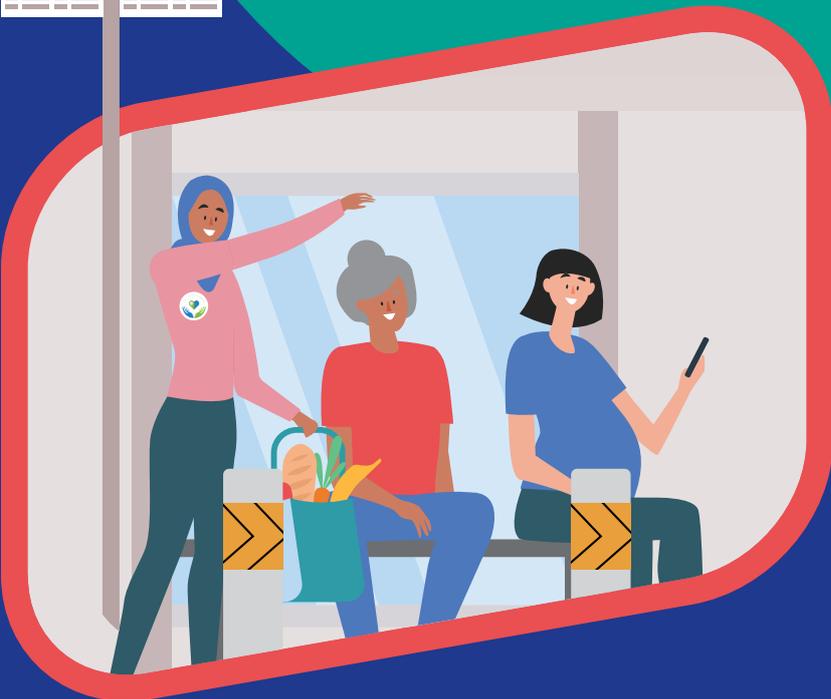


# Our Caring Commuting Journey



Be that  
special  
someone  
today!



Caring **SG**  
Commuters

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## Chairman's Message

Building a socially inclusive public transport system requires not only improved infrastructure and design for better access, but also an environment that makes our commuters feel welcomed, understood and comfortable.

To build such an environment, I hope Singaporeans can see through the bustle of commuting and view public transport beyond getting from one location to another. If we look at our own transport journeys closely enough, we would remember the times when others took time to give way or lend us a hand, despite inconvenience to themselves, so that we could continue on our journey.

The Land Transport Master Plan 2040 envisions a transport system for all, anchored by a gracious and caring commuting culture. In January 2020, the Caring SG Commuters Committee was thus set up, on the Public Transport Council's recommendation, to pull together multi-agency efforts to foster a caring commuting culture in Singapore and to partner with commuters and the community to transform Singapore's public transport system into a more caring, welcoming and inclusive one.

Through this inaugural report of the Committee, I wish to share with you the voices and aspirations of commuters we have connected with. They come from different walks and seasons of life, and they lend their valuable ideas in co-creating the kind of public transport culture they wish to see in Singapore through our conversations.

We are happy to learn that commuters found these conversations enlightening, as they became more aware and observant of needs beyond their own reality. I am also heartened that they have indicated they would be more proactive to render help in the future, if they possess the knowledge to do so. There is no better exercise for our hearts than reaching out and lifting others up.

We are also inspired by their stories, as they recounted how their simple acts of care made a difference. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, Singaporeans continue to help one another, such as offering spare masks to fellow commuters, despite concerns about their personal well-being.



This is only the start of our journey with you to build a caring commuting culture. I hope you will be inspired and join us in the movement where we will:



Build understanding of and embrace differences in one another's commuting needs, so everyone feels welcome on public transport;



Co-create opportunities for shared experiences and connections to be formed among commuters; and



Collectively shape our public transport experiences through meaningful and candid conversations.

We can be that special someone who embodies the caring and gracious Singaporean spirit, and become someone else's shining light on public transport.

Richard Magnus  
Chairman,  
Caring SG Commuters Committee



# 1

## Building an Inclusive Land Transport System

During various conversations with our commuters, the common aspiration for an inclusive land transport system that meets the needs of all Singaporeans was very clear. Many were willing to take some time out from their commute to help fellow commuters. Commuters with special needs and seniors also shared how public transport was an opportunity to connect with others, and how being able to travel independently provided dignity.

*“ Another challenge commonly faced is those interchanges, (for) example, Dhoby Ghaut MRT, especially when I am travelling from the North East line to Circle line or North-South line. Because the interchange level at Dhoby Ghaut is a bit too wide... sometimes it's a bit hard to locate the correct escalator to go up, then go through the linkway, then to the other side. So usually, I have to depend on the commuter to notice me. Then they will assist me to get to the correct platform that I want. ”*

(Male white cane<sup>1</sup> user, 40s)

Realising the aspiration of Singaporeans, the Land Transport Master Plan 2040 (LTMP 2040) has charted a roadmap to an inclusive transport system built on three pillars: accessibility, navigation and culture. Accessibility and navigation, as detailed in the LTMP 2040 report and briefly summarised in this chapter, are being enabled through various enhancements to our land transport infrastructure and assets. However, infrastructural enhancement alone is not enough to cater to the diverse needs of all commuters. Inclusive infrastructure must be accompanied by a culture of kindness, graciousness and care. This is the focus of the Caring SG Commuters Committee. Together with you, we want to foster a caring commuter community in Singapore.

### Accessibility

Accessibility to our public transport enables equal access to opportunities in our society. Public transport is affordable, and most Singaporeans depend on it to connect to important activities such as work, study, and social activities and lead a meaningful life. We have a good foundation to build on, with:



All major public transport nodes already having at least one barrier-free access route;



All public buses being wheelchair-accessible, with new public buses to come with two wheelchair bays; and



Installation of priority use signs at MRT stations and bus interchanges to remind commuters to give priority to commuters in need when boarding/using the lifts or fare gates, and to offer their seats.

### Priority use signs at a bus interchange



Source: Land Transport Authority

We will continue our conversations with you to explore further enhancement for accessibility features progressively.



## Navigation

Navigation and accessibility go hand-in-hand, as information availability is essential for journey planning and independent travel.

**“** *My greatest challenge will be transferring from the current old station of which I am quite familiar..to the new stations...It is close to a bit impossible for me...the interchanges between the circle line, the DTL is really a maze to me.* **”**

(Male white cane user, 60s)

As we expand the rail network to improve connectivity, commuters at the Caring SG Commuters focus group discussions shared how they need time to familiarise themselves with new stations / interchanges, as this could mean a change to their usual route. Familiarisation tours on features such as tactile routes and location of lifts were conducted in partnership with social service agencies for these commuters to orientate themselves before the official station / interchange opening. Together with our public transport operators, service ambassadors stationed at public transport nodes were trained to readily identify and assist commuters with special needs.

## Culture

We can only realise the full potential of accessibility and navigation features if they are complemented by a third component – a gracious and caring culture, to bridge the gap and achieve a truly inclusive land transport landscape.

**“** *You got to start from young (to foster a caring commuting culture)... different projects have to be done together. Give us accessibility, independence and followed by dignity. At the same time, carry on with your caring commuter (movement).* **”**

(Female white cane user, 40s)

For every wheelchair bay installed on a bus, we need commuters to give way to wheelchair users to access the bay and offer a hand to help them get in and out of the bay. For every lift access at MRT stations, fellow commuters need to keep a look out for other commuters and give priority to them when needed.



We have a strong foundation to build on, through the Graciousness on Public Transport Campaign which was introduced to encourage commuters to spread graciousness and make public transport journeys more pleasant for fellow commuters.<sup>2</sup> Giving up seats to those who need it more, and moving towards the back of the bus and the middle of MRT cabins for more to board are all desired gracious commuting behaviours. However, we hope to move a step further towards empowering our commuters, by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to offer help to others in their midst, especially those with special needs. This completes the entire picture of an inclusive land transport system.

Over the past years, we are encouraged to see commuters coming forward to lend their support for the Heart Zones which are set up at selected MRT stations and bus interchanges in collaboration with healthcare institutions.<sup>3</sup>

A commuter working at SGH shared that

*“ it doesn't take a lot of effort to help someone to go to SGH, especially if you are working there. But it makes a lot of difference to the patient who is lost. You also feel good after helping someone, that you have made the patient experience better. ”*

(Public Transport Council Advisory Report 2018)

## Heart Zone at Kent Ridge MRT Station



But we believe you and I can do more than this. We can proactively look out for the safety and welfare of others with courage and compassion. We can be more aware of the needs of commuters with disabilities, and the correct way to assist them. We can voluntarily offer help, beyond giving up seats.

Source: Public Transport Council

<sup>2</sup> Launched in 2014 by LTA, the Graciousness on Public Transport Campaign gently nudges commuters to spread graciousness to make journeys more pleasant amidst the daily rush.

<sup>3</sup> First launched at Outram Park MRT Station in 2017 by the Public Transport Council (PTC), the Heart Zone is a designated area where commuters who require assistance can connect with fellow commuters who are willing to help. There are currently Heart Zones at key transport nodes near Singapore General Hospital, Tan Tock Seng Hospital and Health City Novena medical institutions, Ng Teng Fong General Hospital, Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, and National University Hospital.



Box Story  
01

## Mr James Wong Deputy Secretary (Land and Corporate) / Ministry of Transport

Launched in 2019, the Land Transport Master Plan 2040 was the outcome of the many ideas put forward by thousands of commuters. One key message that came through clearly was that Singaporeans wanted an inclusive transport system where every commuter feels welcome. Many commuters also told us that they were willing to take the time to help someone in need - they saw caring commuting culture as a shared responsibility, where everyone had a part to play in making it happen.

The Caring SG Commuters Committee was set up to nurture this kinder and more caring transport system together. We need your ideas and help to do this. Our daily journeys are not just about trains, buses and infrastructure, but also about the people who journey with us, who can make a difference in the quality of our lives.

We look forward to taking that journey together with you to build a more caring commuting culture for all.

## Being Caring Amidst COVID-19

COVID-19 has disrupted our lives and may have posed additional challenges to some of our commuters travelling on public transport.

**“** *Social distancing is a challenge for us also. Because for me, I really need that contact to bring us around, if I need help...Normally what we prefer is for the sighted person to help us touch the seat, either the back of the seat or the seat itself. But if you say there's social distancing, you're discouraged to have skin-to-skin contact, then it's difficult for someone like me who can't see. To have (verbal cues) - "It's there", "To the left, to the right" that kind. For us, (verbal cues are) very vague.* **”**

(Female white cane user, 40s)

However, it has also shone a light on numerous commuters who continued to show care to others that they meet on their journey.



You can read about some of these heartwarming stories in the next box story. This is a sign that as a community, we are taking steps and moving in the direction of a caring commuting culture.

*Join us in this exciting journey to push forth the caring commuting movement!*

Box Story  
02

## Showing Care Amidst COVID-19

COVID-19 provides an opportunity to capture selfless acts of care by our commuters. At a time when keeping a distance from strangers is the norm, we were heartened to see commuters reaching out to help others still.



A commuter noticed an elderly lady trembling and sweating profusely. She immediately approached the lady to provide assistance and offered to send her home despite it being in a different direction from where she was heading to. When the commuter found out that the lady's son was coming to fetch her, she helped to carry her shopping bags and kept her company until her son arrived.



A young commuter gave her seat to an elderly commuter while waiting for the bus as she was carrying bags of groceries.

### Screenshots from our 2020 videos showing commuters offering help



Source: Caring SG Commuters Committee

Box Story  
03

## Mr Jeremy Yap Deputy Chief Executive (Public Transport, Policy & Planning) / Land Transport Authority

2020 saw the establishment of the Caring SG Commuters Committee, and the Committee planned engagements and initiatives to deepen the caring commuting culture in Singapore. Then came COVID-19 and we had to make adjustments quickly.

At the same time, we had to ensure that the public transport system continued to operate with stepped up sanitisation measures so that our commuters can enjoy a safe ride.

With everyone masked up and keeping a safe distance from fellow commuters, we were nonetheless heartened to see commuters step forward and help. The previous box story contains just some of the caring commuters that we and the public transport operators encountered, and we are sure that there are many more such stories.

### Mr Jeremy Yap at the “Be That Special Someone Today” webinar



Source: Caring SG Commuters Committee

As Singapore prepares for our transition towards COVID resilience, we hope that our commuters will continue the spirit of caring and readily offer assistance where possible.

## 2

# How Our Caring Movement Began

In 2020, Senior Parliamentary Secretary (SPS) for Transport Mr Baey Yam Keng charted the dream ahead: To bring forth the caring movement with the mobilisation of commuters, where individual acts of care become second nature, and where every commuter in need has the confidence that they will be able to receive help on our public transport.

The Caring SG Commuters Committee was thus formed in January 2020, bringing together individuals from various sectors such as transport and social services who share the same goal of pooling resources and expertise to build this culture of care in our public transport system.

*“ We can harness these individual acts of care into a national movement and build a culture where showing care for fellow commuters becomes our way of life. ”*

SPS Mr Baey Yam Keng, Committee of Supply Debate on MOT's Budget 2020

SPS Mr Baey Yam Keng with caring commuters



Source: Ministry of Transport

Box Story  
04

## Mr Melvin Yong Executive Secretary / National Transport Workers' Union



Source: National Transport Workers' Union

Our public transport system is the backbone that keeps Singapore moving, with over 7.5 million trips made daily. With so many commuters relying on our public transport system, it is important that we care for our transport workers who work tirelessly, day and night, to keep our buses and trains running smoothly.

Over the years, the National Transport Workers' Union (NTWU) has done much to raise the wages of our transport workers, and improve staff welfare through better rest areas and providing them healthier options when eating at our 50 canteens island wide.

As the NTWU continues to champion for better wages, better welfare, and better work prospects for our transport workers, I hope that our caring commuting culture will continue to improve, and grow from strength to strength. By continuously improving the way we treat our transport workers, we can transform our public transport sector into an industry of choice.

Box Story  
05

## Ms Lee Huay Leng Public Transport Council Member

It takes a long process for people to change behaviour, but it is not unachievable. Change starts from little things in life. I can still remember when I took bus number 96 at Clementi Road after class, the driver would have to urge commuters to move to the back of the bus and not crowd around the door. It was only when it was your turn to be waiting at the bus stop, hoping to hop on that you appreciated those on the bus who moved in and made space. It is about being empathetic and seeing things from others' perspectives.

So what I hope for is about bettering ourselves as a people, to be considerate and caring towards others in everyday life, and to eventually build a society which is pleasant to live in. Commuting is a good starting point to begin with. As more of us take public transport, we need more caring hearts. We hope to encourage more to care and help others.

## Taking the First Step

Recognising that commuters come from all walks of life and their needs for independent travel differs significantly, the Committee made the decision to focus on two key groups as a start, with the other groups to be focused on in subsequent years.

The two key groups in the first year were seniors and commuters with visual impairments as they form a larger proportion of Singapore's population. For example, seniors make up over 15% of our resident population and will continue to grow in number. Their challenges also overlap with general challenges by other groups. While we also have a large population of families with young children, the Family Friendly Transport Advisory Panel (FFTAP) in 2017 had looked into making our public transport more family-friendly. Measures such as allowing open strollers on-board buses and providing nursing rooms at selected bus interchanges and MRT stations were implemented following the consultations.

**“** *For those of us who are totally blind, we don't know who is there (at the bus stop). So they have to take the initiative to ask (if they are offering help). Because we also do not know what dialect they are, what race they are.* **”**

(Male white cane user, 60s)



*I wish in a crowd when we are going up (the bus)...because I'm carrying bags of groceries, don't rush me please. I won't have a free hand to hold on... Just give me the space, give me the time to go up the bus.*



(Female senior, 60s)

In order not to miss out any crucial needs of our commuters, we mapped out the stages involved in the end-to-end journey of a commuter when navigating public transport, similar to the model below. We then focused on aspects of the user journey where fellow commuters can step in to assist if they come across another commuter in need. This will help to complement the ongoing infrastructure and capability enhancements undertaken by LTA.

## Public Transport Journey



## Other Events



Usage of ticketing machine



Train disruption

During the course of our engagement with commuters, we also got to know a group of commuters who needed help; commuters with invisible disabilities. These commuters have diverse ailments such as auto-immune diseases, but the commonality among them was that their pain and discomfort were not visible, and other commuters were not aware of their plight on public transport. They may also feel shy about asking for help as they look strong and healthy.

Initiatives such as the “May I Have a Seat Please” sticker launched in 2019 were thus a small step towards aiding commuters with invisible disabilities. While the stickers provide visual cues which could help reduce the awkwardness of asking for a seat, we also hope for more commuters to recognise the sticker when they see one and offer assistance as needed. The Committee will also look into improving such initiatives with continuous engagement and feedback with the community.

*Read on to discover the areas in which your fellow commuters may need your care and help.*

## 3 Our Conversations

### How We Reached Out to You

In 2020, we reached out to over 2,000 commuters through more than 30 focus group discussions (FGDs) and surveys.<sup>4</sup> Our participant profiles comprised:



Commuters in general (youths and adults)



Seniors (and some caregivers)



Visually impaired commuters (and some caregivers)

#### Box Story 06

### Hearing From Our Commuters in FGDs

Our conversations with commuters took place online over various video conferencing platforms (such as Zoom, Webex) during the COVID-19 period. We made sure that even commuters who did not have access to video conferencing platforms were able to share their views, whether in-person with safe management measures observed, or through other means that they were more comfortable with.

<sup>4</sup> From April to November 2020, we gathered feedback from more than 200 commuters through a mix of 36 online and face-to-face FGD sessions. We also surveyed 2,528 commuters from July to September 2020.



Source: Caring SG Commuters Committee



Some commuters dialed in using WhatsApp video (left), and we helped to broadcast this onto the same Zoom session (right). This allowed for simultaneous Mandarin translations too!

Our engagement builds on conversations that PTC has had with more than 85,000 commuters since 2016.

## Acknowledging Caring Acts

In our conversations with commuters, a key resounding message is that caring goes both ways – both the person helping and the person being helped should be caring.

Enhancing and deepening this level of care requires awareness and accommodation of the different needs among commuter groups. This may mean withholding judgment and not reacting negatively when another commuter (e.g. a person with dementia) behaves differently. In addition, commuters have requested that offers of help be politely declined so that the person who offered will not feel discouraged and will continue to offer help.

*“ I think teaching a culture of reciprocity - how can you offer?...There has to be a certain...humility in accepting when somebody offers you help, rather than wave it off. ”*

(Female senior, 60s)



Beyond fellow commuters, the principle of caring as a two-way street also extends to public transport staff. Many bus captains have been greeting commuters, but there may not have been ample mutual response or acknowledgement from the commuters.

**“** *...thanking not only the commuters but thanking the bus captains as well.* **”**

(Male student, 20s)

## Overcoming Fears

We journeyed with our caring commuters, and listened to their needs, aspirations, and reflections from their commuting experiences. Their acts of care did not go unnoticed, including:



Notifying a visually impaired commuter of his destination bus stop;



Carrying groceries for seniors from the bus stop to board the bus;



Notifying the bus captain that a wheelchair user wanted to board; and



Giving up seats for those who need it.

Often, our youths are perceived by the general commuting public as the givers of care. However, while our youths are supportive of a caring commuting culture, they shared that they too, have many concerns that impede them from offering help, like fear of judgement and being the centre of attention so they may sometimes use their phone to avoid interactions.

**“** *I was hesitating (to help) because I (am) shy. I (am) introverted... I'll have anxiety attacks.* **”**

(Male student, 20s)

However, despite some feeling shy and wanting to avoid interactions, they do provide help indirectly. For example, they would quietly vacate their seats in hopes that the vulnerable commuter would take the seat. They would also press the button for the bus to stop when they see a commuter running to catch the bus.

**“** *All the acts that I have (done to) help is very silent, without any conversation (with commuters).* **”**

(Male student, 20s)

Box Story  
07

## Challenges Youths Face in Offering Help

As a youth, I believe in helping other commuters when they are in need.

**What I'm thankful for:** There's just this good feeling that you get when you help someone, and when they thank you. When everyone is caring, when my parents get older, then I'll be more assured that when they are outside, they will be in a safe environment.

**My needs:** However, I am at times hesitant to help. My friends and I share similar anxieties. We may:



Feel embarrassed if our offer of help is rejected;



Not know how to help; or



Fear that our help may worsen the situation.

**My aspirations:** If we see caring acts by other commuters (e.g. helping persons with disabilities), they are role models for us to learn what we can do to help. More opportunities to equip us with the knowledge of how to help would be useful. In addition, if commuters who do not need our help were to decline in a nice way, it will also make it easier for us to offer help.

(Mr Ryhan Fitrah, male student in his teens)

## Showing Empathy

Many seniors have proactively helped fellow commuters on their journeys. Nevertheless, there were also journey touchpoints where help from caring commuters would be appreciated by our seniors, especially those with weaker knees and legs.

### Box Story 08

#### Journey Touchpoints Where Seniors May Require Help

**My needs:** I'm in my 70s and sometimes I experience pain in my knees and legs. I face the following challenges in my commute:



Boarding or alighting the bus if the bus is stopped too far from the kerb or if I am carrying groceries or trolleys;



Boarding or alighting the train if the gap between the train and platform is too wide; and



Getting a seat in the train or bus as I'm unable to stand for too long.

**What I'm thankful for:** Although I'm appreciative of commuters who readily offer me a seat, sometimes I may have to decline their offer. This is especially if I'm one or two stops away, as I'm worried that I face difficulty standing up after sitting down. I'm also grateful for the bus captains who greet me. It makes my journey more pleasant.

**My aspirations:** A (caring) culture would make society more harmonious, more understanding, more peaceful.

(Madam Marfuah Sidek, female senior in her 70s)

Caregivers of seniors with dementia shared their hope for commuters to be understanding, as seniors with dementia may behave in unexpected ways such as talking loudly. They hope commuters will show empathy, withhold judgment, and avoid overtly displaying discomfort.

*“ You will feel it when the community becomes more caring. Now you still feel that people still look at us in an abnormal way, like my father in-law has some weird behaviour, then they will move away. (If the community is caring.) I won't feel this awkwardness, or make me feel excluded. ”*

(Male caregiver, 30s)

Our seniors also appreciate the understanding and care commuters have shown them. When travelling with their grandchildren, grandparents shared that they had received help to coax a crying child, or hold on to a child if he or she was having difficulty balancing while standing in a moving bus or train.

## Respecting Choices

Our visually impaired commuters appreciate the assistance rendered by caring commuters especially at certain journey touchpoints. However, some shared that they would also like to commute independently, especially on a familiar route. In such situations, offers of help may be declined.

### Box Story 09

## Help From Caring Commuters Eases Visually Impaired Commuter's Journey

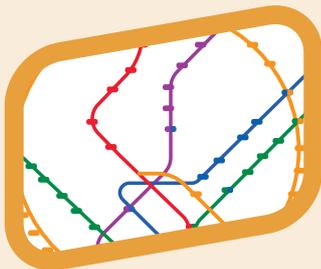
**My needs:** I'm a white cane user and on my public transport journeys, I may need help in areas like:



Looking out for my bus service number at bus stops. While caring commuters sometimes provide help, they may leave without informing me if their bus arrives earlier;



Locating an empty seat in the MRT or bus; and



Navigating unfamiliar transport nodes, for example, within MRT stations with many different lines. I would appreciate if commuters could be more patient and give me more time and space to navigate around.

My friends who use a guide dog often also require similar help to look out for the bus service number and navigate unfamiliar routes.

I hope commuters can keep a look out for us as there have been instances our cane gets broken as commuters rush and trip over it. The cane is like our eyes, and we will not be able to move around or even get home without it.

**What I'm thankful for:** When someone comes and helps me, they are also journeying with us. They can also become our friends and they feel happy to help. When we are happy, they will be happier because they find it meaningful to have helped someone.

**My aspirations:** I'm cognisant that fostering a caring commuting culture will take time, so I'm excited to see improvements in accessibility grow in tandem with a caring commuting culture to enable us to travel independently.

(Ms Carolyn Toh, white cane user in her 40s)



Box Story  
10

## I'm Visually Impaired but I Don't Always Need Help

As an experienced white cane user, I'm confident in navigating familiar places. In fact, I would rather go on my own as:



I have an internal visualisation of the route that I'm going to. So help offered may actually interfere with my internal visualisation.



I'll also need to concentrate on where I'm moving so when someone approaches me to offer their help, I may lose my orientation.



My guide dog user friends may reject help too. Interactions with their guide dogs may distract the dog and cause them to veer off their intended route.

**“** *As much as I can, I try not to ask for help. I feel bad when I ask for help as I don't want to take up the commuter's time and effort. So even if commuters offer their help, I'll politely decline. We hope that commuters don't take these rejections personally or feel disheartened about offering help to other visually impaired commuters in future – some are just more experienced and skilled in navigating than you think.* **”**

(Mr Mohamed Rahamatulla, white cane user in his 40s)

## Learning From Each Other

Participants who joined in the conversations were enriched by the process through hearing first-hand the needs and experiences of fellow commuters.

For example, they learned that the appropriate way to guide commuters with visual impairment is by offering your elbow. They also realised the impact of a noisy environment on a visually impaired commuter who has to listen out for information on the next stop from the app or announcements, so a reduced noise level is appreciated.

Seniors and visually impaired commuters learnt about the challenges fellow commuters may face when offering help, such as not knowing what to do to help, or being fearful of having their offer of help rejected.

Following their participation in the conversations, many are now proactively looking out for fellow commuters. Commuting is no longer an individual journey from point A to point B but one that is part of a larger group, all contributing to one another's journey experience.

**“ I learnt a lot and I'll definitely be more aware and look out more for... less obvious cases and see how I can help. ”**

(Female working adult, 20s)

Regardless of our own conditions and difficulties, we all have the capacity to show care for other commuters.

For example, our visually impaired commuters have helped fellow visually impaired commuters by leading them or provided bus service information to other commuters, while seniors have helped other seniors with groceries, or gave up their seat to those who are more senior.

**“ I'm visually impaired but I'm quite a kaypoh (inquisitive) person. So for example, at the bus stop, if I overheard one commuter asking another commuter what bus to take to this destination. If I have the knowledge, I will shout out to tell the person. ”**

(Male guide dog user, 50s)

One commuter sums it up nicely:

**“ I think we should all be observant to our environment and not assume people with disability need our help and not assume people who have no disability don't need our help. ”**

(Female working adult, 40s)

***Do you also have heart-warming stories of caring acts on public transport to share with us? Please post your experiences on the [Caring SG Commuters Portal](#) so that we can all be an inspiration to one another.***

## 4 Informing

### Words of Inspiration

From our conversations with commuters, we learned that we must first be informed of each other's needs in order to be more thoughtful and conscientious. Most of us are keen to help, but some of us shy away from doing so due to a lack of understanding about the different needs and ways in which assistance can be rendered.

#### Why Do I Care For Others?



**Because it comes from my heart** - *"I think since young, it's like an instinct to help others. For example, when I see the elderly on the train and they look like they need a seat, I think about my grandparents. I would want someone to offer the seat to my grandparents also, so I do the same for others."* (Male working adult, 20s)



**Because others around me have influenced me to do so** - *"...When I (went) out with my late dad, he usually helps people, so I followed (in) his steps."* (Male student, teenager)



**Because someone showed care for me** - *"When I was younger, I wasn't the type to help...but people showed that care to me...From those things I experienced, I feel like I should give back to others."* (Male student, teenager)



**Because I see it around me** - *"...it has improved compared to my younger days...when we talk about the culture, I think back about our younger days where we had a lot of campaigns, if you guys remember. We have the courtesy campaign..."* (Male working adult, 20s)

Our commuters have also shown us that everyone can be a caring commuter. We always have ways to show care to people we meet on our commute.

Box Story  
11

## Where Caring Begins



For Ms Varalackshmi Hariharan, a senior in her 60s who is actively engaged in volunteering activities, her motivation to care for others sparked in secondary school when she joined Interact Club as her co-curriculum activity. Her experience echoes many other participants, who were influenced by their social environment (i.e. school) to be caring.

*"When I was a teenager, my Co-Curricular Activity was the Interact Club. The Club had a strong ethos of service, of helping others and that experience shaped me."*

## How Can We Grow a Caring Commuting Culture?



### Having greater publicity to grow awareness about a caring commuting culture

*"...the Bag-Down Benny thing...I thought that it was a really good idea...often...I tend to be oblivious when I'm onboard public transport so occasionally seeing all these banners, all these posters just remind me of what I need to do and I think those go a long way to help me exercise more responsible behaviours on public transport." (Male working adult, 20s)*



### Inculcating values via the school curriculum, starting from young

*"I think education from young helps and builds the society to build this caring community." (Female senior, 60s)*



### Getting our community involved through projects

*"...we can get volunteers, to go into MRT, go on board buses to coach. They are some behaviours they can coach them (commuters)...can coach them to change by making use of volunteers." (Male senior, 70s)*

## Through Sharing Stories

In our first year, one of the ways we tried to share information with the community was through their fellow commuters in the form of a video series featuring Siti, Nicole, Evon and Daniel. Stories were told of the challenges they faced during their daily commute, the sort of assistance that they needed, and why some commuters are motivated to step forward and offer their help whenever they can. The videos were well-received and we will continue to look for more opportunities to showcase heart-warming stories from the community.

Box Story  
12

## Sharing Our Commuters' Stories, One Video at a Time

Our commuters shared their stories through a series of Caring Commuter Videos, themed around the challenges they faced in their journey as well as why they helped strangers.

One of our commuters featured in the videos is Ms. Nicole Lim, a teenager with an invisible medical condition causing her to tire easily.

*“ I wish there was a sign to identify those with invisible medical conditions. Because most Singaporeans are actually caring commuters. ”*

(Ms Nicole Lim)

Having the “May I have a seat please” sticker identifier helps, and Nicole says that most Singaporeans will “readily show care and concern when they see that something is wrong”. Nicole appreciates the help rendered by fellow commuters and shares that “words and actions always have an impact. Every bit of help counts.”

Ms Nicole Lim in a screenshot from one of our videos



Source: Caring SG Commuters Committee

Watch the Caring Commuter Videos [here](#) and be inspired by stories of care from our fellow commuters!

We have also learned much from our conversations with you. The focus group discussions have left many participants with the motivation to help one another or to pick up new knowledge because of the experience and stories of others.

## If You Feel That You Do Not Know the Right Way to Help, or Fear You May Do It Wrongly, You Are Not Alone:

“ There is an underlying culture in which we all want to help... it's just that sometimes we don't know what to do. ”

(Female working adult, 50s)

“ I don't know how to help and I (am) scared that I might do something that is not correct. ”

(Female student, teenager)

Let us break down such barriers and empower you with the knowledge and confidence to help others during your commute.

Here are some useful tips, developed with the help and support of SG Enable, for the different groups of commuters with varying disabilities and mobility needs.

## Useful Tips to Assist Commuters With Different Needs

### *Commuters with visual impairment*



Approach by tapping on the shoulder



Ask politely if assistance is required



Let the person hold your elbow or shoulder



## Useful Tips to Assist Commuters With Different Needs

### *Commuters with physical disabilities*



If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted before asking for instructions



Place yourself at eye level when talking to someone in a wheelchair



It is ok if your offer for assistance is rejected

### *Commuters with intellectual or developmental disabilities*

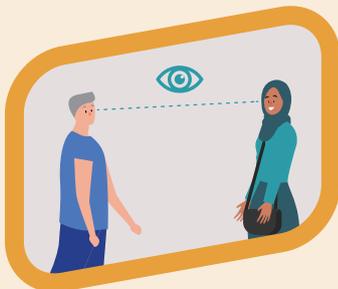


Keep sentences short, be clear and concise



Do not be offended by lack of response or unconventional behaviour

### *Commuters with hearing impairment*



Look at the person while speaking to him/her



Gain their attention before speaking

The Caring SG Commuters Portal is our first step in providing a platform for the community to interact and learn simple acts of care, so that we can all make a big difference to other commuters' journey on public transport. A webinar was also organised in December 2020 to bring together both the commuters who received help and the commuters who stepped forward to assist to share their experiences of how a small act of care can go a long way.

***With greater understanding, we believe all of us can actively look out for those who may need assistance during their commute, overcome your inhibitions and have the confidence to step forward.***

Box Story  
13

## A Space to Share Our Caring Commuting Stories

Sometimes, we come across stories of how someone received help during their commute, be it in the news or on social media platforms. There may be more of such stories, but have you ever wished that you can go to a single website to see similar stories, share your own story and interact with people like yourself?

You can now visit the **Caring SG Commuters Portal!**



This is a one-stop platform where you can find caring commuting stories shared by commuters like yourself. Leave a message on our Community Wall if you have ideas about how we can create a more caring commuting culture in Singapore.



You can also find out about upcoming Caring SG Commuters events in which you can participate and bring along your family and friends as we create a caring commuting culture together!

Box Story  
14

## “Be That Special Someone Today!”

Guest speakers for the webinar  
Clockwise from top left: Ms Siti Rossaliza,  
Ms Evon Lim, Mr Daniel Cheah, Ms Nicole Lim



Source: Caring SG Commuters Committee

You may recognise some familiar faces at the “Be That Special Someone Today” webinar on 15 Dec 2020 if you have seen the Caring Commuter Videos. Yes, the “stars” from the video series came together as guest speakers to relate their experiences on how simple acts of care can go a long way.

### Panelists at the webinar



Source: Caring SG Commuters Committee

They were joined by Ministry of Transport’s Senior Parliamentary Secretary Baey Yam Keng, Public Transport Council’s Chairman Richard Magnus, SG Enable’s Chief Executive Officer Ku Geok Boon and Land Transport Authority’s Deputy Chief Executive Public Transport, Policy and Planning, Jeremy Yap.

Ms Ku shared that “you can always start the day right, start the day well by doing something good, being gracious...that makes the entire journey a more memorable one”.

If you missed the webinar, you can watch the recording [here](#) and we hope that you will be inspired to Be That Special Someone Today.

Box Story  
15

## Voices From Our Youths

Ever wondered what our youths think about showing care for commuters while on public transport?

Representatives from the National University of Singapore Students' Union (NUSSU) shared their thoughts with the Committee on 26 September 2020 in a dialogue session a week after they had distributed 1,000 bottles of hand sanitisers to vulnerable commuters.

### Representatives from NUSSU at the dialogue session



Source: Caring SG Commuters Committee

The representatives agreed that while it is not the goal of a caring society to carry out acts of graciousness for everyone to see, some inspiration may go a long way to foster a culture of care in our public transport system.

**“** *In the pursuit to create a kinder and more gracious society, it is important to create a caring commuting culture as public transport plays a large role in many Singaporean youths' lives. The youths in Singapore today are the next generation of movers and shakers of our nation, and the role that we play is very important to create the Singapore we want to see. What we do defines what we will pass down to future generations of youths to create a kinder and more gracious Singapore of tomorrow.* **”**

(Mr David Tay Wei, 42nd NUSSU General Secretary)

Our youths felt that it is important that everyone works together to create a positive commuting environment for everyone. You can read more about what went on during the dialogue session [here!](#)

## 5 Involving

Possessing knowledge alone is insufficient for sustaining and entrenching a caring commuting movement. The movement is more likely to take root if it is created from within the community and everyone embraces and actively promotes the caring culture. We therefore hope to involve you in the ideation process to create a more inviting transport system for all commuters.

### Connecting (With Commuters) Through Our Partners

You are likely to meet a public transport operator (PTO) staff during your commute, be it a bus captain or a service ambassador at the train station, and that encounter may influence your public transport experience for that journey. Beyond providing safe and reliable public transport services, PTOs have also implemented initiatives to create a more pleasant commuting experience for all commuters. Many of our partners have also tried to build such a culture in their own ways. Find out more about the individual stories below.

Box Story  
16

#### Go-Ahead Singapore - Easing the Commuting Experiences for Commuters With Different Needs, One Card at a Time

Mr Andy Thompson



Source: Go-Ahead Singapore

Mr Andy Thompson, Managing Director of Go-Ahead Singapore, strongly believes that a partnership between bus captains and commuters will form the firm foundation towards a gracious commuting culture, Helping Hand is a tool to promote this.

Helping Hand is designed to enhance the journey experience for commuters with physical and/or invisible mobility impairments. Messages printed on pocket-sized cards allow commuters to discreetly request assistance by displaying the card to a bus captain or fellow commuter. Succinct and easy to understand, the card facilitates prompt action by the other party when a cardholder flashes it.

### Mdm Tan, 65 years old, Housewife



Source: Go-Ahead Singapore

*"I take service 359 regularly and this card is especially useful for me. When I show bus captains the card upon boarding, they will acknowledge my needs and it is heartening to see that they take extra effort in ensuring that I'm safely seated. It is important to make sure that the elderly have a seat as they are at higher risk of falling."*

### Md Ahzman Bin Tumin, 55 years old, Chief Bus Captain



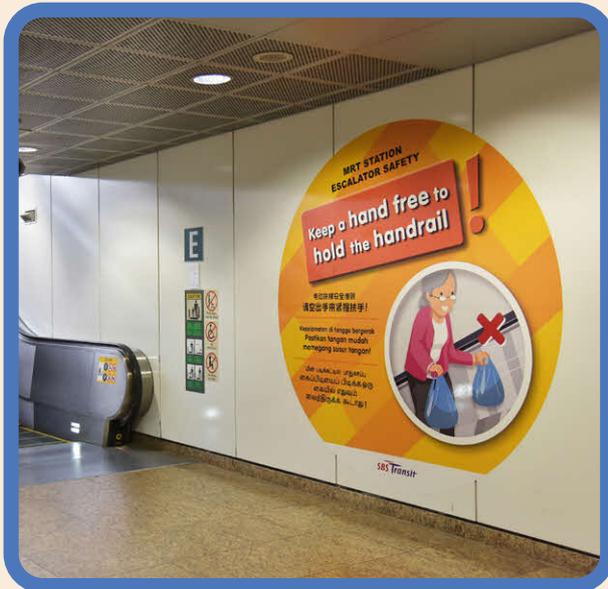
Source: Go-Ahead Singapore

*"I'm heavily involved in raising awareness of the Helping Hand trial amongst other bus captains. Personally, I have heard users of the card feedback that bus captains were very patient and waited for them to be seated before moving off. The Helping Hand card provides a quick and straightforward means of communication, making it easier for a bus captain to understand the kind of assistance required and act accordingly."*

Box Story  
17

## SBS Transit - Escalator Safety for Our Commuters

A poster from SBS Transit's escalator safety campaign



Source: SBS Transit

Big posters with illustrations and minimal text line the walls next to the escalators at the North East Line Chinatown Station. They are also strategically placed within the station. The purpose? To communicate and encourage safe behaviour when using escalators such as holding firmly to the handrails. Uniquely, announcements in dialects - Cantonese and Hokkien - besides English and Mandarin are also played at the start of the escalators to provide audio reminders.

Mr Cheng Siak Kian, SBS Transit Chief Executive Officer (left) engaging an elderly passenger on escalator safety



Source: SBS Transit

*"Safety of our commuters, especially the elderly, is of key importance in SBS Transit. At this station where a majority of them are the elderly, we intentionally use illustrations and dialects in our communication because we want to be focused and effective in reaching out to them. And we will continue to look at other creative and innovative ways to encourage and remind them. This is because being safe is part of the pleasant travel experience that we strive to create for our elderly commuters given Singapore's greying population."*

“There are quite a lot of elderly people in this area. If the announcements were only in English and Mandarin, it would not be possible to attract the attention of those who understand only dialects,” said Ms Low, a 71-year-old retiree.

Another commuter, Mr Chow, a 54-year-old factory worker, said: “The announcements in dialects enable the public to pay attention to safety as some of them do not hold on to the escalator handrails which is dangerous, in particular for the elderly.”

This on-going pilot programme has resulted in zero injuries in 2020 from the improper use of escalators compared to an annual average of 2.5 over the last four years (2016 to 2019).

Box Story  
18

## SMRT's Dementia Efforts

Mr Tan Kian Heong, President, SMRT Roads (leftmost) greeting our visually handicapped commuters and introducing the inclusive caring features in our bus interchanges



Source: SMRT

*“Every commuter is important to SMRT. As an inclusive public transport service provider, we want all commuters, especially the elderly and those with special needs, to feel safe and comfortable when they travel in our network.”*

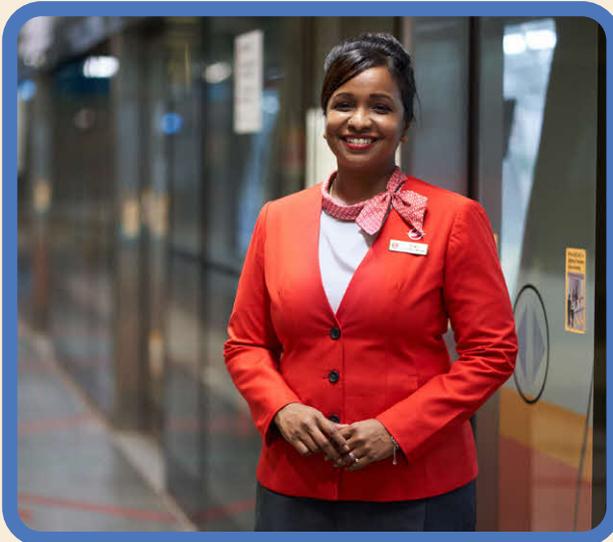
**Ms Susan Aw**  
Service Ambassador / SMRT Buses



Source: SMRT

*"There was an elderly commuter who was lost at the Bukit Panjang Integrated Transport Hub. She had her son's number, and he gave me the home address. I accompanied her home as I thought it would be unsafe for her to travel home alone. The training I received gave me the confidence to help her effectively."*

**Ms Gowri D/O Veren**  
Assistant Station Manager, NSEWL /  
Dhoby Ghaut Station



Source: SMRT

*"A male commuter had sprained his right ankle while rushing down the staircase. Immediately, I rushed to the scene and assisted him to rest at the platform bench. I took the opportunity to apply First Aid with cold compression until the passenger felt some relief. I took him to our WeCare room and connected with his next-of-kin. His uncle came down to our station and fetched him home. Our commuter thanked us for the structured GO-TO SMRT services in place and the extended care we provided for him."*

Box Story  
19

## Tower Transit Singapore - Fostering an Inclusive Commuting Culture Through Courses for Students and People With Disabilities

*"I felt anxious, self-conscious and pai seh about making a bus-load of people wait while I boarded using the ramp."*

That was how Kishon Chong felt when he first began using a wheelchair after acquiring a disability at the age of 26. The former mod-Sin chef is now Tower Transit Singapore (TTS) first Customer Experience & Inclusivity Officer and works to promote inclusivity on its buses and at its interchanges. He also facilitates the Public Bus Confidence Course which TTS launched in January to help people with mobility challenges regain their confidence to get back on the bus.

The course is part of a suite of new inclusive initiatives offered by TTS at the Jurong East Bus Interchange. They include the Public Bus Inclusivity Course which equips participants to help vulnerable passengers in the course of travelling by bus, the Student Co-Host Programme which enlists the help of students to assist commuters at the interchange, and a warm and inviting nursing room designed by homegrown baby products brand Hegen. The public can also donate a meal to needy families living in the area for just \$3 at the NTWU canteen. TTS will match each donation meal-for-meal and donate another 200 meals each month.

*"Our hope is to create an environment where people care for other people when taking public transport,"* said Winston Toh, TTS Managing Director.

Mr Winston Toh (rightmost) and Mr Kishon Chong (front row) with participants of the Public Bus Inclusivity Course



Beyond the PTOs, there are also other public agencies which hold inclusivity issues close to their heart. By leveraging these agencies' existing efforts such as participating in the Ministry of Social and Family Development's Enabling Masterplan engagements, and collaborating with them on inclusivity-related initiatives, we can achieve more as we foster a caring commuting culture.

Box Story  
20

## Mr John Lim Second Deputy Secretary / Ministry of Social and Family Development



Source: Ministry of Social and Family Development

The Caring SG Commuters movement is a reminder that we should look out every day for opportunities to care for others and lend a helping hand to those who need it. By being patient, kind and helpful to one another, we can bring smiles to others and build a kinder and more gracious Singapore.

With this goal in mind, SG Enable partnered LTA and the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH) to pilot the use of the Mobility Assistance for the Visually Impaired and Special Users (MAVIS) app. The app alerts visually-impaired commuters and those using hearing aids whenever the bus is approaching a stop, to make their travel easier and our public transport system more inclusive.

### MAVIS display on a bus



Source: Land Transport Authority

We should all do our part to help make the commuting experience better for everyone, including persons with disabilities. In doing so, we build a better Singapore for all.



Box Story  
21

## Mr Philip Ong Deputy Secretary (Community, Youth and Sports) / Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth



Our public transport infrastructure connects us not only to places but also to each other. Each day, Singaporeans from all walks of life encounter one another in the shared spaces of our buses, MRT cabins, public roads and walkways. How we treat each other in those shared spaces – a nod of greeting to the service ambassador in the MRT station, an offer of a seat to a fellow commuter on the bus, or giving way to a fellow driver on the road – has an impact not only on our day and mood, but contributes to shaping our shared norms and experiences.

Source: Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth

Public transport holds a mirror to our society – the inclusivity of our infrastructure, the graciousness of commuter behaviour, the dignity and appreciation accorded to transport workers, define who we are. Over the past year, we reached out to various segments of the population, including PwDs and their caregivers, bus captains and other frontline staff, as well as our youths, to better understand the needs and concerns of commuters, and explore how we can partner Singaporeans and other stakeholders to nurture a more caring commuter culture for all.

In a public space, there is always room for us to be kinder, more gracious and caring towards one another. I hope that the public transport commuter experience in Singapore will exemplify the society we aspire to be.





## Connecting With Our Community

You heard the stories from our PTOs and fellow public agencies and how we came together to advance our collective cause of building a more caring and inclusive Singapore.

Seven million trips are taken on public transport daily. You are part of this journey and a caring and inclusive Singapore starts with you.

We asked you what caring behaviours would most resonate with you as a commuter, both during our engagement sessions and then to vote during our “Be That Special Someone Today!” webinar. These are the caring behaviours that you felt would be a good start for our journey to build a more caring commuting culture.



**Give Time –**  
Be patient and slow down around others



**Give Care –**  
Look out for commuters who may need help



**Give a Hand –**  
Readily offer help to commuters who may need it



**Give Thanks –**  
Thank commuters who have offered help

You can read more about these behaviours under **Annex C**, and expect to see them featured in our subsequent initiatives and publicity. We also welcome you to give us your comments which can help us refine these behaviours by writing in to [LTA-TransportForAll@lta.gov.sg](mailto:LTA-TransportForAll@lta.gov.sg)

## Connecting Deeper

It is always impactful when different parties come together to develop a new initiative as that is where we get diversity of ideas. Moving forward, there will be more collaboration with different parties, culminating in more initiatives to benefit our commuters. Our first partnership was with a youth organisation, Movement of Inclusivity (MOI), to create a permanent identifier.



Box Story  
22

## Breaking Down Barriers for Our Commuters

Have you offered your seat on the MRT or bus to someone, only for the person to decline and you ended up hovering awkwardly at your seat not knowing whether to continue sitting or not? Or are you someone with a chronic condition who finds it much easier if you can get a seat during your commute, but finds it difficult to ask another person for their seat?

Well, this initiative hopes to make things easier for people like you. Movement of Inclusivity (MOI), a youth-led organisation, felt the same and were inspired to develop a permanent identifier in the form of a lanyard and card for commuters with long term conditions. With the lanyard acting as a signal to fellow commuters that the wearer may require assistance, we hope that such barriers can be broken down and bring about greater convenience to commuters.

**An “Art for Inclusivity” Competition was launched and the top designs were weaved into the lanyard design (read about the winning designs in the next box story).**

The “May I Have a Seat Please” lanyard and card



Source: Land Transport Authority

We should all do our part to help make the commuting experience better for everyone, including persons with disabilities. In doing so, we build a better Singapore for all.

Keep a lookout for this lanyard (and their wearers) as you commute and lend a hand to those in need.

*“ To be a truly inclusive society requires efforts exerted beyond an institutional level. Every individual in Singapore is an important stakeholder in creating this inclusive society. We believe that given a push in the right direction is all that is needed to prompt everyone in Singapore to step up and create a safer and more inclusive environment for everyone. We see this project with LTA as kickstarting a long chain of inclusion-focused projects and decisions in the coming years as we constantly refine and reshape our understanding and definition of inclusion. All in all, we are excited to embark on this journey with LTA and work towards a more inclusive society with all Singaporeans! ”*

(Movement of Inclusivity)

Box Story  
23

## The Meaning Behind the Top Artworks for the Art for Inclusivity Competition



Artwork by Asher Ng, 17

The five people in the artwork represent individuals with various forms of disabilities and conditions. They form a shape of an invisible heart to signify that commuters need to care and look out for these individuals who are more in need of a seat on our public transport (Shared by Asher's mother)



Artwork by Joy Koh, 18

The inspiration for my artwork came about from my own 'invisible' medical condition, which was diagnosed in 2015 - the Moyamoya Disease. People with invisible illness, like me, look exactly like everyone on the outside, but no one knows I have a medical condition. This is depicted in the 'person in blue', in the drawing.



Artwork by Samantha, 24

I am Samantha, I am special with Down syndrome. These are the things I like, colours and faces of my favourite cartoon characters.



Artwork by Lai Zer Yinn, 19

I am Zer Yinn.  
I am 19 years old.  
I am a girl.  
I stay in a HDB flat.  
I like to draw, listen to music, play game, paint, play piano.  
I like to go to the park, ice skating, swimming, rock climbing, library. I go to these places by bus, train.  
I like to eat spaghetti, cookies, candy apples, chicken rice, grapes, apples, banana, peach, watermelon.  
I like to draw manga, fish, flower, butterfly, firefly.



Artwork by See Say Beng, 33

The head in the picture represents himself while the series of lines and hues surrounding the head represent his worldview. To him, his world is melancholy (blue means sad) but there's also hope and happiness (Yellow represents hope and happiness and sunshine) with family and friends being of utmost importance (lighter brown). (Shared by Say Beng's caregiver)

Read more about their stories at our [Caring SG Commuter Portal!](#)

SG Enable has also been at the forefront, driving efforts to make our society a more inclusive place for persons with disabilities. Hear from their CEO Ms Ku Geok Boon as she shares how SG Enable is working with the Committee to realise this vision.

Box Story  
24

## Ms Ku Geok Boon Chief Executive Officer / SG Enable

Commuting is very much a part of the daily lives for most people. If we allow ourselves to be more mindful and aware of the people that we share our commuting time pockets with, offer help to some groups of commuters such as persons with disabilities, and not be afraid to be turned down, we will progressively move towards a more caring and inclusive nation.

We recognise that many, ground staff and public alike, would like to show their care for commuters with disabilities but may not know how to do so. Jointly with Caring SG Commuters Committee and its Caring Commuter Champions initiative, SG Enable will continue to raise awareness about the commuting

**Ms Ku Geok Boon with Special Education trainees under the School-to-Work Transition Programme**



Source: SG Enable

challenges that some persons with disabilities may face, and equip the community with tips on how they can interact with persons with disabilities and provide help to those who need it through our public education efforts.

We hope more will join us to build a more caring and inclusive commuting culture that enables greater independence for persons with disabilities.

We are looking for ways to encourage the community to be more involved in the movement. This could be achieved through supporting community projects, driving public awareness, and more, through the setting up of grants which the community can tap on.

***If you or your organisation have any new and exciting ideas to support the caring commuting movement, we welcome you to connect with us at [LTA-TransportForAll@lta.gov.sg](mailto:LTA-TransportForAll@lta.gov.sg).***



## 6 Inspiring

### Reinforcing Positive Momentum

We hope at this juncture, you are already feeling a bit more inspired to be a part of our journey.

Our commuters told us that they were inspired to show care to others due to influence from the people around them from a young age. Many youths also shared that they wanted to contribute to a more inclusive and caring public transport system. It is thus important that we build on this positive momentum as we grow our caring commuting culture.

*...since young...when I was taking public transport with my family, they would remind me to just stand. They would just let the elderly have the seats, and they themselves would also stand, so they were the role models...I modelled after them.*

(Female working adult, 20s)

*I think it's a good thing to give back to the people. If kindness goes around, you will get the kindness back.*

(Male student, teenager)

Our commuters came forward in various ways to help the community. This is just the beginning and it is our hope that these efforts can inspire more people to step forward.

#### Box Story 25

### Working With Our Youth Leaders to Show Appreciation for Frontline Workers



Do you recall seeing an appreciation wall when you passed by Kent Ridge MRT station in August/September 2020?

Source: Caring SG Commuters Committee

This is the story behind the wall. While Singapore was battling the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, a group of students from the National University of Singapore Students' Union (NUSSU) wanted to do something to show their appreciation for the frontline workers. They approached us with the idea to put up an appreciation wall at Kent Ridge MRT Station which we supported.

Launched on 29 August 2020, the wall was designed by NUSSU. They also distributed care packs to staff from the National University Hospital and public transport workers.

*“ Although engaging in projects that benefit the student population is important, I believe that we can go beyond and give back to society when the opportunity arises, hence I decided to take part in this project with PTC. During such difficult times, it is tempting to stay within our little bubbles instead of reaching out. However, as NUS students, I hope we can lend our support to our frontline heroes in our small ways, which can greatly encourage them in their line of work.*

(Ms Trixie Toh Pei Ying, 41st NUSSU Deputy Welfare Secretary)

Here's a call-out to all our commuters, youth or not. Reach out to us if you are interested in co-creating pilots to grow a caring commuting culture as no idea is too small!

If you are reading this and are not quite sure where to start, check out the next story to find out more about what inspired one of our Committee members' volunteerism journey.



Box Story  
26

## Ms Nadia Ahmad Samdin Public Transport Council Member

Our youths have a vision and are playing their part towards creating our own distinct Singaporean culture on public transport.

Ms Nadia Ahmad Samdin with two youth recipients of the LBKM Top-Up Fund<sup>5</sup> during a school concession pass top-up session in 2019.



Source: Ms Nadia Ahmad Samdin

Going beyond affordability and efficiency, our youths hope for a supportive culture on our public transport networks. One of the youths I spoke to shared how his brother had unfortunately lost his personal belongings while in transit. Thankfully, he was able to retrieve it promptly because the youth was familiar with the bus model and could track it down. He shared if more individuals with an intimate knowledge of the bus system could step forward to help, it would help in building a caring commuting culture. They are also confident commuters – willing to voice out and step up if someone looks lost, or do a quick Google search to offer help to those who have trouble navigating the transport system.

I grew up volunteering in community service, and believe that we should “Start where we are, Use what we have, Do what we can”. Simple gestures are able to make a big difference in our daily commutes, and I am heartened by the pro-activeness of our youth volunteers to serve. I hope more will come forward to volunteer as Caring Commuter Champions!

<sup>5</sup> The LBKM Top-Up Fund was initiated by Ms Nadia Ahmad Samdin and her Youth@LBKM team to cover public transport concession costs for students with financial difficulties, with the objective of reducing long-term absenteeism caused by cost-of-living issues and encouraging them to stay in school.

## Strengthening Positive Habits

Good habits start from young, and children can also play a part to contribute to a caring commuting culture! Read on to find out how.

Box Story  
27

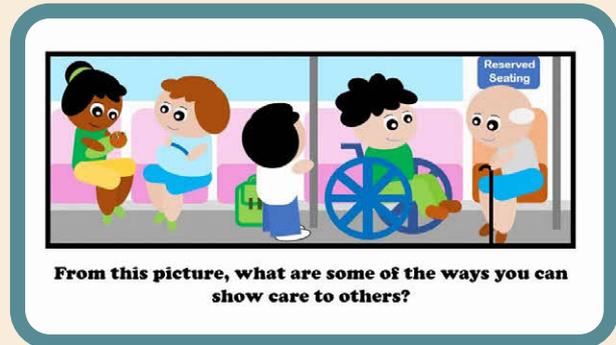
### Kids Can Be a Caring Hero Too

Do you know a child who has always wanted to show care to someone they met on the train, but feels shy or does not know how to do so?

#### Caring Hero Training Camp workshop materials



Source: Caring SG Commuters Committee



**From this picture, what are some of the ways you can show care to others?**

Through a series of interactive activities and discussions, a group of primary school students learnt practical ways to approach and help commuters with visual impairment and how to show care for commuters with personal mobility aids, the elderly and young families at the first ever **“Caring Hero Training Camp”**.

Through this workshop, these students were encouraged to do their part in creating a caring commuting culture in Singapore.

Chloe, a primary 3 student who participated in the workshop said, *“This workshop was very interesting, as I didn’t know the needs of different commuters. I am glad to have fun and to learn how to show care for others during our train rides”*.

If you missed out on this workshop, check out our [page](#) to learn about future opportunities!

Many of us would agree that education plays an important role in inculcating good caring behaviour. Hear from one of our Committee members as he shares his views on how caring behaviours can be inculcated from a young age.

Box Story  
28

## **Mr Lim Boon Wee** **Public Transport Council Member**

Even though we may often think of our young as being in need of care, one is never too young to learn to have a caring heart towards others and be sensitive to someone in need.

Learning to care for others must be a core value that lays the foundation for character and growth in our young, as they will become our future generation.

We already have an excellent public transport system. But let us enhance it to make it a truly special community asset we are all proud of - by embracing a caring commuter culture, with many visible acts of graciousness making for a more pleasant journey for all.

## Be a Caring Commuter Champion!

If you are now thinking “I want to contribute! Where can I start?”, this next section provides you with information about the Caring Commuter Champion (CCC) and how you can join us in fostering a caring commuting culture as a CCC.

***No act is too small to be a caring act if it helps another commuter complete their journey. Don't hesitate further. Be a Caring Commuter Champion today!***

Box Story  
29

### Be a Caring Commuter Champion Today



Do you want to help but don't know how?<sup>6</sup> Do you want to volunteer, but don't know where to start? Do you want to meet like-minded caring commuters like yourself?

If you answer “Yes” to any of the questions above, **join us as a Caring Commuter Champion today!**

Screenshot from a Caring Commuter Champion training session



Source: Caring SG Commuters Committee

<sup>6</sup> Results from a survey conducted by the Public Transport Council showed that commuters are willing to offer their assistance to those in need. Only around half of survey respondents were aware of how to assist those with physical disabilities and only about 20-30% were aware of how to assist those with hearing impairment, intellectual disabilities or developmental disabilities.



You will start with a training programme that teaches you how to assist different groups of commuters with varied needs.

After your training is completed, you will receive updates about Caring SG activities which you can volunteer for. On top of these activities, we know that we can rely on you to help fellow commuters when you encounter them on your public transport journey.

Hear from one of our pioneer Caring Commuter Champions below:

*“ This is a very insightful sharing on how persons with disabilities can receive better support and assistance from the community. It has highlighted the challenges that many of our friends with disabilities are facing on a daily basis, especially when taking public transport. Through this sharing session by SG Enable, I now understand the importance of us providing more support for the vulnerable, ensuring that they are not neglected by the general public. I am also equipped with some knowledge on how we can better assist persons with disabilities when taking public transports and the things that we should be aware that involve our actions and words that may unintentionally hurt or cause others to feel uncomfortable. ”*

(Tan Wei Siang, Republic Polytechnic student)

## This is just the start of our journey.

We hope that you have taken away something new after reading this report. But this is just the start of our journey. Thanks to the combined effort from all of you, our commuters, and partners, Singapore has planted our first seed in creating a caring commuting culture.

***As our community continues to grow, let us all work hand-in-hand to build a caring commuting culture.***



## Annex A: Summary of Key Initiatives

1	Appreciation Wall at Kent Ridge MRT Station	August 2020
2	Caring SG Commuters Committee Dialogue Session With National University of Singapore Students' Union (NUSSU)	September 2020
3	Distribution of Hand Sanitisers to Vulnerable Commuters With National University of Singapore Students' Union (NUSSU)	September 2020
4	Launch of Caring SG Commuters Portal	September 2020
5	Caring SG Commuters Video Series	September – December 2020
6	Go-Ahead Singapore's "Helping Hand" Trial	November 2020
7	SBST's CARES Kindness Month	October 2020
8	SBST's Engagements With Persons With Disabilities to Enhance Their Travel Experience	October – November 2020
9	SBST's "Encourage the Heart" Posters in Collaboration With the Methodist Girls' Secondary School	October 2020 – March 2021
10	"Be That Special Someone Today" Webinar	December 2020
11	Caring Hero Training Camp	December 2020

12	Presentation of Caring Commuter Award 2020	January 2021
13	Heart Zone @ Jurong East Bus Interchange	January 2021
14	Heart Zone @ Kent Ridge MRT Station	February 2021
15	Nursing Room by Hegen at Jurong East Bus Interchange	February 2021
16	Call For Caring Commuter Champions	Ongoing
17	Tower Transit Singapore's Public Bus Confidence Course	Ongoing
18	Tower Transit Singapore's Public Bus Inclusivity Course	Ongoing
19	Tower Transit Singapore's Student Co-Host Programme	Ongoing
20	Tower Community Store in Partnership With SG Enable	Ongoing
21	SMRT's Dementia Assistance Initiatives (e.g. Training Staff to Use the Dementia Friends Mobile Application and Helping to Identify and Assist Passengers Who May Have Dementia)	Ongoing
22	SBST's Bus Safety Awareness Campaign for the Elderly	Ongoing
23	SBST's Escalator Safety Awareness Campaign for the Elderly	Ongoing

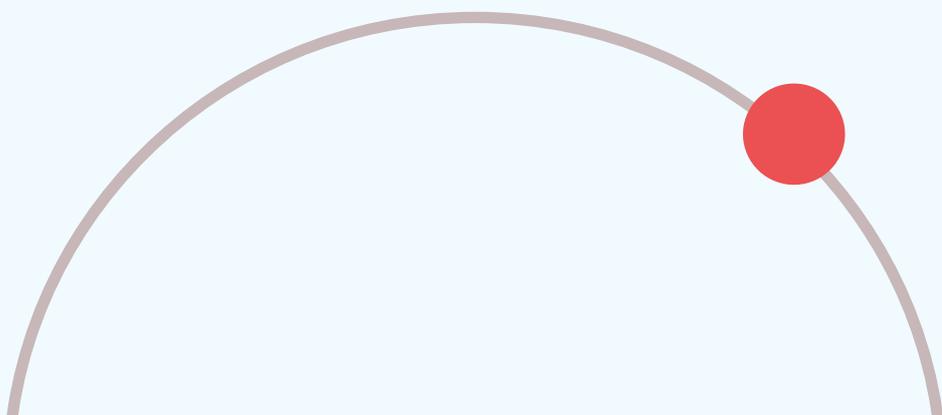


## Annex B: About the Caring SG Commuters Committee

### Vision

The Caring SG Commuters Committee aims to guide multi-agency efforts in the ideation, implementation and publicity of public transport co-creation initiatives to grow and sustain the Caring SG Commuters movement and formulate strategies to foster a caring commuting culture on Singapore's public transport, in alignment with the LTMP 2040.

The Committee will focus on strengthening commuters' understanding of vulnerable commuters, motivate and reinforce caring commuting behaviour through sharing of Caring Behaviours and ways to help vulnerable commuters, and grow the momentum for a caring commuting culture through publicity and outreach. The Committee will co-create and co-deliver solutions with key stakeholders, apply behavioural insights and design thinking, develop data collection and measurement processes and leverage Transport family and relevant whole-of-government efforts to drive the caring commuting culture in Singapore. The objective is to develop a socially inclusive public transport culture where commuters feel that they have a stake in the public transport system, accept diversity among fellow commuters and actively offer assistance to those in need.



## Mission

The Committee will initially focus on three key target groups with greater mobility-related needs for inclusive transport: families, persons with disabilities<sup>7</sup> and the elderly, and implement initiatives which help to promote empathy and care towards commuters from these groups. LTA will continue to develop and address infrastructure-related enhancements through existing efforts.<sup>8</sup>

While the Committee will initially focus on the three key target groups mentioned above, we are cognisant that there will be other general commuters who need help on an ad-hoc basis. We acknowledge that our commuters are diverse and should all have equal access to public transport regardless of their circumstances or abilities. Hence, the Caring SG Commuters movement aims to develop a caring commuting culture for all commuters, while implementing dedicated initiatives for commuters with dedicated needs or may be chronically burdened. Through enhancing commuters' access to public transport resources, we can improve commuters' participation in society and promote greater social inclusion.

<sup>7</sup> Persons with disabilities (PWDs) include those with physical disabilities, visual impairment, deaf and hard-of-hearing, intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorder.

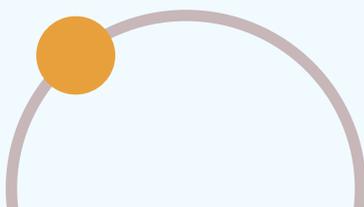
<sup>8</sup> Such initiatives include barrier-free access routes, wheelchair accessible buses which will continue to be undertaken by LTA as part of LTMP 2040 efforts.



## Composition

The Caring SG Commuters Committee comprises key industry players as well as the following ministries and agencies:

- Ministry of Culture, Community & Youth
- Ministry of Social and Family Development
- Ministry of Transport
- Land Transport Authority
- Public Transport Council
- National Transport Workers' Union
- SG Enable
- Go Ahead Singapore
- SBS Transit
- SMRT
- Tower Transit Singapore



You can care for others on your commute if you

# Give Time

*Be patient  
and slow down  
around others*



## Simple habits you can adopt:



- Give way to commuters who are using mobility aids, such as wheelchairs or canes. Do take care not to knock into their canes!

- Be patient around commuters who may need more time to navigate the public transport system, such as commuters with disabilities.



Caring **SG**  
Commuters

You can care for others on your commute if you

# Give Care

Look out for commuters who may need help



## Simple habits you can adopt:



- Keep an eye out for commuters wearing the "May I Have a Seat Please" sticker or card and lanyard. Give up your seat if you can, as they may require assistance even though they appear healthy.

- Take a break from your mobile devices and observe if anyone looks unwell, confused, or in need of assistance.



Caring SG  
Commuters

You can care for others on your commute if you



# Give a Hand

Readily offer help to commuters who may need it



## Simple habits you can adopt:

ASSESS



ASK



ASSIST



- If you **assess** that someone seems to require assistance, **ask** them if and how they would like to be helped, and **assist** them accordingly.

- Vacate the Personal Mobility Aid or stroller restraint spaces on trains and buses if you notice a commuter who would require that space.



Caring SG  
Commuters

You can contribute to a caring commuting culture if you



# Give Thanks

Thank commuters who have offered help



## Simple habits you can adopt:

THANK YOU



IT'S OK, BUT THANK YOU!



- Nod, smile, or say "Thank you" to show your appreciation to commuters who have helped you.

- Express your appreciation even if you were to reject any help, as it will encourage them to continue being caring to others.



Caring SG  
Commuters



 /caringsgcommuters

 @caringsgcommuters

#CaringSGCommuters