

The hope you are bringing. The lives you are changing.

Supporting the Elderly for 30 Years, Witnessing Miracles Everywhere



Volunteers for Elderly Day 2024



The organiser prepared two 150 feet giant dragons to roam around at the opening ceremony, symbolising blessings for the 30th anniversary of HOPE worldwide.



Distinguished guests jointly set off balloon fireworks to kick off the event.



Ms Winnie Ho, JP, Secretary for Housing, and the ambassador of HOPE worldwide, Mr. Cheung Man Sun, along with his wife, Ms. Candy Chea, visited an elder together and sent warm wishes to her. They highly appreciated the elder's attitudes towards life.

The annual Volunteers for Elderly Day by HOPE worldwide was held on January 28, 2024, with over 2,000 volunteers forming hundreds of teams to spread love and care to nearly 1,000 elders aged 65 or above, receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, living alone, or with spouse.

In celebration of HOPE worldwide's 30 years of service in Hong Kong, the event was themed 'Supporting the Elderly for 30 Years, Witnessing Miracles Everywhere'. Over the past 30 years, HOPE worldwide has mobilised over 60,000 volunteers to visit over 20,000 elders before every Chinese New Year. Among them, 402 volunteers have continuously participated in the Elderly Day volunteer service.

The opening ceremony was officiated by Ms Winnie Ho, JP, Secretary for Housing, Mr. David Cheng, Chairman of Executive Committee of HOPE worldwide, Mr. Godwin Chan, the Lead Pastor of the Hong Kong Church of Christ, Mr. Cheung Man Sun, ambassador of HOPE worldwide, along with Ms. Candy Chea veteran presenter. This year, well-known artists Mr. Woo Fung and Ms. Law Lan also showed their support by attending the event as goodwill ambassadors, presenting awards to the elders and children volunteers. Among the elderly volunteers, some were over 80 years old, who wished to use their abilities to serve the other elderly friends in order to contribute to the society.

Following the opening ceremony, the volunteers were dispatched to different public housing estates across the city to visit the elderly with gift bags. Additionally, 145 volunteers were arranged to visit two elderly residential care homes to meet with frail elderly residents. Around a few hundreds of volunteers participated in the 'Fulfill a Wish' Program, helping some elderly to fulfill their small wishes that were difficult to achieve in their daily lives.

Nearly 2,000 volunteers gathered to bring warmth and care to the elderly before the chilly Chinese New Year.





Bringing Warmth to the Elderly

Uncle Ng has limited mobility due to a surgery and he spent the entire year at home, except for medical appointments. His daily life is taken care of by his wife who has just completed cancer surgery and is undergoing chemotherapy. They have no relatives in Hong Kong. They rely on social welfare organisations for meal delivery. When the elevator in their building was out of service during the winter solstice, they had to rely on instant noodles when the meal delivery services were unavailable.

On the Elderly Day, the volunteers arrived very early to take them out for a haircut, followed by lunch at a Chinese restaurant to enjoy some of their favorite foods. After the meal, the volunteers accompanied them to do some shopping and purchase a small furniture.

Getting a haircut, having lunch, and buying necessities may seem like easily achievable tasks, but for the elderly with limited mobility and health issues, these are luxurious missions.



Feeling more blessed to give than to receive

Uncle Wong and Uncle Tak are almost blind. Because of their situation, they usually stay at home but lack of someone to talk to. During the few hours of activity with the volunteers, both were eager to share their stories with the others. Their wish was to visit Sai Kung and had a meal together, but it was obvious that they wanted to be listened, cared, and accompanied. At the end of the trip, they expressed their happiness though the volunteers could sense their reluctance to leave.

Uncle Wong used to do renovation works in Sai Kung when he was young but had never tried seafood there. He hadn't been to this area again since losing his sight over a decade ago, and his wish was to go there to enjoy seafood. Uncle Tak, enjoyed traveling and outdoor activities before losing his sight while working at the airport. Around ten years ago, he experienced retinal degeneration and gradually lost his eyesight. It was hard to accept but even harder was his wife passed away few months ago. He was very lonely since then. He repeatedly expressed his gratitude for the companionship offered by the volunteers.

The volunteers took them to Sai Kung for a leisure trip and enjoyed seafood together. Despite their blindness, they were very loquacious, humorous, and often brought laughter to the others. The volunteers felt that they were the ultimate beneficiaries of this trip as their hearts were enriched by these two elders.



Unrestricted by Time, Preserving Passion for Life

Time may indeed alter one's appearance and physique, but it cannot diminish one's fervor and passion for life.

Grandma Lai used to work on various construction projects when she was young. From boiling cement to laying bricks, nothing was too difficult to her. She is 90 years old now, but she proudly tells the volunteers that about ten years ago, she collected leftover floor tiles from different places and carried them home one by one, then painstakingly pieced them together on the floor. Despite variations in thickness and size, and without cement to secure them, Grandma Lai once again used her skilled hands to neatly re-tile the floor of her home.

Grandma Lai didn't have many desires, but she showed great excitement when suggested to go for a 'good meal'. Therefore, the volunteers found a restaurant with a panoramic view of Victoria Harbour, where they had exquisite dim sum, hoping to create happy memories for her. Throughout the gathering, Grandma Lai not only shared memories of her job, but also her daily life. Amazing to know that besides tiling the floor, she also replaced the toilet seat. Her ability to maintain a healthy body at an advanced age is attributed to her optimistic and resilient character, as well as her fervor and passion for life.





Adding a Splash of Color to Your Life

A few years ago, Uncle Chan's daughter fell ill, and both himself and his wife have been taking care of her since then. However, Uncle Chan has mobility challenges due to diabetes and he is relying on a wheelchair for his daily activities now.

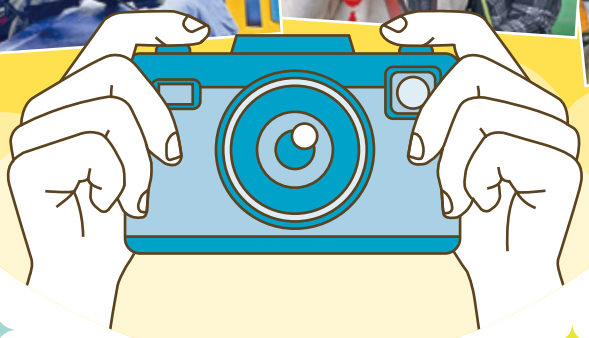
In his younger years, Uncle Chan had worked in a garment factory and the government logistics department. During retirement, he used to play mahjong with neighbors in his spare time or participate in activities at the community center, until his daughter fell ill. His wish is to regain health condition for both his daughter and himself, so that he can meet relatives and enjoy family gatherings once again.

Several volunteers arranged buffet lunch with Uncle Chan, where they indulged in a variety of cuisines while listening to Uncle's sharing of his daily life. The sumptuous lunch left Uncle Chan feeling content and delightful to engage in casual conversation with the volunteers. He was encouraged to participate in the community center activities again to rebuild his social life.



'Fulfill a Wish' Program

This year, a total of 49 elders participated in the 'Fulfill a Wish' Program. Special thanks to the volunteers who had dedicated extra time and effort to bring joy to the elders. One of the participants was even 101 years old! The wishes of these elderly might seem simple and easy, such as meeting family and friends, visiting Sai Kung or Tsim Sha Tsui for leisure, or enjoying a good meal. However, it becomes apparent that these seemingly simple wishes are difficult to achieve by themselves, as they may have limited mobility, difficulty on food chewing due to dental issues, or are suffering from vision or physical impairments.



Small Gestures with Great Meaning

Grandma Shek, an 82-year-old Indonesia-born-Chinese who grew up in Mainland China, used to be a teacher at the secondary schools in Guangxi and Chongqing, but moved to Hong Kong many years ago. She rarely leaves her residence since living alone and longs for someone to accompany her to go on outings. She was excited when she learned from the volunteers about the Palace Museum visit. Upon seeing the many unearthed porcelain artifacts from the Song Dynasty and relics from the Warring States period, it stirred many memories of her time as a teacher. She took many photos and sent them to her son who was living in Shanghai. Although the volunteers were just companions, they also felt encouraged and happy to have had such a meaningful experience with Grandma Shek.





My Small Step is a Big Step to the Elderly

Despite being visually impaired due to eye disease, Grandma Au does not let this discourage her. Instead, she remains optimistic and accepts the fact. She always keeps up with the latest news, enjoys traveling with friends, and explores new things. Living in a relatively distant area, she was eager to visit Tseung Kwan O. So, the volunteers arranged a Tseung Kwan O exploration trip for her. In fact, this trip was just a 'scouting visit', as Grandma Au hoped to understand the details so that she could bring her friends to this area for leisure in the future.



Starting with picking up Grandma Au, the volunteers patiently explained the route and the environment along the way, guiding and accompanying her on how to use public transportation and pointing out important spots throughout the whole journey.

Although she couldn't see, she could vividly sense every corner of each place they had visited, including the Tseung Kwan O waterfront, shopping malls, restaurants, and cafes, all thanks to the volunteers' descriptions.

Grandma Au was very grateful for the volunteers to arrange such a tour. Although she could manage her daily life and even go grocery shopping on her own, and the neighbours often helped her, reaching a distant and unfamiliar place like this still required some assistance of others.



What a Precious Meal

Buffet is a popular choice as we can enjoy a variety of delicious foods and choose our favorite dishes. Many elderly also enjoy buffet meals, but for the low-income, spending a few hundred dollars on a meal is simply too extravagant, making it an unattainable luxury.

Both Grandma Fung and Grandma Chan live alone, and due to their limited mobility, they have no one to take them to enjoy buffet, and they also find it difficult to afford it. When the volunteers took them to a buffet meal, their inner joy was clearly evident on their faces.

Even when meeting them later, they both expressed with enthusiasm how much they had enjoyed the buffet meal. Dining at a buffet allowed them to savor their food slowly, engage in conversation, and experience a wide range of both Chinese and Western cuisines at once.



Neighbourhood Watch: Caring for Each Other

Uncle and Grandma Cheng are close neighbours of Grandma Yip. The couple relies on wheelchairs, and Grandma Yip often provides help to them, embodying the spirit of neighbourly love and mutual assistance. They longed to visit Tsim Sha Tsui and see how the area had changed since their last visit. Finally, the volunteers took a group of five elders for a leisurely stroll along the Avenue of Stars and treated them to a buffet lunch.

Grandma Yip and another elder in this group, Grandma Chan, have recently experienced the loss of their husbands. Through this outdoor activity, they become friends and plan to attend community center activities together.





Witnessing Miracles Everywhere



Visiting the Elders Living Alone or with Spouse



This year, HOPE *worldwide* deployed a total of 1,664 volunteers to visit the elders who lived alone or with spouse in the public housing estates across Hong Kong, bringing them gift bags, engaging in conversations, and caring for their needs. They conveyed love, care, and warmth to every elder. Some volunteer teams even took the initiative to bring the elders to the countryside, creating joyful moments for them.



Bringing Joy to the Residents of Elderly Residential Care Homes



Another group of volunteers was divided into two teams, each visit an elderly residential care home to entertain the residents with various performances, handicraft workshops, games, spring couplets, lion dances, and other festive activities. Some volunteers even dressed up as the God of Wealth to distribute red packets. Over 150 elderly residents from the two residential care homes participated in the activity, spending a delightful afternoon together.



HOPE worldwide's First Elderly Day Care Center Now in Service



Our organisation had indeed faced numerous challenges during the pandemic over the past few years. However, we are grateful for the continuous support from various volunteers and partners, enabling us to expand new services. In addition to opening the third dental center in the Prince Edward district, the first Elderly Exercise and Day Care Center in the same district has recently been approved for operation by the Social Welfare Department, providing day care services for the elderly residents in this area. This center also offers home-based services, including meal delivery, accompanying medical appointments, rehabilitation therapy, nursing services, personal care, home cleaning, and speech therapy. The elders can apply for these caring services by presenting the 'Community Care Service Voucher'.



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