

Bridge



SOUTH WEST
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL

#3 / 2023



“THE FIVE-YEAR MASTER PLAN FOCUSES ON ENSURING THE VIBRANCY AND CONNECTIVITY WITHIN BUKIT BATOK, REJUVENATING PLAYGROUNDS, AND MAKING SURE THAT GRANDPARENTS, PARENTS AND CHILDREN CAN ENJOY THEMSELVES.”

MR MURALI PILLAI
Adviser to Bukit Batok
Grassroots Organisations



Nurturing Green Ambition

Residents can now learn more about sustainable living at the first-of-its-kind Green Innovation Centre.



5 FESTIVE CHEERS @ SOUTH WEST

Championing the spirit of giving to address the needs of seniors.



7 GIRLS' BRIGADE FRIEND IN DEED

Helping families meet their challenges with home enhancements.



23 CAREGIVING @ SOUTH WEST

Juggling multiple responsibilities with the help of various support initiatives.

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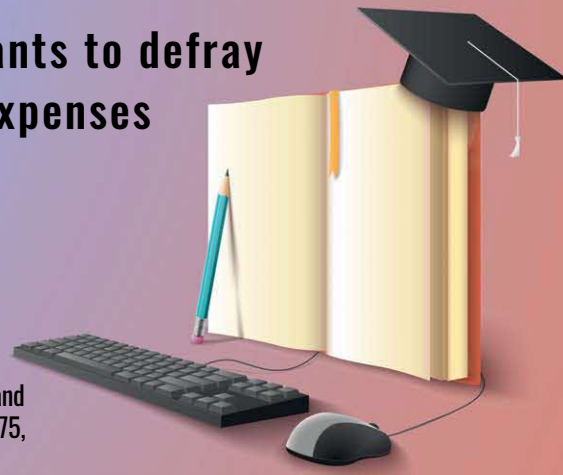
Eligibility Criteria

- Resident of South West District;
- Full-time student at local tertiary institutions (polytechnics / universities);
- Singapore citizen or at least one immediate family member is a Singapore citizen; and
- Combined gross monthly household income of \$3,500 or per capita income of \$875, whichever is lower.



Scan the QR Code to download the application form.

Application is open throughout the year. Visit www.cdc.gov.sg/southwest for more information or email us at swcdc_bursaries@pa.gov.sg for further enquiries.



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Bridge

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Dear friends,

We marked Singapore’s 58th birthday with joyful celebrations of Singapore’s independence. It was also a timely reminder of how our nation stood together to emerge even stronger after the pandemic.

I am thankful to all our partners who rallied behind our residents to ensure that no one is left behind. Together, we reached out to those in need with tangible gifts to make a difference to their daily lives. For example, the Girls’ Brigade Friend In Deed initiative gave out care packs and presented custom-made study furniture to low-income families, and the Home Improvement Programme with P&G presented vulnerable residents with household items and essential appliances.

To promote greater sustainability in our district, we partnered with Bukit Batok Grassroots Organisations and the Swedish Chamber of Commerce Singapore to launch the Green Innovation Centre. This green effort brought together the collective expertise of both small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and multinational corporations (MNCs) to introduce sustainable practices and technologies to Cosy Garden, an iconic community garden in Bukit Batok. This collaborative effort between the 3Ps — People, Private and Public sectors — shows how everyone can play a role to create a greener and more vibrant South West district.

This year, our annual Festive Cheers @ South West saw the participation of 70 corporate and community partners that drew contributions of \$850,000 in cash and in kind. Together with partners Elmich and Nature Landscapes, we gave 150 seniors the gifts they wanted under the Grant-A-Wish @ South West initiative. A big thank you to all our partners and volunteers for their generosity and time.

As we move onward together, let’s continue to join our hearts and hands to make the South West a caring and inclusive district.

Celebrating a Greener, Stronger Community Together

MS LOW YEN LING

Mayor of South West District



Rakan-rakan yang dihormati,

Kita meraikan ulang tahun kemerdekaan Singapura yang ke-58 dengan sambutan yang sungguh meriah. Ia juga mengingatkan kita bagaimana negara kita telah bersatu padu dan muncul lebih teguh selepas pandemik.

Saya berterima kasih kepada semua rakan kerjasama kami yang telah memberikan sokongan kepada para penduduk bagi memastikan tiada siapa yang ketinggalan. Bersama-sama, kami menghulurkan bantuan kepada mereka yang memerlukan dengan sumbangan yang dapat memberikan perubahan yang positif kepada kehidupan harian mereka. Sebagai contoh, inisiatif Girls’ Brigade Friend In Deed mengedarkan pek berisi barang keperluan serta menghadaiahkan perabot untuk belajar yang ditempah khas untuk pelajar daripada keluarga berpendapatan rendah. Program Peningkatan Rumah bersama P&G pula memberikan barangan rumah serta peralatan penting kepada penduduk berpendapatan rendah.

Bagi menggalakkan lagi kemampanan di kawasan kita, kami bekerjasama dengan Pertubuhan Akar Umbi Bukit Batok dan Dewan Perniagaan Sweden Singapura untuk melancarkan Pusat Inovasi Hijau. Usaha hijau ini menghimpunkan kepakaran kolektif Syarikat-Syarikat Kecil dan Sederhana (SME) dan Syarikat Berbilang Negara (MNC) untuk memperkenalkan amalan dan teknologi mampan kepada Cozy Garden, sebuah kebun masyarakat yang ikonik di Bukit Batok. Usahasama antara penduduk, sektor swasta dan sektor awam ini menunjukkan bagaimana semua orang boleh memainkan peranan bagi mewujudkan kawasan Barat Daya yang lebih menghijau dan bertenaga.

Tahun ini, program Festive Cheers @ South West tahunan kami menyaksikan penyertaan 70 rakan kerjasama korporat dan masyarakat yang telah menarik sumbangan sebanyak \$850,000 dalam bentuk wang tunai dan barangan. Bersama dengan rakan kerjasama Elmich and Nature Landscapes, kami menghadaiahkan 150 orang warga emas barang yang mereka inginkan di bawah inisiatif Grant-A-Wish @ South West. Ribuan terima kasih kami ucapkan kepada semua rakan kerjasama dan sukarelawan kami atas kemurahan hati mereka dan masa yang telah mereka luangkan.

Sambil kita melangkah maju bersama-sama, ayuh kita teruskan berganding bahu dan bersatu hati dalam menjadikan Barat Daya sebuah kawasan yang prihatin dan inklusif.

அன்பார்ந்த நண்பர்களே,

சிங்கப்பூரின் 58வது பிறந்தநாளை சிங்கப்பூரின் சுதந்திர தினக் கொண்டாட்டங்களுடன் நாம் மகிழ்ச்சியாகக் கொண்டாடினோம். நமது தேசம் பெருந்தொற்றுக்குப் பிறகு இன்னும் வலுவாக வெளிவர எவ்வாறு ஒன்றுபட்டு நின்றது என்பதை இது சரியான நேரத்தில் நினைவூட்டுவதாக இருந்தது.

யாரும் வாழ்க்கையில் பின்தங்கிவிடாமல் இருப்பதை உறுதிசெய்வதற்காக, நமது குடியிருப்பாளர்களுக்குப் பின்னால் திரண்ட நமது பங்காளர்கள் அனைவருக்கும் நான் நன்றி கூறுகிறேன். நாம் அனைவரும் ஒன்றிணைந்து, உதவி தேவைப்படுபவர்களுக்கு அவர்களின் அன்றாட வாழ்க்கையில் மாற்றத்தை ஏற்படுத்த பரிசுகளை வழங்கினோம். உதாரணமாக, பெண்கள் ப்ரிகேட் ஃப்ரெண்ட் இன் டீட் முனைப்பானது பராமரிப்புப் பொதிகளை வழங்கியது மற்றும் குறைந்த வருமானம் கொண்ட குடும்பங்களுக்குத் தனிப்பயனாக்கப்பட்ட படிப்புத் தளபாடங்களை வழங்கியது, மேலும் P&G உடனான இல்ல மேம்பாட்டுத் திட்டம் எளிதில் பாதிக்கப்படும் நிலையில் உள்ள குடியிருப்பாளர்களுக்கு வீட்டு உபயோகப் பொருட்களையும், அத்தியாவசிய உபகரணங்களையும் வழங்கியது.

நமது மாவட்டத்தில் அதிக நிலைத்தன்மையை ஊக்குவித்து வளர்க்க, நாம் புக்கிட் பாத்தோக் அடித்தள அமைப்புகள் மற்றும் சிங்கப்பூர் ஸ்விடிஷ் வர்த்தக சபை ஆகியவற்றுடன் கூட்டிணைந்து கிரீன் இன்னொவேஷன் சென்டரைத் தொடங்கினோம். இந்தப் பசுமை முயற்சியானது சிறு, நடுத்தரத் தொழில் நிறுவனங்கள் (SMEகள்) மற்றும் பன்னாட்டுப் பெருநிறுவனங்களின் (MNCகள்) கூட்டு நிபுணத்துவத்தை ஒன்றிணைத்து நீடித்து நிலைக்கத்தக்க நடைமுறைகள் மற்றும் தொழில்நுட்பங்களை புக்கிட் பாத்தோக்கில் உள்ள புகழ்பெற்ற சமூகப் பூங்காவான காஸி கார்டனில் அறிமுகப்படுத்தியது. 3Pகளான - மக்கள், தனியார் மற்றும் பொதுத் துறைகளுக்கு (People, Private and Public sectors) இடையிலான இந்தக் கூட்டு முயற்சியானது, பசுமையான மற்றும் மேலும் உயிர்த்துடிப்பான தென்மேற்கு மாவட்டத்தை உருவாக்க ஒவ்வொருவரும் எவ்வாறு பங்கு வகிக்கலாம் என்பதை வெளிப்படுத்துகிறது.

இந்த ஆண்டு, நமது வருடாந்திர Festive Cheers @ South West -இல் 70 பெருநிறுவன மற்றும் சமூகப் பங்காளர்கள் பங்கேற்றனர், அவர்கள் \$850,000 -ஐ ரொக்கமாகவும் பொருட்களாகவும் பங்களித்தனர். எல்மிச் மற்றும் நேச்சர் லேண்ட்ஸ்கேப்ஸ் ஆகிய பங்காளர்களுடன் கூட்டிணைந்து, நாம் 150 முதியவர்களுக்கு அவர்கள் விரும்பிய பரிசுகளை Grant-A-Wish @ South West முனைப்பின் கீழ் வழங்கினோம். நமது பங்காளர்கள் மற்றும் தொண்டுழியர்கள் அனைவருக்கும் அவர்களின் தாராள மனப்பான்மை மற்றும் நேரத்திற்கு மிகவும் நன்றி தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறேன்.

நாம் அனைவரும் ஒன்றிணைந்து முன்னேறும்போது, தென்மேற்கு மாவட்டத்தை அக்கறையுள்ள மற்றும் அனைவருக்கும் சமவாய்ப்புள்ள மாவட்டமாக மாற்றுவதற்கு நாம் அனைவரும் இதயப்பூர்வமாக ஒன்றிணைவோம்.

亲爱的朋友们，

在欢庆新加坡58岁生日之际，我们庆祝了我国的独立。今年的欢庆时时刻刻提醒我们如何团结一致，在疫情后变得更加强大。

我要感谢所有合作伙伴们齐心协力，向需要援助的居民伸出援手，改善他们的日常生活。例如，“女少年旅友谊之手”（Girls’ Brigade Friend In Deed）计划向低收入家庭派发爱心礼包，和提供特制的书房家具。此外，与宝洁公司合作的“家居改进计划”也为弱势居民提供家居用品和电器。

为了推动本区的可持续发展，我们与武吉巴督基层组织及新加坡瑞典商会合作，推出了绿化创新园（Green Innovation Centre）。这项计划汇集了中小型企业及跨国公司的专才，为武吉巴督具有标志性的社区花园引进可持续发展的实践方式和技术，这项结合民众、私人与公共领域的计划，显示大家都可以尽一份力，打造一个更绿化，更有活力的西南区。

今年，70企业与社区伙伴参与了“欢庆佳节在西南”的活动。他们捐出了总值\$850,000的现金和实物捐款。通过“西南愿望实现计划”（Grant-A-Wish @ South West），我们与Elmich及Nature Landscapes两家公司合作，为150名年长者赠送了他们期待的礼物。非常感谢所有的合作伙伴及义工们的慷慨解囊与付出。

让我们携手共进，将西南区打造成一个更充满爱心与包容性的社区。

A season of giving brings joy to Chua Chu Kang seniors

THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF SOUTH WEST CDC'S PARTNERS — ELMICH AND NATURE LANDSCAPES — 150 ELDERLY BENEFICIARIES HAD THEIR WISHES FULFILLED WITH SPECIALLY CUSTOMISED GIFTS.



Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Trade and Industry and Adviser to Chua Chu Kang GRC GROs, and Ms Low Yen Ling, Mayor of South West District, presenting a resident with an electric oven.

HUA CHU KANG RESIDENT MR WONG CHIONG FOO had one simple wish: A food steamer to make meal preparation easier for his wife, who had suffered a stroke. With the Grant-A-Wish @ South West initiative, his wish came true. "It feels good to receive the steamer," said the 74-year-old, who is his wife's primary caregiver. "Now I can replace the old one, and I am very satisfied."

Festive Cheers @ South West 2022 concluded in March 2023 with the Grant-A-Wish @ South West initiative with Elmich and Nature Landscapes, where 150 seniors in Chua Chu Kang received customised gifts of their choice. The gifts were sponsored and curated by Elmich Pte Ltd and Nature Landscapes Pte Ltd, and included communication devices, health and mobility aids, and household items.

Joining the festivities were Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Trade and Industry and Adviser to Chua Chu Kang GRC Grassroots Organisations, and Ms Low Yen Ling, Mayor of South West District.

Together with around 50 volunteers from the two partner organisations, they distributed gifts to the senior beneficiaries.

This effort was part of the broader Festive Cheers @ South West 2022 programme, which included the participation of 1,000 volunteers from 70 corporate partners. In total, \$850,000 in cash and in-kind donations were given — a 25 per cent increase from the previous year — benefitting 8,000 vulnerable households.

GIFTS TO IMPROVE DAILY LIFE

With the assistance of grassroots organisations, the Grant-A-Wish @ South West initiative identified more than 600 beneficiaries in the district. The beneficiaries chose gifts that would best improve their daily lives, including vacuum cleaners, fans, food blenders and blood pressure monitors.

Highlighting the importance of the event, Mr Gan said: "The Grant-A-Wish @ South West initiative goes beyond meeting the needs of the

Festive Cheers @ South West 2022

BY THE NUMBERS

\$850,000

in cash and in-kind donations received, an increase of **25%** from the previous year.

1,000

volunteers from **70** corporate and community partners.

8,000

vulnerable households helped.



Blenders, steamers, toaster ovens and standing fans sponsored by Elmich and Nature Landscapes were among the items chosen by the beneficiaries.



Staff volunteers from Elmich distributing a bread toaster to a resident



Minister Gan and Mayor Low joined 50 volunteers from Elmich and Nature Landscapes in the distribution of gifts.



A resident receiving a standing fan he had wished for from Nature Landscapes staff volunteers.



Minister Gan and Mayor Low distributed gifts to senior beneficiaries in Chua Chu Kang.

seniors. It brings joy to them and helps strengthen the unity and resilience of the community."

Residents like Mr Wong and 66-year-old Mdm Sarojah d/o Vengadasamy expressed gratitude for the support they received from the CDC and its partners. Mdm Sarojah, who chose a mobile phone, said, "I will gladly use what is given to me, and it is like a blessing when we are given items we do not already have."

CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS AND PARTNERS

Demonstrating its commitment to the community, Nature Landscapes participated in Festive Cheers @ South West for the third year. "It is very fulfilling to see residents beaming when they see us," said Mr Michael Teh, Managing Director of Nature Landscapes. He added that the gifts had been tailored to meet the residents' specific needs. "The gifts are something they chose for themselves, and it is more fulfilling to be given something they wished for."

Mayor Low also shared her appreciation for the partners' ongoing commitment. "I am very heartened that our partners not only continue to set aside resources to support the less fortunate but also continue to encourage their employees to step forward to do their part for the community," she said. "Their dedication, time and door-to-door distribution efforts exemplify the spirit of giving back and our shared wish that no one gets left behind." **B**



Built to uplift

Some 90 youths from the Girls' Brigade Singapore participated in this year's initiative.

THIS YEAR'S GIRLS' BRIGADE FRIEND IN DEED INITIATIVE SAW IDENTIFIED HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVE CUSTOM HANDMADE FURNITURE, THANKS TO A PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL CARPENTRY STUDIO ROGER&SONS.

MDM NURUL HABIBAH BINTE BAHARUN'S DAUGHTER STRUGGLED TO COMPLETE HER HOMEWORK. Sitting on the floor with books spread out around her, she would try her best to concentrate amid the playful antics of her younger siblings. She longed for a proper table and chair to study.

Her wish was granted when local carpenter Roger&Sons crafted a furniture set for the family, using wood salvaged from local trees felled for urban development. "I feel so happy to receive this gift as it will help my children to focus and do better in their studies," said Mdm Nurul, 34, who has seven children aged between six months and 11 years old.

The contribution was part of South West Community Development Council's (CDC) Home Improvement Project that provided 30 families with sustainable, bespoke furniture for their children's education.

MOBILISING YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

Bolstering the initiative was the Girls' Brigade (GB) Singapore, which – as part of its annual Girls' Brigade Friend in Deed



Mdm Halimah Yacob, Mayor Low and Ms Sharon Liat, President of the Girls' Brigade Singapore (far right), joining a resident in completing her bespoke bench.

(GBFD) volunteer project – deployed 90 girls who visited the residents to identify their specific needs. After taking measurements for the furniture, the girls participated in workshops conducted by Roger&Sons to learn how to assemble the pieces, which they then delivered to each household.



The Girls' Brigade girls helped to assemble furniture as well as presented gifts, including school essentials and home appliances, to the residents.



Mayor Low with a Girls' Brigade Singapore volunteer and resident.



Girls from the Girls' Brigade Singapore doing their part for the community (this photo and right).

"This year, we met the beneficiaries face-to-face to better understand how they conduct their daily lives," said GB volunteer Trinity Leong. The 12-year-old finds it meaningful to create bespoke furniture from felled trees as "it is like giving the wood a new lease of life".

The third run of GBFD was launched by Mdm Halimah Yacob, Eighth President of the Republic of Singapore; Ms Low Yen Ling, Mayor of South West District; Ms Sharon Liat, President of Girls' Brigade Singapore; and Ms Christine Lim, Principal of Boon Lay Garden Primary School. The special guests joined the GB girls and student recipients in putting the finishing touches to their new handmade chairs. Ms Liat shared that the project was birthed during the pandemic in 2021, when they explored innovative ways to provide a loving, human touch to the community beyond large-scale gatherings.

The initiative was commended by Ms Low, who noted its ability to draw the community closer. "This effort gives the girls and furniture makers a chance to understand up close the constraints and challenges faced by low-income families, and the opportunity to make a difference with their skills and creative solutions. It also demonstrates the community's heartfelt commitment and collective action to uplift fellow Singaporeans and leave no one behind," said Ms Low.

WISH FULFILMENT

GBFD 2023 aims to fulfil some 3,000 wishes of disadvantaged families – 570 of whom are from South West District – through thoughtfully selected gifts worth up to \$180,000. Residents received items ranging from home essentials and appliances such as bedsheets and electric kettles, to health and wellness



Ms Kalvinder Jitkaur and daughter at the gift presentation ceremony with Mdm Halimah Yacob, Mayor Low and Ms Sharon Liat.

equipment, including blood pressure monitors and mobility aids, as well as school supplies. Mdm Halimah Yacob presented the first wishes to families at the launch.

Among the recipients was Ms Kalvinder Jitkaur, 35, whose daughter received a custom-made study chair. "I also appreciate the bag of groceries, which contain my children's favourite food items. These will help to offset my monthly household expenses," she said, adding that she hopes her two children, aged five and 11, will grow up to make meaningful contributions to society. 



Mayor Low viewing Midea's smart appliances (this photo and right).



Midea Singapore contributed appliances to five eldercare centres in South West District.



Midea's latest advancements incorporate technologies such as Artificial Intelligence.

All hands on tech

MIDEA SINGAPORE DONATED ESSENTIAL HOME APPLIANCES TO HELP ENHANCE THE LIVES OF SENIORS IN THE SOUTH WEST DISTRICT.

THE BALLROOM OF SHANGRI-LA SINGAPORE WAS ABUZZ WITH EXCITEMENT, AS ELECTRONICS FIRM MIDEA SINGAPORE MARKED ITS 15TH ANNIVERSARY WITH A GRAND CELEBRATION.

The event showcased the latest advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology deployed in the manufacturer's smart appliances. On display were a standing air-conditioner that regulates temperature, wind speed, humidity and air quality; and a washing machine that comes with a detachable robot vacuum cleaner suitable for those with mobility issues.

In line with their vision to uplift the community, Midea Singapore donated essential home appliances to five eldercare centres in the South West District, namely Jamiyah Nursing Home, Ren Ci @ Bukit Batok, St Luke's Eldercare, NTUC Health Nursing Home (Jurong Spring) and NTUC Health Nursing Home (Jurong West). This is the second year that Midea Singapore is partnering Singapore

University of Social Sciences in contributing towards the care of seniors in the community.

In 2022, Midea Singapore donated a range of home equipment, including air purifiers, washing machines and cooking appliances, to four eldercare centres and nursing homes in South West District to support their daily operations.

UPLIFTING THE LIVES OF SENIORS

In his opening address, Mr Jackie Huang, Regional General Manager, Midea Group Asia Pacific Region, highlighted the company's commitment to giving back to society. "In Singapore, we have actively participated in various charity, community, and sustainable development activities. We believe that for everyone to prosper, we first need to have a harmonious society," he said.

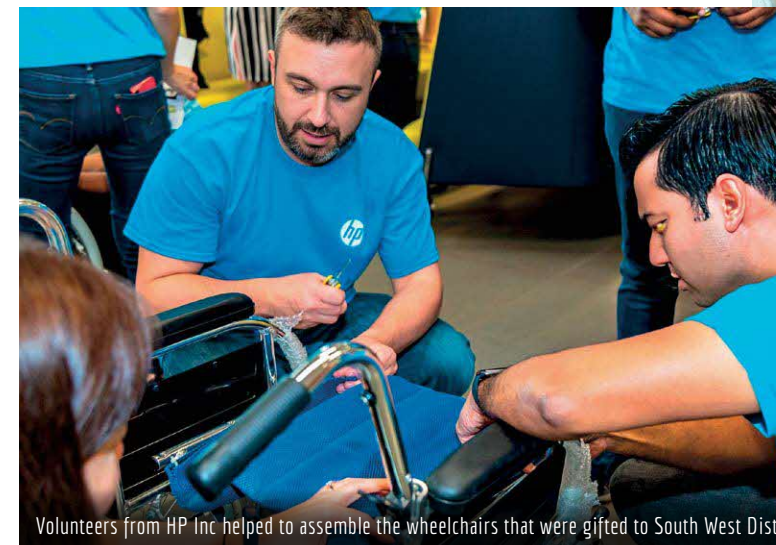
The event was graced by Ms Low Yen Ling, Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry & Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, and Mayor of South West District.

Expressing her appreciation towards Midea Singapore for their generosity and support in making a tangible difference to the community, Ms Low said, "Singapore is slated to become a super-aged society by 2026. By 2030, one in four citizens will be aged 65 and above, up from one in six now. As the needs of caring for our older persons continue to grow, we hope that different members of society, including businesses, will lend a hand and chip in to uplift the vulnerable among us."

This year, the centres got to choose from a wish list of 15 appliances including robot vacuum cleaners, refrigerators and water dispensers with purifiers. "We trust that the appliances will come in handy to support the well-being of our seniors and help the centres in caring for their elderly residents," said Ms Low. **B**

Enhancing seniors' quality of life

HP INC'S DONATION OF WHEELCHAIRS TO SOUTH WEST DISTRICT EMPOWERS SENIORS WITH GREATER ACCESSIBILITY.



Volunteers from HP Inc helped to assemble the wheelchairs that were gifted to South West District residents.



VULNERABLE SENIORS FROM SOUTH WEST DISTRICT CAN NOW ENJOY GREATER EASE OF MOBILITY,

thanks to a wheelchair donation by information technology firm HP Inc. The initiative was started during a brainstorming session where HP employees looked for ways to positively impact the lives of residents in need. It sparked an idea from finance analyst Ms Christine Kit, whose daughter had shared with her about the lack of wheelchairs for seniors at an elderly care centre where she was doing her internship.

Ms Kit's idea was accepted by the team and they quickly started work. "We understand that residents

from low-income families may not be able to afford wheelchairs, so we thought this initiative could help them with their mobility issues," said Ms Bengkhim Teoh, Vice President - Global Supply Chain Print Finance at HP Inc Singapore.

A WIN-WIN PARTNERSHIP

Ms Kit's team procured eight wheelchairs, which cost about \$280 each, before proceeding to assemble their non-critical components. The rest of the work was handled by the wheelchair vendor. Following a safety inspection, the wheelchairs were delivered to South West CDC, to be used by residents in need.

"Putting together the wheelchairs is a team-building activity that can foster a sense of unity, purpose and empathy while making a positive impact on the community," said Ms Teoh. "It is also a great way to promote social responsibility within the department while at the same time strengthening relationships among team members," she added, saying that it was a win-win partnership between the community and her company.

This is not the first time HP has reached out to seniors in the South West. In February, some 50 HP volunteers organised a party for seniors living in Telok Blangah, under the Festive Cheers @ South West programme.

Moving forward, Ms Teoh said that HP will continue to work closely with South West CDC to identify potential areas where they can contribute to the community. **B**



The wheelchair components had to be assembled by hand.

An eco-vision comes to life in Bukit Batok

THE PILOT GREEN INNOVATION CENTRE IS A MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING, THANKS TO A COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS AND THE COMMUNITY.

IMAGINE A LUSH COMMUNAL SPACE, teeming with eco-innovations to guide residents towards a greener lifestyle. That's what you will find at the new Green Innovation Centre at Bukit Batok Zone 2 Residents' Network Cosy Garden. Behind Block 106, Bukit Batok Central, residents can now experience more sustainable habits for themselves, from irrigating plants using rainwater to mastering hydroponic gardening techniques.

A favourite spot for Bukit Batok residents and green thumbs for over a decade, the award-winning Cosy Garden has blossomed into a 10,000-sq-ft eco-friendly oasis over the years. The Green Innovation Centre is the first-of-its-kind in the district and is a collaboration between the South West Community Development Council (CDC), Bukit Batok Grassroots Organisations (GROs) and the Swedish Chamber of Commerce Singapore (SwedCham).

The Green Innovation Centre was unveiled by Ms Low Yen Ling, Mayor of South West District; Mr Murali Pillai, Adviser to Bukit Batok GROs; Ms Jenny Egermark, Chargé d'affaires, Embassy of Sweden; Mr Emil Akandar, Trade Commissioner to Singapore & Vice President, Business Sweden and representatives from SwedCham; as well as volunteers from schools and Bukit Batok GROs. At the event, Ms Low highlighted the importance of working collectively towards a greener future. "The launch of our joint initiative today demonstrates the collaborative power of the 3Ps — People, Public and Private — coming together to drive and promote greater sustainability in the heartlands," she said.



The Green Innovation Centre harnesses the joint efforts of the people, public and private sectors.



Sustainable technologies include a rainwater harvesting system by local firm Hydro Dynamic Engineering.



In the heart of the community garden, volunteers nurture an array of vegetables and plants.

model of sustainability, inspiring residents to adopt more eco-friendly practices at home.

Ms Low explained that the Green Innovation Centre aligns with the Singapore Green Plan 2030's goal to advance sustainable development and the Sustainable South West Master Plan's aim to nurture an environmentally conscious community. "We hope this successful initiative will serve as a blueprint for more such community gardens in our district as we work towards shaping a greener and more sustainable Singapore," she said.

President of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce Singapore and Vice-President of Atlas Copco Holding SEA & Oceania, Mr Horst Wasel, shared Ms Low's sentiment. "At the heart of this project is the firm belief in partnerships to drive change," he said. "We will only manage to build a sustainable future by coming together. Individually, we can take small steps, but when we do it side by side with others, we have the opportunity to make more meaningful change. This is about setting an example of how businesses, governments and people can join forces to make a tangible difference."

A VERDANT DISPLAY OF INNOVATION

At the event, more than 100 guests took a tour of the Green Innovation Centre at Cosy Garden, where they were introduced to innovative sustainable technologies by local and international companies. The garden now hosts 10 experiential stations where visitors can explore

a host of sustainable concepts, including smart pest control, therapeutic gardening and circular solutions that encourage reuse and recycling.

Take, for instance, the closed-loop energy system in which energy is continuously recycled and reused, resulting in minimal or no waste. This is achieved through solutions such as a rainwater harvesting system devised by local water storage company Hydro Dynamic Engineering, and solar technology from local and Swedish renewable energy firms 10 Degree Solar and Nojdhs Technologies respectively.

SwedCham's General Manager, Ms Lisa Ferreton, said such collaborations between companies can foster an exchange of ideas, mutual learning and motivation for wider action. "It is so important that big and small companies work together, because sometimes the best solutions do not come from companies that are hundreds of years old, but from start-ups within the community," she added.

Another feature reflecting the merits of merging expertise is the garden's reusable outdoor living room, which was fashioned from discarded scaffolding poles by local circular design social enterprise reXtore, along with a polyaluminium roof made from used beverage cans by Swedish packaging giant Tetra Pak.

NEW WAYS OF LIVING

The Green Innovation Centre's campaign to spread environmental awareness does not stop at Cosy Garden. Following the launch, the Centre will host community workshops to familiarise residents with concepts such as packaging recycling and managing food waste.

Already, the initiative's positive impact has been felt by the community. Long-time volunteer gardener, Mdm Lee May La, shared that it has made sustainable technology more accessible to seniors. With the new rainwater harvesting system, the 68-year-old — who grows edible crops such as Indian lettuce, Chinese mustard leaves and chilli padi in the garden — no longer needs to collect water in a pail for the plants. "The garden's new high-tech features have drawn curious residents and grown our community of gardeners, thus strengthening our bonds," said Mdm Lee, who has tended to Cosy Garden for 12 years.

The Green Innovation Centre is poised to be a hub of sustainable activity and learning. Ms Low shared that the space could also catalyse environmentally friendly behaviours in the young and old. "If they adopt an eco-friendly approach from a young age, it will stay with them throughout their adult lives," she said. "That is the best gift for our residents here at South West District." **B**



"The launch of our joint initiative today demonstrates the collaborative power of the 3Ps — People, Public and Private — coming together to drive and promote greater sustainability in the heartlands."

Ms Low Yen Ling
Mayor of South West District

"This is about setting an example of how businesses, governments and people can join forces to make a tangible difference."

Mr Horst Wasel
President of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce Singapore and Vice-President of Atlas Copco Holding SEA & Oceania



Community gardeners Mdm Lee May La and Mr Richard Ashworth (both in red) grow a variety of vegetables using hydroponic farming.

Admiring the ingenuity on display after a tour of the rejuvenated Cosy Garden, which began as a tiny plot nearly 30 years ago, Mr Murali shared how residents can make an impact at the community level. "Bukit Batok GROs have been working closely with community partners in championing green initiatives and creating awareness in environmental sustainability," he said. "We are thankful to have SwedCham and South West CDC partner us to implement various green innovative solutions in Cosy Garden to complement our efforts under the Bukit Batok Green Plan."

MAKING POSITIVE IMPACT AS A SOCIETY

The Green Innovation Centre is the culmination of efforts by close to 30 partners — including Bukit Batok residents, student volunteers from Bukit Batok Secondary and Queenstown Secondary, small- and medium-sized local enterprises, and 13 Swedish multinational corporations that sponsored the initiative. Together, they have turned the existing Cosy Garden into a living

Other features at the Green Innovation Centre

► **Low-carbon concrete pathways:**
Made from a durable, low-carbon concrete developed by local enterprise Pan-United Corporation, the pathways were also widened for improved accessibility for wheelchair users.



► **Hydroponic farming:**
Nutrient-rich water is circulated through an intricate network of pipes built by resident volunteers and corporate partners.



► **Composting:**
The Cosy Garden community creates its own plant fertilisers using waste, such as fruit peel, from the nearby wet market.

► **Therapeutic gardening:**
A space that promotes physical and mental well-being for all ages and abilities.



► **Green and smart community:**
A smart energy solution ensures uninterrupted power supply to the koi fishpond pump and other garden features, in case of grid power failures.



► **Smart rodent trap:**
A remote-controlled trap uses electric current — not harmful chemicals that could hurt people or the environment — to eliminate rodents.





More than 50 SMF and grassroots volunteers participated in the distribution of the care packs.



Care packs consisted of a mix of food and non-food items.



Jobseeker Mr Yeo Leng Chew (fourth from left) and Ms Rachel Ong (in white), Adviser to Telok Blangah Grassroots Organisations.

A win-win situation

JOB FAIRS ORGANISED BY SOUTH WEST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OFFER JOBSEEKERS A WIDE RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES WHILE CONNECTING EMPLOYERS TO A DIVERSE POOL OF CANDIDATES.

A chance to give back again

VOLUNTEERS FROM THE SINGAPORE MANUFACTURING FEDERATION PASSIONATELY GAVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY AT A CARE PACK DISTRIBUTION DRIVE FOR BUKIT GOMBAK RESIDENTS.

VOLUNTEERS PUT IN A LOT OF LEGWORK TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY. This was evident when 50 Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF) and grassroots volunteers distributed care packs to the households in Bukit Gombak. They were joined by Mayor of South West District, Ms Low Yen Ling, and SMF President, Mr Lennon Tan.

Sponsored by first-time partner SMF, the care packs were distributed as part of the Adopt @ South West programme. Volunteer Leong Mun Yin, a member of SMF's Centre for Corporate Learning, enthusiastically shared, "I enjoyed my first care pack distribution with the South West CDC in September and was raring for another opportunity to give back, so I was very excited to sign up for this one. Distributing the care packs to residents and interacting with them, no matter how briefly, is a special opportunity."

Residents also welcomed these thoughtful moments, often inviting volunteers inside to share a drink. Said 73-year-old resident Mdm Ng May Chan, "I live alone, so it is always nice to make a



Mayor Low and Mr Lennon Tan, President of the SMF, joined volunteers in the door-to-door distribution.

new friend. The volunteers are very approachable, and I enjoyed talking to them."

This companionship was just as welcome as the contents of the care pack. Each care pack was worth more than \$40 and went towards defraying the cost of living. They contained food items, such as rice and cooking oil, and non-food items like dishwashing detergent and toothpaste. Mdm Ng said, "I never married, and I do not have children. But events like this remind us that we are not alone and make us feel that we are taken care of."

BY YOUR SIDE

That message of caring for the community was what the South West CDC and SMF wanted to share with residents. Mayor Low said, "These care packs will not only help the households defray some household expenses, but also bring them much cheer and comfort that the community is there for them."

Mr Tan added, "As we go about distributing the care packs, we aim to do so with genuine love and sincerity. I hope that the care packs we distributed put a smile on the faces of the residents and bring warmth to their hearts."

One resident who would agree is Mdm Sarojini Devi, who also enjoyed the camaraderie and the care packs. The 75-year-old had spent most of October sprucing up her home for Deepavali, which she celebrated in full swing for the first time since the pandemic. "This pack will be of great help to my family," said the part-time office clerk as she warmly asked volunteers if they had had their lunch.

Since its launch in 2007, the flagship Adopt @ South West programme has benefitted more than 8,000 households in the district every year. **B**



The distribution drive marked SMF's first partnership with the South West CDC.

MR YEO LENG CHEW HAS FACED NUMEROUS CHALLENGES IN LIFE. After being diagnosed with glaucoma and losing his vision in one eye, he was retrenched in 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the setbacks, Mr Yeo remained positive and proactive in his job search, and visited a recent job fair organised by South West Community Development Council (CDC) and online job portal goodjobs.

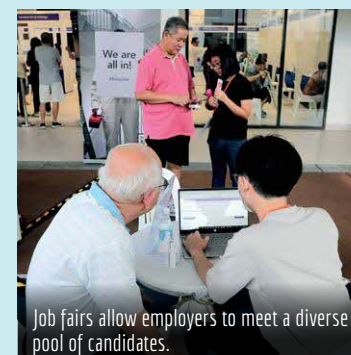
"Even though I have been unemployed since 2019, I am determined to find a job and start a new chapter in my life. I want to provide my elderly mother with more financial support," said Mr Yeo, who applied for an F&B service crew position with a fast-food chain at the fair. The event, held at Telok Blangah Community Club on 4 May, was graced by Ms Rachel Ong, Adviser to Telok Blangah Grassroots Organisations.

Mr Yeo has not received a job offer from the fast-food chain, but the 62-year-old says attending job fairs has helped him to better understand what potential employers are seeking.

"I hope they would give me a fair chance and evaluate me based on my abilities and experience," said Mr Yeo.

One company that acknowledges the value of inclusivity is Paradise Group, which participated in the job fair. Its employees, according to Mr Simon Ho, HR business partner lead at Paradise Group, include an 80-year-old woman who supports her brother.

"Many people have the misconception that the F&B industry is fast-paced and involves long hours on your feet and carrying heavy things — that turns a lot of people off. But we have no boundaries when it comes to hiring," shared Mr Ho.



Job fairs allow employers to meet a diverse pool of candidates.



Employers, including tech companies, participated in the job fair.



Employers pre-screening candidates at the job fair.



Recent polytechnic graduate Mr Lerwin Loh (right) sees job fairs as an accessible alternative to interviews in a corporate environment.

REACHING OUT TO A BROADER TALENT POOL

Apart from being a useful resource for jobseekers, the job fairs allow employers such as Mr Ho to pre-screen candidates. If deemed suitable for a position, they are typically referred to the company's headquarters, where a letter of offer can be swiftly issued.

Furthermore, the job fairs are particularly beneficial to those looking to reach out to a diverse range of candidates. For companies such as National University Hospital (NUH), which primarily hires through job portals and recruitment agencies, such fairs are a way to connect with middle-aged and senior jobseekers who may not be as tech-savvy.

NUH senior HR executive Ms Kahmin Chua shared a positive experience at the Telok Blangah job fair, where she met an enthusiastic middle-aged South West resident who applied for the position of patient associate. "He was motivated to give back to the community after a local hospital provided excellent care for his father during a challenging time," said Ms Chua.

OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

For Mr Lerwin Loh, 20, attending such fairs allows him to meet potential employers in a central location. The recent Business and Financial Technology graduate from Nanyang Polytechnic, who will begin serving his National Service in July, is keen on part-time positions as a full stack developer, data analyst or programming teacher to enrich his skills.

He finds interviews in a corporate environment intimidating, so job fairs are a great alternative. "I was surprised to find ACP Computer Training & Consultancy participating in the job fair because such tech companies usually conduct their hiring online," said Mr Loh. Though he discovered that the positions offered by the company were on a full-time basis, he says that the fair has helped him stay updated on the latest jobs and requirements. **B**

It starts at home



Mdm Rumisem and family with Mayor Low, Ms Rachel Ong and the volunteers.



Mayor Low with Ms Rachel Ong and Ms Priyali Kamath (far right).



Mdm Salmah enjoying her new sofa with her son.

THE HOME IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME WITH P&G @ SOUTH WEST SUPPORTED RESIDENTS IN SOLVING THEIR DAILY CHALLENGES, AS WELL AS BROUGHT JOY AND COMFORT TO THEIR LIVES.

M DM SALMAH, 46, underwent a knee operation that left her unable to sit on the floor for extended periods. Her husband, who suffers from a back problem, faces a similar challenge. The couple longed for comfortable seating.

Their wishes were fulfilled through a home improvement programme conducted by Procter & Gamble (P&G) Singapore, in collaboration with South West Community Development Council (CDC). As part of the initiative, they were gifted a three-seater sofa.

"I can now sit comfortably and enjoy precious moments with my loved ones," said Mdm Salmah.

Another family who benefitted from the programme is Mdm Rumisem, 46, who could not afford to provide her four children with the necessary furniture for a conducive study environment. Her husband, who works as a bag valet at Sentosa Golf Club, is the family's sole breadwinner. Thanks to the home improvement programme, Mdm Rumisem's children are now equipped with a bookshelf and study desk sponsored by P&G.

"The desk will enable my children to study more effectively, and they can organise their learning materials using the bookshelf," said Mdm Rumisem.

The furniture has also solved a pain point for 55-year-old Mdm Cheong Poh Yeen and her family, who received a bookshelf to organise her grandchildren's textbooks and her kitchen supplies. "There are five of us staying together, so we would often run out of storage space," said Mdm Cheong, who works as a school bus

assistant to help support her family.

The three families were among 35 households in Telok Blangah who, under the home improvement programme, received bookshelves, mattresses and household appliances such as electric fans. Worth up to \$200, each gift was carefully selected and purchased with the help of P&G staff volunteers, who presented the items to the beneficiaries.

One such volunteer is Mr Aldwin Su, 35, who lent a hand in assembling the bookshelves and delivering the furniture to the families. He said he is glad to help improve living conditions for the residents and positively impact the community.

AN ENDURING PARTNERSHIP FOR GOOD

Started in 2021, when schools adopted home-based learning due to pandemic restrictions, the home improvement programme first addressed the needs of children who lacked proper study furniture. It has helped students from Teck Whye Primary School and Chua Chu Kang Primary School.

The initiative is part of P&G Singapore's ongoing series of contributions to the South West District, which include sponsoring and distributing festive care packs to vulnerable residents. Ms Low Yen Ling, Mayor of South West District, highlighted P&G Singapore's role as a long-standing and valued partner of South West CDC since 2019. "We have worked closely together to uplift and enrich the lives of vulnerable residents in the South West District through initiatives such as the Festive Cheers @ South West programme, the Grant-A-Wish @ South West initiative and providing care packs for migrant workers during the pandemic," shared Ms Low. Ms Rachel Ong, Adviser to the Telok Blangah Grassroots Organisations, commended the meaningful partnership. "Corporates bring with them a wealth of experiences, resources and expertise. I would like to thank P&G Singapore for its strong support and dedication in touching the lives of the vulnerable in the community," added Ms Ong.

Ms Priyali Kamath, Senior Vice President — Skin and Personal Care, Asia Pacific, Middle East & Africa, P&G Singapore, said the company believes in giving back to the local community. "Initiatives like these have helped us to build a stronger connection with the community, and our employees are also more motivated as they are proud to work for a company that is engaged in corporate philanthropy," said Ms Priyali. **B**



The families received household appliances and furniture under the home improvement programme conducted by P&G Singapore and South West CDC.

» Join us in touching the lives of residents! Contact us at southwest_cdc@pa.gov.sg for more information about partnership opportunities with South West CDC.

Health Qigong @ South West
is an initiative by the CDC to encourage active ageing through regular bonding and engagement in qigong.

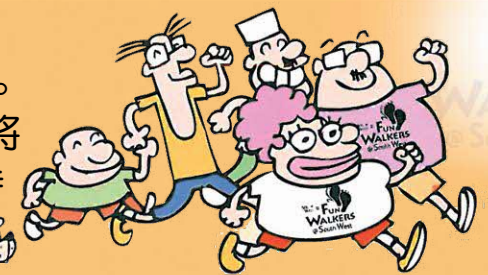


If you are keen to join **Health Qigong @ South West**, please approach your nearest Community Centre/Club (CC) or Residents' Committee (RC) Centre. Should you have any queries, please contact:

South West Community Development Council
Tel: 6316 1616
Email: Southwest_CDC@pa.gov.sg
Website: <https://southwest.cdc.gov.sg/>

Fun Walkers @ South West is part of the CDC's efforts to foster community bonding and build a healthier South West District. **Fun Walkers @ South West** is designed for everyone to participate as a group or individual. You can look forward to regular walking sessions in the community, embark on unique nature trails with your family and friends, and take part in community events.

西南乐乐走是西南社理会通过步行以提倡社区凝聚力及健康社区的活动之一。西南乐乐走是为男女老少而设计的。您将在社区里参加乐乐走活动，并参与独特的步行活动及社理会活动。



If you are keen to join **Fun Walkers Club**, please approach your nearest Community Centre/Club (CC) or Residents' Committee (RC) Centre. Should you have any queries, please contact:
欲知详情，请联络：
South West Community Development Council
西南社区发展理事会
Tel: 6316 1616 Fax: 6316 7250
Email: Southwest_CDC@pa.gov.sg
Website: <https://southwest.cdc.gov.sg/>



THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC WAS CHALLENGING FOR MANY SINGAPOREANS, INCLUDING MDM ANITA BINTE MAULANA. It was during this period of uncertainty that the 42-year-old became the sole breadwinner for her family of 10, after her husband met with a severe accident. She struggled to cope with their household expenses.

Thankfully, they received a helping hand through the South West Community Development Council's (CDC) Food Connect @ South West programme, which supports residents with monthly food packs containing items such as rice and oil. Household essential items were also provided on a bi-annual basis.

The initiative is supported by corporate partner, Siltronic Singapore. Since 2021, the semiconductor manufacturer has contributed more than \$1.7 million towards programmes to uplift disadvantaged residents.

Mr Niew Bock Cheng, President of Siltronic Singapore, shares that his organisation was spurred to help the community after noticing how much the pandemic had impacted low-income residents. "We know that there are existing programmes to help these residents, but we also feel that we can offer other forms of assistance. These efforts, however small, will certainly make a difference in the lives of families," said Mr Niew.

A TEAM EFFORT

At the heart of Siltronic Singapore's contributions to South West CDC, is its belief in the power of rallying its employees to effect positive change. The company's clear corporate social responsibility charter has set the precedent for its wide-reaching community work, which is carried out in Germany, the United States and Singapore.

"We believe that apart from making a difference to the families, these small contributions will certainly inspire our employees to do more community work," said Mr Niew.

Another programme that Siltronic Singapore supports is My Schooling Needs @ South West, which provides selected kindergarten students who are transitioning to primary school with school bags, schooling essentials and bookstore vouchers.

The school bags were packed by 26 volunteers from Siltronic Singapore and subsequently distributed to the preschools to support more than 600 preschoolers.



Mayor Low and Mr Niew Bock Cheng (back row, second from left) with students from PCF Sparkletots preschool in Bukit Gombak.



Volunteers helped to distribute food packs to residents.

Ms Low Yen Ling, Mayor of South West District, joined Mr Niew and his team to present the school bags to students from PCF Sparkletots preschool in Bukit Gombak, as part of the programme.

The event proved to be as rewarding for the beneficiaries as it was for the staff volunteers from Siltronic Singapore. "It was a meaningful experience helping to pack and distribute the bags to the children. Such initiatives are a great opportunity to do our part in spreading joy within this close-knit community, as well as get better acquainted with our colleagues outside of work," said Ms Pearly Tan, Human Resource Director, Siltronic Singapore.



Mr Niew and Mayor Low sharing a light-hearted moment with a young resident and her mother.



Each food pack contained staples such as cereal and oatmeal.

For Mr Niew, one of the event's highlights was seeing the smiling faces of the students and their parents as they received the bags. "Witnessing their happiness has inspired me to do more," said Mr Niew, who plans to rope in more volunteers from his company to help distribute food to residents under the Food Connect @ South West initiative.

The enduring partnership between Siltronic Singapore and South West CDC once again highlights the important role that corporate partners play in building a resilient community.



Volunteers presenting the food pack to a family.



Staff volunteers from Siltronic Singapore had the opportunity to bond with their colleagues while helping the community.



Volunteers from Siltronic Singapore preparing the school bags.

Making a difference to the community

SILTRONIC SINGAPORE UPLIFTED SOUTH WEST DISTRICT RESIDENTS THROUGH TWO ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES.



Join us in touching the lives of residents!
Contact us at southwest_cdc@pa.gov.sg for more information about partnership opportunities with South West CDC.

Making a difference from the ground up



您对武吉巴督有什么规划?

我们在去年宣布了五年总体规划发展计划，重心在于确保武吉巴督继续充满活力，实现便捷的交通连接性、翻新游乐场所，让不同年龄层的人都可以乐享其中。

您的灵感来自哪里?

我常常会在走路的时候获得灵感。我还喜欢使用 Libby应用程序来阅读书籍。但是，这些想法并非凭空想象。这些意见都是武吉巴督的居民们提出的。我们逐一讨论，然后将它们整合在一起。正是这种密切合作的伙伴关系使这个规划变得特别。

您最喜欢这里的什么地方?

我喜欢沿着富士山丘公园的木板步道散步。它的独特设计方案受到了武吉巴督居民的影响，居民们想要保持山体的自然形态，而不是挖掘造成破坏，因此就建造了这些木板步道。去那里的最佳时间是傍晚，那时你会看到很多孩子们开心地在两层高的滑梯上玩耍。



Mr Murali Pillai enjoying an old-school game of marbles with residents at Bukit Batok Family Day.

What are your plans for Bukit Batok?

The five-year master plan announced last year focuses on ensuring the vibrancy and connectivity within Bukit Batok, rejuvenating playgrounds, and making sure that grandparents, parents and children can enjoy themselves.

What inspires you?

I get my best ideas when I walk. I also enjoy reading books through the National Library app, Libby. But all the ideas for the master plan were not taken off the top of my head. Every single idea was contributed by Bukit Batok residents. We distilled and put them together. And it's this partnership that makes the plan special.

What is your favourite spot in the area?

I like to take walks along the Fuji Hill Park boardwalk. Its unique design was influenced by a group of Bukit Batok residents, who wanted to keep the hill's natural form, so we built the boardwalks without digging into it. The best time to go is in the evening because you'll find happy children playing at the playground with its two-storey slide.

I F YOU ARE A BUKIT BATOK RESIDENT, you might have chanced upon Mr Murali Pillai enjoying his favourite vegetarian carrot cake at Block 166 or taking an evening stroll along the boardwalk of Fuji Hill. Having served as a volunteer in Bukit Batok since 2000, the estate has become a second home to him.

MR MURALI PILLAI, ADVISER TO BUKIT BATOK GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS, SHARES WHY HE HOLDS THE ESTATE FIRMLY IN HIS HEART.

A lawyer by profession, Mr Murali was invited to become a volunteer in Bukit Batok more than two decades ago after providing pro bono legal advice to a resident. Being a self-made man from humble beginnings, he saw this as a good opportunity to give back to society.

"My late father was a security guard," Mr Murali reflected. "We were raised in a one-room flat at the PUB (Public Utilities Board) quarters. After that, we moved to a three-room flat in Sembawang. I was a police officer before joining the legal profession. I am deeply grateful to the country for the opportunities I got along the way."

COCONUT THEORIES, GREEN FINGERS AND THE BEST COMMUNITY GARDEN

Mr Murali has served in Bukit Batok for more than 23 years. As Adviser to Bukit Batok Grassroots

Organisations, he has helmed the rejuvenation of the estate, enhancing various amenities and constructing sheltered walkways and drop-off points to connect blocks and neighbourhoods.

It is no wonder Mr Murali feels passionately for Bukit Batok. He even enjoys spirited debates about the origins of its name. "My favourite theory is that 'Batok' is Javanese for 'coconut' because there was a Javanese village in Bukit Batok at the turn of the 20th century. So, I think it could have been populated with coconuts," he said with a laugh.

He also enthusiastically shared his insights on the area's unique character. "Because many of the people who first settled here from the mid-1980s came from *kampungs*, they had green fingers," he said. "Thanks to them, we have one of the best community gardens in Singapore. Our 'Cosy Garden' was initially a barren plot of land between



Mr Murali Pillai joining the festivities at Bukit Batok Christmas Cheer.

blocks. They turned it into a paradise. Today, you can see gardeners watering plants early in the morning. We also have programmes to teach children about the plants, vegetables and fruits in Singapore."

HEARTFELT CONNECTIONS

Mr Murali spoke with pride about the arts and cultural scene within the estate. He praised the West Winds, a well-known orchestra; two Chinese orchestras; a *gamelan* (traditional Indonesian percussion orchestra) ensemble; and a woodcarving interest group that repurposes wood from felled trees — to make way for the MRT lines — and crafts intricate sculptures, including those of the Merlion and orchid plants.

Part of this pride in the estate stems from how

Mr Murali has become an integral part of the community. "Because of the length of my service here, I get to meet and re-meet families and see how they have grown," he mused. "Children have become parents, and parents have become grandparents. So, it is a special moment when I meet three generations of a family, many of whom have kept true to their roots and remained in Bukit Batok."

Mr Murali has also accompanied residents through the most challenging years of the pandemic. "We have had a number of residents who lost their loved ones due to COVID-19," he explained. "To top it all off, it was much more expensive because the undertakers had to take special precautions. I set up a Helping Hands Fund so that each one of these families would get \$3,000 to help

defray the (funeral) costs. It was a gesture to show them that they were not alone — we grieved with them."

PLANTING THE SEEDS OF INCLUSIVITY

Coming from a humble background, Mr Murali also looks out for the underprivileged in other ways. He was instrumental in setting up the Community Job Placement Task Force, linking residents to business owners offering essential jobs.

He also enhanced the food and grocery voucher scheme for those in need. "At Bukit Batok, we are one community helping each other," he said. "The ethos of looking out for your neighbour is built into the DNA of the Bukit Batok resident. I continue to be really touched and wowed by the strong community spirit in my residents, and one of my priorities is to keep the community intact."



Calligraphy writing during the Mid Autumn Festival.

புக்கிட் பாத்தோக்கிற்கான உங்கள் திட்டங்கள் என்ன? கடந்த ஆண்டு அறிவிக்கப்பட்ட ஐந்தாண்டு பெருந்திட்டம், புக்கிட் பாத்தோக்கிற்குள் துடிப்புத்தன்மையையும் இணைப்புத்தன்மையையும் உறுதி செய்வது, விளையாட்டு மைதானங்களுக்கு புத்துயிர் அளிப்பது, மேலும் இவற்றை தாத்தா பாட்டிகளும், பெற்றோர்களும் பிள்ளைகளும் மகிழ்ச்சியாக அனுபவிப்பதை உறுதி செய்வது ஆகியவற்றின் மீது கவனம் செலுத்துகிறது.

உங்களுக்கு உத்வேகம் அளிப்பது எது?

நான் நடக்கும்போது எனது சிறந்த யோசனைகளைப் பெறுகிறேன். லிப்பி (Libby) செயலி மூலம் புத்தகங்களைப் படிப்பதும் எனக்கு பிடிக்கும். ஆனால் பெருந்திட்டத்துக்கான அனைத்து சிந்தனைகளும் என்னிடமிருந்து மட்டும் வந்தவை அல்ல. ஒவ்வொரு சிந்தனையும் புக்கிட் பாத்தோக் குடியிருப்பாளர்களின் பங்களிப்பாகும். நாங்கள் அவற்றிலிருந்து தேர்வு செய்து ஒன்றிணைத்தோம். இந்தப் பங்களித்துவந்தான் இந்தத் திட்டத்திற்கு சிறப்பூட்டுகிறது.

இந்தப் பகுதியில் உங்களுக்கு பிடித்த இடம் எது?

பூஜி ஹில் பार्க் மரப்பால நடைபாதையில் நடப்பது எனக்குப் பிடிக்கும். அதன் தனித்துவமான வடிவமைப்பு புக்கிட் பாத்தோக் குடியிருப்பாளர்களின் பங்களிப்பினால் உருவானது. அவர்கள் மலையின் இயற்கையான வடிவத்தை பராமரிக்க விரும்பினர், எனவே நாங்கள் அதற்குள் தோண்டாமல் மரப்பால நடைபாதைகளைக் கட்டினோம். அங்கே செல்வதற்கு மாலை நேரம் சிறந்தது. ஏனெனில் அப்போது விளையாட்டு மைதானத்தில் இரண்டு மாடி சறுக்கு விளையாட்டில் விளையாடிக் கொண்டிருக்கும் மகிழ்ச்சியான குழந்தைகளை நீங்கள் காணலாம்.

PAINTING A PICTURE OF MR MURALI PILLAI



→ He loves Chinese calligraphy.

"I find it very calming to work with the calligraphy brush and just breathe in and out," Mr Murali said. "I normally do two to three sessions before Chinese New Year and give my calligraphy to residents during the *hongbao* (red packet) presentation, Edusave Award ceremonies or on my walkabouts."



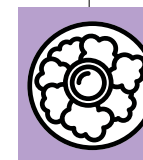
→ He does pro bono legal work.

Despite his hectic schedule as a Grassroots Adviser and a Senior Counsel, Mr Murali carves time out of his busy schedule to help those who cannot afford legal representation. "I am presently representing a person charged with a capital case of drug trafficking," he shared. "It is a high-stakes case because if found guilty, he would be sentenced to death."



→ He is a vegetarian.

Mr Murali became a vegetarian in 2007 to honour his late father. "It is quite common for people in my community to give up something in memory of departed parents," he said. "They form a deep impression in our lives."



→ He loves carrot cake.

"Before I became a vegetarian, I loved carrot cake," he shared. "So, after I turned vegetarian, it was something I missed." He has since discovered the perfect vegetarian carrot cake — without pork lard — at Shu Vegetarian at Block 166, Bukit Batok West Avenue 8.

Apakah rancangan-rancangan anda untuk Bukit Batok?

Pelan utama untuk lima tahun yang telah diumumkan tahun lepas memberi fokus untuk memastikan kerancangan dan ketersambungan di Bukit Batok, memperbaharui taman-taman permainan, dan memastikan datuk, nenek, ibu bapa dan anak-anak boleh berseronok.

Apakah yang memberi inspirasi kepada anda?

Saya mendapat idea-idea yang terbaik semasa saya berjalan-jalan. Saya juga suka membaca buku melalui aplikasi Libby. Tetapi semua idea untuk pelan utama tidak diambil begitu sahaja dari fikiran saya. Setiap idea datang dari penduduk Bukit Batok. Kita kumpulkan dan bincangkan bersama. Dan kerjasama inilah yang menjadikan pelan itu istimewa.

Di manakah tempat kegemaran anda di daerah ini?

Saya suka berjalan-jalan di laluan pejalan kaki di Fuji Hill Park. Rekabentuknya yang unik adalah hasil ilham sekumpulan penduduk Bukit Batok, yang ingin mengekalkan bentuk semula jadi bukit itu. Jadi kami membina laluan pejalan kaki tanpa perlu mengorek ke dalam bukit itu. Masa yang terbaik untuk pergi ke sana adalah pada waktu senja kerana anda akan dapat melihat kanak-kanak dengan bahagianya bermain di taman permainan yang mempunyai papan gelongsor dua tingkat. **B**

When the tables turn: A daughter's experience caring for her elderly parent

A SOUTH WEST RESIDENT SHARES WHAT IT IS LIKE CARING FOR HER ELDERLY MOTHER WITH DEMENTIA WHILE WORKING FULL-TIME AS A NURSE, AND HOW SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



How to *balance* caregiving and work

Tips from Ms Anna Wee on juggling work and caregiving without burning out.

CARING FOR A LOVED ONE WITH A DEBILITATING ILLNESS WHILE JUGGLING A FULL-TIME JOB CAN BE PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY DRAINING. South West resident Anna Wee, a Senior Staff Nurse at Ng Teng Fong General Hospital, knows how daunting it can be and wants to highlight the challenges that caregivers like herself face.

For the past three years, she has been caring for her 76-year-old mother, who has dementia and mobility issues. Ms Wee is single, and they live together in a four-room flat in Jurong West. Her mother's personality and behaviour changed after she developed vascular dementia in 2019 following a stroke, and she was no longer the independent woman who took care of the household.

A DAUGHTER'S STRUGGLE

Due to disruptive and aggressive behaviour, her mother was not suitable to attend a day care facility. Ms Wee had little choice but to monitor her through a video camera during work hours. Her sister, who lives apart, and other relatives often take turns checking in on her mother.

During one incident, after Ms Wee started her work shift, she noticed through the home CCTV that her mother had fallen. "I had to get someone else to check on her," she recounted. "It was heart-breaking as no one could assist her immediately. I wished that I had been there to help her. If it had been a fatal injury, I would blame myself."

There were also days when Ms Wee felt overwhelmed by her caregiving responsibilities. "One day, I felt like I could not take it anymore. All the stress just accumulated, and I did not know who to talk to. That was when I called a dementia helpline to talk to someone and

cry it out," she said, highlighting the importance of caregiver support.

HELP FOR THE CAREGIVERS

Support is vital as the caregiving journey is not a one-person task. For example, Ms Wee's sister, niece and relatives take turns checking in on her mother. Helpful neighbours also keep an eye out for the elderly lady, who sometimes loses her way while wandering around the block.

At work, Ms Wee's colleagues and manager understand her caregiving situation, too. Her request to change her shift schedule was accepted in 2021. It made a positive difference in how she cared for her mother. "It was hard to manage my mother's care initially as she would get confused over day and night while I was on shift work. Switching to office hours helps," she said.

Ms Wee appreciates the South West Community Development Council's move to better support caregivers through the Caregiving @ South West initiative, which raises awareness of caregiving and provides resources for caregivers.

Despite the heartaches and challenges, love for her mother has kept Ms Wee going. She shared how her mother had singlehandedly raised her and her sister, sometimes by working two jobs. Now that she is ill, Ms Wee wants to "be there for her".

During her caregiving experience, there have also been many moments of happiness. For instance, Ms Wee started taking her mother to attractions such as Gardens by the Bay — something they did not do in the past. She also cherishes the moments when her mother responds to her with affection. "Sometimes after work, I hug her, and she hugs me back or asks me certain questions. That makes me happy." **B**



► Accept help and support:

For example, family members, relatives and even neighbours can help check in on your loved one or run errands.



► Get connected:

Find out about caregiving resources in your community, such as the Caregiving @ South West initiative.



► Discuss flexible work options:

Explore alternative work arrangements with your employer. Open communication is crucial in finding a balance between work and the needs of your loved one.



► Practise self-care:

Being a caregiver can be physically and emotionally draining, so it is critical to look after yourself. For example, set up a quiet and calming space at home and exercise regularly to de-stress.

Help is just a *click* or a call away

Here are some helpful resources and caregiving information for residents in South West CDC.

South West Caregiver Care Guide
A handy booklet by South West CDC with tips for caregivers to look after their emotional health.
<https://southwest.cdc.gov.sg/files/south-west-caregiver-care-guide.pdf>



Jurong Community Hospital Caregiver Talk

In this video, a medical social worker from Ng Teng Fong General Hospital shares more about healthcare financing and caregiver resources.
<https://www.ntfgh.com.sg/Health-Information/Videos/Pages/JCH-CGT-Healthcare-Financing-Caregiver-Resources.aspx>



Dementia InfoLine by Health Promotion Board

For advice and information on dementia-related queries (available in English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil).
Tel: **1800-223 1123**
(Monday to Friday, 8.30 am to 5 pm, and Saturday, 8.30 am to 1 pm)

Caregivers Alliance Limited

Supports caregivers of persons with mental health issues.
Tel: **6460 4400** (main line); **6388 2686** (Caregivers Support Centre)

South West Caregiver Support Fund

Interim one-time financial assistance to help caregivers defray self-care and caregiving expenses. Email South_West_assistance@pa.gov.sg for more information.

Go to <https://southwest.cdc.gov.sg/what-we-do-for-caregivers> for more resources.





Hong Kah North residents learning how to better manage their health.



The programme was conducted by facilitators from Ng Teng Fong General Hospital.

Staying wise & well

A FREE PREVENTIVE HEALTH PROGRAMME HELPS HONG KAH NORTH RESIDENTS TO IMPROVE THEIR OVERALL WELL-BEING BY MAKING SPECIFIC LIFESTYLE CHANGES.



Facilitators assisted residents in setting health goals and shared tips on healthy living.

EARLIER THIS YEAR, Mdm Chong Siew Yuen received a sobering warning about her health after she went for a chronic disease check-up at the Hong Kah North Community Club. A blood test revealed that she has high cholesterol and needs medication. It was a wake-up call for the 65-year-old clerk. "I always thought I led a healthy lifestyle, but in reality, eating anything I wanted and only occasionally exercising has impacted my health negatively."

Resolving to change her habits, Mdm Chong signed up for Wise & Well 2.0, a four-week preventive health programme that aims to empower residents with knowledge and skills to better manage their health. Designed by experts from Ng Teng Fong General Hospital (NTFGH), it was conducted by trained facilitators at Hong Kah North Resident Network Centres, with the help of volunteers from Hong Kah North Active Ageing Council.

The programme comprised 90-minute sessions that covered nutrition, fitness and chronic disease screening. The trainers from

NTFGH also helped participants set personalised health goals and implement lifestyle changes to achieve them.

MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES

The practical tips that Mdm Chong acquired through the programme have made a tangible difference to her overall sense of well-being. "In the past, I suffered from knee pain. I was glad to learn some exercises that helped strengthen my legs. This has allowed me to walk more regularly," said Mdm Chong. She now has the energy to complete a 20-minute stroll after work every day, which is something she also attributes to a healthier diet. Instead of having her usual meals such as chicken rice and fishball noodles for lunch, she now opts for economical rice and dishes — choosing two types of vegetables and a protein for balanced nutrition.

"It was initially challenging to adjust to these changes, but I am more motivated, having seen their benefits — I now feel more refreshed," said Mdm Chong, who also maintains a sleep diary to ensure she gets sufficient rest.

In June, Mdm Chong was among 42 Hong Kah North residents who received certificates for completing the first three runs of Wise & Well 2.0, presented by Dr Amy Khor, Adviser to Hong Kah North Grassroots Organisations. During the event, NTFGH's Senior Principal Physiotherapist, Mr Lim Kian Chong shared that the participants' knowledge of diet management has greatly improved, and his team has received positive feedback from attendees.

For Mdm Chong, it is certainly a step forward in the right direction. Apart from altering her diet and becoming more physically active, she also plans to increase her social interactions in efforts to prevent dementia and loneliness. She hopes there will be more participants in subsequent Wise & Well sessions.

"Learn new things as you age. Take advantage of courses and activities to lead a healthier lifestyle," encouraged Mdm Chong. **B**

Here to help

RESOURCES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS



FINANCIAL & EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

ComCare Hotline

1800 222 0000 (Monday to Sunday, 7 am to 12 am)

ComCare by the Ministry of Social and Family Development provides social assistance for low-income individuals and families.

Employment & Employability Institute (e2i)

6474 0606

e2i West
Devan Nair Institute for Employment and Employability
80 Jurong East Street 21, Level 2
Singapore 609607

Centre opening hours: Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm;
Saturday, 9 am to 1 pm; closed on Sundays and public holidays

LEGAL ADVICE

Community Legal Clinic @ South West

enquiry@lawsocprobono.org

The Community Legal Clinics provide free basic legal advice and information for the public. Registration is required.

6536 0650

Hotline operating hours: Monday to Friday, 10 am to 1 pm
and 2 pm to 4 pm; closed on weekends and public holidays

ASSISTANCE FOR BUSINESSES

SME Centre@SouthWest

9636 5265

A one-stop centre where businesses can get information on Government-funded programmes, capability workshops and group-based upgrading, as well as help in business diagnosis from business advisors.

SOCIAL SUPPORT/ MENTAL WELLNESS

Caregiving @ South West Hotline

6258 6683 (24 hours)

Manned by Caregiver Asia, this hotline is for everyone with a caregiving-related enquiry.

The Seniors Helpline 乐龄援助热线

1800 555 5555

A toll-free national helpline by Sage Counselling Centre that seniors can call for befriending, counselling and referral for community resources.

Helpline operating hours: Monday to Friday, 9 am to 7 pm;
Saturday, 9 am to 1 pm; closed on Sundays and public holidays

National CARE Hotline

1800 202 6868 (8 am to 12 am daily)

Offers emotional support to individuals who may be worried about COVID-19 and its impact on their lives.

SELF-HELP GROUPS

CDAC

6841 4889 (Monday to Thursday, 8.30 pm to 6 pm;
Friday, 8.30 am to 5.30 pm)
enquiry@cdac.org.sg

CDAC @ Jurong
Blk 421 Jurong West Street 42 #01-1045
Singapore 640421
Tel: 6569 3573

Centre opening hours: Monday to Friday, 1 pm to 10 pm;
Saturday and Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm; closed on public holidays
and the eve of Christmas, New Year and Chinese New Year

Yayasan MENDAKI

6245 5555 (Monday to Friday, 8.30 pm to 5.30 pm;
Saturday, 9 am to 1 pm)
mendaki.org.sg

MENDAKI @ Jurong
500 Corporation Road, #02-01
Singapore 649808

MENDAKI @ Choa Chu Kang
Blk 813A Choa Chu Kang Ave 7
Singapore 681813

MENDAKI @ ITE College West
1 Choa Chu Kang Grove
Singapore 688236

Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA)

1800 295 3333 (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 6 pm)
Email: queries@sinda.org.sg
Support package: sinda.org.sg/supportpackage

SINDA Youth Hub
(temporarily closed in line with COVID-19 safe opening guidelines)
Jurong Point 1, #06-03
Singapore 648886
Tel: 6393 7288

Knowing my district

TAKE THIS QUIZ TO FIND OUT HOW MUCH YOU KNOW AND STAND A CHANCE TO BRING HOME THE SOUTH WEST CDC TEDDY BEAR!

1. Where was the recent South West Community Job Fair held?

A: _____

2. How many corporate partners were involved in Festive Cheers @ South West 2022?

A: _____

3. How many families from the South West District benefitted from Girls' Brigade Friend in Deed 2023?

A: _____

4. Name one of the sustainable features installed at the Green Innovation Centre.

A: _____

5. Name a South West CDC community assistance programme that Siltronic Singapore has participated in.

A: _____

Complete the quiz and Sudoku puzzle,
take a picture of the page and upload to:
<https://go.gov.sg/swcdcbridge>



Or

Send your entries to us at: **South West CDC,**
Jurong Town Hall Road, #26-06, Singapore 609434.

If your entry is selected,
you will win a
South West CDC teddy bear!

DEADLINE: 30 November 2023



Name: _____

Age: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____ Email: _____

SUDOKU FUN

HOW TO PLAY

Enter numbers from 1 to 9 in the blank spaces. Every row and every column must contain only one of each number. This also applies to every 3x3 square. Have fun!

				8				5
		1	9					
7							1	6
			1			6		9
3		5				1		4
6		8			3			
5	6							2
					5	4		
9				2				