

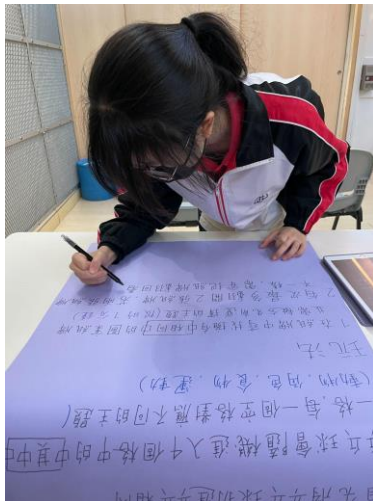
4A Summer Wong

As summer holidays are approaching, our schedules are slowly filling up, and most of us may find our days tied-up by extra classes and tutorial school lessons. Well, all the more reason to contribute the rest of our invaluable free time to meaningful and enjoyable activities! Volunteering is a great way to relax and unwind, as well as a chance to connect with the community. In February, I had the opportunity to experience this first-hand during the Form Four social service activity.

Tasked with designing and setting up game booths for a local community centre, we were absolutely giddy with the prospect of getting to play with kindergarteners and primary school kids, although we did not look forward to the tedious planning and brainstorming process. However, the planning process was much more fruitful and satisfying than we would have thought. Working together as a class allowed us to bond and learn to work together as a team rather than individuals each doing their own thing. The



shared goal of creating a fun event for the children brought us an equally gratifying experience.



We were given a few Class Teacher Period slots to 'strategize' and during that time, we drew up lists of materials we needed, and mapped out our ideas for the games. And when the time came for us to set up our booths, some classmates even brought extra snacks and candy from home as a treat for the kids. And when we finished up our work, we had extra time to have lots of fun before welcoming our first guests. All-in-all, the experience was rewarding and toned our creative thinking skills.

To say the social service activity was tiring would be an understatement. Nonetheless, the activity will always remain a core event of my middle school years. From the vibrantly (and chaotically) high atmosphere that is created during class trip coach rides, to the focused, serious faces that my classmates put on to get the job done, the whole experience was unforgettable.



Needless to say, volunteering also benefits others in the community, so don't hesitate to invite some friends to join you for some fun volunteering activities. There are plenty of student volunteer programmes in Hong Kong. Some local non-profit NGOs specifically provide volunteer opportunities to students, you can simply look up their lists of available volunteer positions online. By volunteering your time to charities to organisations like Red Cross and Make-A-Wish, you're also expanding your portfolio for university in terms of Other Learning Experiences (OLE). There are just so many benefits to participating in volunteering programmes, everyone should give it a go.



4B Dorothy Chan

Have you ever helped somebody? I am going to share with you the volunteering experience we had with the elderly.

Last week, we had a precious opportunity to serve the elderly and make a difference in the community. We were given the chance to carry out activities with the elderly all by ourselves, which means we planned the activities, prepared the materials and guided the seniors to do it. We were so nervous at first because we thought it can be hard for us to communicate. We also did not have a lot of experience interacting with the elderly in our daily lives.

However, it was unexpected that the elderly actually enjoyed the activities that we prepared. On that day, half of the class painted the DIY Easter eggs with the elderly. Most of the elderly people have not celebrated Easter before, so they all find the activity interesting and new. When we started painting the eggs, we could see the spark in their eyes and how they were interested in the activities. We shared with them our drawings and they showed us theirs, which was a joyful experience. When we were painting, some of the active participants were even sharing with us their life stories and feelings. We had a long chat about our school life and our friends and families. The activity really allowed us to open up our hearts and narrow the gap between the seniors and the juniors. At the end of the day, the time together was short but it felt like we have had some connections already.

The voluntary service has definitely broadened our horizons. At the beginning we were all very nervous and scared as we did not have any experience interacting with them. However, once we get to know them more, we realized they were all very kind and caring. Although it is called the 'service', both the elderly and I benefited from the activities. We have established a sense of connectedness and a sense of achievement after making the Easter eggs together. I can never forget the smile they had on their faces after the visit. I hope you are going to join the volunteering service one day and feel as rewarding as I do.



4C Judy Yam

I am here today to talk about how to make an impact in my own way with my voluntary service experience. Let me share my thought about it with you all.

Last week, my class took part in a visit to the elderly centre organized by the school. I was nervous at first since I did not know how to get along with the elderly and I was afraid that I didn't know how to communicate with them. They might be very passive or boring. But to my surprise, they were all very energetic and were eager to talk to us. We sang songs, played games and had lots of fun.

I was so glad to see them being so active and putting on great smiles on their faces during the visit. What impresses me most are two old ladies. They were mother and daughter. The daughter was taking care of her mom who was unable to walk due to sickness. The daughter who was also quite old told me that she would do anything for her mom. Even though the daughter herself was already old, she still spared no effort in taking care of her mother, accompanying her and cheering her up. This makes me think of my own mother and I wanted to give her anything she needs in the future. I will never take her love and care for granted but appreciate what my mom and dad did for me. At the end of the service, the elderly told us that they had a lot of fun and wanted us to visit them again in the future. I think we have already built a strong bond and connection with each other.



It was such a fruitful visit and I did try to get out of the comfort zone to do something new and challenging in my life. It was my first time talking to strangers and organizing activities for the elderly. I do learn a lot from this experience. I am grateful for what I have and will never take things for granted. Also, I learn to cherish all the little things that happens in life. To teenagers like me, it is not easy to always bear this in mind but I would love to try.



What are you waiting for? Sign up for the next volunteer work! You surely will learn a lot from this experience and I hope to see you all participating in the next social service. It feels really great to lend a helping hand to the needy. Trust me, this meaningful volunteering service is definitely worth your while and you will regret it if you don't have this experience.



4D Sydney Chan

Has anyone ever participated in voluntary work before? I would like to share with you all my recent experience of visiting an elderly home.

As a part of society, I feel obligated to assist people in need. Therefore, I had decided to start my mission with visiting the home of the elderly. I did not arrive there empty-handed. Debriefing sessions were given by the instructors. We were assigned duties, mine being the caretaker, which revolved around checking up on the elderly with poor health. With rules we had to follow presented, we were finally set to set foot into the center.

I had always imagined what the interior of an elderly home was like. Did it look as cramped as some movies portrayed? To my surprise, it was quite spacious. A few seniors were seated at the atrium of the house, eyes fixated on the television plastered on the wall, mouths appearing occasionally when the nurses nudged them with a spoonful of porridge. Prying my eyes away from them, I headed in the direction of the sick room.

I chit-chatted with countless seniors, ranging from seniors in their early 60s to even seniors in their late 90s. Many of them were in critical condition. I could see their life slowly ebbing away in their eyes. I had to mentally comfort myself before confronting them. However, once I had the chance to speak to them, I couldn't help but feel the joyfulness in their words. The way they shared their life stories was both entertaining and tragic. My heart ached when not just one but 7 out of 10 seniors I talked to said that they were abandoned by their family members.

Sad stories only made up a small percentage of our conversation. The elderly are like an old sword, rusty and used on the outside, shiny and full of experiences on the inside. They shared their adventures with enthusiasm similar to how a little child would act handing his artwork to his

parents - with proudness. One of them had said life is not always sunshine and rainbows. She pointed at both her broken legs and said "We overcome obstacles but don't let that stop you. What kills us makes us stronger." My cheeks were drenched with tears upon hearing her words.

After this volunteering work, my perspective towards elderly people has changed. They always hold up a strong shield that no one can penetrate, which they can conceal their true emotions. All the seniors I socialized with on that day thanked me for simply being there and listening attentively. They taught me valuable lessons such as patience, as some of them had hearing issues, kindness, as they had treated me with nothing but hospitality throughout my stay, and mental strength, as they believed in themselves. I have learned a lot from this experience and I am sure you will too! Please don't hesitate to take part in volunteer work."

