

Hope of the City / Annual Report 2023/2024

Strengthening Ties





LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Our Vision

To see Hong Kong free of poverty, where all people are known, loved and fulfilling their potential.

Our Mission

To unite efforts in bringing meaningful transformation to communities impacted by poverty.

Board Members

Agnes Tai: Director, Great Glory Investment Corporation

Brett Hilliard: Senior Pastor, Island ECC

Brian Kusunoki: Co-Founder, Hope of the City

Charles Chu: Solicitor, Charles Chu and Kenneth Sit Solicitors

Rick Bates: Executive Pastor, Island ECC

Strengthening Ties

Stepping out of an MTR station one day, I heard a voice behind me call out “Haau Jeong” – Principal!”; it was one of the women from Hope of the City’s first season of ‘Mommies Learn English’ classes. When we first met some years before, she would not have had the courage to call out to me in that way or to stop in the street to ask about how I was and how my wife, her English teacher, was doing. Now, she told me with some satisfaction, she was on her way to work. It was a delight to hear the self-assurance in her voice as she shared a brief life update. She had come a long way.

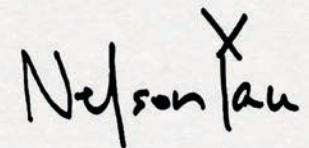
Hope of the City’s work in Sham Shui Po aims to bring about exactly this kind of life transformation. Our presence in the community has resulted in a wide and varied collection of stories from moms, kids, seniors and former street sleepers who have been transformed from what they once were; their growth reflecting a new self esteem, confidence and hope for the future.

Hope of the City has not achieved such an impact alone: more and more, we are convinced of the importance of shared strengths. Building strong and resilient relationships requires binding together many hearts, tying our aims tightly to the collective resources and passionate spirits of our partners, local non-profits, volunteers, and beneficiaries.

With the strong scaffolding of shared aspirations and freely-offered talents, those whose lives have been touched, beneficiaries and volunteers alike, are returning to touch others, to maintain the momentum of transformation.

After 10 years leading our brilliant team at Hope of the City, the time has come for me to step aside and pass the baton to Hope’s new director, Kevin Lu.

My time at Hope has been personally impactful and joyful, and I leave with so much gratitude for every moment spent in service to a community and city so dear to my heart. I also carry with me complete confidence that the mission of Hope to transform lives and foment renewal will continue unabated under the guidance of Hope’s Board, bringing blessing where there is need and light where there is darkness.



Nelson Yau
Executive Director



Will Cheung's story

Will's journey with children with special educational needs is a testament to the power of relationships. When he found himself between jobs in November 2023, Will began volunteering with Hope of the City, offering Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) therapy training to children. His motivation was deeply personal: as a father of a son with special educational needs, Will had experienced both the struggles and breakthroughs that such a journey brings. Through his own ABA training and active involvement in his son's school community, he discovered how essential relationship-building is for meaningful learning and progress.

At Hope Centre, Will met regularly with children, tailoring each lesson to their individual needs. One bright and inquisitive nine-year-old boy, diagnosed with severe ADHD, found it nearly impossible to sit still, focus for any length of time, or control impulsive outbursts. Will, instead of insisting on rigid discipline, designed interactive games

with clear rules and time limits that encouraged self-control and engagement. Will introduced practical strategies such as "hands in pockets" to calm down or "raise your hand" to manage group discussions, which steadily improved the boy's behavior. As a result outbursts became less frequent and tasks were completed with fewer reminders. These changes were rooted in trust, patience, and respect nurtured in their relationship.

Will knew that progress needed to extend beyond therapy sessions. After every lesson, he met with parents, sharing feedback and techniques so families could reinforce positive behaviours at home. This partnership further strengthened the child's support network, ensuring consistency and understanding.

Will's commitment also reached into the broader community. Recognising the importance of both therapy and social interaction, he encouraged his students to join Hope of the City's weekly Saturday English classes, launched in partnership with Mongkok Baptist Church. The class

welcomed children with and without special educational needs, integrating language learning with values of empathy and inclusion.

Some journeys required even deeper patience. One of his students, a six-year-old boy suffering from severe separation anxiety, refused to join class on his first day and cried until it ended. Rather than give up, Will patiently accompanied him week after week, offering reassurance and steadfast support. Gradually, the child's anxiety eased, and he adapted to the new environment, gaining confidence with each session.

Through every story, Will's belief in every child's potential combined with his focus on strengthening ties between children, families, and the community, turned obstacles into opportunities and fostered hope where there was once uncertainty.

- *Provided 381 weekly one-on-one or small group tutoring sessions to 31 primary and 13 secondary students by 19 dedicated volunteers.*
- *Sponsored 215 classes for 98 students with paid tutors.*
- *Sponsored 18 SEN training sessions and assessments for 43 children and their parents.*



Porter & Priscilla's story



Towards the end of the summer of 2024, Porter shared, “I decided to take the coffee and dessert foundation diploma.” This statement marked the first clear response we had ever heard from him since our initial quiet encounter. The beginning of the summer had been a most confusing time following the DSE public exam which determined the opportunities he might have for higher education.

When he first arrived at the center, he was a shy, anxious young man who often tagged along with friends who had been introduced to coffee at Hope Centre. Later, he and his group of three friends participated in our mentorship program, which we co-run with our partner, YWCA. The social worker overseeing the youth team and a coffee enthusiast, took the opportunity to support Porter's personal and social growth.

Porter's passion for coffee ignited when he joined the introductory barista class at Alternative Café. Here, he was exposed to the café barista environment and received guidance from professional trainers who were also practicing baristas. Beyond the classes, the social worker organized weekly sessions, using his expertise in expressive art therapy, to assist Porter in his journey of self-discovery and confidence-building.

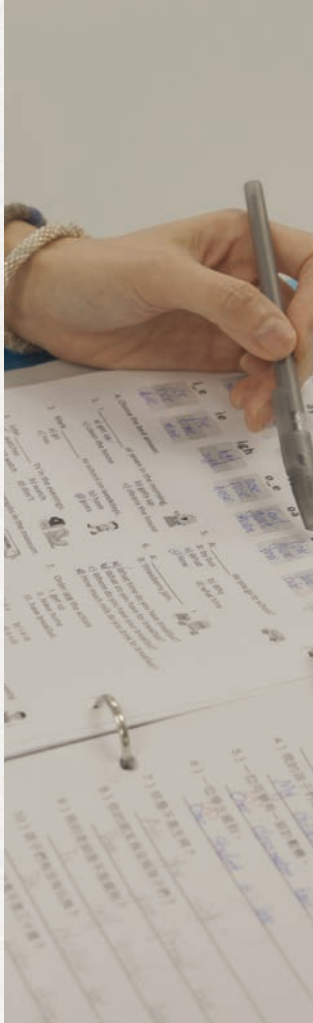
A sense of being part of a community emerged as Porter learned to seek help from his mentor, Priscilla, who had been assigned to him as the volunteer mentor in the mentorship program. Priscilla, who has experience in the coffee and food & beverage industry and who is a certified counselor recognised Porter's growing interest in coffee. After

the mentorship program, Porter was invited to join a coffee internship, where he dedicated 20 hours per week to training for two months. Alongside ten other interns, he benefited from Priscilla's guidance and volunteered at YWCA, leading to significant growth in his confidence.

Direction became clear for Porter as he began applying for jobs and attending interviews. In his journey of seeking, he bravely embraced the experience as valuable exploration for his future. The friendships and mentorship continue to thrive under strong ties.

- *Provided nearly 4,300 hours of youth empowerment activities including coffee making, 3D modeling, music production, dancing etc. to 79 youth with 20 mentors.*
- *A youth committee was established by 7 volunteer mentors and local partners to commit two years in finding ways to support the local youth in the neighbourhood.*

Wells & Angela's story



Our student, Wells, faced immense challenges when her son, Jayco, was diagnosed with autism at just 18 months old. As Jayco grew, his behaviour became increasingly difficult to manage. Overwhelmed by his constant crying, screaming, and outbursts, Wells felt isolated and hopeless, and had no choice but to keep Jayco at home all the time. Her heart was heavy until she joined our Mommies Learning English (MLE) class.

There, she met Angela, a teacher assistant volunteer with personal experience and knowledge in parenting children with special educational needs (SEN). Angela, driven by a passion to serve SEN families, had dedicated herself to use what she had learnt to support and bless those with limited resources, and this proved invaluable to Wells.

Angela is approachable, friendly, and supportive and, despite a demanding schedule, she consistently made time after class to connect with Wells as a friend. Their conversations spanned a range of topics, from English learning

and behaviour management for SEN children, to SEN therapy and medication, family relationships, biblical messages, faith, and the daily challenges Wells faced. Wells and Angela shared a deeper connection, having both lost their fathers at a young age and both raising children with SEN.

"At first, I simply wanted to improve my English writing and speaking skills in the Mommies Learning English class to get a better job in the future. But through this course, I gained much more."

One time, when Jayco suffered an eye infection, his distress led to distraught behaviour. Angela advised Wells to hold Jayco close, reassuring him that she understood his pain and discomfort, and to continue hugging him until he calmed down. This allowed Jayco to articulate his symptoms clearly, enabling Wells to provide the doctor with accurate information for a swift diagnosis and recovery. Knowing Angela was there to help whenever issues arose gave Wells a sense of security and ease.



Hope of the City believes that, like scaffolding supporting a strong structure, interweaving relationships and fostering community is essential to anchoring and stabilizing families, making them resilient in the face of life's challenges. The assistance and support given to Wells and Jayco by Angela through Hope of the City, resulted in significant progress for Jayco, gradual integration into a local school and, most wonderfully, a strengthened relationship between Wells and her husband.

- *Trained 28 volunteers to teach 54 ladies in our weekly mommies Learn English classes, providing 170 in-person lessons at Hope Centre.*
- *Provided 24 parenting classes, emotional support groups and family bond events to 36 women.*

KK Ho's story



KK had always believed in the transformative power of human connection. For nearly 20 years, he dedicated his life to serving through one of our partners, Christian Concern for Homeless Association (CCHA), as a social worker focused on helping underprivileged middle-aged to senior men regain a sense of stability and belonging. These were men, overlooked by society, but who had weathered the storms of unemployment, homelessness, or fractured relationships. KK's role was simple yet profound: to create a space where they could rediscover hope in life.

However, even a seasoned professional like KK was not immune to burnout. "Gathering a group of men is already difficult, let alone shepherding them," KK confessed. "I often find myself in a state of loneliness and discouragement."

Everything changed when KK attended a breakfast meeting at Hope Centre, where volunteers and frontline workers gathered to address the question: How can we better support the men in the neighborhood? That conversation became the turning point: Hope of the City began recruiting volunteers

to support KK's men's group, pairing these men with volunteers who offered listening ears, companionship, and sometimes, a much-needed spark of inspiration. The new volunteers were a diverse mix, business owners, managers, and retirees, all eager to help. Their sincerity reignited something in KK. Miraculously, as volunteers from Hope began to step forward, the number of men attending the group also grew.

"It turns out men can enjoy interacting with each other so much! Some have even moved out of Sham Shui Po but still come back!" KK shared. "Each time, we talk so long we don't want to leave! We all understand how fragile the lives of grassroots men can be, but I'm utterly amazed at how volunteers from outside the neighborhood have stepped up to watch over these men so well."

Today, KK leads the program with renewed energy, supported by a dedicated team of volunteers who share his vision to shepherd these men. "I am immensely grateful that men can walk together despite where they are at," KK reflected. "I believe God created men in His image, enabling us to restore each other even in our failures. Ultimately, we can be blessings to one another again."

- *Over the course of 26 meetups every other week between six volunteer leaders and 23 men from CCHA, emotional and medical support were shared in a brotherly community.*
- *Together with CCHA, 33 volunteers regularly visited the homeless community in Tung Chau Park for 31 weeks.*

Terri Chan's story



Terri's journey with Hope of the City began in 2015, when she joined the Ngau Tau Kok Monthly Elderly Home Visit as a regular volunteer. What started as a simple commitment to visit two elderly households, Au Yeung por por, who lives alone, and the couple Chan por por and Li gong gong, soon blossomed into something far deeper.

Month after month, Terri's visits became more than just a routine, weaving another thread in the fabric of friendship. Over the years, both Terri and the elderly she visited began to look forward to their monthly catch-ups, not so much as volunteers and recipients, but as friends who genuinely cared for each other. The connection grew so strong that even Terri's family got involved asking when she would be visiting "por-por" and preparing small gifts for her to bring. The bond extended beyond Terri and the elderly, reaching into both their families and weaving a tapestry of shared warmth and care.

Terri's dedication didn't end with home visits. In 2020, she began teaching other volunteers how to write Chinese New Year blessings in calligraphy, sharing both her skills and her encouragement. By March 2022, Terri joined the Ngau Tau Kok Core Team, driven by the belief that relationships between volunteers and with the elderly, are the heartbeat of service. Since then, she has worked to foster unity, especially after the pandemic disrupted regular visits and scattered volunteers' schedules.

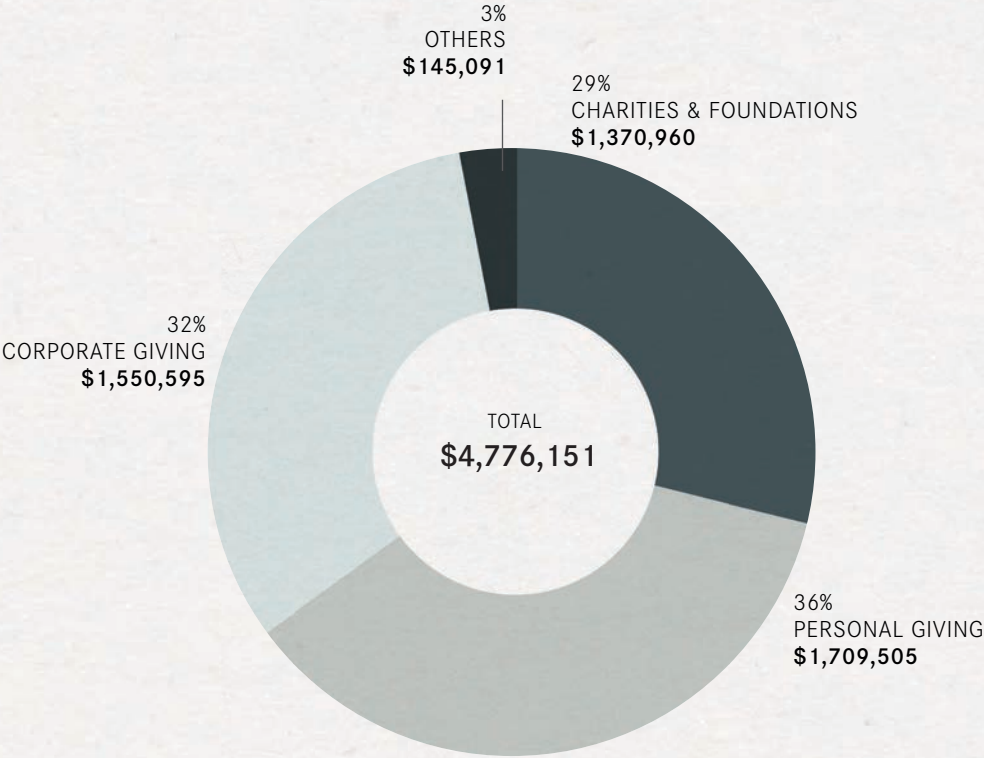
"Being a part of the core team has been fruitful as we share not only ways to better address the needs of the elderly, but also form a sisterhood as we gather monthly to catch up and plan ahead for training and briefings. It's encouraging to see how God uses the gifts and strengths of different members to bless the elderly. Despite the economic downturn, we have seen God's timely provision and people's generosity, reflecting His heart."



Terri's journey has not been without challenges. In 2023-2024, she walked alongside Chan por por through family conflicts and the eventual passing of Li gong gong. With guidance from a social worker at Kwun Tong Methodist Social Services, Terri learned to be empathetic without overstepping, respecting boundaries whilst assuring por por of her presence. Terri helped Chan por por release bitterness and disappointment through prayer, and witnessed her draw closer to God, finding comfort and peace even in grief.

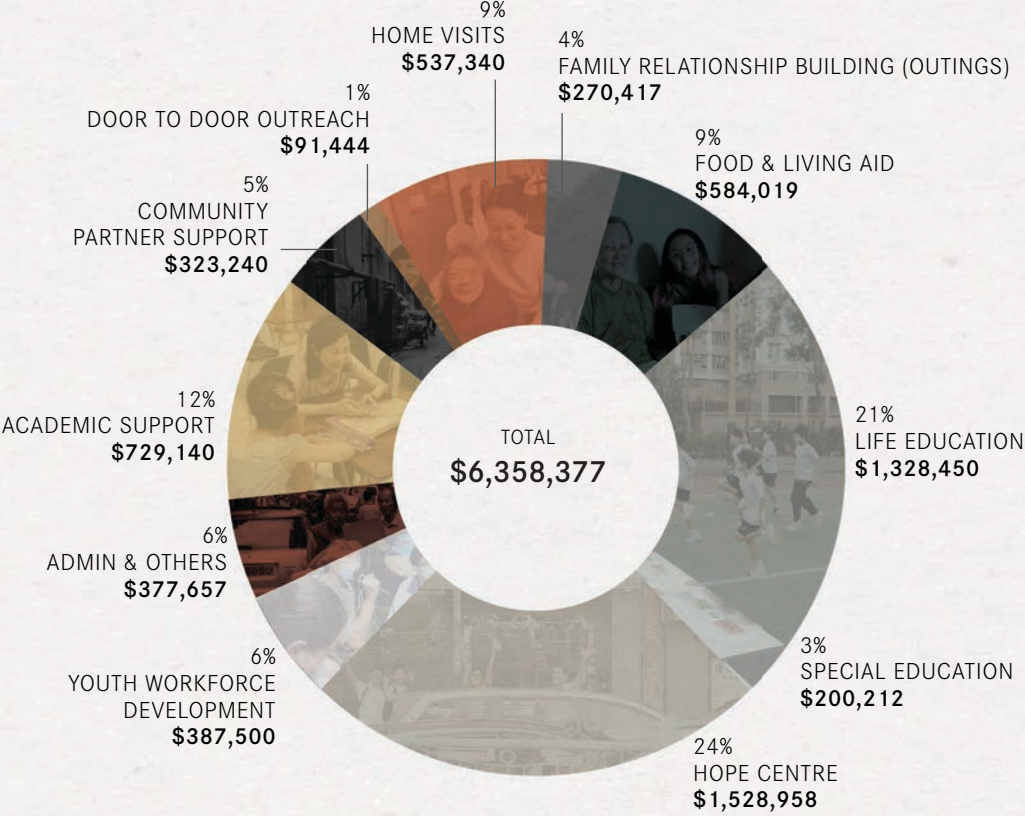
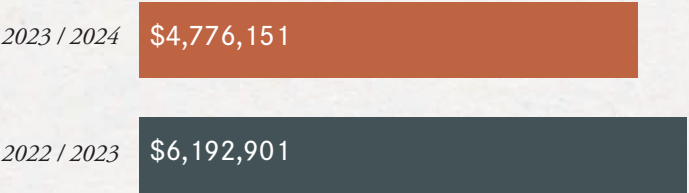
Terri's story is a powerful reminder that investing in relationships is not just an individual work, but a communal effort.

- For thirteen consecutive years, 34 volunteers continue to build relationships with the 17 elderly living alone in Shek Kip Mei.
- A total of 66 regular volunteers paid monthly visits to 58 elderly living in the Ngau Tau Kok area.
- Partnered with Hong Kong Family Welfare Society, 9 volunteers interviewed 11 elderly through twelve workshops to create a Life Stories Booklet.



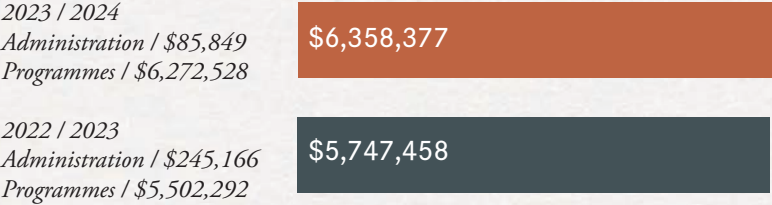
SOURCE OF INCOME

INCOME



PROGRAMME EXPENSES
Projects and Sponsorships

EXPENSES
Administration vs Programmes



It has been an absolute honour to work alongside Nelson over the past decade, laying the foundation for all that we are today. During these years, the connections forged in Sham Shui Po between beneficiaries, volunteers, and partners have been like the ties of scaffolding: they hold us together, steady us through challenges, and provide the strength to reach new heights.

In the years ahead, we see not only the opportunity to connect with new partners but also the responsibility to build upon our existing relationships. In an era of financial uncertainty, it is more crucial than ever to serve as a shared resource. Our work goes beyond bridging divides; it is about weaving a resilient network of support that empowers the underprivileged to thrive.

The road ahead will require us to strengthen these ties, deepen our partnerships, and strategically expand our reach. Our progress won't just be measured by what we achieve, but by how well we hold one another up.

Yet, the role of scaffolding is not to take center stage, it is to assist in constructing something greater. Behind this joint effort lies a vision waiting to be revealed: a city where every neighbor in need feels seen, supported, and loved; a city where hope is not just a word but a tangible presence; a city built to endure, even when the scaffolding is no longer needed.

To everyone who has been part of this journey, thank you for trusting us to carry this mission forward. Let's keep building together.

*DONATE
to hope*

Your financial giving enables Hope of the City to support low-income households through additional educational resources and support services. We are a registered charity in Hong Kong and all donations are fully tax-deductible.* DIY fundraising ideas and corporate gift matching are other ways to support our work.

For more information, please visit:

hopeofthecity.com/donate

*VOLUNTEER
your time*

Hope of the City seeks volunteers who would like to support those in need. Our model is primarily relationship focused, so the growth of our outreach is dependent on the efforts of volunteers.

Updated serving opportunities can be found online at:

hopeofthecity.com/volunteer

*PARTNER
with us*

Hope of the City is always on the lookout for corporations who are willing to donate skills and expertise to serve the disadvantaged in Hong Kong. We also welcome referrals of local non-profits who are currently providing social services and may be interested in partnership.

Please email info@hopeofthecity.com with enquiries or referrals.

China Holiness College

Christian Church of Mustard Seed

Christian Concern for the Homeless Association

Christian Evangelical Zion Church

Evangelical Yan Kei Church

Feeding Hong Kong

Garden Estate Baptist Church

Grace Free Methodist Church

Hong Kong Church Network for the Poor

Hong Kong Family Welfare Society

Hong Kong Tsz Kwong Bethel Church

J-Life Community Centre

Kwun Tong Methodist Social Services

Mongkok Baptist Church

Po Leung Kuk (Headquarters Children's Section)

Social Work Dream Community Development Centre

St. James' Settlement (Kowloon Kindness Centre)

The Hub Hong Kong

United Christian College

YWCA (Sham Shui Po Integrated Social Service Centre)



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