



## **Mdm Cindy Tan Chai Hon**

*“When we believe tomorrow will be better,  
there is no hardship we cannot bear.  
Hang on to hope, we will get there.”*

### **A Second Chance**

#### *Patience and Persistence Helped Her Daughter Thrive*

As a single parent raising two children, Mdm Cindy Tan Chai Hon worked tirelessly abroad, striving to secure a better future for her children while temporarily entrusting their care to her relatives.

However, a turning point came when her daughter, Valerie, faced a traumatic ordeal at the age of 10. Struggling in silence with hidden trauma, Valerie's life took a distressing turn with a schizophrenia diagnosis in 2007. Admitted to the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) for treatment, Valerie battled hallucinations and withdrew from the world. Overwhelmed with concern and shock, Cindy swiftly returned to Singapore to care for her daughter.

Rebuilding their fractured relationship proved challenging, as Valerie harboured resentment due to her mother's absence. Filled with guilt and determination, Cindy was resolute in bridging the gap in their relationship.

To aid Valerie's recovery, Cindy tirelessly researched her daughter's condition, reached out to organisations and support groups, and eventually joined Caregivers Alliance Limited (CAL). She diligently attended training programmes to learn strategies to manage Valerie's condition and closely monitored Valerie's progress while collaborating with her psychiatrist.

Over time, Cindy's persistence, along with her patience, tenderness and profound love, mended the emotional divide between mother and daughter. With dedicated devotion, Cindy rekindled their bond.

Her unwavering support continued, guiding Valerie until she regained confidence and independence. Valerie now thrives, securing full-time employment at CAL, travelling independently and enjoying nine years free from relapse.

Inspired by her daughter's triumph, Cindy embraced the role of caregiver and volunteer, generously offering her time and expertise to support others who face similar challenges. Through CAL training and sharing sessions, she selflessly gives back to the community, embodying the spirit of compassion, resilience and selflessness.



## **Mdm Evelyn Chng Guek Cheng**

*“Embrace every happening in life and regard suffering as fertilizer for growth.”*

### **Threads of Compassion**

#### *From Three in Her Family to Many More in the Community*

In the tapestry of life, unexpected challenges often thread their way into our stories. For Mdm Evelyn Chng Guek Cheng, one such challenge began when her son, Wayne, was diagnosed with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) at the age of 16, setting off a series of obstacles that tested her resilience and compassion.

Wayne's sudden transformation left the family bewildered and the home in turmoil. His OCD manifested in ways that were difficult to understand, sparking family conflicts and even violent disputes that required police intervention. The strain eventually took its toll on Evelyn's husband, plunging him into a battle with depression.

To make matters more complex, Evelyn's mother was diagnosed with dementia around the same time. This marked the beginning of an arduous caregiving journey that would demand every ounce of her emotional, physical, and mental strength. The frustration and stress at home left Evelyn on the verge of despair, torn between the diverse needs of her loved ones.

Fortunately for Evelyn, her faith became her source of strength and clarity amid the storm of challenges. She realised that to help her son, mother, and husband, she needed a clear mind and unwavering determination.

Evelyn's turning point came when she enrolled in Caregivers-to-Caregivers (C2C) training program offered by the Caregivers Alliance Limited (CAL). Through this programme, she acquired coping strategies and learned effective communication techniques to connect with her son. After applying these techniques, Evelyn witnessed positive changes in her ability to manage challenging situations at home, significantly reducing conflicts.

Recognising the transformative power of this training, she became a dedicated volunteer trainer to support fellow caregivers. She ultimately joined CAL and is currently the Cluster Head (Central), leading a team of Programme Managers. Evelyn continued her education, eventually attaining a graduate diploma and a Master's degree. Now, she extends her knowledge and assistance to patients and their caregivers, helping others to navigate their own challenges and illuminating a path towards hope and resilience.



**Mdm Ivy Yong**

*“Live happily everyday.”*

## **Defying All Odds**

### *Her Mother’s Love Helped Her Live*

Mdm Ivy Yong Shiek Fong's love for her daughter is the epitome of unconditional love – a symbol of a mother's love conquering every challenge. For over four decades, Ivy has stood as a pillar of unwavering support for her daughter, Vivian, who has been courageously battling Type 2 Spinal Muscular Dystrophy (SMA) since the tender age of 3.

SMA stripped Vivian of her muscle strength, confining her to a bed by the age of 16, wholly dependent on her mother. As a single parent, Ivy shouldered the monumental task of raising both Vivian and her older brother.

When Vivian turned 18, her condition worsened with recurrent chest infections, prompting Ivy to make the decision to leave her jewellery sales job to become Vivian’s full-time caregiver. With resolute determination, Ivy acquired the necessary skills to operate life-saving medical equipment, learned to administer a feeding tube, and even pursued an online course in traditional medicine.

Her days and nights were devoted to Vivian, their journey marked by numerous brushes with death. Diagnosed with a neuromuscular condition in childhood, doctors did not expect Vivian to reach her 12th birthday. Yet today, at 43 years old, she stands as a testament to love's power, resilience, and maternal care.

Despite daunting challenges, Ivy remains cautiously grateful for Vivian's recent stable condition. She credits the dedicated home-care team from the National University Hospital (NUH) Paediatric Home Care Programme for their regular home visits to check on Vivian’s condition.

For years, holidays were spent in the confines of the intensive care unit. In 2017, Ivy's meticulous caregiving allowed Vivian to venture beyond home to visit Madame Tussauds Singapore for the first time. Since then, they have explored other local attractions, cherishing each moment that they spend together.

In Ivy's journey, we find boundless inspiration – the strength of love, resilience, and unwavering dedication. Ivy Yong Shiek Fong: a devoted caregiver, embodying the extraordinary power of a mother’s love.



## SINGAPORE PATIENT CAREGIVER AWARD 2023



### Mdm Kengeamal D/O Chinniah

*“Looking after my mother over the past decade was my way of repaying her for everything she had done for me. I am grateful to have had the chance to take care of her till the very end.”*

## Daughter, Mother and Sister

### *A Steadfast Pillar of Support for Her Family*

In early 2017, when her mother, the late Mdm Ponnayee, was diagnosed with dementia, Mdm Kengeamal resigned from her job to embrace a new role as her mother's sole caregiver. She provided round-the-clock care and supervision, turning her home into a sanctuary of love and comfort for her mother.

Mdm Ponnayee's nights were plagued with sleep disturbances, frequent wakings, and the need for assistance in basic activities like walking and toileting. Her resistance to certain care routines, like wearing diapers and bathing, was met with Mdm Kengeamal's patience, preserving her dignity.

Caring for her mother at home took a toll on Mdm Kengeamal's health. Eventually, her own medical needs compelled her to make the agonising decision to place her mother in dementia daycare at Ren Ci Hospital. Nonetheless, she continued to be deeply involved in her mother's care, working closely with the daycare team, discussing and sharing valuable insights to improve her mother's overall well-being. Mdm Ponnayee was also one of the best dressed clients in the daycare, as Mdm Kengeamal wanted her mother to feel beautiful every day. During COVID, video calls with the daycare team would also be made to help her mother stay connected, bringing joy to Mdm Ponnayee. In 2021, Mdm Ponnayee found peace, her final years made infinitely more comfortable because of her daughter's devotion.

Through her caregiving journey, Mdm Kengeamal had to endure other challenges. She selflessly donated a kidney to her younger brother, who later passed away in 2018. She also became a steadfast pillar of support for her children. She stood strong as a widow, caring not only for her late mother but also for her entire family.

The unwavering dedication of Mdm Kengeamal paints a portrait of a daughter who, in the face of adversity, chose love and selflessness. Through her sacrifices, she has etched a legacy of compassion that will forever inspire hearts and minds.



## **Ms Leong Woon Tai Helen**

*“I hope volunteers like us who care for seniors can put our hearts into adding a little more happiness into their later years. After all, we only live once.”*

### **Love Thy Neighbour**

#### *Her Selfless Love Transcending Familial Ties*

Ms Helen Leong Woon Tai has taken the essence of the “kampung” spirit one step further. Her devotion and commitment to the well-being of her elderly neighbours, Mdm Chew and the late Mr Lee, transcend familial ties.

Having lost her own parents, Helen embraced the couple, Mdm Chew and Mr Lee, as her own. She had always looked out for them, sharing home-cooked meals, running errands and accompanying them to medical appointments whenever her work schedule permitted. Eventually, she became their goddaughter, taking on the responsibility of managing the couple’s savings account and supervising their domestic helper.

The couple lived with the challenges of dementia, with Mr Lee further burdened by the aftermath of a stroke in 2017 which left him bedbound. As their age-related ailments progressed and their care needs became more complex, their domestic helper left, leading Helen to make the heart-wrenching decision to move them into St. John's-St. Margaret's Nursing Home in 2022.

However, her commitment to the couple’s well-being never waned. Three days a week, Helen faithfully spent two hours travelling to visit them at the nursing home, bringing with her their favourite dishes to brighten their days. When Mr Lee was hospitalised and in critical condition, Helen’s magnanimous nature came through as she worked with the nursing staff to arrange for Mdm Chew to visit her husband in the hospital, helping them to be close to each other during Mr Lee’s last days.

After Mr Lee's passing in February this year, Helen continues to visit Mdm Chew every week, bringing the warmth of her presence and keeping Mdm Chew in good spirits. Helen’s selfless love and compassion remind us that the true essence of humanity lies in our capacity to care for and uplift those in need, regardless of blood ties. She is an inspirational reminder that we all have the power to make a difference in the lives of others.



## **Mr Pichaymuthu Salomon**

*“True love means never giving up.”*



### **Till Death Do Us Part**

#### *Husband's Love Gives Wife Strength*

Mr Pichaymuthu Salomon's life took an unexpected turn when his wife, Mdm Saroja D/O Rasoo, was diagnosed with the rare and debilitating stiff person syndrome at the age of 30, leading to her confinement to a wheelchair. During the initial years of her illness, Pichaymuthu bore the weight of both working and raising their two young children.

The mounting medical bills, coupled with her frequent hospital visits and a necessary hip replacement surgery in 1997, added to their financial burdens. When Saroja's condition worsened to the point of reliance on others for help with daily tasks, Pichaymuthu made a heartfelt decision to leave his job, choosing to care for her at home rather than admit her into a nursing home.

Each day, Pichaymuthu lovingly attended to her daily needs, from bathing and feeding her to ensuring their children's education. Nightfall brought its own set of challenges as Saroja's muscle spasms intensified, causing her immense pain. Pichaymuthu massaged her regularly to soothe her muscles, providing solace until the spasms relented. In moments of escalating pain, he rushed her to the hospital, always putting her well-being first.

Saroja's despair was palpable as she witnessed her husband's struggles, yet Pichaymuthu remained her steadfast pillar of strength, never wavering in his belief in her and their enduring love. He sought numerous medical opinions and supported her emotionally and spiritually, always nurturing hope. While nurses from Sunlove Home Care Services now provide regular support for Saroja's feeding tube and urinary catheter, Pichaymuthu remains as her primary caregiver. He continues to express his affection through small acts of tenderness, such as dressing her in new clothes, even though her world has grown confined to the walls of their home.

Pichaymuthu's unwavering love and devotion to his wife exemplify an incredible journey marked by courage and determination in the face of adversity. Their enduring bond is a reminder that love possesses the strength to weather any storm.



**SINGAPORE PATIENT  
CAREGIVER AWARD 2023**



**Mr Raymond Anthony  
Fernando**

*“One of the most important things caregivers of the mentally ill must remember at all times, especially during loved ones’ relapses, is to separate the illness from the person.”*

## **Love will Lead the Way**

### *His Wife Ignited his Passion for Advocacy*

In 1974, Raymond made a life-altering decision to marry Doris, his girlfriend who was battling schizophrenia. This commitment spanned four decades and was marked by profound love and enduring support.

Raymond's role extended far beyond that of a husband; he was Doris' steadfast caregiver. Through countless medical appointments, financial challenges, and the daily ritual of administering 52 tablets, Raymond stood unwavering by her side. He shared in the emotional burden as Doris underwent electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), a treatment that, while effective, was emotionally taxing. The demands of work and caregiving exacted its toll on Raymond, testing him mentally and physically. Yet, his love never once faltered. Under Raymond's vigilant care and encouragement, Doris' schizophrenia stabilised. She blossomed into an accomplished author and penned eight books, four of which became bestsellers. She also found the time to volunteer in elderly care homes.

Their journey was not without heartache; they endured the devastating loss of two children. These traumatic experiences posed a threat to Doris' mental health, demanding extra vigilance and caution on Raymond's part. In her later years, Doris grappled with severe arthritis, which caused her excruciating pain and limited mobility. Raymond became her pillar of strength, acutely aware that her pain could trigger a relapse of her mental illness.

Raymond's love and their shared journey of resilience has evolved into a life's purpose. Today, he is a motivational speaker and a passionate advocate for mental health. As a Mental Health Ambassador at the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), he shares his story, shedding light on the challenges faced by caregivers and people living with mental illness. He is also a published author of 55 books, many of which focus on mental health and caregiving. Raymond's life radiates with the enduring power of love that has evolved to create positive impact in the community.



**Ms Sally Yeong**

*“Knowing and feeling my sister is comfortable makes me fulfilled.”*

## **My Sister’s Keeper**

### *Providing 24/7 Care with Compassion and Dignity*

For nearly a decade, Ms Sally Yeong has been a devoted caregiver to her older sister, Siew Hah, who was diagnosed with early-onset dementia and brain cancer. Siew Hah, completely bedbound, is totally dependent on Sally for her daily needs, including tube feeding with limited ability to make eye contact.

As Siew Hah requires round-the-clock care, Sally decided to quit her job as a general manager. She wanted to preserve her sister’s dignity and to make her life as comfortable as possible, even in her bedbound state.

Sally’s dedication is nothing short of remarkable. She meticulously tends to Siew Hah’s daily hygiene, ensuring she is bathed with the utmost care and vigilantly monitoring any changes in her condition.

When Siew Hah developed skin issues due to diarrhoea, Sally tirelessly cleansed her skin and applied ointment to the affected areas, turning Siew Hah around every hour to expedite the healing process. Sally also undertakes the delicate task of manually clearing phlegm from Siew Hah’s mouth, choosing to do so to avoid causing discomfort with the suctioning procedure. This dedicated care continues through the night, with Sally sacrificing her own rest.

The home care team from Alexandra Hospital would occasionally visit to check on Siew Hah, consistently finding her in excellent care. In fact, due to her attentiveness, Sally can decipher what her sister needs through minor body movements and the noises her sister makes. She would convey this to Siew Hah’s care team to ensure that her sister is as comfortable as possible. As a result of her proactive care, her sister has been able to stay at home and avoid hospitalisation.

Despite the immense challenges she faces as a caregiver, Sally remains cheerful. She readily shares her knowledge and caregiving resources with community nurses, firmly believing that her personal experience can empower and guide other caregivers on their journey, enabling them to provide better care for their loved ones.





**SINGAPORE PATIENT  
CAREGIVER AWARD 2023**



**Mr Seeni Davis**

*“Caregiving is in me, in my blood,  
not only to my siblings, but to  
anyone else too.  
I’ll go forward to help them.”*

## **Courageous Heart**

### *The One Who Uplifts Family and the Community*

Mr Seeni Davis stands as a beacon of unyielding strength amidst the profound challenges that have plagued his life and the lives of his loved ones. With five siblings grappling with the harsh realities of myotonic dystrophy, an unrelenting condition causing muscle weakness and wasting, Seeni has emerged as their steadfast caregiver.

He willingly left his job as a contractor, donning the mantle of a Grab driver so that he would have the flexibility to transport his siblings for their medical appointments and manage their daily needs. Adding to his responsibilities, Seeni’s own wife endured a prolonged battle against brain cancer. Through the years of her courageous fight, Seeni never wavered as her source of support and comfort until her passing.

Amidst the grief of losing his beloved wife, Seeni’s younger brother, William, reached out in need. Diagnosed with myotonic dystrophy in his mid-30s, William needed help to care for his own family, including two children who had inherited his condition. Recognising the urgency of the situation, Seeni selflessly stepped forward to lend them his much-needed assistance.

Despite the immense weight of his caregiving responsibilities, Seeni has generously given his time and skills to enrich the lives of those residing in the nursing home where his brother is receiving care. He selflessly offered his skills to tackle handyman repairs and modest renovations, enhancing the living conditions for the residents. His efforts not only beautified the facility but have also brought immeasurable joy and comfort to the residents.

Seeni’s selfless acts and boundless kindness have undeniably left an indelible mark on the lives of his family and the broader community. Through his generosity, he has created a nurturing and comforting environment for all who have had the privilege of crossing his path, embodying the true essence of compassion and empathy.



**Mr Albert Louis**

*“Creativity is an ongoing process  
for the Disabled.”*

## **Never Stop For A Beat**

### *Drumming Joy into the Lives of Those in Need*

For the past 24 years, professional drummer Mr Albert Louis has shared his love of drumming with those facing disabilities and disadvantages, harnessing the therapeutic potential of rhythm to bring about profound transformations.

Since 1999, Albert has offered drum workshops as a form of therapy and worked with many organisations including children's homes, senior citizens' residences, and hospitals treating patients with autism, dementia, Parkinson's disease and other conditions.

As part of Albert's innovative approach, he has crafted modified percussion instruments for those sensitive to loud noises, fostering inclusivity and joy in drumming. His dedication stems from a belief that drumming triggers brain waves linked to well-being and euphoria. Recognising music's soothing power, Albert uses drumming to reduce anxiety and complement patients' recovery. Through rhythm, he helps patients enhance their coordination, dexterity, focus, and timing — all while ensuring they are having fun.

Many of the patients he has had the privilege of working with have expressed their gratitude and exhibited positive changes in their lives. Their spirits are lifted, and they gain newfound self-confidence as they continue to practice and engage with the rhythm of life.

In 2014, Albert was conferred the Meritorious Award by the Composers and Authors Society of Singapore (COMPASS) for his work with children and adults living with special needs. His extensive portfolio has been showcased in hospitals and welfare homes.

In 2018, his expertise earned him an invitation to speak at the World Mental Health Congress, sharing his insights into the therapeutic wonders of drumming. Albert also produced a video on drumming exercises for those with Parkinson's disease, which has since been featured by the Swedish Parkinson's Association on their website and in the UK by Parkinson's Europe.

Not stopping for a beat, he is actively exploring ways to help even more people. Albert Louis embodies the extraordinary power of music and inspires us with its potential to infuse healing and harmony.



**Mr Allan Cai Chenxi**

*“Let’s respect each other and build a more inclusive Singapore! I love Singapore!”*

## **A Force To Be Reckoned With** *Championing A More Inclusive Society for Individuals with Special Needs*

Mr Allan Cai Chenxi has played a pivotal role in shaping Singapore to become a more inclusive society for people with intellectual disabilities (PWIDs). As a pioneering member of the “Our Lives, Our Voices” (OLOV) self-advocacy programme, Allan has elevated awareness of issues related to PWIDs and harnessed his platform to ignite transformative conversations aimed at genuine and lasting change.

In 2018, he was one of three Singapore delegates who attended the “Having a Say Conference” in Australia. Despite his speech impairment, he delivered a powerful keynote speech calling on people with Down Syndrome to empower themselves, championing the idea that they are not disabled but just “differently-abled” and are fully capable of contributing to society.

The year 2019 saw Allan co-organising a visit to Parliament to engage with the Senior Principal Assistant Clerk and Parliament staff to reshape perceptions regarding the potential of PWIDs as active contributors to society.

In 2021, he lent his expertise to the Purple Parade Working Committee, offering valuable insights to ensure inclusivity. For instance, he advocated for button-less T-shirt designs, recognising that motor skills could pose challenges for some individuals.

As an inclusion champion of SG Enable, Allan contributed to the design of the Enabling Village in Lengkok Bahru, a space committed to inclusivity and community integration.

He actively uses his platform to amplify the voices of the PWIDs, contributing inputs as to how the nation can realise its goal of inclusion by sharing his views regarding the Enabling Masterplan 2030 in conjunction with the Ministry of Social and Family Development.

Beyond his disability advocacy work, Allan is also a passionate conservationist. He sought out Wildlife Reserves Singapore to explore opportunities for collaboration where the intellectual disability community could support its conservation efforts.

Allan’s tireless dedication and unyielding advocacy show us that passion and determination can lead to extraordinary change. His unwavering commitment will continue to illuminate the path towards a more inclusive Singapore.



**Ms Sherry Soon**

*“Live with purpose, give back with love.”*

## **Unbreakable Spirit**

### *Transforming Personal Hurdles into a Force for Good*

At just 19 years old, Ms Sherry Soon was diagnosed with a chronic autoimmune disease. She battles vasculitis, which causes physical discomfort and painful ulcers on her feet, leading to periodic hospitalisations. This imposes a significant burden on her daily life.

Rising above her condition, she has leveraged her experience to assist others facing similar challenges. In 2015, she established the Autoimmune Diseases Support Group—a community where patients learn from one another through online and offline discussions, forging friendships and finding solace and camaraderie amid their shared struggles.

In 2017, she launched the groundup movement, Be Kind SG, which is now a registered charity. She initiated the "Be A Special Friend" programme, where volunteers brought companionship to seniors living in adult disability and destitute homes. Sherry worked with staff from the Homes to understand the seniors' needs and organise activities to nurture their holistic well-being. During the global pandemic, they pivoted to Zoom volunteering sessions to continue engaging the seniors. Sherry also rallied the volunteers to channel their collective kindness toward healthcare workers through a heartfelt tribute video and distribution of care packages.

Sherry and her team went on to design a self-care journal to remind healthcare workers to prioritise their well-being. The journal bore a written tribute from the President of Singapore and the head of the Singapore Kindness Movement. This project saw 19,000 of these journals distributed to healthcare workers across Singapore.

In 2022, Sherry set up Play.Able, a toy and resource library for children with special needs to socialise with their friends in a safe space. She supports their caregivers with diverse resources that can be borrowed to support their children's developmental needs. Over the past year, she has also organised workshops and outings for these families, building a robust community.

Surmounting everyday challenges herself, Sherry's selfless dedication is profoundly inspirational, transforming her personal hurdles into a force for good.



**Mr Yong Kwon Seng**

*“In this life, we have a moral responsibility to our families and friends. But beyond that, we also have a responsibility to help others, especially if we have the capacity to do so.”*

## **Unstoppable Compassion**

### *Illuminating Lives Through Volunteerism*

For the past 12 years, Mr Yong Kwon Seng has been a stalwart advocate for mental health. Fuelled by his personal experiences growing up with a sibling with an intellectual disability, Kwon Seng has dedicated his time and effort to uplifting the lives of those battling mental health issues.

Since 2010, he has spent every weekend and public holiday volunteering at Buangkok Green Medical Park, extending a helping hand to individuals who are often neglected by society.

He engages residents in enriching activities, from creating beautiful handicrafts and gift items for sale to making snacks for long-stay patients at the Institute of Mental Health (IMH). He even acquired haircutting skills to provide free services to the residents.

Leading a ground-up initiative called "The Achievers," which comprises about 300 like-minded individuals, Kwon Seng spreads cheer among long-stay residents at Surya and Sunlove Home, particularly those confined to wheelchairs. Their monthly "Jalan Jalan" outings bring joy to those with mobility challenges, and Kwon Seng takes a central role in planning, recruiting, and training volunteers to ensure residents' safety and enjoyment.

At IMH, he initiated the "No One Dies Alone" (NODA) program. For individuals with mental health issues lacking living relatives or friends due to their condition, this program provides invaluable support and companionship during their final days. Kwon Seng's promise to stand by these patients until the end, even overseeing their funeral arrangements, epitomises the profound impact that one person's compassion can have on the lives of those often marginalized by society.

Kwon Seng's unceasing dedication has illuminated the lives of many. His selfless compassion shows that empathy and action can make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.



## **Amputee Support Group**

*“Happiness is a personal choice  
and not dependent on my  
circumstances.”*

•*Mr Lieu Teck Hua, Member*

### **Embracing a New Lease of Life**

#### *Achieving Holistic Well-being for Amputees*

The Amputee Support Group (ASG), founded in 2010, has been a collaborative effort between Ang Mo Kio-Thye Hua Kwan Hospital, Care and Counselling Department and Tan Tock Seng Hospital Rehabilitation Centre since 2012. Its purpose was to shatter the barriers of isolation and lack of psychosocial care that often plague the lives of Persons with Amputation (PWAs).

Over the past 13 transformative years, ASG has woven a tapestry of camaraderie among PWAs, fostering connections and uniting members in a vibrant social support network.

Individuals have found a haven to share their unique personal experiences. The Group also regularly invites other professionals to illuminate the path to health and resilience, ensuring that members thrive in their journeys.

In 2016, ASG introduced sports to encourage members to lead a healthy lifestyle. The idea was first initiated by a member who was an avid climber and proposed a collaboration with Climb Central Singapore. The first session saw more than 10 members reaching the summit, thanks to safe adaptive climb measures. Fuelled by this success, ASG has sought partnerships with other sports organisations to introduce other various modified sports activities to its members.

ASG also initiated a Befriending Service in 2018 which pairs PWAs who have been well integrated into the community to newly amputated patients to help prepare them for living life with limb loss.

Through these programmes, ASG has transformed the lives of PWAs. Not only does the Group help PWAs adapt to their new reality, but it also empowers them to flourish and embrace healthy lifestyles.

With the ambition to become the national support group for PWAs, ASG has recently begun a collaboration with the Lions Prosthesis Centre. ASG envisions a future where its network expands, encompassing an even wider array of activities that will help PWAs thrive and weave their voices into the rich tapestry of society.



## **Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu-Chi Foundation (Singapore)**

*"We are where we are because others have been kind to us along the way, and we want to return this kindness by extending our care for others. So what we feel is the right thing to do, just do it!"*

*- Dr Eugene Tang, Dental Convenor*

### **More Reason to Smile**

#### ***Providing Pro Bono Dental Services for the Sick and Elderly***

In 2014, the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu-Chi Foundation and Ren Ci Hospital united to bring smiles to those in need, providing free dental services to those residing in Ren Ci's Chronic Sick Unit and Nursing Homes. This collaboration, led by volunteers and dental professionals from the Singapore branch of the Tzu Chi International Medical Association (TIMA), has touched the lives of over 600 individuals.

During each visit, a dedicated team of 40 individuals works tirelessly to attend to the residents. Many of these residents are immobilised, confined to wheelchairs or beds, and face chronic and severe dental issues. Some are unable to communicate, adding complexity to the team's evaluation process.

The team's dedication is put to the test as many residents grapple with cognitive issues and dementia. Despite the challenges, they move swiftly and precisely, striving to minimise discomfort. Volunteers provide vital words of encouragement, offering reassurance and peace of mind to the residents. Since the partnership's inception, these compassionate volunteers have contributed over 7,400 hours of their time, offering their expertise pro bono. Tzu Chi's involvement has also translated into annual savings of over \$70,000 in dental treatments for Ren Ci Hospital.

Tzu Chi's approach, though voluntary, is marked by professionalism. They work closely with Ren Ci's staff, efficiently managing logistical requirements and ensuring that every resource is directed towards the well-being of the beneficiaries.

Moreover, Tzu Chi's dedicated team has taken on the role of educators, empowering both residents and staff with essential knowledge about maintaining dental hygiene. From denture cleaning tips to the proper angling of toothbrushes for thorough cleaning, these efforts encourage individuals to take charge of their own dental well-being.

In a world where compassion seamlessly merges with professionalism, Tzu Chi Foundation and Ren Ci Hospital exemplify the transformative power of collaboration. Their partnership transcends dentistry, instilling hope, comfort and, above all, the gift of a healthy smile for those who need it most.



## **Diamond Group Dover Park Hospice**

*“Keep moving with compassion,  
love and heart.”  
- Diamond Group*

### **A Sparkling Gem of Compassion *Bringing Joy and Colour to the Hospice***

For over two decades, the Diamond Group, led by the dedicated Mr Muhammad Agus Bin Othman, has been a sparkling gem of compassion. Diamond Group volunteers provide comfort to patients at Dover Park Hospice, offering care that encompasses their psychological, spiritual and social well-being during their stay.

The volunteers underwent comprehensive training in infection control, basic feeding and handling of medical equipment to meet the unique needs of the patients with life-limiting illnesses with less than three months of prognosis. Many of the volunteers have displayed remarkable commitment, serving more than five years, with a number of them earning 20-year service medals. As befrienders, they worked with the Hospice’s multidisciplinary team to provide steadfast emotional and social support to the patients.

Every month, the Diamond Group hosts heart-warming birthday celebrations featuring ukulele performances and homemade treats, creating moments of joy that patients and their families cherish deeply.

When Hari Raya comes around, celebrations become more elaborate with volunteers going all out to make it a grand affair. The Hospice is adorned with *Raya*-themed decorations for an entire month, giving patients something to look forward to. Volunteers lovingly prepare a sumptuous feast featuring local favourites like *lontong*, *curry* and *rendang*, all thoughtfully adjusted to cater to the patients’ palate.

In the spirit of togetherness, volunteers gather patients in the auditorium with games and activities that bring laughter to all. They also help to capture these enduring memories through photographs, creating precious keepsakes for the patients and their families.

As the Hospice prepares for its new home in November 2023, the Diamond Group plays a pivotal role in training the next generation of volunteers, ensuring that the legacy of compassion continues to thrive. In a world where healthcare meets compassion, the Diamond Group stands as a testament to the profound impact of kindness. Their dedication not only brings smiles but soothes the souls of the patients they serve and their families.





## **Seniors Caring for Seniors Programme**

*“Age is just a number.  
You are never too old to volunteer.”*  
- Mr Alvin Ong, Manager,  
TOUCHpoint@Geylang Bahru

### **Never Too Old**

#### *Mobilising Seniors to Support Their Peers*

The Seniors Caring for Seniors (SCS) programme, initiated by TOUCH Community Services, emerges as a compelling force of compassion and community empowerment in the face of an ageing population. This initiative mobilises abled seniors aged 60 and above as befrienders to support their frailer peers.

Many elderly were gripped by anxiety and socially isolated during the pandemic, making the support of trained befrienders critical. Through door-to-door visits, 22 dedicated SCS befrienders positively impacted the lives of 170 frail seniors during the first quarter of 2022. They ran errands, helped with chores, and checked in on the seniors. With things returning to normalcy, befrienders have eagerly resumed their regular home visits to support 35 homebound seniors.

SCS adopts a proactive approach, leveraging peer influence to inspire seniors to embrace physical and mental well-being. The programme equips seniors with essential healthcare and preventive knowledge, empowering them to care for themselves and others effectively. Through weekly activities organised by the Healthy Ageing Promotion Programme for You (HAPPY), 80 residents, including befrienders and seniors, engage in exercises and cognitive activities of varying intensity.

SCS also capitalises on the web of friendships woven in the community to encourage seniors to stand by each other. Under the programme, Health Promotion Board conducted a series of courses covering topics including dementia awareness and fall prevention. This knowledge empowers befrienders to act as health advocates, extending their meaningful support to other seniors.

The SCS programme's framework has been replicated at TOUCH's other Active Ageing Centres in Yishun and Wellington, where numerous seniors have undergone training to become befrienders to their peers.

SCS underscores that age is just a number and that one is never too old to create a positive impact. With compassion, one can create a ripple effect by rallying others to stay connected, adopt a healthier lifestyle and embrace the golden years with vitality and joy.



## **Call Me, Maybe**

*“As a heart project, we look forward to having more patients on board to Care, Activate, Love & Lead (CALL) and support them.”*

*- Ms Margaret Mary Hendriks, Senior Principal Case Manager, Institute of Mental Health*



### **A Ringing Success**

#### *Help Is Now Just a Phone Call Away*

In an interconnected world dependent on technology, there is one life-changing project that stands out – "Call Me, Maybe" is more than just a catchy name. It is a lifeline that weaves together the hearts of patients, caregivers and their healthcare team in a symphony of compassion.

At its core, this initiative connects patients with healthcare providers, families and friends for social support. In a society that sometimes feels isolated, "Call Me, Maybe" promotes social inclusion, reminding us that we are all connected.

Patients who cannot afford a mobile phone are gifted with a free phone and a prepaid SIM card. With these tools, they are instantaneously connected to receive gentle appointment reminders and crucial medication adherence guidance, with a call or a text.

This project empowers patients to take charge of their own health, reducing appointment default rates and hospital re-admission rates. The impact is clear. Within a year, "Call Me, Maybe" saw an 82% decrease in re-admission rates and a staggering 92% reduction in appointment default rates.

Numbers only tell part of the story. Patients find comfort in having easy access to the crisis helpline and the warmth of staying connected with their case managers – especially during emergencies. With appointment defaults on the decline, the hospital reduces resource wastage and helps patients to stay on course with their treatment plan and recovery.

The success of "Call Me, Maybe" is attributed to a dedicated team of case managers, guiding patients through choosing their phones, activating their services and teaching them to put these devices to good use. Patients, once passive, now become proactive in their health journeys.

The most profound outcome is the gift of communication that many of us take for granted in a world driven by rapid digital transformation. Through this project, with each call made and each message received, the joy of connection is a reminder that "we are never alone in this journey".



## SINGAPORE PATIENT ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE AWARD 2023



### Smaller Bites to Swallow Right

*"Everyone should have the  
chance to enjoy hawker  
food."  
- Ms Tey Jo Ching, Speech  
Therapist*

## Big Impact with Small Bites

### *Make Eating Safe for People with Dysphagia*

A dedicated team of Speech Therapists from Alexandra Hospital envisioned a transformation that would touch the lives of countless patients facing the challenge of dysphagia. "Smaller Bites to Swallow Right" is an initiative designed to bridge the gap for patients transitioning back into their communities after their discharge from the hospital.

Dysphagia, or difficulty in swallowing, presents a challenge for patients as they step back into the rhythm of daily life. One upsetting concern is that they can no longer enjoy their favourite foods. For individuals with dysphagia, their diets need adjustment – their meals need to be soft, bite-sized, minced, or pureed to allow them to swallow safely.

The initiative's mission is twofold: to raise public awareness about dysphagia and to educate and empower food providers in the community with the skill set to cater to these individuals.

The heart-warming result has been a united community effort that extends a hand to hawkers, ensuring that people with dysphagia can relish a broader array of culinary choices and, in turn, elevate their quality of life. This initiative paints a path toward a more inclusive society, especially as dysphagia affects a significant portion of our senior population.

Thanks to the support of hawkers who wholeheartedly embraced this initiative, people with dysphagia can dine out, savouring their favourite dishes without the fear of choking or being confined to home-cooked meals.

Hawkers who joined hands with "Smaller Bites to Swallow Right" participated in free training sessions, acquiring skills to modify their dishes appropriately. They shared the sentiment of a "kampung" spirit, a feeling of belonging to a close-knit community, and immense satisfaction in contributing to the well-being and enhanced quality of life for these patients.

"Smaller Bites to Swallow Right" is a story of unity and transformation – an example of the profound impact of how small changes ripple out to create a brighter, more inclusive world for all.



## SINGAPORE PATIENT ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE AWARD 2023



### Touch Art Programme

*“Empowered to create.  
Community to relate.”*

*- Ms Saw Han, SAVH Client,  
Artist and Touch Art Team  
Member*

### **A Collaborative Masterpiece**

#### *Bringing Light to the Visually Impaired through Art*

The Touch Art Programme is a collaborative masterpiece between visually impaired clients, dedicated volunteers and staff of the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH).

Designed to empower visually impaired individuals with artistic talents or interests, the programme provides a platform for them to earn a livelihood by creating and selling their art and handcrafted items. Aside from the opportunity to use their talent for income, the programme offers a profound sense of inclusion, allowing participants to actively engage in society and foster a sense of self-reliance.

Volunteers and staff take on the marketing role by reaching out to various organisations and groups to sell the exquisite creations crafted by visually impaired artisans. As the artists collaborate to produce and sell their creations, they get together to engage with one another, including volunteers and staff, fostering a sense of camaraderie and belonging through their shared artistic journey.

The programme has been in operation for 27 remarkable years, generating \$45,500 in the previous year alone. Beyond financial gain, it serves as a vibrant canvas for the visually impaired to showcase their extraordinary talents.

Their artistry has graced goodie bags and other gift items including badges, stickers, fans, and tote bags. Their creations have been presented as gifts to esteemed guests at prestigious events such as the National Day Parade in 2020, 2021, 2022, and Blind Community Day in 2022.

SAVH has extended its collaborative spirit beyond its walls, partnering with organisations like Supermama and SG Enable. In 2022, visually impaired artisans crafted batik pieces for sale, with proceeds benefiting SG Enable and their beneficiaries.

Step into the extraordinary world of Touch Art, where creativity knows no bounds. This ground-breaking programme empowers those with visual impairments to unleash their artistic potential, transforming limitations into awe-inspiring masterpieces and endless opportunities.



*“Embrace your unique role in life,  
for it is not only to care for your  
family but to illuminate, educate and  
empower others in our shared  
community.”*

*- Mr Nazmul Khan, Founder*

## **Lifting Lives**

### *Uplifting the Migrant Worker Community*

Founded by Mr Nazmul Khan, a Singapore Permanent Resident working in cybersecurity, 24asia stands as a remarkable beacon of support for the migrant worker community. For almost five years, the organisation has made significant strides in uplifting migrant workers in Singapore through a variety of initiatives.

24asia provides opportunities for migrant workers to bond and form new friendships through activities such as cricket matches and live-streamed videos on social media. These positive interactions create a network of support outside of their workplace, which not only promotes social integration but also offers moments of respite from the daily grind.

In this digital age, 24asia is equipping migrant workers with the tools they need to thrive. The organisation offers free classes that empower individuals with invaluable skills, ranging from the art of public speaking to the intricacies of video editing and computer literacy. By arming these dedicated workers with the knowledge and skill sets necessary for both their personal and professional growth, 24asia empowers them with the ability to upgrade themselves.

To address both physical and mental well-being, 24asia organises sports activities to promote physical health and mental health programmes to address psychological challenges faced by many migrants. This holistic approach ensures that migrant workers are not only physically robust but also mentally resilient.

24asia actively partners organisations such as HealthServe and the Red Cross to extend the reach of their compassionate endeavours, thereby making healthcare more accessible to migrant workers and facilitating crucial blood donation drives. In addition, 24asia's partnership with the National Environment Agency for periodic beach clean-up initiatives serves as a testament to their commitment to care for Singapore as their second home.

24asia's compassionate initiatives, driven by Nazmul's leadership, have made a significant impact on Singapore's migrant worker community. Through community engagement, skill development and holistic well-being programmes, 24asia is enriching the lives of those who often go unnoticed.



## SINGAPORE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE AWARD 2023



### ACES CARE HELPLIFE

*“Celebrate old age,  
not everyone make it this far.”*  
- Mr James Foo,  
Centre Manager

### **Just A Call Away** *SOS Hotline for Seniors*

ACES Care HelpLife is more than just a hotline. This remarkable service is staffed by trained seniors to serve seniors. It goes beyond offering a listening ear; this hotline is a vital link connecting seniors with the right services to overcome their hurdles and challenges in life. The mission is clear: to empower seniors to live happier, more meaningful, confident, and dignified lives.

Since its inception, seniors have reached out with a diverse range of requests, from meal delivery to job searches, appliance repairs, and more. Volunteers, trained to provide essential connections, ensure that no elderly member of the community feels isolated by pointing them to the appropriate service closest to them.

One of the outstanding features of ACES Care HelpLife is its commitment to enhance seniors' digital literacy. By encouraging seniors to use their smartphones effectively, the initiative aims to open up new worlds of connection, from friends and entertainment to educational resources, online banking and management of their medical appointments. By making life more convenient and accessible, ACES Care HelpLife fosters independence and empowerment.

Crucially, the initiative actively trains senior volunteers to seek out less accessible seniors who are unlikely to reach out for assistance. With digital awareness training, these volunteers become confident digital migrants, equipped to connect with their peers through their smart devices.

The impact is undeniable, with over 3,500 calls received and over 5,300 outgoing calls in just fifteen months and an impressive fulfilment rate of about 99%. This success can be attributed to the dedication and commitment of the volunteers.

Launched initially in Teck Ghee in 2022, ACES Care HelpLife has received calls from seniors all across Singapore. Such impact cannot be contained with plans already in motion to expand this invaluable service to other constituencies in 2024 and beyond, ensuring that more seniors benefit from ACES Care HelpLife's compassionate support and meaningful connections.



## SINGAPORE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE AWARD 2023



### Enriching and Mobilising Participation of Whampoa's Elder Residents (EMPOWER) @ ComSA

*"Embrace each day with gratitude,  
for every moment is an opportunity  
to create an extraordinary legacy."  
- Ms Mei Amurao, Assistant Director*

## Architects of Social Change *Seniors Take Charge of Their Neighbourhood*

"Enriching and Mobilising Participation of Whampoa's Elder Residents" (EMPOWER) is a community development initiative of Tsao Foundation and is part of its Community for Successful Ageing (ComSA) programme model. The initiative has brought together the Whampoa community in an unprecedented way, empowering its senior residents to be the architects of positive change.

EMPOWER is on a mission – to make elder residents the driving force behind initiatives that enhance the neighbourhood's ageing experience. It adopts a culture-centered, community-based approach to decision-making where every voice counts.

Between 2019 to 2022, EMPOWER's Community Advocates collaborated to tackle pressing issues like high medical costs, social isolation, dementia, age discrimination and mobility challenges in Whampoa. Gatherings for the senior residents blended fun activities with training sessions to create resident-centered communication materials such as posters and postcards. These gatherings delved into critical community issues close to the hearts of Whampoa's growing senior population.

Through Community Design Thinking Workshops, seniors have gained the skills and knowledge to implement civic initiatives and engage with government agencies. Together, they construct a platform for ideas, brainstorm solutions and garner support.

EMPOWER has become a haven of inspiration for Whampoa's seniors. It empowers them as agents of change, letting them actively participate in decision-making. Their roles span across marketing, outreach, issue identification, coordination with vendors and innovative problem-solving. The impact is tangible – practical solutions such as providing shuttle services to hospitals and improved walkways.

This project is more than an initiative; it is a testament of community empowerment and the resilience of its elder residents. EMPOWER continues to thrive, proving that when communities give voice to their seniors, positive change happens.

Based on research findings, EMPOWER participants showed a remarkable shift in confidence levels compared to those who did not participate in the programme. There was a greater belief in achieving community goals and confidence in influencing local issues, highlighting EMPOWER's transformative power.



## **Limitless SAFEHOUSE**

*“It does indeed take a village to raise a child. Community support can make all the difference to someone feeling lonely and discouraged in their journey. We’re here to bridge the two sides of this journey.”*

*- Ms Cheyenne Naidu, Counsellor and  
Community Team Lead*

### **SAFEHOUSE for Youths**

#### *Providing Mental Health Support in the Virtual World*

In a society where bullying is rampant and teen depression and suicide are on the rise, Limitless Singapore is rewriting the narrative on youth mental health with its online community, SAFEHOUSE.

Established in 2021, SAFEHOUSE targets youths aged 13 to 25, aiming to promote help-seeking behaviour, empower them to develop resilience, and encourage them to lean on one another for support. The goal is to provide a welcoming and safe community where conversations range from discussing how their day went to cultivating self-management skills, all while navigating their mental health journeys with the assistance of Limitless befrienders and staff.

Hosted on Discord, an online platform, SAFEHOUSE serves as an avenue for youths to share their problems, access mental health resources and information, and seek help from qualified professionals while remaining anonymous. This initiative offers free confidential, short-term, text-based support in the form of peer support, clinical and interventive assistance, and general mental health information in a welcoming, judgment-free online space. Here, young people navigating daily life with mental health conditions can connect safely with professionals and peers.

In just two years, SAFEHOUSE has facilitated millions of messages exchanged between users, sparking daily conversations, providing unwavering support, and offering empathy and insight into various life issues. By connecting and supporting youths with more options on how to manage their situations and struggles, it is evident that SAFEHOUSE is a much-needed resource highly valued within the community.

In the past three months alone, there have been over 190 instances of emotional support provided by befrienders and staff, including psychological first aid and crisis intervention in incidents involving active suicidality and self-harm in youths. Around 40% of the youths that seek help with Limitless present with suicidal ideation.

This vibrant virtual space proves that every message sent is a step closer to healing and prevention. These messages are more than just words; they are lifelines of hope, recovery, and empowerment to help every young life flourish.