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Nan Fung Group gets their “In Time Of” programme off the ground with Episode II “Nice to meet you, Kapok!” that connects the Tsuen Wan Community with arts and culture to enhance local diversity and inclusion



(Hong Kong, 10th March 2021) – Today, the leading local enterprise and conglomerate – **Nan Fung Group (the Group)** launched **Episode II** of the “**In Time Of**” community initiative, “**Nice to meet you, Kapok!**”. The Group has always been committed to building for and with the communities to co-create a sustainable future for Hong Kong. This episode features the seasonal kapok trees as a medium to connect the community by inviting the public to discover the concept of “human-tree symbiosis”, appreciate the beauty that surrounds us in our daily lives and establish a closer bond between humanity and nature.

The “**In Time Of**” programme aspires to encourage a diversity of social stakeholders including non-profit organisations and social enterprises to develop sustainable community programmes spanning culture, arts, and social design; realise social empowerment and improve the efficiency of resource utilisation in the hope of creating a more resilient future for local neighbourhoods.

Kapok trees blossom from March to May, and the Group has chosen Tsuen Wan as the target community that provides abundant kapok resources and is also the base of this episode’s organiser, Nan Fung’s iconic cultural landmark, The Mills. The programme is also collaborating with the local environmental conservation organisation - **The Conservancy Association**; illustrator – **Connie Maoshan**; local natural dye artist – **Beely Daily**; local printmaking artist – **Lam King Ting**; and a team of urban sketchers called “**WaHaYeah Sketch Group**” to curate an exhibition under the themes of clothing, food, living and travelling.

The full programme includes an array of interactive handicraft workshops, guided tours, kapok sketch tours and the production of a unique Kapok Tree Map of the community.



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Him Lo, Senior Manager of Nan Fung Cultural and Community Engagement Team said: “Kapok trees in the city are often overlooked. But in fact, urban trees are important to the city. They do not only help to reduce heat and remove pollutants, but they enhance the environment of the neighborhood.”

“We would like to take a leading role in educating the public on the history, usage, and development of the kapok trees in the neighborhood. In the “Nice to meet you, Kapok!” programme, we are collaborating with local artists and organisations from different aspects to foster a better understanding of the values of the trees to the community and allowing public to get closer to the nature through the campaign.” Him Lo remarked.

Hands on kapok experience to discover “human - tree symbiosis”

Through the “Nice to meet you, Kapok!” episode, the Group hopes to encourage people to explore the concept of “human-tree symbiosis” and rediscover a connection to the natural environment. In addition to introducing the kapok trees to the community with innovative hands-on art experiences that focus on a community-based observation approach, the organising team is also looking for interesting stories from residents and using existing resources to show how kapok contributes to people’s food, clothing, living, and travelling.

In this programme, The Mills is cooperating with several institutions and tour guides to organise kapok tree guided tours, sketching tours, and a glass painting workshop to provide a platform for public to discover more about the history and beauty of Tsuen Wan to strengthen the sense of belonging and social cohesion within the neighbourhoods.

For example, **Beely Daily**, a local natural dye artist, uses fresh fallen kapok to create natural dyes for clothes and explore other little-known uses of kapok. **The “In Time Of” team and The Mills** are also partnering with the long-established **Hing Cheong Medicine Store** in Fuk Loi Estate, Tsuen Wan, to make Chinese herbal Five Flower Tea and talk about the therapeutic effects of kapok for natural detoxification; the **EUROPA TEA FOUNDRY**, one of the tenants at The Mills, to create an exclusive Kapok Honey Lemon Rice Chiffon Cake, that imitates the shape of kapok and offers a surprising new taste. The famous homeware store **Lai Hing Kee**, recalls the time when kapok was also used to make pillows. And the local illustrator, **Connie Maoshan** encourages everyone to explore the area with a hand-painted Kapok Tree Map. During the oral history community tour, visitors can trace the history of kapok and experience the connection between kapok and the community.

Connecting organisations with kapok and co-creating lasting social capital for the community

Connie Maoshan, a local illustrator, and the **Caritas Jockey Club Artkids Studio** are invited to provide art workshop for dyslexic students through a kapok glass painting workshop that teaches students to create unique kapok decorations for The Mills. Aiming to connect the community with kapok and powered it with arts and cultural elements. Due to COVID limitations, the workshop will be conducted online. All the finished works will be printed as stickers and displayed on the glass wall at The Mills



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during the campaign.

A representative from the Caritas Jockey Club Artkids Studio said: “As a platform that combines art and dyslexia service, we always try to explore diverse opportunities for our students and inspire them by interacting with different artists. This collaboration with The Mills is perfect for us in achieving our vision. By extending the project into the community, “Nice to meet you, Kapok!” makes the event an even more meaningful programme for the kids. It also offers a fantastic opportunity to recognise their artistic talents by showcasing their sketches at The Mills, which will be a memorable experience for them.”

The local sketch team, “**WaHaYeah Sketch Group**”, is leading a kapok tree sketch tour, to inspire people to learn basic sketching and observation skills and sketch the kapok scenery while exploring the area. The participants will have the opportunity to have their work displayed in an art installation exhibition for “The Tsuen Wan Kapok Tree Map” by Connie Maoshan.

The Group also supports **The Conservancy Association**, a local environmental conservation organisation that advocates sustainable development with a focus on natural environmental protection, nature, and heritage conservations. The association has conducted comprehensive research on kapok over the years and collected comprehensive information to produce in-depth literature on the city’s kapok trees and the threats the trees are currently facing. The literature will be showcased at the exhibition at The Mills.

A representative of The Conservancy Association said: “We hope to reduce public misunderstanding of kapok and introduce the different varieties of kapok to raise awareness of the environmental diversity of Tsuen Wan. This will help to encourage the public to embrace the contribution that urban trees make to our daily life and ultimately increase the residents’ sense of belonging to the community in the long term.”

Paving the way to enhancing community harmony

Nan Fung Group believes that every stakeholder could make a contribution to facilitate a successful harmonious community. “Nice to meet you, Kapok!” programme has invited the art accessibility service partner **DSTUDIO** to help visually impaired groups to also experience the cultural programme in different ways. They can learn about the kapok trees from the community and how they are connected to people in different ways.

To achieve this, DSTUDIO has created a tactile map and booklet for the kapok exhibition. They have also set up a QR code in the exhibition area which people can scan to listen to an audio tour and descriptions.

In Time of Arts and Culture – “Nice to meet you, Kapok!”

Venue: The Mills, Tsuen Wan

Date: 6th March 2021 to 30th May 2021



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To find out more about “In Time Of” and “Nice to meet you, Kapok!”, please follow social media platforms as below.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/InTimeOf>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/intimeofhk/>

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High Resolution Images can be downloaded in the link below:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/p3l41qeyobp2495/AAA-c_nhr_pxVLgpwzRI_Zoia?dl=0

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About “In Time Of”

The “**In Time Of**” programme is a community initiative launched by **Nan Fung Group** that engages society on multidisciplinary levels ranging from culture and arts to social design and sustainable development. Inspired by the global “Resilient Cities” concept that refers to a city with the resilience to absorb, recover from and prepare for future shocks in different areas of society - economic, environmental, social, infrastructural, and institutional. The programme aspiring to empower the community with the goals of accumulating social capital in neighbourhoods, advocating sustainability, and reshaping a continuous relationship that bridges humanity and nature.

The Group will partner with a diversity of social stakeholders including non-profit organisations, social enterprises and community designers through the “**In Time Of**” programme to develop sustainable community programmes including exhibitions, seminars, workshops, and guided tours, realise social empowerment and improve the efficiency of resource utilisation in the hope of creating a more resilient future for local neighbourhoods.



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About Nan Fung Group

Nan Fung Development Limited is a subsidiary of Nan Fung Group, one of the largest privately held conglomerates in Hong Kong with global interests in real estate development and investment and holds a well-diversified, substantial financial investment portfolio. The Group was founded in 1954 and has a track record spanning over 50 years with over 165 projects including residential, commercial and industrial buildings. The Group also strategically focuses on first-tier cities in Mainland China and recognises attractive opportunities for development and investment overseas, including New York and London.

In recent years, the Group expanded its investment focus on ICE (Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship), exemplified by its signature project, The Mills, a revitalization of its legacy yarn factories into a hub promoting techstyle (intersection of technology and style) and an integrated destination housing an experiential shopfloor, startup incubator and interactive gallery. The Group also made significant progress in investments related to life sciences in the US via Pivotal; and in Mainland China via an affiliate, New Frontier, which focuses on healthcare, elderly care, education and new technology.