



Press Release

Towngas collaborates with TWGHs and The Salvation Army to extend the “Warmth and Care Fresh Food Aid Programme”

Over 60% of families surveyed have difficulties in providing a balanced diet

(Hong Kong, 7 February 2015) A recent survey^[1] has found that over 1.02 million people in Hong Kong are living in poverty, and one in four people aged 18 or under, which is over 200,000 children, are living below the poverty line. These startling figures show the poverty crisis that is currently being experienced by many people in Hong Kong. Due to the economic constraints of some single-parents and low-income earners, families often struggle to purchase basic food items that are necessary for a balanced diet.

Since 2013, The Hong Kong and China Gas Company Limited (Towngas) in collaboration with Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWGHs), have used their social enterprise titled “CookEasy” to provide food for the “Towngas Warmth and Care Fresh Food Aid Programme”, with added support from The Salvation Army Family and Community Services. Towngas engaged CookEasy to provide fresh and nutritious food packs, twice a week to 150 single-parents and low-income families in Hong Kong, to ensure that people in need receive a balanced diet for a healthy life.

In addition, the organisers conducted a survey of 200 single-parents and low-income families with independent research company in January this year. The survey was used to gain key information on dietary and living conditions in Hong Kong, which will be used to enhance the effectiveness of the 2015 “Towngas Warmth and Care Fresh Food Aid Programme”.

Over 60% of families surveyed have difficulties in providing a balanced diet

Celebrity nutritionist Leslie Chan said that adults and children must not solely eat in order to fill their stomachs, but must also pay attention to eating fresh and healthy ingredients in order to achieve the daily standards of nutrition and calorie requirements.

^[1] http://www.hkcss.org.hk/uploadfileMgnt/0_201382214446.pdf



According to the survey, over 60% of interviewees claimed that they did not meet their basic nutritional requirements last year before participating in the “Towngas Warmth and Care Fresh Food Aid Programme”. The respondents also explained that the price of food items played a significant role when purchasing food. 74.5% of interviewees showed that the price of food was a key consideration, while 63.5% of interviewees stated that buying cheaper food was their only option. Over 60% of interviewees also indicated that they needed to eat leftover meals over three days a week.

Leslie Chan claimed that leftover meals could drain important nutrients such as vitamin B and vitamin C, and that only considering the cost of food would narrow the selection of healthy food choices.

Nearly half of those families spent 40% of their total monthly household income on food expenditure

The survey showed that over 73% of the respondents had a monthly household income less than HK\$10,000, yet nearly half of those families spent HK\$ 2,001 to \$4,000 on food expenditure, which accounted for 40% of their total monthly household income. According to the result, the lower the household income, the higher the percentage of their food expenditure will be.

In order to reduce living expenses, 84.5% of families explained that adult members restricted their meals in order to save money to provide quality food for their children. The survey also concluded that 79% of families rationed soup over two day periods, and separate single dish into several meals; 78.5% of families would only buy poor quality, cheaper vegetables; and 74.5% of families would not eat expensive meat (such as beef) at all.

To alleviate some of the financial pressures and provide fresher and more nutritious food for the children, CookEasy, the social enterprise of Towngas in collaboration with TWGHs, together with the Salvation Army, do not only continuously help single-parents and low-income families in Kowloon City and Sham Shui Po districts, but also extend their programme to Wong Tai Sin and Yau Tsim Wong districts to provide nutritious and fresh food packs for families in need.



58% of families expressed the programme helps to lower at least HK\$2,000 of their food expenditure, while 73.8% even stated their children can join more extra-curricular activities (or additional teaching lessons) after participating in the Food Aid programme.

Peter Wong, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer – Utilities Business of Towngas said, “Towngas takes responsibility to care for those in need by committing to a variety of community activities. The company has already given away more than 31,200 packs of fresh food through the “Towngas Warmth and Care Fresh Food Aid Programme”, and we will continue to provide fresh and nutritious food packs for those that require social care and support.”

Create job opportunities to the disabled and bring out the message of “help people help themselves”

In addition, the survey also revealed that most families wanted the fresh food programme to include vegetables and meat, as well as fresh soup. Therefore, food items provided by the “Towngas Warmth and Care Fresh Food Aid Programme” have been specially catered for their needs by providing families with healthy and nutritious soups to maintain a balanced diet.

CookEasy helps alleviate financial pressures for low-income earning families and also provides employment opportunities to disabled members of society through vocational training services. These opportunities provide an added meaning to the social enterprise as it brings out the important message of “help people help themselves”.

The Chairman of Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, Ivan Sze Wing Hang said, “TWGHs and Towngas have carried out the social enterprise services ‘CookEasy’ since 2007 for the purpose of providing employment opportunities to people with disabilities through vocational training services. With an extension of the Food Aid Programme, CookEasy plans to employ 3 more disabled employees, with 17 employees in total, to provide nutritious and fresh food packs for families in need. As a result, the service will create mutual benefits for both low-income families and people with disabilities in the society.”



63% of families would not purchase festive food to celebrate Chinese New Year

Major Sara Tam, Secretary of Programmes for The Salvation Army, Hong Kong and Macau, explained, “We are very pleased once again to collaborate with Towngas to support the underprivileged people of Hong Kong. Our goal this year is to provide families with nutritious and fresh food to ensure a healthy and balanced diet.”

63% of respondents in the survey said they would not purchase additional food items to celebrate Chinese New Year. As a special gift, the “Towngas Warmth and Care Fresh Food Aid Programme” has prepared festive glutinous cakes for 150 families in need, allowing them to enjoy the atmosphere and festivities during this special time of year.

Press Photos:



Photo 1: Matthew Cheung Kin Chung (second from left), the Secretary for Labour and Welfare; Peter Wong (second from right), Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer – Utilities Business of Towngas; Ivan Sze Wing Hang (first from left), Chairman of Tung Wah Group of Hospitals; and Major Sara Tam (first from right), Secretary of programmes for The Salvation Army kick-off the extension ceremony by opening a traditional Chinese New Year candy box which displayed everyone’s efforts and resources in helping families receive fresh and nutritious food.



Photo 2: “Towngas Warmth and Care Fresh Food Aid Programme” provides 2 sets a week of nutritious and healthy fresh food packs to 150 single-parents and low-income families.



Photo 3: “Towngas Warmth and Care Fresh Food Aid Programme” specially provides Chinese New Year glutinous cakes to 150 single-parent and low-income families.



Photo 4: “Towngas Warmth and Care Fresh Food Aid Programme” provides different types of nutritious and fresh soup packs and food packs for families in need to maintain their balanced diets.



Photo 5: CookEasy allows the disabled to learn “help people help themselves” by preparing a variety of fresh food packs to those families in need.



香港中華煤氣有限公司
The Hong Kong and China Gas Company Limited



東華三院
Tung Wah Group of Hospitals



Photo 6: Leslie Chan (second from right), celebrity nutritionist, states that the fresh food packs of “Towngas Warmth and Care Fresh Food Aid Programme” contain a variety of fresh vegetables and meat which can satisfy the basic nutritional requirements of a balanced diet for adults and children.

Enclosure: A Set of Questionnaire on Household Incomes and Basic Nutrition Requirements (Chinese version only)

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For media enquiries, please contact:
Corporate Communications Department
The Hong Kong and China Gas Company Limited
Tel: 2963 3493
Fax: 2516 7368
Email: ccd@towngas.com