

Meaningful, Crucial And Irreplaceable Work
– Voluntary Work
(by Woo Ho Yan F.6A)

“Being a volunteer? No way. I’ve a hectic schedule. I’ve just completed zillion tons of past paper. It’s monotonous and tedious to do voluntary work after completing them. Find someone else!” I believe that some of you are familiar with the aforementioned response. I have also heard of them countless times. In recent years, the young generation needs to put every endeavour to prepare for the exam-oriented education challenges. Nevertheless, is it a plausible and rational reason for students to neglect their civic responsibilities to lend a helping hand to the need in society? Absolutely not! Youth volunteers play a crucial role in creating a harmonious and caring society. Youth volunteers can also gain multitudinous benefits through participating in such fruitful and irreplaceable social services.

Firstly, being a youth volunteer can let the young generation understand the social environment of Hong Kong, elevating the priority of helping each other and thus contributing to the society. As all of us know, Hong Kong is a prosperous and international city. The living standard of citizens has risen at an unprecedented rate. Nonetheless, behind such a glamorous and splendid surface, who will imagine the poor living environment of tenants in subdivided flats? Who will notice some workers still working diligently from dawn to dusk to make ends meet? Who will care about the impoverished urban dwellers who live under the breadline? Being a youth volunteer, an adolescent can gain a valuable chance to offer help to others and gain a more thorough understanding about the plight of the underprivileged. I once had a similar experience. I became a volunteer of a non-profit food bank to collect edible food from restaurants, supermarkets

and hotels. I then had to allocate it to the needy. I was appalled and shocked that tons of mouth-watering and stunning cuisines became leftovers after the event. Before participating in this campaign, I could never imagine that the food waste issue is so serious and terrifying. It also let me reflect on my own eating habits. I used to leave a huge amount of food on the plate just because I was going on a diet, without noticing that there were still numerous people in the territory who could have barely enough to eat. The conversation with one of the recipients also let me realise that we should not take food for granted. The moral value I have gained is much more significant than the theoretical knowledge from the textbooks. Being youth volunteers can cultivate your moral values and make you learn to be grateful to what you have in daily lives.

Besides, young people can learn a wide variety of skills doing voluntary work which is extremely beneficial in getting a good boost in terms of their career, such as handling interpersonal relationships. One of the most conspicuous benefits must be improving communication skills. I still remember the first time for me to be a volunteer. I was required to deliver some daily necessities to the elderly living alone in subdivided flats or caged homes. I was so nervous and had thousands of butterflies in my stomach since I was shy and worried about not being able to find a right topic to talk with the elderly. Nevertheless, during each visit, my stress had been relieved since the elderly were so friendly. Gradually, I felt free to chat with them and send them the best regards without hesitation. Apart from the sense of achievement and satisfaction I have gained, my communication skills were also greatly enhanced. I have learnt to listen to the elderly patiently and speak to them loudly since some of them may have hearing problems. Surprisingly, I have found out that even the generation gap can be eliminated. I have also gained enough confidence to speak in order to create a trustful and harmonious atmosphere. All these benefit significantly the youngsters

who may have low self-esteem and delusion for grandeur.

Being youth volunteers can bring numerous benefits to the young generation. It is a pity that the local charities face difficulties in trying to attract young volunteers.

The barriers to voluntary work are related to the emotional and moral values of the young generation. As the education system in Hong Kong is exam-oriented and focuses on academic qualifications, some youngsters only want to excel academically, ignoring their civic responsibilities and the significance of altruism and kindness. I believe some of you just believe that doing voluntary work is tedious, meaningless and time-consuming. Even though social services can be part of their learning experience, their main concern is still studying and examination results.

Moreover, the limited budget also entrammels the charities to attract the young generation. Since many of the food banks and charities are non-profit, their budget mainly relies on the donations from the general public and government funding. The penny which can be used is thus limited. As a result, they may not have enough resources to promote and publicise the voluntary work.

I believe that all of you have the enthusiasm to contribute to the society. The spirit of generosity can overcome the difficulties the charities are facing, can't it? Under no circumstances should we ignore those in need. What are you waiting for? Why can't you be a youth volunteer to create a caring and joyful society?