that is hard to break. Most young children who enter into institutional care stay for years, with many leaving the system at age 18 without ever knowing the love and support of a family.

Research shows that when children live in institutional care, they are more likely to experience physical and mental health problems, be incarcerated, have addiction issues, and if they are a girl, to face a crisis pregnancy. Teenage mothers too often lack the support and resources they need, and are more likely to place their child into institutional care – and the cycle begins again.

Mother's Choice is committed to ending this vicious cycle.

Sources:

1. Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report (2015).
2. Examination of Estimates of Expenditure, HKSAR Social Welfare Department 2016-17.
3. Women and Men in Hong Kong Key Statistics (2016) HKSAR Census and Statistics Department.

What we do

FOR CHILDREN

When a child comes to us, we provide high quality loving and temporary care with early intervention support through our Child Care Home, Project Bridge, or Foster Care Services. We are a voice for every child to be in a safe, loving, and permanent family as soon as possible. We believe every child is special and it takes a village to raise a child.

FOR YOUTH

When a girl comes to our Pregnant Girls Services, we love and welcome her without judgement, provide information to show her she has choices, build a supportive network around her, and give her hope to face her future. We deliver child protection and comprehensive sexuality education workshops through our Community Education team.

FOR FAMILIES

We believe that every family needs a supportive community in order to thrive. We run workshops, trainings, and reunions for foster and adoptive families to support them in the unique journey of parenting through our Foster Care Services and Adoption Services, and we identify and wrap around struggling birth families to support them.

In 30 years, Mother's Choice has...



Cared for over **2,000 BABIES AND CHILDREN** in our Child Care Home (many with special needs), providing safe and loving care before they return to their birth family or join an adoptive family.



Provided loving and temporary care for over **860 CHILDREN AND YOUTH** through foster care, small group homes, and Project Bridge, supporting and recruiting foster families, and advocating for each child to join a permanent family.

Served over **53,000 PREGNANT GIRLS** by providing counselling, a safe place to live, pre-natal support, parenting



training, post-abortion healing, adoption support, and more.



Delivered sexuality education to over **HALF A MILLION YOUTH** across Hong Kong.



Found families for over **250 CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**, mostly through our Intercountry Adoption Services.

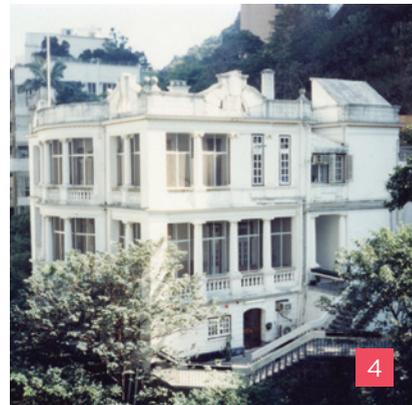


Supported **215 FAMILIES** through the local adoption journey since 2010, assessing prospective parents and giving pre-adoption training. **101 FAMILIES** are already home with their child.



Welcomed over **9,000 COMMITTED VOLUNTEERS** to serve in our Child Care Home (from all over the world!), who have together changed around **3.3 MILLION DIAPERS** and given around **1.4 MILLION BOTTLES OF MILK** to our babies!

Our History



1. Mother's Choice first sign, 1987 2. Pregnant Girls Hostel opening ceremony with Sir David Ford, Chief Secretary of Hong Kong, 1988 3. Our first baby room, 1990 4. Our Child Care Home, 5 Bowen Road, 1990 5. Volunteers caring for babies, 1994

In 1986, our founders read a series of newspaper articles pointing to the alarming numbers of teen pregnancies in Hong Kong. They were shocked to read reports that girls as young as 13 were going through unsafe terminations of pregnancy in as late as their ninth month. As they dug deeper into the issue, they found that most of these girls were facing the biggest crisis of their lives, completely alone.

With support from many in the community, our founders opened up the doors to Mother's Choice in 1987. Instead of rejecting or

punishing pregnant teenagers, they were determined to welcome girls into a home where they felt valued and accepted, where they would be given care, safety, support, and hope for their future.

Our passion to welcome and love the many pregnant teenagers who had no one to turn to quickly grew, and we began to be a voice for all children without families. Today, we are more determined than ever to join hands with our community to give hope and change the life stories of children, youth, and families in crisis across our city.

Memories from our Co-Founders

We asked our four co-founders to share their thoughts from 30 years ago, when they first opened the doors of Mother's Choice to girls and babies in need.

HELEN STEPHENS

The idea of supporting girls facing a crisis pregnancy really impacted me. Years before, in the early 1970s, my teenage sister faced a crisis pregnancy, and our whole family kept it a secret. She was sent away, and she gave birth to a healthy baby girl whom she never held. Though the family had decided on this course of action with the best of intentions, she was never able to recover from the trauma, from sudden loss of innocence, and from a total loss of former self. I knew that girls in Hong Kong faced the same scrutiny and judgement, and I felt led to support them.

PHYLLIS MARWAH

Everyone deserves a second chance, and every pregnant girl and every child deserves to have a safe, loving, and permanent family. This is what we've been working towards for 30 years, and it's a message we need to pass down to our children. We won't stop until every child in Hong Kong has a loving family.

RANJAN MARWAH

We wanted give more than just shelter, we wanted girls to experience love and receive help to face the many choices that lay before them. In 30 years, the biggest miracle that we have seen at Mother's Choice is the change in attitude of our community towards our girls and their babies. At the start, many people asked why I would want to help "those naughty girls". Some of those same people are now our biggest supporters, and they value young women and children so differently. That gives me great hope for Hong Kong.

GARY STEPHENS

As a father, I was devastated for the young girls we had read about in the newspaper who were facing a crisis pregnancy alone. We hoped that somehow there would be people - professional, compassionate people, who would step forward to help them. We were busy with our own work, and we didn't think we were the ones to help, so we didn't do anything. That is, until we told our friend, Ranjan about the articles, and he challenged us: "So what are you going to do about it?"



Our co-founders, Phyllis Marwah, Ranjan Marwah, Helen Stephens, and Gary Stephens, 1987

Timeline

In 30 years, Mother's Choice has continued to adapt and change to serve the most vulnerable in Hong Kong, and inspire others around the world!



1986
The articles that inspired our co-founders published



1988
Hostel for pregnant teens opened



1990
Wee Care home (for special needs children) opened



1995
Mother's Love in Nanning, China opened



2001
Mother's Hope in Nagaland, India opened



2010
Mother's Choice licensed as a Local Adoption Agency in Hong Kong

Mother's Heart opened in Phnom Penh, Cambodia



2014
Project Bridge, an innovative volunteer foster care movement piloted

1986

1988

1990

1995

2001

2010

2014

1987

1989

1993

1996

2007

2012

2017

1987
Mother's Choice founded



1989
Baby Care opened
Licenced to provide Overseas Adoption Services



1993
Foster Care Services started



1996
Sexuality education program for schools started



2007
Pregnant Girls Crisis Support Center opened in Tsim Sha Tsui



2012
Support Center for girls and families moved to Kwun Tong



2017
Mother's Choice 30th Anniversary!

Changing Life Stories of Children

Ming Ming's Story

We gave this little boy stuck in the residential care system a loving, temporary home where he could reach his full potential, and we found him a permanent family.

CHARMAINE, Child Care Home Manager
Ming Ming* was almost 18 months old when he moved into our Child Care Home. It took him a long time to feel settled, but over time, he began to open up to his favorite volunteers. As one of the oldest children, he took his role as a “big brother” very seriously, always trying to care for the little babies! We wanted Ming Ming to experience life in a family environment, so we arranged for him to move into the home of a volunteer Bridge family, where he was given extra love and individual attention while he waited for a family of his own.

LEA, Foster Care Services Manager
Soon after Ming Ming was born, he was placed into emergency residential care because his parents were unable to care for him. Although it was meant to be a temporary placement, Ming Ming actually stayed there for over a year. We were so glad to welcome 18 month old Ming Ming to Mother's Choice, although his case was complex. Without a dedicated team working behind the scenes, Ming Ming would be at-risk of staying in residential care for his entire childhood. Although it has been challenging, we have finally found him a loving adoptive family!



CHUN KI, Bridge Mom
We have seen so many changes in Ming Ming since he moved into our home. We have been able to give him a lot of individual attention, and he loves playing with our older children. The Mother's Choice early-intervention therapy team made an individual plan for him, and they gave me lots of exercises to practice with him. Just a few months after he moved into our home, he caught up in every area. He is much more confident and he is so talkative! He knows he can trust us, and I know that this time will have such a positive impact on his transition when he joins his adoptive family.

PHOEBE, Senior Occupational Therapist
When we first met Ming Ming, our team assessed him and found him to be delayed in a number of areas, including communication (his speech and language), and physical movement (jumping and running). He showed signs of improvement each week, but the real progress came when he joined a Bridge Family. His Bridge Mom helped him with his exercises and brought him back for therapy once a month. We could see the loving bond they shared. Just four months later, Ming Ming had caught up with his peers in every area. We know he will keep growing to his full potential!



*Name has been changed to protect the identity of the child.

In the past year, with the support of 625 Child Care Home volunteers, 38 volunteer Bridge Families, and 50 foster families, we served:

- 61** babies aged 0-2 at our Child Care Home
- 14** children with special needs in Wee Care
- 19** babies and children through Project Bridge
- 56** children through Foster Care
- 58** children, who joined their forever family through family reunion, or adoption!

We believe every child is special and deserves to have a loving family. It takes a village to raise a child, and here to share the story of 2-year-old Ming Ming* are those who loved and served him this year.

Giving Hope to Pregnant Girls

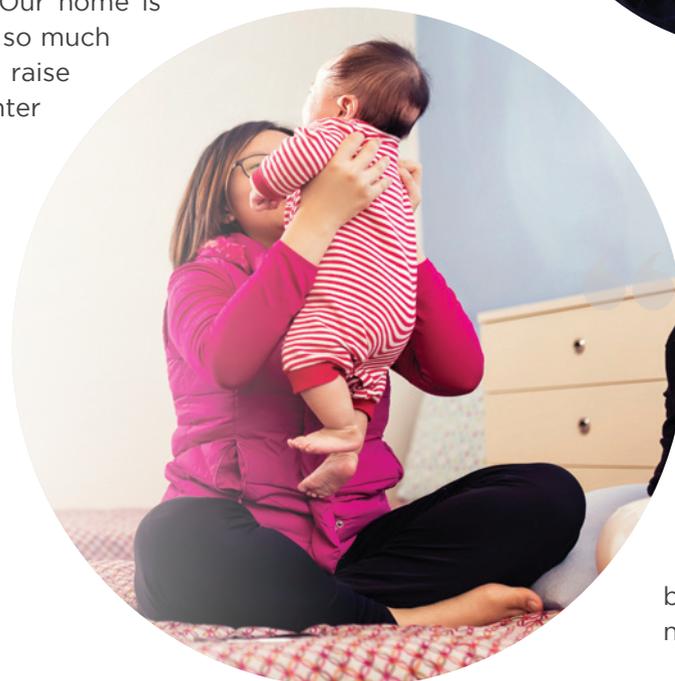
BoBo's Story

We gave this girl in crisis the support she needed to make a decision that was right for her and her baby. She now knows she is loved, valued, and has a loving support system around her.

BOBO, a teen client of our Pregnant Girls Services

When I was pregnant, I truly didn't know if I had the support around me to care for a baby, so I thought adoption would be the best plan. But the moment she was born, I felt so much love, I didn't think I could leave her. Mother's Choice arranged for a Project Bridge family to care for my baby while I made my decision. I was nervous, but as I watched the Bridge Mom gently pick up my daughter, I knew she would be safe. Even so, my heart ached when she was carried away from me.

With support from my family, I realized I have what it takes to be a mother. I am so thankful to be living with our daughter now and am learning to be the best mom I can be. Our home is filled with so much joy as we raise my daughter together.



RENATA, Bridge Mom

When we first met BoBo in the hospital, we could feel her pain. She desperately wanted to be a mom, but she didn't have the support she needed. My husband and I committed to caring for her baby in our own home so that BoBo and her family would have some time to get back on their feet.

During that time, BoBo came over regularly to learn how to take care of her baby, and I would always try to encourage her. One evening, after we put the baby to bed, she opened her arms, and we hugged and cried together for several minutes. We started as strangers who don't speak the same language, but we will forever share a deep bond, because we love the same child. This experience has made me so passionate about supporting young mothers – all we did was care for a baby for two months, but it gave this new family the time they needed to stay together. Saying goodbye to the baby was one of the hardest things we have ever done, but we will absolutely open our home again to do the same thing if it can help another child and their family.



CONNIE, Social Worker

For teenagers like BoBo, pregnancy brings overwhelming emotions of guilt, pain, and powerlessness. She desperately craved comfort and support from her family, and their loving commitment has transformed her life.

When BoBo's parents made the decision to support her, I could see the change in them. They were sincere about bringing the baby home and establishing a full and loving support structure around her. They even decorated the baby's room – they could finally be excited about welcoming the baby home. Every new parent needs help and support, but teenage moms like BoBo don't often receive the love and forgiveness from their family that they need. When a parent steps into their daughter's life in the midst of a storm, they can lead them into a safe haven.

BoBo's mom, baby's grandmother

It is sad, painful, and heart wrenching to see your daughter face a crisis pregnancy. Some days, my heart was pounding so hard that I thought it was going to explode, but our social worker was always there, even when I lost all hope. I don't know how we could have walked through this journey without her support.

I am so thankful that Mother's Choice connected us to a Bridge Family, who took such good care of my granddaughter. I want to thank everyone at Mother's Choice from the bottom of my heart. Our granddaughter has brought such joy to our family, and we would not be so happy now without your help. My gratitude is beyond words.

When a girl reaches out to Mother's Choice for help, our first priority is to welcome her into a safe place where she knows she is loved and valued, then we can give her hope and equip her to face the future of her choice. This looks different for each of the 242 girls who we walked with this past year, because we adapt our approach to the needs of each girl. BoBo's story reminds us that we all need support from our friends and family.

In the past year,

242

girls received holistic care and support through our programs.

2,097

girls received help through our crisis hotline.

79%

of the girls we serve are under 21 years old.

10,000+

students received sexuality education.

Building Stronger Families

In 2010, the Social Welfare Department licensed Mother's Choice to assess and support families through the local adoption process. In February 2017, we celebrated our 100th family built through our Local Adoption Services, who were kind enough to share their story with us!

In the past year,

16 birth parents and grandparents received parenting training.

18 families were built through our Local Adoption Services.

34 adoptive parents learned how to care for their baby.

54 adoptive family training workshops were held.

43 prospective parents were supported in the early stages of the adoption process.

21 new Project Bridge families were approved to provide temporary care to a child.

A Family's Story

We supported this family on the journey of adoption, before, during, and after they met their beautiful daughter!

FRANK AND ANDREA, adoptive parents

We had already adopted our eldest daughter, Zara, five years ago, before moving to Hong Kong. When we met an adoptive family from Hong Kong, we began to think about growing our family through adoption again. Our Mother's Choice social worker, Janice, gave us a lot of guidance throughout all of our assessments as she made sure we could provide a safe and loving home for a child. Once we were approved, we began to wait for a child. We knew that every third Thursday the children who need a family are matched with parents, and we eagerly awaited a phone call.

The wait felt long and we began to get discouraged. Finally, one Thursday, my phone rang, and I saw Janice's name on the screen. I panicked and dropped my phone! I was so nervous when I spoke to her, but she gave us the great news that we had been matched with a baby girl. We were given some time to think about it, but we knew the answer was "yes"!

A few days later, we went to meet our daughter, Johanna for the first time. She was six months old, and had been living in Mother's Choice Child Care Home. She was carried into the room, and her caregiver handed her to me. When she looked at us with her huge brown eyes, she began to cry because she was so overwhelmed. Slowly she calmed down, and she let me hold her and feed her a bottle. For the next two weeks, we went to visit her every day so we could bond as a family.



We were so impressed with the staff and the many volunteers at Child Care Home – the way they interact with the children is so professional and caring. The day we brought Johanna home, we were given a beautiful gift of her own Lifebook, with all her photos and milestones from her time living at Child Care Home. She will never forget the foundation of love that the Mother's Choice team has given to her. We were also given a photo of Johanna with her birth mother, which was taken a few months after she was born. It is a precious gift to us. We know how valuable it will be to our daughter as we tell her about her courageous birth mother.

Our advice for adoption applicants is never to lose faith. There are children who are waiting for a loving family. Your role as a parent is to love and support your child no matter what is ahead. Many people tell us how kind we are to adopt a child, but we will never see it that way. We have been given the most wonderful gift of two daughters through adoption. We are so blessed.

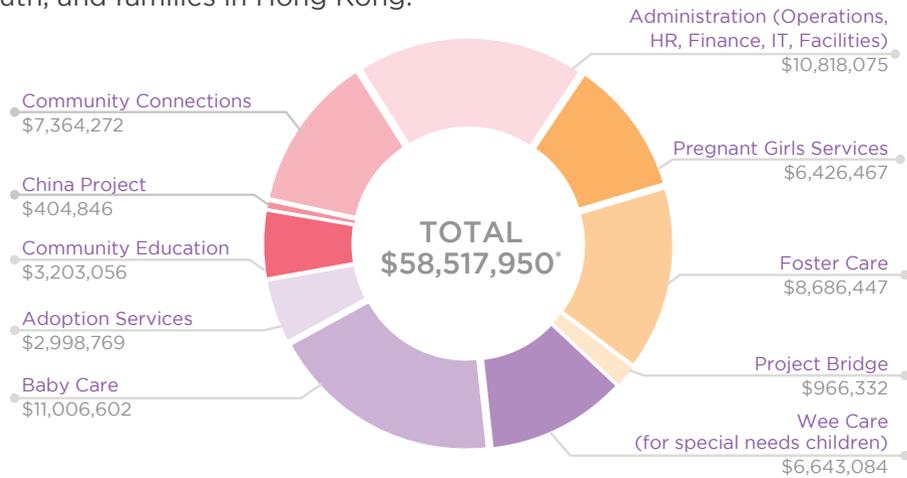


Financials

EXPENDITURE

Mother's Choice continues to grow in order to offer best in class services, invest in new and innovative programs such as Project Bridge and Community Education, and ensure sustainability of our team and facilities.

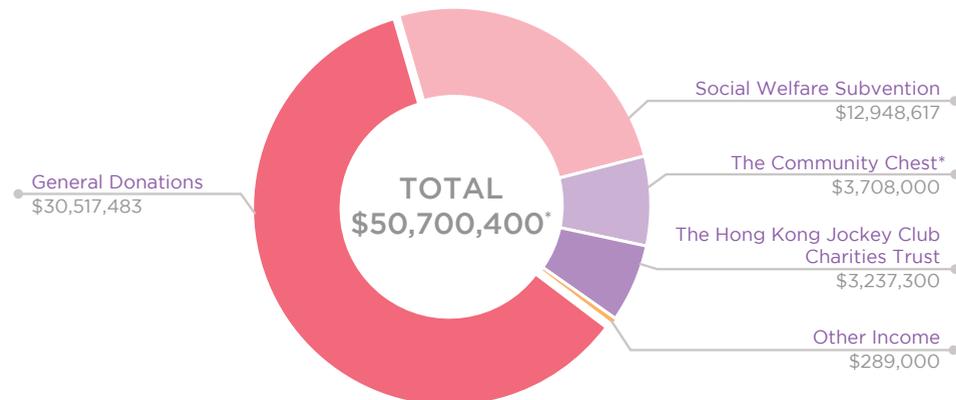
Here's how your donation gives hope and changes the life stories of children, youth, and families in Hong Kong:



INCOME

This year, it has been particularly challenging for us to raise the funds we need to serve our children, youth, and families. During 2016-2017, our fundraising efforts did not cover 100% of our costs.

To ensure stability in times such as these with economic unpredictability, we keep substantial reserves to ensure we can always continue to provide care to the most vulnerable in our community. Therefore, despite the shortfall, we were able to continue operations of all front line services.



* Includes \$531,063 donated by Sun Hung Kai Properties Charitable Fund Ltd.

Despite our challenging financial year, we continue to be encouraged by the creative ways our community has raised money for Mother's Choice, and we value every dollar you have raised by donating your birthdays, selling crafts and cakes, collecting coins, and joining our Walkathon!



Kids raised
\$198,349!



Runners raised
\$281,318!



Emma raised **\$14,000**
at her 100th day party!

FINANCIALS

	2014-2015 Audited Accounts**	2015-2016 Audited Accounts***	2016-2017 Estimates*
INCOME			
General Donations	37,383,178	38,534,069	30,517,483
Government and Public Grants			
• Social Welfare Subvention	11,726,724	13,623,467	12,948,617
• The Community Chest	3,182,600	3,438,100	3,708,000
• The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust	3,237,300	3,237,300	3,237,300
Other Income	281,409	351,303	289,000
TOTAL	55,811,211	59,184,239	50,700,400
EXPENDITURE			
Pregnant Girls Services	6,258,186	6,497,045	6,426,467
Foster Care	8,299,471	8,305,900	8,686,447
Project Bridge	-	1,005,977	966,332
Wee Care (for special needs children)	6,739,030	7,451,256	6,643,084
Baby Care	8,998,205	10,181,291	11,006,602
Adoption Services	3,018,690	2,719,467	2,998,769
Community Education	997,124	2,387,970	3,203,056
China Project	914,224	887,346	404,846
Community Connections	4,422,759	6,083,447	7,364,272
Administration	7,632,421	9,804,857	10,818,075
TOTAL	47,280,110	55,324,556	58,517,950

All amount are in HK\$.

*Estimates are based on 11 months unaudited management accounts (1 April 2016 to 28 February 2017), and one month management forecast (1 March 2017 to 31 March 2017).

**Financial highlights are extracted from 2014-2015 Audited Financial Statements (Financial year: 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015).

***Financial highlights are extracted from 2015-2016 Audited Financial Statements (Financial year: 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016).

Our Audited Financial Statements, audited by KPMG are available to view at www.motherschoice.org.

Mother's Choice is a member of the Hong Kong Council of Social Services, and has Hong Kong IRD s88 charitable status.



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO RAISE A CHILD?

Sometimes it takes the family you're born into,
and sometimes the family you'd never have imagined.
It takes mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters of all kinds.
It takes us all.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD

Watch our video at www.motherschoice.org.

Read the Chinese version here:

[www.motherschoice.org/app/
uploads/2017/06/Impact-Report-
2016-2017-CH.pdf](http://www.motherschoice.org/app/uploads/2017/06/Impact-Report-2016-2017-CH.pdf)