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BREAKING THE MOULD

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Like father like sons

For Raymond Cheng, charity has always been a part of life. Cheng, Chairman of HLB Hodgson Impey Cheng Limited, first got involved with charity work while in boarding school in the United Kingdom, where he volunteered to teach disabled children how to read. After returning to Hong Kong in 1996, he took up regular volunteering and still continues to help at charity organizations including Po Leung Kuk, St. James’ Settlement and rehabilitation service organization SAHK, where he interacts and reads with disadvantaged kids, many of whom are orphans. He has also involved his two sons, now teenagers, with these charities since they were nine. Helping charities along with his kids, Cheng says, is deeply rewarding.

During a work trip to the Mainland, he got involved with another charity organization to rebuild a school in Liu Wang (六王鎮), a village near the city of Yulin in the southern region of Guangxi, which had been affected by flooding following heavy rainfall in June 2010. “After the flood, the students were studying in an abandoned factory,” he recalls. “The kids sat on the floor and used individual pieces of wood as a desk. It was horrible.”

Cheng donated to the local charity organization, helping it to start rebuilding the school (龍頭小學). “They built the school from the foundations up, concrete, plumbing and stocking of tables and chairs,” he says.

“The kids sat on the floor and used individual pieces of wood as a desk.”

He brought his children along on a separate visit, with school supplies in hand. “I bought every kid a goody bag with supplies such as stationery, milk and a water bottle too.” Construction began in December 2010 and finished in October 2011, and Cheng still regularly visits the school. “The school didn’t believe people would

visit and help them, and were truly thankful.” Cheng was most surprised about the impact the experience had on his kids after they returned home. “It changed the way they saw things, and they are grateful with their lives in Hong Kong,” he says.

Cheng is also currently raising funds for another charity organization to purchase and build large water tanks in Guangxi, known as Dashi (廣西大石山區). “There were outbreaks of diseases due to poor hygiene and dirty water,” he says. “One water tank is able to supply clean water to an entire village.” He has visited the areas and met with locals to understand how the water tanks have to be put in place. “It’s not a one-off,” he adds. “They have to be routinely cleaned, maintained, and refilled with clean water, and the organization has a team of people who regularly inspect the water tanks.” With the project beginning in October, the water tanks are currently being built, and Cheng looks forward to his next visit in early 2019.

Cheng recommends other CPAs to get involved with charities, and to bring their children along. “Helping in charities changed my children’s perspectives – they are more willing to help people now, and are less selfish too,” he says. “A lot of people are in need, and we could all take some time to help out.”



Raymond Cheng visits the kids at a new school in Yulin, Guangxi