**18th July 2023 – Community Action Sutton/Hill House Karen Leung on Volunteer “Flash Mobs”**

**Topic: Volunteer “Flash Mob” for The Big Help Out**

Karen and Richard from CAS talked about the day 60 volunteers came to help tidy the Hill House grounds.

* The volunteers included families and children.
* They were recruited via WhatsApp and then completed a google form to register.
* The connection came through Richard Choi, who is very active in the Sutton HK Community.
* Sutton Council provided the tools.
* They built a bug hotel, cleared 20 bags of rubbish and also dug up some oak saplings to grow as bonsais.
* Key lessons: Be organised and prepare far further in advance than you think you need to.
* Have tasks ready to go including extras if they finish what you had in mind sooner than you’d expect.
* Ensure the volunteers feel appreciated for their individual contributions.

“On May 8th, we embarked on a memorable journey that brought together more than 60 volunteers from Hong Kong for the Big Help Out at Hill House. This day marked a significant achievement, thanks to their collective efforts and dedication.

As a community organization, we wanted to demonstrate the spirit of our local community, and that's when Neil, the Director of UK Welcomes Refugees and Founder of Citizens UK, connected us with Richard Choi, the Community Organizer of Sutton Hongkonger. Their collaboration aimed to encourage Hong Kong residents to actively participate in the Big Help Out and contribute to society. The partnership between our organisations flourished from the very beginning.

Working closely with Richard, we brainstormed ideas to transform Hill House. In the weeks leading up to the event, Richard from the Garden Club shared his expertise and suggested constructing an impressive insect hotel and planting new saplings to enhance the significance of the occasion. Their invaluable support added depth to the overall experience.

Finding volunteers can be a challenge, but we were fortunate to have a strong community network through Sutton Hongkonger and passionate individuals eager to make a difference. Through conversations and social media, we spread the word about the Big Help Out, attracting people from diverse backgrounds who were eager to lend a helping hand.

Organizing a large-scale volunteer event necessitates careful planning and coordination. We reached out to local authorities, including Sutton Council, who generously provided us with tools and bags to support our efforts. We utilized various communication channels to keep everyone informed and engaged, providing clear instructions and safety guidelines to ensure a secure volunteering experience.

Significant progress was made in cleaning and tidying the grounds of Hill House. Volunteers worked in harmony, constructing an impressive insect hotel and planting saplings. It was a day of collective action, where individuals united for a shared purpose.

If given the chance to do it all over again, we have **a few tips** to share:

* Firstly, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose is crucial.
* By creating a supportive and inclusive environment, we can inspire individuals to contribute their time and effort.
* Secondly, clear communication and organization are key.
* Providing volunteers with precise tasks and instructions ensures a smooth workflow.
* Lastly, expressing gratitude and recognizing the contributions of each volunteer is essential.
* Appreciation goes a long way in building a strong volunteer community.