

# Extra \$140m to support expansion of active ageing centres

Funding comes on top of \$800m set aside  
by the Govt for them from 2024 to 2028

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REVERSAL OF SPIRIT

**If we take care of our seniors well, they are not a challenge, they are an asset. We are convinced that with proper policy, proper engagement, whether you are young or old, it is in the mind... Ageing by age we cannot stop, but ageing in spirit we can reverse.**



HEALTH MINISTER ONG YE KUNG

When nursing student Abigail Lim goes for work attachments at hospitals, she often sees elderly patients alone. So when her mother Jenny Teo, 52, asked her and her brother to volunteer to do outreach for seniors in Paya Lebar as Silver Generation Ambassadors, they agreed.

On Oct 12, their family was recognised for helping seniors at a celebration for the 10th anniversary of the Silver Generation Office (SGO), the outreach arm of the Agency for Integrated Care.

Minister for Health Ong Ye Kung was there to announce that an additional \$140 million will be pumped into more than 100 active ageing centres (AACs) from 2025 to 2027, to expand or refurbish them as Singapore becomes a super-aged society.

The family was awarded the Silver Generation Ambassador Family Award at the event. Ms Lim, 21, a final-year nursing student at the Singapore Institute of Technology, said: "At work, I can see how much the elderly wish for someone to talk to them and how lonely



Health Minister Ong Ye Kung taking a selfie with Silver Generation Ambassadors and guests at the 10th anniversary of the Silver Generation Office (SGO), the outreach arm of the Agency for Integrated Care, at Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre on Oct 12. ST PHOTOS: SHINTARO TAY

it can be living at home for some.

"Knowing I'm making a difference in their lives, becoming a friend for them to talk to and to turn to for help, even in small ways, it keeps me going."

Her brother Samuel, 24, an entrepreneur dealing with leather crafts, was initially hesitant about volunteering. He said: "I am quite lazy, but my mother can be very persuasive, and I have learnt to trust her intuition."

He volunteers once a week. He added: "When you get to see and meet all these people while volunteering, it really lends a whole new and deeper understanding and appreciation, not just for your parents, but for everyone else you meet."

The additional \$140 million funding is on top of the \$800 mil-



From left, Ms Jenny Teo roped in her daughter Abigail Lim and son Samuel Lim to do outreach for seniors in Paya Lebar as Silver Generation Ambassadors. They were recognised by the SGO on Oct 12 for helping seniors.

lion the Government has set aside for them from 2024 to 2028.

AACs are commonly located at the void decks of Housing Board blocks to engage seniors through social and recreational activities, and provide them with befriending and referrals for care services.

Age Well SG is a national programme to help seniors age well in the community, and the Government announced in February it has set aside \$3.5 billion to support the effort over the next decade.

Mr Ong said 60 more AACs have been added over the past year and, there are now 214. Singapore is on track to reach 220 AACs by 2025, which will serve around 80 per cent of the senior population here.

He also announced that the en-

hanced Home Personal Care (HPC+) service will be rolled out islandwide by end-2025, to strengthen care support in the community.

This service offers support for daily activities like showering, feeding and housekeeping, while the enhanced version includes a 24/7 technology-enabled monitoring and response element to detect falls and incidents.

Since March 2023, the enhanced HPC+ service has been rolled out at 11 sites around Singapore.

HPC+ has led to lower nursing home admission rates among frail seniors as the service provides more responsive and frequent support to them, said the Ministry of Health (MOH).

Said Mr Ong: "If we take care of our seniors well, they are not a challenge, they are an asset. We are convinced that with proper policy, proper engagement, whether you are young or old, it is in the mind."

"Ageing by age we cannot stop, but ageing in spirit we can reverse."

Seniors also have more housing options, MOH said.

Harmony Village @ Bukit Batok, Singapore's first community care apartment (CCA) project, will be completed by October. CCA is a type of public housing that pairs senior-friendly housing with on-site social activities and care services.

Apart from the upcoming CCAs in Queenstown and Chai Chee, a fourth project will be launched in MacPherson, offering 260 units.

By 2030, the Government will launch up to 30 CCA projects.

Since 2022, SGO has been conducting door-to-door visits to seniors to find out about their health and social needs and connect them to a nearby AAC. So far, more than 480,000 seniors have been visited.

One ambassador, retiree Lim Chuan Poo, 66, dedicates four to five days a week engaging fellow seniors in his estate. He speaks to more than 160 seniors monthly, and was awarded the Silver Generation Ambassador Exemplary Award.

He said: "I feel happy when these seniors say 'hi'. Establishing relationships like these is important to ensure they are not isolated. The joy of seeing people being helped by what we are doing keeps me going."

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