



Sian surrounded by presents

AND..THAT'S A WRAP

Nicole Slater catches up with Box of Hope Director, Sian Taylor as the charity celebrates its eleventh year

Box of Hope was started in 2008 by Hong Kong expats Nicole Woolhouse and Harriet Cleverly through a desire to teach their own children the joy of giving at Christmas time. As is common in the circle of expat life, Nicole and Harriet moved on to new pastures and in 2016, friend and volunteer, Sian Taylor took the reigns of what had since become a considerable charity operation.

Today, Box of Hope collects and distributes over 30,000 boxes each year. The boxes are packed with gifts by Hong Kong school children, sorted by volunteers and distributed to children in need in Hong Kong, China, Macau, Philippines, Nepal, Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand.

As is the case with those in the business of distributing gifts at Christmas time, Sian barely has time to breathe in December. We

stopped by the packing and distribution centre in late November to find out how things are going. Here, Sian spills the beans.

When the charity began in 2008 we collected 800 boxes, fast forward 10 years to 2018 - we collected a record 35,000 boxes!



Volunteers checking boxes

Of course I'm hoping we'll top that number this year. We spend two weeks every year collecting and checking boxes. We are three days in and so far we've checked and packed over 8,500 boxes.

I became director of Box of Hope three years ago. It's been an incredibly rewarding experience throughout. As my children got older, they were around less and I wanted to spend my spare time in a meaningful way.

My previous career was in event planning so I had some relevant experience and ideas that I could contribute in a very positive way.

As an organisation, we are solely run by volunteers and we always need good people. If you have spare time and energy, we'd love to meet you!

These boxes bring joy and happiness to underprivileged children across Asia. And on the other end of the spectrum, teaching Hong Kong school children the importance of giving has an incredibly positive impact on their wellbeing.

What do I look for in the perfectly packed



box? Something to love - it's heartwarming to open the box and see a soft toy.

Practical items like soap, toothpaste, pens and paper are also incredibly important, particularly in countries like Cambodia and the Philippines.

This year has been a little tricky. The unexpected closure of schools due to protests has meant our collection schedule has been disrupted and volunteers haven't been able to make it into our Central location. Nevertheless, we will push ahead and make sure the job is done!

People often ask what I do for the rest of the year. Actually planning for the coming


Box of Hope takes up most of my year. Luckily, January and February are quieter as after Christmas I tend to collapse in a heap! In March we start planning campaigns and liaising with our sponsors.

At Christmas time I look forward to taking my girls to watch The Nutcracker by Hong Kong Ballet. It's also my favourite time of year weather wise so plenty of hiking in the hills with my dog.

This year, I'm also beyond excited to spend my first Christmas in my new apartment. I'll be outdoors enjoying the sunshine on my roof terrace!

I want to thank the dedicated team at Box of Hope and our volunteers for giving so much of their time to bring this together each year.

Want to get involved?

Sian and her team are always looking for people to volunteer, particularly with box checking. Visit boxofhope.org for more information. 



Sian and her dedicated team