

Volunteer Movement yields encouraging results over past 20 years

The Chief Secretary for Administration and Volunteer-in-Chief, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, said today (December 2) that since the launch of the Volunteer Movement 20 years ago, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) has been encouraging members of the public to participate in voluntary services with a view to establishing a culture of lifelong volunteerism. The Volunteer Movement has yielded encouraging results, with more than 1.3 million volunteers registered in Hong Kong and over 3 200 organisations participating, he noted.

Speaking at the 2018 Hong Kong Volunteer Award Presentation Ceremony organised by the SWD, Mr Cheung said that the Government has always been committed to building a caring and inclusive society. The estimated spending on social welfare in 2018-19 amounts to \$84.2 billion, representing a more than two-fold increase when compared with the figure 10 years ago. The Government has also been actively promoting "Residents-Business-Government-School" collaboration with a view to facilitating the participation of various sectors in volunteer services and cultivating a culture of mutual help and care in the community.

Also addressing the ceremony, the Director of Social Welfare, Ms Carol Yip, said that over the years, the Steering Committee on Promotion of Volunteer Service has been striving to encourage and mobilise individuals and organisations from all walks of life, through various channels, to join volunteer services. She said she was happy to see that the number of registered volunteers and participating organisations in the Volunteer Movement has almost doubled from the figure a decade ago while the number of service hours has also been rising, and that the development of volunteerism has become increasingly creative, sustainable and professional.

Saying that she was proud of volunteers' contributions to the community, Ms Yip expressed gratitude to different sectors of society for supporting the Volunteer Movement, in particular to the Steering Committee on Promotion of Volunteer Service, its four Sub-committees on Promotion, the 11 District Co-ordinating Committees, District Social Welfare Officers and all committee members for their commitment in bringing the movement forward with depth and diversity, which has also helped foster mutual aid and care among people.

She also noted that this year marks the 60th anniversary of the SWD, adding that the department will continue to uphold the "people-oriented" approach and strive to deliver services tailored for the public.

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Volunteer Movement, the SWD and Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) have jointly produced an eight-episode television docudrama series on voluntary work. The TV series, adapting real stories of volunteers, aims to promote the message of "Volunteering – Make a Difference in Life". The officiating guests launched the TV series at the

ceremony today, and some actors performing in the docudrama, together with the Volunteer Movement Ambassador, Stephanie Au, and artiste Jade Kwan, discussed their experiences in volunteer services onstage.

Also at the ceremony, artiste Hins Cheung was appointed as the 2019 Volunteer Movement Star to help further promote the movement.

Today's ceremony, organised by the Steering Committee on Promotion of Volunteer Service, aimed to further promote volunteerism by paying tribute to volunteers, to enhance people's understanding of volunteer services, and to promote a sense of caring and mutual help in the community.

Awards were presented to volunteers from various sectors for their outstanding contributions in the previous year. They included volunteers who have served the community for more than 20 years and the volunteer organisations from public and private groups with the highest number of service hours (see Annex for the list of awardees (Chinese only)).

Also officiating at today's ceremony were the Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Caspar Tsui; the Convenor of the Sub-committee on Promotion and Publicity of Volunteer Service, Mr David Ho; the Convenor of the Sub-committee on Promotion of Corporate Volunteering, Dr Kevin Lau; the Convenor of the Sub-committee on Promotion of Volunteering in Community Organisations, Mr Bevis Leung; and the Acting Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Programmes) of RTHK, Mr Albert Cheung.