

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

- Lucinda Pike, Executive Director at Enrich HK: lucinda@enrichhk.org
- Ken To, Sr Manager, Communications at PathFinders Hong Kong: +852 9707 1405 or ken.to@pathfinders.org.hk

18 April 2024

Award-Winning Filmmaker and Talented Artists Collaborate on Hong Kong's First Children's Book Illustrated by Migrant Domestic Workers

Hong Kong, 2 May 2024 - Award-winning filmmaker Joanna Bowers and a team of talented collaborators proudly announce the release of *My Extra-Special Aunty*, a heartwarming children's tale that shines a spotlight on the extraordinary migrant domestic workers, known colloquially as 'aunties', who play an integral role in the lives of many Hong Kong families. The story, narrated from a child's perspective, aims to promote healthy relationships among young readers and their families, and is Hong Kong's first children's book illustrated by migrant domestic workers.

My Extra-Special Aunty is not only a captivating tale but also a local story that captures the essence of Hong Kong families, depicted in both English and Traditional Chinese. The book aims to foster empathy, kindness, and respect among children, their families, and their beloved aunties.

Written by Joanna Bowers and featuring exquisite illustrations by domestic worker artists Cristina Cayat and Noemi Caballero Manguerra, *My Extra-Special Aunty* also celebrates cultural diversity and the immense talent that thrives within the migrant domestic worker community. With representations from Hong Kong, the Philippines, Indonesia, and beyond, these artists bring their unique perspectives to create a visually stunning masterpiece.

Author Joanna Bowers was the creative force behind her first book *My Extra-Special Aunty*, following the success of her 2017 film *The Helper documentary*, which chronicles diverse stories from Hong Kong's migrant domestic workers. According to Joanna, "*I wanted to capture the special bond that exists between Hong Kong families and their beloved aunties. By sharing this enchanting story, we hope to inspire children and families to foster meaningful connections that transcend boundaries.*"

The talented illustrators of the book, Cristina Cayat and Noemi Caballero Manguerra, are also founding members of Guhit Kulay, a migrant domestic worker artist collective in Hong Kong. Cristina said, "*As a domestic worker artist, I am proud to contribute my artwork to My Extra-Special Aunty. Coming from the northern part of the Philippines, I wanted to bring my culture into this book by using traditional design and clothing. I think it's the perfect tool to start a conversation, inspiring young readers to appreciate different cultures and understand their Aunties better.*"

Echoing these sentiments, Noemi, who now lives overseas, expressed, "*My role was to develop the character illustrations in the book, using watercolour techniques, which is my particular specialty. I believe that through the power of art, we can bridge gaps and build understanding. I'm honored to be a part of this project that showcases the incredible talent and diversity of migrant domestic workers.*"

The team behind the book came together in 2018 at a charity event organized by Enrich HK. Their shared appreciation for migrant domestic workers and storytelling led them on a collaborative journey. Using various techniques such as poetry, hand illustrations, painting, and textiles, they focused on exploring the complex emotions of attachment between domestic workers and the families they serve. The goal was to help families understand their Aunty's aspirations and unwavering dedication to providing a better life for her family back home.

In addition to its artistic significance, *My Extra-Special Aunty* is a charity project. All proceeds from sales and events will support local charities, Enrich HK and PathFinders Hong Kong dedicated to supporting migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong. By purchasing this book, young readers have the opportunity to make a positive impact.

My Extra-Special Aunty is now available for purchase and can be found at The Lion Rock Press and Bookazine. For more information, visit www.myextraspecialaunty.com.

All are also welcome to celebrate the launch of *My Extra-Special Aunty* at a Family Fun Day and Book Launch at Asia Society Hong Kong on 11 May, 2024. Children and aunts can immerse themselves in the story together through animated book readings and fun creative activities that are guaranteed to create extra-special memories. Tickets are available at www.myextraspecialaunty.com.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

Images can be found in this [Google Folder](#).

For press inquiries and interviews, please contact

- Lucinda Pike, Executive Director at Enrich HK: lucinda@enrichhk.org
- Ken To, Sr Manager, Communications at PathFinders Hong Kong: +852 9707 1405 or ken.to@pathfinders.org.hk

About Joanna Bowers

Originally from the UK, Joanna Bowers is a Hong Kong-based film director and screenwriter and the founder of Cheeky Monkey Productions. She is passionate about telling international stories that feature strong women and unique perspectives. Her debut feature documentary film, *The Helper*, explored the maternal sacrifices of migrant domestic workers and their immense

contributions to society and went on to global distribution. Joanna now turns her hand to writing and *My Extra-Special Aunty* is her first book. For more on Joanna Bowers, visit <https://cheekymonkeyprods.com/>

About Cristina Cayat

Hailing from Baguio City, Philippines, Cristina Cayat currently works in Hong Kong as a domestic worker. She is also an artist working in painting and fashion design, specialising in ethnic fabrics that belong to her tribe. Her attention to texture and fabric design can be seen in the intricate detailed textures of her illustrations. Cristina is a founding member of Guhit Kulay.

About Noemi Manguerra

Noemi Caballero Manguerra is a self-taught artist from Bulacan, Philippines. She worked as a migrant worker in Hong Kong for 16 years and now resides and works in Ontario, Canada. Noemi honed her skills using the enchanting medium of watercolour and acrylics. Her artistic journey is fueled by curiosity to delve deeper into culture, traditions and the roots of various tribes. She has participated in various projects and group exhibitions in Hong Kong, The Philippines and Toronto. Noemi continues to learn and explore art, making her everyday life full of lines and colours. Noemi is a founding member of Guhit Kulay

About Guhit Kulay

Guhit Kulay are a collective of talented self-taught migrant Filipino artists making the most of their time in Hong Kong through art, crafts and textiles. The group has displayed their work in collaboration with numerous organisations and charities, including the Philippine Consulate of Hong Kong, Centre for Heritage Arts and Textiles, The Mills, Enrich HK, ParaSite Hong Kong, University of the Arts London, and National Commission for Culture and the Arts. For more on Guhit Kulay, please visit: www.facebook.com/guhitkulay2017

About Enrich HK

Enrich is an award-winning Hong Kong charity promoting the economic empowerment of migrant domestic workers. For more on Enrich, please visit www.enrichhk.org

About PathFinders Hong Kong

PathFinders believes every child deserves a fair start in life. PathFinders is the only Hong Kong charity dedicated to supporting the unique vulnerabilities of children born to migrant mothers. Since 2008, PathFinders has supported over 11,000 mothers and children to find a path to a brighter future. For more on PathFinders, please visit www.pathfinders.org.hk.

