

The Volunteer with Your Hair

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Hello everyone. My name is Hoshino Momona. Today I would like to talk to you about a very special kind of volunteer work. First, look at these numbers. This is the number of things needed to make one thing. What do you think it is? This is the number of people required to make one wig. This is the number of children who waiting to get their own wig. And this is the length of hair which can be donated. Have you heard about Hair Donation? Many children in the world lose their hair at a young age due to illnesses or accidents. For children, the loss of hair against their will is very shocking, and some of them find it very hard to live their lives without hair. Hair donation is a way to help these children.

Hair donors need 30 to 50 cm of hair. The cut hair is sent to the organization that manages hair donations. They choose each of them by checking the length, hair quality and color of each hair they receive and make a wig from the hair of about 50 people. Many organizations make the wigs by hand, so creating a wig requires a lot of work. Sadly, however, some people think that hair donation is useless or meaningless. The reason for this is that artificial hair wigs, which look almost the same as real hair, can be purchased for 50,000 yen. However, artificial hair wigs have some weaknesses. They are usually made by machine implantation, which means that the size does not fit the head or the partings are unnatural. In addition, even recently developed artificial hair produces an unnatural sheen when exposed to light, and the naturalness of the hair is inferior to that of human hair wigs. From these points of view, artificial hair wigs do not fully meet the needs of children who have problems.

I have donated my hair four times now. Each time, I donated about 40 cm of my hair, and it took about three years for my hair to grow back to its original length. Actually, growing my hair long was challenging. It was hard to wash and dry my long hair, and even when I tied it up, it was felt heavy. But I didn't give up, despite these problems, thinking that my hair could be useful to someone else. My hair is not long yet, but I would like to grow it longer again so that I can donate it once more in three years.

Volunteering is not just about helping others. Accumulated experiences of contributing to society builds one's self-confidence. I have participated in many volunteer activities besides Hair Donation. For example, I donated 1,000 yen every month for two years. Also I helped with events organized by JICA. And I plan to become a member of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers sent by JICA in the future. These volunteer experiences have made me feel more excited than nervous when speaking in front of a large audience now.

Hair donation, which I talked about today, is one of the many volunteer activities in the world. If any of you would like something to boost your self-confidence, why don't you start doing something you can do?