

# Grandfriend Programme

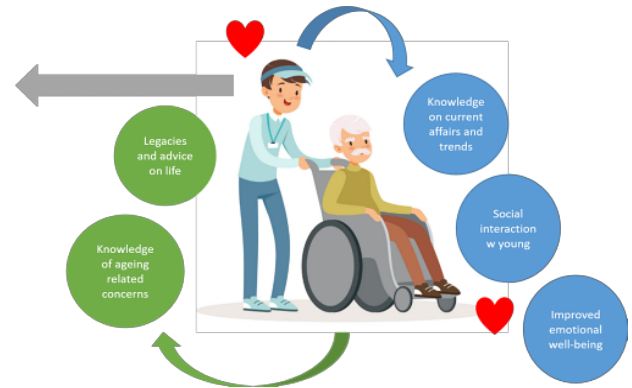
## 我的老友记



### Introduction & problem analysis

Loneliness in nursing homes has been well-documented abroad and in Singapore. According to a local study, 59.6% of residents in nursing home reported that they feel lonely. [1] At the same time, studies conducted in nursing home in the Western countries have found that intergenerational activities can have a positive impact on seniors. [2] Inspired by the successes found abroad, the Grandfriend Programme is an intergenerational programme where post-secondary students would stay in KWSH for 3D2N. During the camp, the residents and students are paired one-to-one. Through a series of planned activities, the students and residents develop greater understanding of one another, and friendships are forged. Students also experience life in the nursing home by sleeping on hospital beds and having meals served in the wards. The programme has three main objectives. First, KWSH hopes that the social interaction with the young can help to alleviate the loneliness experienced by its residents. Next, KWSH hopes to inspire the future generations to uphold the philanthropic spirit of our forefathers via the programme. Finally, students inject life and zest into the nursing home environment, bringing joy to both the residents and staff.

- Experience living in a nursing home.
- Understand the logistical operations of a nursing home, Senior Care Centre and Active Ageing Hub.
- Interact with other youths of various backgrounds.
- Learn about supporting elderly care, mobility aids and rehabilitation facilities.
- Gain exposure to the career options within the healthcare sector.



### Intervention & residents' outcomes

To date, four runs of the camp have been conducted since Dec' 18. Close to 50 students from 11 educational institutions: Anglo Chinese School (Independent), Eunoia Junior College (JC), Nanyang JC, Nanyang Technological University, National JC, National University of Singapore, Raffles Institution, Singapore Polytechnic, Temasek Polytechnic, Victoria JC and Yishun Innova JC have benefitted from the programme.

During the 3D2N here, residents will participate in various social activities with the students. This includes going for an outing, treasure hunt, baking and interaction time in the wards. 89% of the resident participants surveyed indicated positive responses as well as, willingness to participate in similar programmes in the future. Most enjoyed the time that they spent with the students. In fact, the bond established between the resident and student could result in a long-term friendship beyond the camp.

3<sup>rd</sup> Dec 2019- Day 1 (Tuesday)

Time	Activity
0900-1030	Registration & Briefing
1045-1145	Tips for interacting with elderly Introduction to Grandfriend
1200-1315	Lunch
1330-1500	Visit to Senior Care Centre
1500-1600	Ward observation with Nurse Manager(s) Tube Feeding
1600-1630	Break
1630-1830	Steamboat dinner
1830-2000	Movie under the stars
After 2000	Shower and self-reflection
2200	Lights out

Fig 1: Programme rundown of Day 1 of the Grandfriend Programme

*My Grandfriend lent me this book, she will return in 3 weeks to visit me. I finished the book and re-reading to revise, so when my Grandfriend comes back, I can summarize the story to her.*



Fig 2: Participants and residents enjoy a steamboat dinner together



Fig 3: Grandfriends all geared up in gloves and ready to bake

The programme could be the much-needed solution to improve the psychosocial well-being of residents staying in a nursing home. Importantly, it is discovered that it mattered less who visited, as long there is someone to interact with the seniors.

*As long as someone comes, or else every day is just too boring, sleep and eat, eat and sleep, like a dead person.*

### Students' outcome

Prior to the camp, nearly all the student participants were not volunteering. After the camp, 94% of participants indicated willingness to volunteer for other elderly-related programmes in the future. Around 40% of the students have since returned to volunteer after the camp. Some of these students are now volunteering regularly. (at least once in two weeks). This has certainly brought much joy to the lonely residents.

### Sustainability

To sustain this programme, KWSH need the help of its student volunteers. Students are encouraged to think about the sustainability of the programme since Day 1 of the camp. During round 2, 3 and 4 of the camp, previous participants have returned to assist with the programme. A SOP has also been written to ensure that staff could reproduce the programme.

### How are the results measured ?

Students must complete pre-camp and post-camp surveys. Oral interviews are conducted after the camp to find out residents' opinion about the camp. Finally, staff feedback is collated after every round. These feedback are then shared with the respective departments.

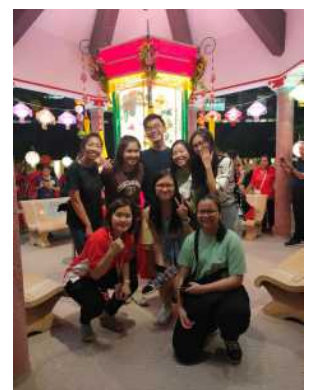


Fig 4: Student participants return during the mid-autumn festival to have a "reunion" with their Grandfriends

### References

- [1] Chew SY: MPH Practicum (Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health) - Loneliness among cognitively-intact elderly 65 years and older residing in Nursing Homes. 2018.  
 [2] Drageset J, Kirkevold M, Espehaug B. Loneliness and social support among nursing home residents without cognitive impairment: A questionnaire survey. Int J Nurs Stud. 2011;48(5):611-619.  
 Slettenbø Å. Safe, but Lonely: Living in a Nursing Home. Nord J Nurs Res. 2008;28(1):22-25.