

Charity Focus: Helping animals in Hong Kong

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Many people in Hong Kong do amazing things for others in need through charity work – and that includes needy dogs, cats and other animals! Lifelong Animal Protection Charity is one such organisation. We chat to the founder about its aims and hopes, and find out more about its two centres for dog adoption, cat adoption and more.

Name: Sheila McClelland

Nationality: British

Time in Hong Kong: More than three decades





Where are you from originally and what do you miss about it?

I'm Irish originally, but I've lived in several countries around the world including the US, England, Ghana, Brazil and of course Hong Kong. Ireland was a long time ago so it's just a series of good holiday memories with my relatives. I've lived in Hong Kong longer than I've lived anywhere else, and it's now very much my home.

When did you first come to Hong Kong? What brought you here?

When I left England in the early 1980s, I was on my way to visit Australia. I got as far as Hong Kong and was in love with it as soon as I got off the plane. I felt instantly at home here, and never left – I've still never been to Australia!



Tell us more about the charity and its mission.

Lifelong Animal Protection Charity (LAP) exists to help animals in Hong Kong, and to bring about the conditions whereby every animal has a good home. We are dedicated to improving the lives of HK's animals and we hope to foster compassion and respect for all species.



What's your role there?

The founder and daily volunteer.

Give us an insight into some of the work you do.

I work with a great team of volunteers who turn up every single day to keep LAP running. We have two adoption centres nowadays – one for dogs in Tsuen Wan and the other just for cats in Sai Ying Pun. Daily, we look after the emotional and physical care of the animals and also help



visitors, potential fosters and adopters, as well as dealing with surrenders and people in dire need of help with their animals.

Of course, there is a constant round of cleaning. It's a lot of work, but one look at our residents is more than enough motivation. Once again, LAP is blessed with fantastic volunteers to help bear the load of this.

What do you get out of this work?

It's very fulfilling. Not only do I work with the beautiful innocent animals in need, and really make a difference, but as a volunteer in a fun and highly collaborative organisation, I get to share this passion with many very wonderful people who also believe that animals are entitled to kind and respectful care.

Tell us about some of the organisation's achievements to date.

LAP as a charity came about when I kept finding abandoned, neglected and abused animals, and I wanted to do something to help. One of the first things I was able to do was start a trap, neuter and release campaign on Lamma; this reduced the overwhelming population of homeless and stray kittens to zero.

Over time, more and more people volunteered to help me, and eventually I was able to open LAP's first shelter in Tseun Wan. This was followed by the dedicated Cat Adoption Centre. Since then, with the amazing help from our roster of committed volunteers, and with the donations from great people who want to help animals, we are now able to do a great deal for Hong Kong's companion animals each year. In 2020, for instance, we were able to help well over 1,000 animals.





Is there a particular focus for 2021 and beyond?

COVID continues to affect everyone. We are not immune to its influence, and we have seen animals abandoned or unable to travel as their owners leave Hong Kong. Although these numbers are not as bad as we had initially feared, we are still working hard to deal with the fallout from the pandemic. With support, we can expand our adoption centres, training and Humane Education programme.

Can readers volunteer, contribute or help in some other way?

You can make a difference. It could be physically with the animals or by offering your expertise – the animals rely 100% on volunteers of all sorts. All donations go directly to the care of the animals and their rescue. Some of our residents have been with us for years but we will never give up on them. The highest costs are definitely medical.



For more information on volunteering, adopting or fostering, and financial donations, visit [lap.org.hk](http://www.lap.org.hk) ([http://www.lap.org.hk/](http://www.lap.org.hk)). LAP is always looking for help and support in all areas to ensure animals are safe and in loving homes.

Email: info@lap.org.hk

(<mailto:info@lap.org.hk>) Instagram: @lap.org.hk

Facebook: LAP Lifelong Animal Protection Charity

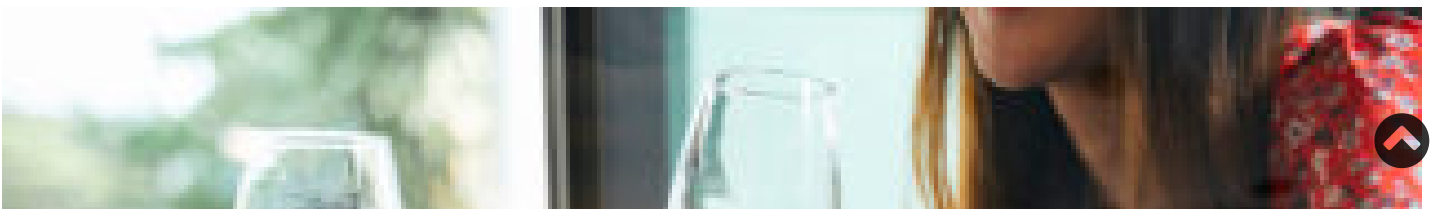
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