

Annual Report – AWA Board Activities 2014/2015

President's Report

1) Overall

This has been an impressive year because of hard work and a tremendous amount of teamwork. Many members from the former Board returned, so the board began the year with a good knowledge base. This year has again been faced with declining membership and the board has discussed many different options to correct this. The AWAre advertising has increased and the AWAre editorial team has reduced pages as well as reduced overall costs. The board has reviewed and discussed many scenarios to close this gap in the administrative costs for the upcoming year.

2) AWA Board

Fortunately, there was little turnover on the board for the 2014/15 term.

The Recording Secretary resigned in August and the position has remained vacant for the year.

Appointments to the Board:

Editor of AWAre (twice, since the editor appointed last summer relocated)

PR/Communications

Social Media

Corporate Sponsorship (resigned late in the 2014 year)

Organizational Development

3) Organization Operations

A proposal on both operating and property reserves was discussed and agreed to by board.

4) AWAre sub-committee

Hildy Karev has worked very hard at generating advertising revenue and done very well.

Begona Blanco has successfully reduced the costs of the magazine by reducing pages and doing the design portion within the editorial team.

5) Membership

Membership is down for the 2014/15 year and did not meet the budget projections.

6) Website relaunch -

Digital Butter was chosen as the provider for the website relaunch and was behind schedule however, the website is up and running as of early fall 2014. The website has not been as successful as we had hope and will need further work in order for it to work the way it was intended.

7) Fees from Rental of Office

We have rented the office space out once and have future interests in renting the space.

8) Nomination process

No comments

Fundraising Report
SUMMARY

This year the collective efforts around fundraising yielded raise over HKD \$1,017,395 in money, of which \$236,300 was issued education and scholarship money for higher education and English Language enrichment programs and \$756,835 issued to vetted and approved charitable grant requests. This was a very successful fundraising year, showing approximately 33% growth over the 2013-2014 fundraising year. Including the contributions from our charitable partners within the Hong Kong community, our total ògiveö to the community was HKD \$1,404,766.

EVENTS BREAKDOWN

The main fundraising season during the AWA fiscal year is September through May. Events for the 2014-2015 season started a bit earlier than in past years, as we wanted to add a solid Fall event into the flow. *Laugh out Loud for Education* was a comedy performance held in October. This was followed next by yet another successful *Charity Bazaar* (in its 29th year) in November. At the end of November/beginning December, the annual òMake a Differenceö letter appeal for donations went out to our members. In early February, the Globe Paddlers joined our efforts this year and held a clothing swap, *Sip, Shop, Swap & Socialize* for charity. Around that time, we also held a charity and awareness movie screening of *My Voice, My Life* to benefit one of our long time partners, Ebenezer School for the Blind and Disabled. And we ended February with our second annual *Charity Pub Quiz*. We finished out our fundraising season with what turned out to be the crowning achievement for both fundraising and the AWA this past year, the amazing *Art on the Line* event held in early March.

AWA Sponsored Events

Laugh Out Loud for Education	= \$ 18,941
AWA Charity Bazaar at the Jockey Club, Happy Valley	= \$ 434,197
Make a Difference Letter Campaign	= \$ 225,253
Sip, Swap, Shop & Socialize	= \$ 9,320
My Voice, My Life screening	= \$ 8,400
Pub Quiz	= \$ 32,317
Art on the Line	= \$ 320,000
S.P.I.N.	= \$ 12,750
Miscellaneous Small Events/Sales	= \$ 1,518

Private Events

Tennis Social (money carried over into FY 2014/15)	= \$ 21,200
Mahjong Night	= \$ 33,349

CHARITABLE/FUNDRAISING PARTNERS

- 1) Our partnership with Am Cham grew this year with them providing significantly more toward our grants, at a total of HKD \$ 285,248.
- 2) We were also fortunate for the second year in a row, to have a partnership with the Celtic Connections choir, who raise HKD \$ 48,500 through their holiday concert, and provided funding specifically for grants supplying Ebenezer School and Home for the Visually Impaired and the Hong Kong Society for the Blind.

NOTES FOR FR FOR 2015-2016 FISCAL YEAR

Charity Bazaar 6 VENUE CHANGE: The annual Charity Bazaar for 2015 will not take place at the Jockey Club, Happy Valley, its home for the past 4 years. They informed us that they are no longer able to accommodate our event. The Charity Bazaar will move to the PMQ in Central, which is a smaller venue but very well located in the middle of Central, and may turn out to be significantly less expensive to rent. Our event will need to be smaller, but the foot traffic and overall potential of a slightly different format in this new venue is very promising. Event coordinators for November 2015 Charity Bazaar are Lisa Strunin and Kay Suzuki, with Marybeth Coffey coordinating certain aspects of Lucky Lai See with them.

Charity Bazaar 6 PROFIT SHARING: Due to ongoing challenges within the AWA pertaining to having a net zero/break even balanced budget, and further due to the fact that the organization has been running at a deficit and dipping into limited reserves for the over the past 3 years, it was proposed and approved that one anchor AWA fundraising event would contribute some amount of money into the general AWA coffers in order to shore up this operating deficit. Thus, this year and (feasibly) going forward, up to \$200,000 of what is raised at the Charity Bazaar will go to the AWA to fund ourselves as a non profit. The Charity aspect of the bazaar will be focused more on a giving tree and direct donations to our education/scholarship and charitable funds in addition to anything over and above the allocated \$200,000. If the AWA does not require the full \$200k, whatever is not needed for an operations shortfall will go back into the charitable fund.

Pub Quiz 6 VENUE: Delaney's has closed due to their landlord not renewing their lease, so we are looking at Trafalgar Brewing company as our venue for the 2016 Pub Quiz. The capacity is much higher, but the costs are also significantly higher. The team on this, headed by Marybeth Coffey, is Marybeth, AWA President, AWA VP of Fundraising, and the Public Relations Chair.

Art on the Line: The team, headed by Lisa Strunin and Regine Pokatso, have decided that they will put on another art event in early March 2016. The Space has been pre-reserved. The deposit will be due accordingly and paying it as per the required schedule has been pre-approved by the 2014-2015 Board.

60th Anniversary Gala: Marcy LaRont and Barbora Mayer have done research on potential venues and dates for the AWA 60th Anniversary Gala as well as meeting with potential event management companies. That work is ongoing, but the relative event date is set for October of 2016. The venue will be the Aberdeen Marina Club. Deposit is due accordingly and paying it per the required schedule has been pre-approved by the 2014-2015 Board.

Membership Report

The following Membership activities and recruiting efforts were held during the 2014 & 2015 AWA year:

1. **Welcome Back Coffee**

The WBC was held at the American Club in Tai Tam on 17 September and was fully subscribed. Asian Tigers sponsored the event in the amount of \$25,000, of which \$1600 was used to purchase Chinese fans as door prizes for attendees. These were fanned out at each place setting and looked very pleasing. Charlotte Travel donated a stay at the Aman Resorts new South Vietnam location, which was given to an attendee as a lucky draw prize.
2. **CHAT / New CHAT**

For many years, CHAT has been held at the Lobby Lounge (near the bar) of the JW Marriott Hotel at Pacific Place, Admiralty. Over the years, attendance has been high in the autumn months and builds up due to word of mouth among newcomers and past members. Numbers were down significantly at the beginning of the year, which appears to have carried through the year. This downturn was due to at least two factors: (1) the fewer number of new expats actually posted to Hong Kong at the time and (2) the Umbrella protests occurring in autumn in Hong Kong which wreaked havoc with transportation from the southside and Mid-Levels. Towards the end of the winter, the JW Marriott announced that its lounge area would be closed for several months due to renovations. The VP Membership and the CHAT coordinator agreed not to seek a different location to use during that time due to the fact that it would take a significant amount of time to get the word out about a new location to potential members, the AWA office was not available consistently on Thursday mornings as an alternate venue, and the time could be better used to meet with the CHAT hostesses and determine & implement a plan to rejuvenate the CHAT program. It was therefore announced that CHAT would reopen on 7 May (the Marriott's intended completion date for renovations). The AWA Board disagreed with this approach and instead replaced the CHAT coordinator with a new coordinator who found a new venue at a restaurant on the roof of the Maritime Museum at the Star Ferry. The new coordinator reopened CHAT at the new venue on 7 May.
3. **Holiday Party**

A holiday party for members and their spouses/partners was suggested by the AWA President just prior to the November AWA Bazaar. \$10,000 was budgeted. The date chosen was Tuesday, 2 December in the evening. The OWL coordinator arranged the venue (at Oolaa, where OWL is held) and the VP Membership designed invitations for members, which were handed out at the Bazaar and also printed in AWAre magazine and posted on the AWA website. There was no attendance fee, (registration required), nibbles were provided and there was a cash bar. The event was very successful.
4. **Membership Drive**

During the summer and early autumn 2014, the VP Membership conducted a membership drive among International Schools and Relocation Companies. Approximately 20 International Schools were contacted. The reception was lukewarm to cold from most, who were not interested in permitting AWA representatives to attend new parent get-togethers. The reason most frequently given was that the schools do their own fundraising and did not want any competition. Rack cards detailing CHAT and OWL were provided to various schools who made them available to new parents. The Australian School was particularly receptive (copies of AWAre Magazine were provided to them). The AWA was invited to the HKIS new parent coffee, which was very successful.

An afternoon get-together was held for relocation company representatives at the AWA office in early autumn. Representatives from 7 relocation companies attended. Although the representatives seemed excited to have materials to give to clients, it is not known if that ever happened. One company (Asian Express International Movers, Ltd) was very interested in working with the AWA and since then has sponsored two tours of the Hong Kong Container Park, both of which were very successful as local activities.
5. **Year of the Woman**

In March 2015, the AWA celebrated the 40th anniversary of the International Year of the Woman, with a fundraising event, membership event and various activities all dedicated to the role of women. The membership event was held on Tuesday, 24 March and consisted of a panel discussion and luncheon at

the Foreign Correspondents' Club in Central, with 4 women discussing and updating the same topics as covered at the original Year of the Woman convention in Hong Kong in 1975. Prof. Fanny Cheung, Dr. Susan Fan, Prof. Agnes Tiwari and Ms. Anne-Marie Balfe were the panelists; Dr. Rosann Santora Kao was the moderator; and the honorary convener for the event was the Hon. Anson Chan. The event filled and there was a waitlist.

Activities

Lisa Strunin served as VP of Activities for FY 2014-2015. Jane Buck served as chair of the Asian Tours committee until April 2015, at which time Kate Mahjoubian assumed the position as chair. Jane Buck continued as chair of the Local Tours and Activities committee for FY2014-2015.

Combined net income from Local and Asian Tours was budgeted to generate \$281.9K; actual combined net income was \$282.6K. However, this was only achieved due to Asian Tours exceeding budgeted income of \$79K with actual net income of \$107.3K. Local Tours budgeted income of \$207K was less than expected with an actual net income of \$175.3K. This is partially attributed to Occupy Central which caused a general disruption to the ease of travel in Hong Kong, discouraging members to participate in activities in and around the Central district; 11 local tours were cancelled in September and October due to insufficient enrollment. In August, a Signal 8 Typhoon and the unseasonably warm ocean temperatures resulted in the cancellation of two heavily subscribed activities, a Nature walk and Squid Fishing.

Asian Tours organized eight trips for the year. One trip to Yellow Mountain in April was cancelled due to insufficient enrollment. The Harbin, Myanmar and Vietnam Cycling trips were fully subscribed. The most well-attended was a three day weekend trip to the River Kwai. The remaining trips to Nepal, Tibet and Zhangjiajie/Avatar proceeded with less than full enrollment. Subsequent to a participant's injury while on the Vietnam Cycling trip, the Asian Tours committee has done a thorough review of their procedures and policies in the event of a medical emergency. Further, they will now require every trip participant to sign a Waiver of Liability before commencing on a trip, regardless of whether they have already signed the AWA's Member Liability Waiver at time of membership. While Asian Tours exceeded this year's budget expectations, its actual net income of \$107.3K was \$37K less than the previous year, a decrease of 25%.

Local Tours and Activities generated net income of \$175.3K, a 15% shortfall from budgeted \$207K. This year's actual net income was \$18K less than the previous year's actual net income (\$193.3K), a decrease of 9.3%. As membership numbers fluctuate from year to year, a key metric is participation rate as a percentage of total membership. The average monthly participation rate as a percentage of total membership for FY2013-2014 was 22.1% compared to a rate of 19.6% for FY2014-2015. After discounting the unusually low participation rates in August, September and October due to circumstances cited above, the participation rates the remainder of this year were actually equal to or greater than the previous year. Further analysis of individual members' participation in Local Tours and Activities showed that 30% of AWA's total membership only participated in 1 to 2 activities per year, with another 18.7% of total membership participating in 3 to 5 activities over the entire year. While we expect new members to populate more of our local tours as they acclimate to living in Hong Kong, our core existing membership is more selective about enrolling in activities and is more likely to be enticed by the unusual or one-of-a kind experiences. To that end, offerings this year have included social media workshops, a lecture on the bound feet women of China, a factory tour of Zhuhai, a tour and lecture on Chinese Herbal Medicine at Chinese University of Hong Kong, a presentation on Human Trafficking, and a tour of Legco. The guided Heritage Tours continue to be well-attended. Behind the Scenes tours to the container port terminal and DHL were booked to capacity with large waiting lists. Shopping trips to Da Fen Village, Sum Ngai Brass Factory, Kwah Tung Porcelain and furniture shopping in Zhuhai were all filled to capacity. An overnight local tour to Danxia Mountain was very well-received; further short trips are being investigated. Two Global Insights events, hosted at the Belgium and Austrian Consulates, were well-attended by members and their spouses.

Ongoing activity groups continued with strong interest and participation in most groups. The Art Lovers group had 60+ members and organized 1 to 2 events per month at local galleries and shows. The Photography group has been re-energized under Sharon Mason's excellent leadership. The Needle Arts group meets weekly and is at capacity. The Afternoon Book Club and the Spiritual Literacy Discussion group have a loyal and regular following. Social Bridge at AWA runs 3 to 4 tables of bridge each week. Mahjong on Tuesdays at the American Club continues in popularity and Games Galore on Fridays at the American Club is regularly hosting 12 to 20 members. The Italian Conversation group is small but regular. The French Conversation group was withdrawn mid-year due to lack of attendance. Interest in the Moms & Tots Play group has been low. The Evening Book Club has started up again. Lunch Bunch remained active throughout the year with monthly lunches, but will need a new coordinator for next year. The International Cooking Club experienced waning interest this year and will need a new coordinator to continue next year. The Social Golf group reorganized this past year into the AWA Golf Society with new leadership and affiliation with Hong Kong Golf Association to allow for member handicapping and greater tournament involvement. The Dragon Boat Globe Paddlers struggled to find a team sponsor to help defray costs for the race season and ultimately decided to increase team fees substantially to cover their costs; despite that, they had another winning season taking first place in the Stanley Cup.

Treasurer

During the year, the month-end closing of our books and the preparation of the monthly financial reports were handled by the outside accountant, Wallace Lee, once a month, and reviewed by Irene, our Treasurer. Irene then presented the Income statement, Statement of Financial Position and cash position analysis to the AWA board. The financial information was prepared in accordance with the AWA accounting policy.

The 2013/2014 annual financial statements have been audited and approved by the auditor, Mr. Lau Pui Wing, Certified Public Accountant.

FY 2014-15 Report

Results

YTD results before net fundraising income was deficit of HK\$432,269, compared to FY 2013-14 net results before net fundraising income of deficit of HK\$576,054.

YTD net results was deficit HK\$352,492 which included net fundraising income of HK\$79,778, compared to FY 2013-14 net results of deficit of HK\$523,597.

YTD total net results to date exceeded our budget primarily due to increased income from local activities and Asian Tours and decreased operating expenses. Our operating expenses this year was lower compared to FY 2013-14 because additional expenses were spent in relation to the office move.

YTD operating expenses were HK\$1.32 million, HK\$82k below budget, primarily due to reduced depreciation and salaries compared to budget. We had one less full time staff during for half of the year compared to the year before.

Financial Position

As of June 30, 2015, we have cash of HK\$1.80 million, compared to cash of \$1.68 million at June

30, 2014. Increase in cash balance was primarily due to increased income from local activities and Asian Tours.

Approximately \$4.5 million have been designated for the operating reserve and the property maintenance and technology reserve.

AWAre

AWAre has been revamped with new design, imagery and including diverse content in order to attract potential younger members to join the organization.

Asian Tours and Local Tours & Activities continue informing members of the wide range of interest groups and activities available to them. The layout design of these sections has been assigned to Fahima, an AWA member, bringing a fresher air, and reducing costs at the same time. The layout of the rest of the magazine is still done by R&R Publishers. AWA Enjoys has adopted a fresher format, with a layout of a polaroid picture. New sections have been added, like Neighbourhood walks with Frances. These articles had already been featured in AWAre, and Frances is now back with updated ones by popular demand.

We still continue informing about the charity work, but not making the issues charity-only focused. We have included useful information on round ups that members consider interesting and that contain handy and entertaining information. The Ongoing Activities section has been reduced to one page, due to the constant repetition of information and therefore high cost of that space.

We continue to promote our fundraising events and provide a useful medium to acknowledge our sponsors. We have reviewed internal advertising, and redesigned some ads to make all of them come up to a certain standard. We have put special attention to choose the appropriate cover for every issue.

In order to save money, the pagination of each monthly issue has been reduced to 32 pages in order to optimize costs. Following the multiples of 16, if we had to print a double or triple issue, the most cost effective number would be 48.

A new print & design rate per page has been negotiated with the publisher, bringing the overall print cost down. Insourcing some of the layout, as explained above, has also cut the bill.

The increase on quality content has increased the profile of the magazine, making easier for the Advertising Manager to sell space to advertisers, that may be looking for a more upbeat target.

Charitable Donations

Donations in kind

The CDC organized a toiletries drive for the Welcome Back Coffee in September. Members were asked to donate toiletries for Feeding Hong Kong and Sunshine Action and they obliged! We filled many bags with small and big toiletry items, which were piling up in the office for a while as Occupy Central made it difficult to convey them further. But they eventually made it to the two charities that distributed them to people in need.

Applications for funding

We again moved up the deadline for funding applications by another month to Sept 22. The idea was to conduct our grant review process earlier in order to identify our priority organizations for funding early on. This should allow more targeted and more effective fundraising by highlighting specific causes.

We received 37 grant requests, asking for a total of more than HK\$ 4.2 M.

CD committee

6 new committee members joined the team after the Welcome Back Coffee. In total we started with 37 members into the year. Some resigned throughout the year, others joined later. We only had 4 team leaders as no one else wanted to commit to this task. Thus we had rather large teams with 8 to 10 members each.

Vetting

We introduced a criteria list for vetting with the purpose to make vetting more objective and comparable. It should also help remember all the topics that need to be covered at the site visits.

Each team organized site visits to 8 to 10 charities. The team leaders provided their feedback on the applications by end of November. The CD committee met Dec 3 to discuss the applications. We identified 11 charities with A+ priority, 7 charities with A, 10 with B, 4 with C and 5 with D priority (= no funding recommendation).

Charities, which were rated as C and D priority, were informed in early February that they would not receive funding. All A+ and A charities received confirmation of funding in April and the B priority charities only end of May when we knew the final amount of funding and selected charities from AmCham.

Cooperation with AmCham

In January Marcy and I met with Ming-Lai from AmCham. We gave them a reduced list of charities with A+, A and B recommendation for funding. We hoped that they would choose one or more charities that they would highlight for fundraising purposes, e.g. at their ball on April 25. In the end they did not follow-up on this idea but appreciated that they received the list early. We agreed on June 5 as the date for the Awards Tea.

Articles in Aware

CD featured articles about charities in Aware issues of September, October, November, December, February, March and April.

Support of fundraising

The Celtic Connection Choir dedicated the proceeds (33,000 HKD) from their Christmas concert to Helping Hand and Ebenezer School. Thanks to Celine O'Connor for having arranged the cooperation on fundraising.

We held a charity movie night January 19 at UA Windsor cinema that kindly sponsored the venue and cost for film rental. We showed the very touching documentary *My voice, my life* by Oscar winning film director Ruby Yang. The film follows a group of disadvantaged Hong Kong students, among them blind students from Ebenezer School, to whom the chance is offered to participate in a musical. Proceeds (16,600HKD) were split between Ebenezer and AWA.

A small team of CD members (Celine, Ilene, Jenny, Lisa) organized a private mahjong night, which raised 27,250HKD.

Liana Sadhwani organized a spin class which made 12,750HKD.

Revision of CD procedures and policies

We had two CDC meeting in March and April to reflect on experiences with this year's vetting process, to discuss funding guidelines and to organize the follow-up on awarded grants (2014/13). The results are an amended version of the AWA funding policy and guidelines, a revised criteria list for vetting and procedures how to

organize the follow up on awarded grants. Charities will receive a follow up form together with the cheque/ acceptance letter of funding. They need to send back the form together with proof of how money was spent and an evaluation of the project by May 31 the following year. In addition we created a small evaluating committee within CD that will also follow up directly with charities (site visits if necessary) and might check on progress 6 months after charities received funding.

Awards Tea June 5

We could again celebrate the end of the CD year at the US Consul General's residence. Tom Cooney, Deputy Consul General, represented the Consul General. He and his wife Deborah, AWA Honorary President, welcomed the guests. James Thompson, Charitable Foundation Board of Trustee, and AmCham Past Chairman spoke for AmCham.

We donated 1,042,083 HKD to 24 local charities. Out of these 8 were sponsored by AmCham. They donated 285,248 HKD in total.

Education & Scholarship

This year in Education and Scholarship, we continued to provide English education outreach services to local students through our programs, Chatterbox, Mock Interviews, Western Dining Etiquette, Story Reading, and Phone Pals. We saw increased volunteer and student participation in some programs but saw declines in others. We increased our scholarship donations compared to last year, specifically to Lingnan University.

The Chatterbox program had a mixed year. Most of the programs continued in full force, under the strong and capable leadership of on-the-ground AWA coordinators who have been involved with the schools for many years. However, two programs (Ap Lei Chau and Wanchai) became dormant after the AWA's school coordinators left in the fall, leaving vacancies that were not filled in the rest of 2014 and 2015. It will be important to appoint a new Chatterbox Coordinator who can breathe new life and energy into the program by attracting more volunteers and providing support to new AWA school coordinators with standardised lesson plans, training sessions, and so forth, whilst leveraging the knowledge and experience of the well-established coordinators by actively engaging them.

The Mock Interview program, run by Bernice Lee, attracted more volunteers than in the three previous years (30+ people), serving over 200 Form 5 students in five secondary schools. Two of the schools that had joined the original program several years ago declined participating, one because a new principal joined the school and the other because it chose to organise other career education activities. However, we added Ching Chung Hau Bo Poon Secondary School.

The Phone Pals team, lead by Shibani Dutta, worked with 12 secondary school students this year. Every week, each AWA volunteer would have a 15-minute conversation with a mentee to improve their oral English skills. Recruiting and retaining volunteers for this program is a significant challenge. Ms. Dutta and Ms. Lee recommend we temporarily stop the program to assess how it can be delivered more effectively. Alternatively, already scarce volunteer resources might be out to better use if deployed to other programs.

The Western Dining Etiquette program, run by Bernice Lee, gained popularity amongst volunteers compared to previous years, with more than 10 AWA members helping to teach over 100 Form 4 and 5 students dining skills and table manners. The number of participating schools stayed the same as last year.

The Reading Program in Cheung Chau, led by Patty Tarralo, was moved from the Volunteer Activities Committee to Education & Scholarship. This program, targeted at primary school students, continued to do well in terms of

attracting volunteers and engaging students.

In Scholarships, the Board decided to increase the scholarships granted to three students of Lingnan University. The increase was enough to cover full tuition, housing and miscellaneous expenses. The amount of scholarship money disbursed to the Vocational Training Institute (VTC) stayed the same as last year but, with matching grants from the VTC, was granted to more students than last year.

This year, we sought out detailed information about the grants that the AWA had given to select secondary schools to support English education activities in past years, including the amount of funds the schools received and spent, how they were spent, and the amount of surplus remaining. It became clear that the schools were not given guidelines about when and how they should use AWA funds in this regard. Consequently, the Board voted to continue defer the disbursement of additional grants until more clearly defined guidelines about fund applications, disbursements, and governance are approved and disbursed by futures Boards.

Community Service

There are 9 charities that the AWA actively helps with hands-on volunteers:

Asian Charity Services, Beach Clean-Up, Fenwick Pier Volunteers, Helpers for Domestic Helpers, Meals in the Home, Reading for the Blind, Red Cross Cookie Drive, Ronald McDonald House, and Soup Kitchen. Overall there are more than 300 AWA members involved in some way with Community Service activities/programs.

The first Community Service event for 2013/14 was the Beach Clean-Up campaign. Patrizia Tarallo was the coordinator for AWA and worked with Eco-Asia, the organizing body, to officially secure a Country side and clean-up time. This activity is important in helping the ecological health of Hong Kong. Patrizia Tarallo will be stepping down this year so the new Community Service chair will need to find a replacement but Patrizia will be available to continue the program.

The next event was the Red Cross Cookie Drive in which the coordinator, Patrizia Tarallo and Marybeth Coffey posted an ad to ask the members to bake the cookies. AWA members delivered the cookies to the office and Patrizia delivered to the school to be sent to the hospitals across HK. This was a successful campaign in which the AWA shipped 3,000 cookies to the Red Cross, though it was 2,000 less than the previous year. Patrizia Tarallo and Lisa Strunin, attended the Christmas Red Cross parties. They presented an award to AWA for supporting the project for over 30 years.

Asian Charity Services continued to recruit women with executive experience to help train and give professional guidance to smaller charities; Susan Trebach leads this group.

Fenwick Pier Volunteers, run by Carol Lampard, has enough volunteers to fully staff the welcome desk at The Pier to greet US Navy/Marine personnel whenever their ships arrive, giving advice about Hong Kong and presenting a friendly face. Even if given short notice by the Navy, the AWA Fenwick Pier volunteers come through. The AWA Fenwick Pier Volunteers are AWA members of many nationalities.

Sister-program Meals in the Home, led by Mary Beth Coffey, has expanded to include a wide variety of social activities available for Navy/Marine personnel to sign up for, including hikes, tours, junk trips as well as meals at restaurants or at home. This has not only increased the number of service people who can benefit but also allows AWA members with smaller homes or only daytime hours available to be able to offer an activity. Both Fenwick Pier Volunteers and MITH are very much appreciated by the people involved in bringing US ships to Hong Kong.

Helpers for Domestic Helpers, run by Nicola Cottrell, continues to gain highly skilled volunteers, to help this very

important and often vulnerable segment of Hong Kong society with paralegal advice. This agency requires a commitment by volunteers to insure seamless follow up of issues.

Reading for the Blind, led by Kate Mahjoubian, has a large number of volunteers who tape the South China Morning Post for the HK Society for the Blind each month and add much needed material in English for the tape library at the Hong Kong Society for the Blind.

Ronald McDonald House led by Renee Cheung and Trisha Cliff, volunteers from AWA host parties once every other month at the RMD House in Sha Tin, supplying food, games, prizes, friendship and some relief for the families at the House. These parties are always well staffed by AWA volunteers and greatly enjoyed by RMH. Renee Chung and Tricia Cliff are currently heading this effort.

The Soup Kitchen volunteer group which Alison May organizes for AWA is very popular and is in the lucky position of having more volunteers than can be accommodated at the kitchen. Alison is stepping down and Linda Wolfe will be heading up.

Communications/Public Relations

This position was created to enhance the way the American Women's Association communicates with its members. Through the use of networking and social media, we promoted signature events, raising awareness for our philanthropy, fundraising and charitable causes.

Beginning in August 2014, in my role as Public Relations/ Communication Chair, I opened Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and Pinterest accounts for the American Women's Association, with the goal of broadening our audience, particularly among younger members. The AWA Facebook account was already in place but wasn't being utilized as a promotional tool. The FB page was mobilized as an information tool for our members, allowing them to learn more about volunteer opportunities available locally, as well as a blog-site for news and feedback relevant to women in and around Hong Kong.

In addition to utilizing the new communication additions, we continued to reach our members through our monthly E-newsletters designed as a "What to look forward to" and E-blasts which helped inform the members of any changes in previous announcements.

As part of the strategy to improve outreach, educational seminars on social media were organized to help our members understand how to utilize and access the information we were providing. The seminar was oversubscribed, but successfully taught skills to women, ranging in age, and laid the foundations for further training.

Given the scarcity of resources, the initiative to activate and mobilize the social media accounts was conducted at no cost to the AWA. The AWA Board has the option of allocating resources to this initiative should they wish to broaden the audience.

The additions to our media tool-box have laid a sound foundation for communicating with the AWA membership, as well as making its work accessible to the broader public. The efforts of the previous year have created imaginative ways to reach out to our members, get them involved and help them become part of the AWA family.

Office Manager

The workload of the office manager (Barbora Mayer) and membership representative (Joanne Lam) has increased in comparison to previous years.

New part time (3 days a week) office administrator was recruited in April 2014 and left in October 2014 (Carolyn Nicholas). Second part time administrator was recruited in October 2014 and left in early January 2015 (Ces Defeo). This position is difficult to fill as it is part-time (3 days a week) and low paid; which is reflected in the caliber of candidates applying for the role.

Due to the financial standing of the association it was decided not to look for a 3rd staff member and workload was added to existing workload of office manager and membership representative.

The office staff have been very busy this year due to many additional events/activities held at the office. The office manager has been closely involved in the later stages of the website development, launch and ongoing problem solving.

We have secured 3 partners for regular hiring out of the office ó Charlotte Travel, Project Asia and C3HK: Kids Church Sunday School. We will continue to work with these carefully selected partners in the future.

Recording Secretary

The position of Recording secretary remained vacant for the full term. Recording Secretary responsibilities were covered by the President and meeting minute taking was shared amongst the board.