



PRESIDENT'S  
VOLUNTEERISM &  
PHILANTHROPY  
*awards*  
2018



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PRESIDENT'S  
VOLUNTEERISM &  
PHILANTHROPY  
*awards*  
2018

The annual President's Volunteerism & Philanthropy Awards (PVPA) presents the highest honour for those who have set benchmarks of excellence in the spirit of giving in the arts, environment, social services, sports, education, healthcare and other worthy causes in Singapore. The Awards aim to encourage and inspire others to bring about a higher level of volunteerism and philanthropy in Singapore.

## Message By President Mdm Halimah Yacob

*Together, many hands and hearts  
nurture a nation that cares.*

My heartiest congratulations to the eight winners of this year's President's Volunteerism & Philanthropy Awards.

Since its introduction in 2012, the Awards have recognised dozens of inspiring corporations, individuals and groups who have gone the extra mile for worthy causes.

This year's winners include firms that made giving an integral part of their corporate culture, as well as individuals who are passionate in helping those around them. Through their selfless acts, they have shown that volunteerism can be a part of all our lives. They exemplify how our nation's giving landscape has matured and flourished over the years. They are the personification of a nation that cares.

For Singapore to progress as one nation, we need our people to be compassionate. This can only be achieved when all of us pitch in to help those around us, so that we can make a greater and longer lasting impact on society.

To the winners of this year's Awards – congratulations once again, and may you inspire others to follow suit to grow the SG Cares movement and make Singapore a caring and endearing home for everyone.

**Mdm Halimah Yacob**

President of the  
Republic of Singapore



# Message By Chairman Mrs Mildred Tan

*“Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.” – Mother Teresa*

Kindness in words or in acts are not done in futility. As this quote reminds us, the kindness we extend makes an impact that can reverberate loudly.

Just like how tonight’s winners have shown us, their giving journeys are ongoing and echoes forth. In fact, for some of them, their kindness have rippled across oceans and are blessing communities in other corners of our world. This is the true spirit of giving – no end, no border.

As I congratulate the winners of this year’s President’s Volunteerism & Philanthropy Awards, my desire is that their giving stories will inspire more to come forward and join in the echoing of kindness that will see Singapore strongly established as a City of Good!



**Mrs Mildred Tan**

Chairman, NVPC

# Message By Chief Executive Officer Ms Melissa Kwee

*Join me to salute the winners of  
the President’s Volunteerism &  
Philanthropy Awards 2018.*

As we come together as a community to celebrate Singapore’s Giving Heroes, we reaffirm the values that hold us together as a society in the midst of many forces that always threaten to divide us. Giving unites people and reminds us that we share a great deal in our common humanity.

The President’s Volunteerism & Philanthropy Awards recognise the efforts of individuals who tirelessly yet joyfully give of themselves in service of others and the institutions and initiatives that build cultures which enable and support others to cultivate a giving spirit and habit.

The winners remind us that each of us can choose to use our power and influence in private and public arenas to uplift, comfort, create and expand our imagination of what it means to do good and do well. Together they represent a microcosm of what is best and beautiful about our society.

I hope that as you read these stories and words of these inspiring individuals and organisations, your hope and courage will arise. May we start to put our hands to the plough to give towards the future we collectively envision.



**Ms Melissa Kwee**

Chief Executive Officer, NVPC

# 2018 Judging Panel



**Mr Eugene Seow**  
Co-Chairperson

*Special Advisor,  
TOUCH Community Services,  
& Chief Executive Officer,  
TOUCH International*



**Ms Trina Liang-Lin**  
Co-Chairperson

*Managing Director,  
Templebridge Investments*



**Mr Azmoon Bin Ahmad**

*Managing Director,  
Desay SV Automotive Singapore  
Pte Ltd*



**Mr Robert Chew**

*Honorary Treasurer,  
National Council of Social Service  
Vice Chairman,  
Dover Park Hospice*



**Ms Debra Soon**

*Chief Marketing Officer,  
Mediacorp Pte Ltd*



**Dr Ming Tan**

*Director,  
The COMO Foundation*



**Mr Ronny Tan**

*President,  
Sentosa Golf Club*



**Ms Yvonne Tham**

*Chief Executive Officer,  
The Esplanade Co Ltd*

# Winners Of PVPA 2018



**Corporate:  
Large Enterprise**

**Citi Singapore**  
*Page 8*



**Corporate:  
Small and Medium  
Enterprise**

**TSMP Law Corporation**  
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**Non-Profit  
Organisation**

**Assisi Hospice**  
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**Kampong Spirit**

**Blessings in a Bag**  
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**Educational Institution**

**National University  
of Singapore**  
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**Individual: Youth**

**Mr Abbas Ali  
Mohamed Irshad**  
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**Individual: Adult**

**Dr Rupesh Agrawal**  
*Page 20*



**Individual: Senior**

**Mrs Anna Tham**  
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## Investing In Citizens Of Good

A generation of financially-savvy young people, able to adapt to the challenges of a constantly evolving economic landscape – that is the future that Citi Singapore envisions. Citizenship is core to Citi Singapore and is deeply embedded in their mission of enabling growth and progress around the world. It has also powered the bank's emphasis on youth, with the aim to nurture their personal development, career aspirations and equip them with financial literacy skills. Leveraging on its expertise as a financial institution, Citi Singapore has chosen to focus on financial literacy and inclusion as key areas of outreach. The knowledge that a financially literate society strengthens the community's well-being and also provides the foundation for a better future, makes it all the more worthwhile to help develop the economic vitality and ambition of young people who are poised to become powerful growth engines for cities worldwide.

In a tangible demonstration of its commitment to address unmet social needs in Singapore, and with support from the Citi Foundation, the bank has committed \$1.75 million in funding in 2017, a whopping 67 per cent increase in philanthropic grant funding from \$1.04 million in 2002. To date, Citi has contributed \$17 million to various financial inclusion and youth development programmes. With its emphasis on the young, Citi Singapore aims to get Singaporeans to start thinking about money matters, even from a young age, regardless of their socio-economic background. For example, the Citi-South East CDC MoneyWise Matched Savings Programme, launched in 2011, encourages needy students to start saving early. A follow-up research showed that almost half of the 1,000 students involved saved regularly during the eight-month programme, giving them a good head start.

Another programme that started in 2012, the Citi-SMU Financial Literacy Programme for Young Adults, seeks to equip young adults with essential personal finance knowledge, giving them a firm foundation to manage their money when they go out into the working world. So far, 210 SMU student trainers and 120 trainers from five polytechnics and three ITE colleges have trained over 18,000 young adults on a wide range of topics, such as credit management, financial planning and investing.

Citi Singapore's corporate giving programmes also hone in on specific sectors of the demographic, filling in gaps within the community. With the awareness that women are often the ones who manage the household finances, the Citi-Tsao Foundation Financial Education Programme for Mature Women, launched in 2008, has helped more than 8,500 women from low-income households plan for their later years. Another target group is social workers and social work students, who are taught how to help needy families manage their finances under the Citi-NUS NAI Financial Capability and Asset Building (FCAB) Initiative for Social Workers in Singapore. In total, the bank's financial literacy initiatives have reached out to more than 425,000 students from over 80 per cent of the schools in Singapore, as well as over 6,000 low-income mature women.

*“We believe our efforts in Singapore in enabling financial inclusion and empowering youth with employable skills form the building blocks for their financial well-being and upward mobility in the future.”*

-- Mr Amol Gupte,  
ASEAN Head and Citi Country Officer for Singapore

Besides focusing on promoting financial literacy, Citi Singapore also supports and organises programmes that encourage creativity, innovation and community leadership amongst youth. That is why, beyond giving advice on day-to-day money matters, the bank also aims to develop leadership and soft skills in young people. The Citi-YMCA Youth for Causes has raised some \$10 million in funds for over 150 local voluntary welfare organisations (VWO), providing seed funding, training and mentorship for young entrepreneurs to realise their dreams. The results speak for themselves: in 2017, with seed funding of \$1,600 per team, the 100 participating teams comprising 400 youths raised a total of \$742,000, which benefitted 49 VWOs. Apart from fund-raising, their initiatives also mobilised over 15,000 volunteers. Similarly, the Citi-TOUCH Community Services Aspire Programme teaches ITE students occupational skills through hands-on work experiences to give them a head start when applying for jobs.

Another significant collaboration is a tie-up between Citi Commercial Bank (CCB) and The Business Times Budding Artists Fund (BT BAF) to provide a larger and visible platform for promising young artists. In 2017, 25 art works were shortlisted from more than 40 initial sketch submissions by children and youth. These works are published in CCB's annual desk calendars and on Chinese New Year red packets which are distributed to clients.

Citi Singapore has also shown that sometimes, it is the little things that can have a massive impact. Take its simple donate-as-you-drink programme. At all of Citi's 45 office drink dispensers, 10 cents of every drink purchased by employees at 20 cents per cup goes to the Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund. It's a small amount but this has translated into nearly \$60,000 raised every year. Overarching Citi Singapore's approach to citizenship is sustainability and scalability, which comes with the understanding that grooming the next generation requires long-term commitment. 2018 marks the 16th year of collaboration for Citi Singapore with the YMCA. Over the years, this collaboration has built up a sustainable pool of resources in terms of volunteers, ideas and social enterprise prototypes for social service organisations to tap. Likewise, Citi Singapore has supported The Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund for 16 years and The Business Times Budding Artists Fund for 15 years.



### Art Jamming

Volunteers from Citi Singapore participating in an art jamming session with children and youths from The Business Times Budding Artists Fund.

Naturally, when it comes to tapping expertise for its various programmes, Citi Singapore leverages on its best resource – its people. “Citi Singapore's philanthropy is enhanced by our talented employees, who donate their time and skills to benefit the communities. We encourage year-round employee volunteerism and the Community and Volunteerism Committee of CitiClub – our employee recreational club – help to achieve this by organising volunteer events and community projects throughout the year. Often, these events start from employee suggestions.” says Adam Rahman, Head of Corporate Affairs, Citi Singapore and ASEAN. These volunteer opportunities are then highlighted in CitiClub's weekly e-bulletin that is sent to the whole workforce.

In 2017, over 6,000 volunteers participated in the bank's various corporate giving programmes, contributing more



### Youth For Causes

Citi Singapore volunteers, YMCA and youth participants at the Citi-YMCA Youth for Causes Social Bazaar 2018.

than 19,817 volunteer hours in total. Volunteers range from mid- to senior-level staff, providing expert skills in financial literacy, entrepreneurship and money management, as well as legal counselling, HR consulting, marketing and even IT assistance.

Citi Singapore also spreads its corporate giving message with customers by giving them the opportunity to convert their credit card rewards points into donations. The bank's global foreign exchange and local markets business also donates US\$1 for every US\$1 million of foreign currency clients traded on the online Velocity platform over a month each year. So far the programme – ‘e for education’ – has raised between US\$6.25 million and US\$22.5 million in the five years that it has been running.

Adam shares: “At Citi Singapore, we believe that building a City of Good is a responsibility shared by our employees, businesses, clients, suppliers and communities. In other words, it is best accomplished when all of us work together towards a common goal; to enable growth and progress.”

Even with its long-term perspective on investing in Singapore's future, Citi Singapore is still looking ahead of the curve. It aims to deepen its commitment to youth development and has plans to partner with another prominent youth social agency, other non-profit organisations as well as collaboration with the Community Chest's Share as One programme. With its capacity to do much more, it is without a doubt that this Citi Singapore is not looking to slow down when it comes to making a difference.




## Advocating Positive Social Change

The will to connect and a social consciousness that come from understanding what beneficiaries want and need - these are the qualities that make TSMP Law Corporation stand out among the many small and medium enterprises in Singapore. Central to the law firm's corporate giving mission is learning what is needed on the ground and coming up with programmes to meet those needs.

TSMP's corporate giving programme started with the partners wanting to give back. The firm was already making charitable donations and undertaking ad hoc pro bono legal briefs, but the lawyers wanted to do something more than their day jobs. That was 10 years ago, when they partnered with Children's Cancer Foundation to organise and sponsor Christmas events for cancer patients and their families.

After a few years of successful collaboration, TSMP decided to look for charities that were under-resourced, throwing its weight behind lesser known causes like youth at risk. Its first foray was a challenge - A Saturday outing to Outward Bound School with youths from Boys' Town. From the 7am boat ride that would take them to Pulau Ubin, to wall climbing and just learning to connect with pre-teen and teenage boys from broken homes, it was a huge learning curve for the lawyers and staff.

"There were quiet grumbles on the way to the island as nobody wanted to wake up at dawn on a Saturday to don a harness and walk a tightrope. But we were so inspired by the boys - I vividly remember a 15-year-old who was terrified of walking across a bridge. As we called out our encouragement from below, we knew we were urging him not just to put one foot in front of the other, but to also face up to the demons in his life. There were few dry eyes on the boat ride back," recalls Stefanie Yuen Thio, TSMP's Joint Managing Partner.

*"When I look back on my life, I don't want to be confronted with a blank canvas, filled with people I did not help and the good I did not do"*

- Ms Stefanie Yuen Thio,  
Joint Managing Partner

Inspired to make a strategic difference with its charitable efforts, TSMP has gone on to seek out other causes where the need is lesser known.

Because there are no programmes that support children with low vision (those who have lost a certain portion of their eyesight), TSMP helped set up iC2 PrepHouse, an institution that provides structured educational and rehabilitative programmes for those with visual impairment. One of its partners, Jennifer Chia, also serves on iC2 PrepHouse's board while the firm continues

to provide free legal advice as well as making donations and supporting the charity's fundraising initiatives. Similarly, at a laser tag event organised by the firm for Muhammadiyah Welfare Home (MWH), Ms Yuen Thio discovered that the boys are keen footballers. She immediately offered to sponsor a football coach to help train them and hone their footwork. See a need, meet the need - that is the concrete way TSMP operates.

TSMP focuses its resources to support three groups of beneficiaries - namely,

children and youth-at-risk, the elderly and migrant workers. It believes these are key groups that need attention and hopes other volunteers or donors will follow suit. "Put your dollar and time where they could make impact. It is easy to raise money for a cute pre-schooler fighting cancer, but it is much harder to persuade someone to open his wallet for a scruffy 17-year-old who is dropping out of school because his only parent is in jail for taking drugs. Yet these oft-neglected causes need our help just as much," says Ms Yuen Thio.

For each group, TSMP aims to understand their needs, provide guidance such as legal help and friendship, as well as impart life skills and a positive influence. It has currently helped almost 20 groups, including the Singapore Association for the Visually-Handicapped and the Dover Park Hospice.

To better develop its corporate giving programmes, the firm established the 'Handprint Committee'. Overseen by Ian Lim, one of its partners, this committee coordinates with different organisations to structure relevant programmes - a kind of "matching" of skills and expertise to needs. The firm also encourages giving back throughout its ranks by actively inviting employees to share their ideas for CSR activities and to nominate charities to support.

Having a large pool of skilled and experienced lawyers has proven beneficial in TSMP's partnership with Humanitarian Organisation for Home Economics (HOME) and Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2). The firm provides legal pro bono services to migrant workers who need assistance in issues such as disputes with employers over unpaid salaries and the lack of annual and sick leave. This desire to help saw its lawyers handling two landmark salary dispute cases last year, ensuring workers received due compensation.



### S.E.A. Aquarium

TSMP staff bringing migrant workers to S.E.A. Aquarium as a way of appreciating them for their contributions in building Singapore.

"We try to take on cases which have a multiplier impact," says Melvin Chan, who heads the firm's pro bono legal work. "If an employer knows that he cannot bully his foreign employee by underpaying him, because we will enforce that employee's rights in the courts, that employer will think twice before swindling any of his foreign staff."

TSMP's programmes also aim to inject an element of fun for its beneficiaries that go beyond the usual charity drives. In September last year, it organised an Amazing Race that saw over 50 socially disadvantaged children and youths from Tasek Jurong Limited racing around the Central Business District and civic district to locate landmarks and answer questions - a day out that was both enjoyable and educational. The year before, TSMP took migrant workers from TWC2 and HOME to the S.E.A. Aquarium at Resorts World Singapore and the holographic Korean Pop concert, luxuries that migrant workers would never reward themselves with. TSMP's array of programmes has

also included Masterchef and futsal sessions with boys from MWH, a donation drive for women's clothes and a mooncake-making workshop for the elderly.

Another intangible but no less invaluable way that TSMP gives back is through recruitment. It offered a practice-training contract and later, a full-time position to ex-offender



### Muhammadiyah Welfare Home

TSMP staff organised an intense laser-tag battle for 40 boys from Muhammadiyah Welfare Home. This treat and rare outing was a new experience for these children, many who are juvenile offenders from broken families.

Darren Tan who impressed with his sincerity, maturity and hardworking attitude. Four years on, he is now a senior associate in the firm. TSMP also partnered with the Asian Women's Welfare Association (AWWA) to give disadvantaged women a chance to support themselves, such as hiring a beneficiary with a hearing disability to work in its finance department.

Solidifying the firm's DNA of giving back, TSMP prioritises job applicants who are active volunteers. Among its ranks is a young lawyer who goes to Chiang Mai annually to help underprivileged children there. "I am heartened to see many millennials giving back to society at a very early stage of their career. The proliferation of new media platforms in shaping attitudes and approaches to giving has resulted in a growing awareness of social problems and how they can be tackled," says Ms Yuen Thio. To further support its employees in giving back to the community, the firm closes its doors for two days every year so staff can take part in corporate giving projects.

This year, the firm is celebrating its 20th anniversary. To commemorate this milestone, it is setting up TSMP Law Foundation, a charitable foundation that will be administered by the Community Foundation of Singapore. Through its own foundation, the firm will continue focusing on the three main corporate giving initiatives: children and youth-at-risk, the elderly and migrant workers. It also hopes to take its charitable efforts overseas, such as teaching English in villages in Thailand and Myanmar. And judging by the enthusiasm throughout its ranks, the verdict is clear - TSMP will continue to make a positive impact in the lives of those in need.



## Journeying To The End Together

Providing comfort to a terminally ill patient in his final hours is a daunting task. It requires not just someone who possesses a stoic demeanour, but also emotional sensitivity. That is a tall order for a nurse or a doctor, even more so for a volunteer. And that is what makes Assisi Hospice's team of volunteers so special. Thanks largely to the strength of its volunteer force, the hospice is the first to have a sustainable No One Dies Alone (NODA) programme.

NODA@Assisi is a volunteer programme that provides companionship to dying patients who have neither family nor close friends to accompany them in their final hours. The volunteers in the programme spend extended periods of time with each patient, getting to know him better and staying with him right till his last breath, taking turns to sit in vigil over the last 48 hours.

These emotionally trying moments often leave a lasting impression on volunteers. Paul Koh, a NODA volunteer since 2014 vividly recalls his encounter with a Madam T, a patient in her 70s. Despite her erratic mood swings, he persevered to befriend her by serving her lunch each time he was on duty. As her health deteriorated and her speech became more incoherent, there were times when Paul could not understand her. Frustrated by this, Madam T would

*"Volunteers are an integral part of the Assisi team. We are grateful that our volunteers truly understand how the final days can be a time to experience joy in relationships and shared moments of kinship. As our hospice grows and evolves, our volunteers are always willing to grow with us, inspiring us with their commitment to meet new areas of need for the benefit of our patients."*

— Ms Choo Shiu Ling, CEO of Assisi Hospice

sometimes pinch him. Yet on other days, she would enjoy their time in the garden, watching him play mahjong with other patients, or just sitting and listening to Teresa Teng classics and even singing along to her favourite song 'Tian Mi Mi'. When it came to Madam T's final hours, Paul remembers holding her hands as she struggled to breathe. "She was gasping for air and I was at a loss about what to do. Finally, I decided to play 'Tian Mi Mi' in the hope of providing her with some ease and comfort. Eventually, her breathing became shallower and she passed on peacefully. I whispered my goodbye to her and told her we would miss her 'Tian Mi Mi' smile."

Another NODA volunteer, Lydia Tan, remembers a Mr H who impressed her with his angelic demeanour. When she first visited him, he was curled up beneath his blanket with his clasped hands holding it and silently watching TV even though he could not hear. "I gestured to him if I could sit with him and he smiled, pointing me to the chair beside his bed and then passing me the TV remote control. It was as though he was telling me to go ahead if I would like to switch channels.

That was the start of our "silent" but short friendship where I would spend 2 to 3 hours being with him, with his soulful eyes speaking to me." A volunteer since 2016, she shares how in a way, she fell in love with his presence and how she felt it a blessing to be there. "I also felt privileged to be present at his vigil. As I

whispered our love and gratitude to him and mentioned we would be with him, he teared. That moment is one that I hold dear to my heart."

Just like Paul and Lydia, many of the NODA volunteers have touching stories to share of their times with their patients. It is this bond they forge with their patients and their sense of empathy that has helped the programme make a positive impact. Since its inauguration in 2014 to 2017, NODA@Assisi has helped 53 patients, and provided 735 hours



### Cat Therapy

Volunteers from Cat-Assisted Therapy Singapore spending a cosy afternoon mingling with patients and caregivers.

of care, including 33 end-of-life vigils for those who were alone. In 2016, the programme received affirmation for its good work when it won the annual Patient Engagement Initiative Award, a part of the Singapore Patient Action Awards.

A large part of Assisi Hospice's ability to provide competent and critical care comes from having a formidable team of volunteers. They support the hospice's 200 staff and have been an integral part of the hospice's care team since 1969. More than half of the volunteers are Volunteer-Carers, trained to assist nurses with patient care activities so that nurses can be freed up for more specialised roles. From helping patients with daily functions such as eating and bathing to providing a comforting ear, there is no task too big or too small that these volunteers cannot do. They also bring with them unique and diverse skills, such as baking and hairdressing.

"We are grateful that our volunteers truly understand how important the final days are to someone, and are willing to provide support to as well as journey with our patients," says Ms Juliet Ng, Assisi Hospice's Head of Communications & Community Engagement.

Preparing volunteers with the evolving needs of the hospice has become all the more crucial ever since Assisi Hospice moved to its larger six-storey premises in 2017, which has 85 beds and serves about 2,000 patients each year through inpatient, homecare and day care services. About 100 volunteers are at the hospice monthly, committing an average 1,500 hours

of service. They come from all walks of life - schools, corporate partners such as Deutsche Bank and special interest groups such as the Japanese Association Singapore. To get the best out of its volunteer force, Assisi Hospice's Volunteer Management team conducts needs assessments with various departments to identify areas that can be improved on with volunteer support.

To express appreciation to its volunteers, Assisi Hospice has put various initiatives in place. These range from providing insurance coverage to a break room that is stocked with snacks and drinks. There is also provision of lunch and parking coupons for those who complete four hours of service or more. Volunteers are also rewarded with badges of achievement when they complete certain milestones, such as completing one year of service. In addition, there are bi-monthly tea sessions for volunteers to share their experiences and ask questions, as well as an annual "thank you" celebration. Outstanding volunteers are also nominated for the Singapore Patient Action Awards - which saw long-time volunteers Paul Koh and Josephine Chandra winning the Healthcare Humanity Award (Volunteer Category) in 2017 and 2018 respectively. These initiatives may seem small but collectively, they serve to underscore the hospice's belief that all their volunteers are a part of the Assisi family.

Juliet adds, "Investment in creating a friendly, supportive and nurturing environment for volunteers is essential. This includes efforts

in garnering support from fellow colleagues to treat volunteers with love and respect. This helps us to retain our volunteers and allows us time to engage them and even explore ways to maximise their potential in service."

Apart from its patient care programmes, the hospice also conducts fund-raising initiatives, such as Assisi Fun Day and a charity dinner with a silent auction. This partnership of generous donors along with that of selfless volunteers ensure the end of life journeys for Assisi Hospice's patients are made as comfortable as possible and that each patient is also made to feel valued and loved.



### Volunteer Training

Volunteers attending a training session on patient care, conducted by Assisi Hospice's nurse educator (in blue).





# No Baggage, Just Blessings

Whoever said growing up was easy? Schoolwork, fitting in, boy-girl relationships, bullying – these are just some of the stresses teens and teens face in today's world. Blessings in a Bag (BIAB) founder Emily Teng was no exception. Her high school years in Australia saw her getting picked on because of her race. She often felt isolated and worthless but instead of growing up bitter and angry, this young woman turned her negative experience into a positive one – determined to ensure that other teens, especially those who have “slipped between the cracks” have a strong support system when faced with such challenges.

Returning to Singapore, she formed a community in 2007 that became BIAB, to address the lack of avenues for youths to give back. This community-led group has since evolved into leading community-centred projects that aim to reach out to youths to help them forge better relationships and give them a sense of worth.

Emily recounts how speaking with social workers and agencies on the ground made her team aware of the issues faced by youth-at-risk, particularly those who can no longer rely on social service support. Sadly, a lot of the programmes out there were one-off events that failed to prioritise the need for sustainability. “Many well-meaning corporates would clamour to host a one-day outreach program, but were unaware of the emotional repercussions on participating youths. What actually was needed, was a community and a safe space for children and youths to receive constant care and support along with the opportunities for deep and meaningful relationships to grow,” she says.

*“Do what you can,  
with what you have,  
where you are.”*

- Ms Emily Teng, Founder of Blessings in a Bag

Beyond Awesome provides after-school care twice a week for about 100 needy children and youths aged between six and 15 who live in rental flats in the Redhill, Henderson and Jalan Bukit Merah areas. BIAB's philosophy is that “it takes a village to raise a child” and it aims to rally “all community stakeholders to have an opportunity to be part of raising the next generation”. For the beneficiaries, there is a range of activities – from art to sports to storytelling – to help the children discover their passions and interests. Under its “Jalan Jalan” programme, in partnership with companies such as Twitter, Nike and Elsie's Kitchen, BIAB has organised field trips to get the beneficiaries dreaming about what they want to do when they grow up. It has actively engaged the community, knocking on doors to invite students to participate in the programme and working closely

At the same time, BIAB also wanted to tackle the rising sense of isolation and alienation, especially among today's younger generation who are often holed up at home with their mobile devices. There was a need to get them out and involved in programmes that would allow them to interact with others, share their problems and forge healthy relationships with their peers. Thus BIAB's Beyond Awesome programme was established 2015.

with community partners such as the Ministry of Social and Family Development, Beyond Social Services, Industrial & Services Co-operative Society and other established social service offices.

“We have come across many corporates and individuals who have great intentions, but rather than listen to what is truly needed, they end up doing what makes them feel good. Sometimes service does not feel great and it's challenging and it's unglamorous, it stretches us beyond our comfort zone but that's where the real hard work and heart work can take place,” says Emily.

The Beyond Awesome approach is a holistic one, focusing not just on the academics but also on what stirs these young minds. It aims to let these children redefine success, apart from the traditional notion of straight As. Programmes such as STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art + Math) and sports and wellness are designed to be fun, interactive and engaging, such that there is “no quiet classroom”. One-on-one sessions between mentors and mentees have also helped beneficiaries deal with tougher issues like anger management and restorative justice. Older children are also roped in as role models for the younger ones.

Ask the beneficiaries why they enjoy attending sessions at Beyond Awesome and the immediate answer is it is a place that makes them feel free to dream, explore and reflect. Says one child: “I feel happier, I feel like everyone here and it is like my second family, I feel more confident, I feel I am



## Community Outreach

Emily Teng (bottom left) with volunteers and beneficiaries during one of BIAB's early outreaches that eventually led to the start of the Beyond Awesome programme.

doing better at school, I am excited for the future.” Emily says: “We have heard stories of how they feel they could not be themselves other than in our programme, and that they loved coming every week because it was an opportunity to learn new things, go on adventures and most importantly, make new friends and catch up with others they've closely bonded with.”

There are many more heartwarming stories. Like the one about how BIAB helped change the mindset of a girl who refused to go school, helping her understand the importance of education and showing her that learning can be fun. As well as that of the boy who learnt to tone down his aggression after six months with BIAB. Reflecting on its success, Emily believes it is because “each and every person has created a ripple effect to others giving more or taking on the cause – and we believe each is significant.



## Volunteer Chaperones

Volunteers personally chaperoning children to the Beyond Awesome programme helps ensure the children do not have to miss any session.

This is why it relies on a strong pool of volunteers that it calls WorldChangeAgents (WCA). Recruitment of WCA is mostly by word of mouth and friends often tag along with their friends who are WCA, and end up signing up too.

Challenge-wise, one of the biggest BIAB faces is with fundraising. Currently it taps the online sphere such as Give Asia for this. “It is our favourite approach at the moment as it encourages people from all walks of life, all backgrounds and financial levels to be a part of BIAB. We've just had to be very creative... from working out what can be contributed

by others in the community to providing various ways that people could give at different amounts. We don't run big fund-raising drives, instead, our drives are ‘micro-fund-raising’ where individuals can contribute as little as \$2 to specific needs of our programme like ensuring no child in our programme goes home hungry,” says Emily, adding that they also break down campaigns to raise amounts as low as \$250. Donations-in-kind are also sourced for items such as tables, toys, educational equipment and food.

Still, for a small outfit, BIAB continues to dream big. It is looking to run Beyond Awesome programmes three times or more a week. Going

forward, it also wants to take its programmes to the region and help communities in need. In addition, Emily constantly meets up with other entrepreneurs and volunteer leaders to share and exchange ideas and learning points. Seeing how some volunteers have made career switches to areas of education or social services, BIAB is also exploring the idea of setting up a social enterprise. With all these ideas in the bag, it is for certain that the blessings will keep on flowing.



## Educating, Transforming And Inspiring The Next Generation

When it comes to volunteerism, the National University of Singapore (NUS) takes a back-to-basics approach. It's all about the ABCDs, or rather, Asset-based Community Development. This framework emphasises community empowerment and sustainable development through the institution's volunteering activities. It is ingrained in the community skills training for students, as well as staff mentors who guide students in their project submissions for endorsement and funding. NUS' approach to volunteerism aims to "look beyond giving in monetary terms to giving by understanding and deepening the engagement with the community through skill sets and transfer of knowledge towards a more sustainable community development".

But how do you galvanise an entire NUS Community of thousands that comprises staff, students, alumni and family members? In 2016, NUS started its signature event, NUS Day of Service (DOS). On every first Saturday of September, the entire community comes together to give back, both locally and overseas. In 2017, 1,950 participants were involved in 42 community activities that reached out to 5,400 beneficiaries. There were also 183 community projects led by students, both locally and overseas. This event won the Bronze award in CASE Circle of Excellence Awards 2017, under the Category of Creative Strategies for Engaging Volunteers.

*"We envision a Singapore where citizens, young and old, of good hearts and minds, are empowered to do good for the community."*

— Ms Corrine Ong,  
Deputy Director & Division Head  
(Community Engagement), NUS

One of NUS' most iconic programmes - and its longest-running - is the annual NUSSU Rag & Flag, with the aim to help the underprivileged. This Student Union-led event mobilises hundreds of freshmen as part of the orientation programme to raise more than \$450,000 from public donations in 2017. This sum benefited 23 beneficiaries under the Community Chest. Over the past 16 years, the event has raised \$6.3 million and last year, NUSSU's Rag & Flag was recognised with Community Chest's Outstanding Special Event Award.

Other initiatives undertaken by NUS include free public health screenings involving medical and pharmaceutical students which benefitted over

1000 people. The screenings also focus on primary prevention through an initiative launched in 2015 named the "Youth Health Ambassadors' Programme (YHAP)", which aims to groom young champions of healthy living. YHAP has since reached out to more than 2,100 secondary and junior college students through talks and mentorship projects.

NUS is also involved in community projects at Chua Thian Poh Community Leadership Centre (CTPCLC) that aim to nurture Singapore's next generation of community leaders, as well as the work done by the Asia Centre for Social Enterprise and Philanthropy, which seeks to advance the understanding and the impactful practice of social entrepreneurship and philanthropy in Asia. Over at the College of Alice and Peter Tan (CAPT), senior students can undertake a semester-long academic project that

addresses important issues in a particular community. As of the last academic year, there have been 37 projects conducted in collaboration with 38 community partners. In total, as of 2017, NUS has embarked on over 105 partnerships, with 214 projects successfully completed, both here and overseas.

The needs chosen by the university fall under two broad categories: first, engagement with the direct beneficiaries, partnering them to create solutions by tapping on their inherent strengths and needs; and second, enhancing the capabilities of these non-profit organisations so they can better serve their beneficiaries.

By having students drive these initiatives, the projects are given a fresh, millennial perspective that leverage on the causes that young Singaporeans feel passionate about, such as environmental conservation. These included the NUS Goes Lite flagship event with the theme "Ctrl-Alt-Del Waste Manager" in March 2017, which encouraged people on campus to reduce plastic and food waste. Another key initiative was Trees & Trunks, an overseas Youth Expedition Project



APSN

Bringing cheer and providing support as a buddy to one of the members at APSN Centre for Adults.

best reward. As one student who participated in 2017's DOS says: "Being physically disabled is more than just physical, there are the emotional and mental aspects to it. It's only when you interact with those with disabilities that you get to understand how it really affects them. It makes you want to do more to help."

But no matter how motivated these student volunteers are, they also need steady hands to guide them and these come from the staff in charge of academic programmes relating to community engagement who are specially recruited with a strong background in volunteerism and community work. Apart from the management team, staff involved in community engagement programmes attend workshops by CTPCLC to learn about the ABCD approach and so they are better equipped to advise students. Interestingly, it is not uncommon for Heads of Department to close their offices temporarily, if operations permit, and avail staff to volunteer.

As for the students, the curriculum is designed to allow them to apply their knowledge and skills to various volunteering opportunities. Beyond just picking up skill sets and knowledge, they also learn about the bigger picture - issues and challenges faced by Singapore's social service sector. Students are therefore able to identify problems and conceive solutions on their own. One example was the Mobile Toy Library project with Ang Mo Kio Family Service Centre (AMKFSC). The plan was to locate the toy library at the service centre but after speaking to residents, the students found that parents did not have time to take their children there. This sparked the idea of a mobile library that could operate from a void deck at the convenience of busy mums and dads.



Singapore Christian Home

A NUS student assisting a resident of Singapore Christian Home.

(YEP) group that advocated environment conservation and animal cruelty prevention both locally and in Thailand.

Understandably, most students are often strapped for time as they juggle project meetings, completing assignments and studying for exams. To recognise those who have gone beyond the lecture halls to give back, the Office of Student Affairs organises a yearly Student Achievement Awards (SAA) to commend those who have shown leadership in community projects. In 2017, 20 students received this award in the Community Service category alone. Awards aside, it is the personal satisfaction the students gain that is probably the

Be it fundraising for beneficiaries, collaborations to improve programmes, giving time to provide direct help - the wide range of opportunities that NUS has given her students are testament that this institution of higher education is committed to helping them travel far on their giving journeys.

# Hope Arose

Mr Abbas Ali Mohamed Irshad

When news broke about the Charlie Hebdo incident in Paris in 2012, people around the world reacted – from marching on streets to ranting online. But instead of joining the chorus of hate, Mr Abbas Ali Mohamed Irshad took a step back and ended up taking a giant leap forward when he set up Roses of Peace (ROP), a youth-led ground-up interfaith initiative that saw about 100 volunteers distributing 3,000 roses across eight locations in Singapore. A simple rose with message of peace and love by faith luminaries became one way to bridge the gap in a world divided by racial, cultural and religious lines.

Since then, ROP has blossomed, sending out over 40,000 roses in a long-term mission involving more than 2,000 youth volunteers. In 2017, 300 volunteers distributed 10,000 roses. Two thousand members of the public also took the ROP Peace pledge, taking a united stand to uphold peace and harmony in Singapore.

Irshad recalls how he was approached by a fellow student to be part of a school protest against the Charlie Hebdo magazine over its series of controversial cartoons of Prophet Muhammad. He refused, but it was not a sign of apathy. Instead, it planted the seed for him to start ROP.



A Message of Peace

Irshad briefs volunteers before they go forth to spread the message of peace and interfaith harmony.

“Charlie Hebdo caused unhappiness among Muslim communities as far away as Singapore. I realised then that the harmony Singapore enjoyed was vulnerable in today’s volatile and uncertain environment,” he says, adding that he wanted to try to preserve Singapore’s inter-religious harmony. “In today’s world, religion is often seen as a divisive tool of conflict rather than a positive force that can unite us. Across the globe, we can observe rising levels of hate crimes and xenophobia that are largely caused by the lack of interfaith cooperation and understanding.”

Through informed discussions and a community of voices, ROP encourages this by providing

a safe space for interfaith conversations with three different platforms – ROP Youth Forum, Interfaith Conference and Faith in Leadership (FIL) Symposium. The forum connects youths with community leaders such as Ministers and Members of Parliament, giving participants the opportunity to understand policies set by the Government and to voice their concerns. The conference, comprising panellists of community leaders from different faiths, provides a relaxed environment for a heart-to-heart conversation on religion. The symposium is a unique initiative to bring world renowned interfaith leaders to speak on topics relating to youth leadership and interfaith engagement.

ROP also assess the impact of these initiatives through continuous feedback and interviews with participants. The FIL Symposium saw 350 people signing up, even though news about the event was only released one week before. Also, 75 percent of attendees were made up of youths, even though the conference was held at 8.30am on Sunday.

Beyond just gathering opinions and spurring debate, ROP is also engaging a large group of volunteers – often by word of mouth. It reaches out to youths from our local universities, polytechnics and ITEs. It also works with youth groups from various religious organisations such as the SOKA Association, Hindu Endowment Board and mosque youth groups. Additionally, it has collaborated with religious organisations like the Singapore Buddhist Youth Network and student clubs such as the NUS Interfaith, SMU Muslim Society and organisations such as Giving.sg, Singapore Kindness Movement and People’s Association. Volunteer Peace Ambassadors, being the advocates for peace and harmony, aim to build bridges between different communities and inspire ongoing interfaith initiatives on the ground. ROP’s engagement with various organisations has also resulted

in meaningful connections and friendships between youths of diverse background, culture and religions.

Says Irshad: “We are very heartened to see many volunteers join us together with their families. We see this as a testament to how ROP can cause a ripple effect. Also, since we are completely volunteer-run, we need to help the volunteers understand the purpose and values of the cause. This is so that when they take part in any of our activities or help us organise them, they do so with full conviction and passion. As such, it was important for me to communicate the sensitivity of the work we are engaging in and I strive to set the tone through leading by

## Official Launch of ROP Ambassador Programme 2018

The official inauguration of 30 youth ambassadors in the ROP Ambassador Programme by our Patron, President Halimah Yacob.



example in making sure we all put the cause before ourselves. As I see how our small gesture is making big impact to stir thoughts about the wider issue of inter-religious harmony, I am also encouraged to champion on.”

What sets ROP apart from the Inter-Religious Organisation (IRO) and Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circles (IRCC) is its intent and approach. It is able to tap the youth audience – a segment that otherwise would not participate in discussions – and bring in fresh views. Irshad adds: “We aim to achieve a much broader societal impact of building a more resilient, cohesive and harmonious society, one that is rooted in inter-religious understanding among the different faiths in Singapore. Unlike many other NGOs that aim to provide social services to citizens at large, ROP instead hopes to strengthen the overall social fabric of the multi-religious, multi-racial and multi-cultural

“There is no right or wrong time to start giving back. And don’t wait for others, take the plunge and just do it.”

- Mr Abbas Ali Mohamed Irshad

Singaporean society, through tangible and ground-up outreach initiatives.”

Since the seed was first planted in 2012, a simple idea has germinated and through a single bloom, hope arose and continues to fill our world with the fragrance of peace.



## Interfaith Iftar in Conjunction with Kindness Carnival 2018

Roses of Peace Ambassadors spread the Interfaith messages of peace, love and harmony at the Interfaith Iftar by distributing roses and organising a break fast event.



# Giving Time To Gift Sight

Dr Rupesh Agrawal

Living in a developed country like Singapore, it is easy to take basic necessities like access to quality healthcare for granted. But in many parts of the world, seeking medical help does not come easily – something that senior consultant ophthalmologist and a clinician scientist, Dr Rupesh Agrawal from National Healthcare Group Eye Institute (NHGEI) at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH), noticed and immediately set his sights on to address.

For Dr Rupesh, giving back is something he has embraced since young and continued to do when he moved to Singapore in 2009 as a service registrar at NHGEI, following studies and work in India and the United Kingdom. During volunteer missions to rural regions in countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar, he saw the struggles to meet local healthcare demands, particularly due to extreme geographical shortages of resources. However, he was also struck by the determination of the local healthcare staff who did their best to serve the populations. It inspired him to dedicate more time to share the Singaporean quality of healthcare.

Envisioning solutions to meet such needs led him to set up VIRAJ Healthcare Foundation (VHF) with his brother and friends in 2016. VHF enables him to be more targeted in providing medical assistance. He assembled a team of doctors, students and volunteers who went to the ground to understand the healthcare problems these rural populations faced. The aim: to break down the cultural differences and language barriers, and understand the effects of certain diseases on the local communities. Project Aasha is one of VHF's significant collaborations, with students from Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine and a TTSH colleague, Dr Kumaran Rasappan. Setting up a surgical eye camp for the rural population near Gorkha, Nepal, this team discovered that cataracts were a leading but preventable cause of blindness in the community but a lack of funds and manpower made this relatively simple surgery inaccessible. To bring relief, VHF's team worked with Rotary Club of Singapore and with the Himalayan Eye Hospital to provide funding, equipment and manpower to perform basic eye screening and outpatient



**Medical Mission in Cambodia**

Dr Rupesh (second from left) reviewing post-operative patients in Cambodia and teaching staff about post-op care for cataract surgery.

examinations in 2016 and 2018.

To keep all the different initiatives sustainable, Dr Rupesh and his team also carried out a training programme for healthcare workers in the community. Since then, VHF has expanded its outreach, providing healthcare support and training young ophthalmologists through collaborations which included Singaporean supporters together with the local non-profit organisations (NGO) in places such as Vavuniya (Sri Lanka), Phnom Penh (Cambodia), as well as in various regions in India. To date, with support from his parent institute – TTSH, and contributions from Rotary Club of Singapore (District 3310) and his non-profit organisation VHF, Dr Rupesh has been able to help more than 1,000 underprivileged Singaporeans and over 5,000 others all over Asia in countries such as India, Cambodia, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka.

An avid researcher, Dr Rupesh has also written numerous research papers, including an article

in the Nepal Journal of Ophthalmology on the role of NGOs in the prevention of blindness. He also gives talks and mentor medical and engineering students. He has also chaired outreach committees with the Rotary Club of Singapore that saw collaborations to provide free local eye care screenings and spectacles to beneficiaries through organisations such as Sembawang Family Service Centre and Association for People with Special Needs. He designed the work plan for these projects and together with medical students and volunteers

## Inspiring Others

Inspiring others, including his daughter, to join him bring sight and comfort to those in need.



from NHGEI, TTSH, over 100 pairs of spectacles – sponsored by optical supplies companies – were gifted to patients and referrals written for further eye check-ups.

Interestingly, what motivates and moves him is another visionary, Mahatma Gandhi, who once said: "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Adds Dr Rupesh, "I see each project as an opportunity to leave behind a legacy for our children's generation to carry on in the spirit of community and togetherness." Apart from his professional commitments, Dr Rupesh spends an average of 60 hours monthly on volunteer work, leading his wife to jokingly call him "super crazy" as he works "24x7x365". But his commitment has done wonders in building up his team of volunteers, which counts about 10 strong each month, comprising fellow doctors, friends, family and nursing students from the local polytechnics.

He has also motivated his loved ones to come alongside him on his missions. Besides joining Dr Rupesh to establish VHF, his brother Rohit Agrawal,

*"I want to encourage more organisations and individuals to make a concerted effort to dedicate a portion of their time or expertise to give back. Just a small pledge of 2 per cent of a skilled professional's time for resource-limited communities could make an immense impact if thoughtfully applied."*

*- Dr Rupesh Agrawal*



## Partnership with Local NGO

Dr Rupesh (seated) with members of Project Aasha from Singapore's Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, together with healthcare workers from Himalayan Eye Hospital.

a consultant anaesthetist at National University Hospital, has also helped conduct projects both locally and overseas. One week-long trip in Dahod, Gujarat, saw him assisting the local team with anaesthesia care and planning for surgeries. Dr Rupesh's daughter, Mahek, is also on board. This 13-year-old often spends her school holidays accompanying him to countries like Indonesia and Sri Lanka where she supports by escorting patients for treatments or speaking with the local community. On home ground, she would support her father's mission by helping to distribute spectacle frames to beneficiaries.

Looking ahead, Dr Rupesh already has a checklist of more projects lined up in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Cambodia and Indonesia. While home in Singapore, he wants to next focus on migrant workers - to get them better eye care screenings and treatment. Still, with all he's done and is set to do, he knows that he does not walk his giving journey alone and acknowledges the generous support and selfless contributions of others – those at his workplace, other medical institutions, social organisations, private entities and his family – because of them, he can go on giving time to gift sight to those in need.

# Guiding And Serving – A Lifelong Passion

Mrs Anna Tham

With a more than 100-year history in Singapore, Girl Guides are a long-standing part of the school scene, smartly dressed in their uniforms, scarves and belts. But while she outgrew her uniform years ago, Mrs Anna Tham, 84, remains a steadfast Girl Guide, one whose mission is to inspire girls and women to develop their courage, confidence and character and be model citizens.

Anna has certainly come a long way as a student Girl Guide in Methodist Girls' School (MGS) in 1949. And now, almost 70 years later, she continues to serve the Girl Guides Singapore (GGS), contributing in various capacities - from



Senior Branch at 90<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary Dinner in 2007

Anna Tham (front, 3rd from left) with fellow Post Secondary Guides.

Captain of First Singapore Land Ranger to Commissioner for Camp.

Never one to stay cooped indoors, Anna says she was drawn to the Girl Guides because of its outdoor activities. Thanks to the mentorship of "excellent leaders and trainers", in 1951, she was named one of Singapore's first three distinguished Queen's Guides. Even after leaving school, she found herself believing very strongly in the fundamental values of Girl Guiding: character building and intelligence, skill in crafts, healthy living and service.

"I've experienced first-hand how the Guiding programme gives girls a safe and supportive environment to learn values and practical life skills, be it leadership, decision-making, team building, first aid and so on. Guiding creates many opportunities for its girls members and adult volunteers or leaders to not only learn about complex issues in our world, it

goes one step further to empower us to help others. Guiding equips us with hands-on skills to lead and participate in a wide spectrum of meaningful service projects that impact different communities," says Anna.

A true multitasker, Anna's work with GGS over the years has spanned a wide range. She has mentored young Guides and adult leaders and accompanied them on camps and to events. She has also trained volunteers for GGS events and fundraising projects. Among her fond memories of her student guide days are the monthly visits the Guides of the 11<sup>th</sup> Company (Open Unit) made to St Andrew's Children Orthopaedic

Hospital in the 1950s. "It was always a delight as we enjoyed interacting with the children and seeing how much they looked forward to our visits. We cheered the patients up by singing songs and reading stories to them," she says.

Another highlight for her was in 2000, when the Methodist Girls' School President's Guide Award

winners organised an Amazing Race in Malacca for the NUH Children's Kidney Centre. "We were so impressed with the 'can do' and gung-ho spirit of the patients who demonstrated immense strength and gumption despite their disabilities," she recalls.

It is no wonder then that the former MGS principal's mantle is filled with accolades. In 2010, she was given the Palm Leaf (Platinum) Award for exemplary service to GGS. Five years later, she received the 65 Years Long Service Award for her work in GGS.

Not one to rest on her laurels, Anna's mind is always one step ahead. Foremost in her thoughts is the future of GGS as she constantly seeks ideas and ways to uplift the organisation and its contributions. In the 1980s, she was instrumental in the inception and building of Camp Christine and Guide House and further upgrading projects. In 2012, she initiated a collaboration with

National Library Board to revamp the GGS library. That same year, Anna together with GGS' Guide Branch Commissioner launched the Jacob Ballas Green Ambassador Badge, which continues to this day. She also believes in helping the Guides sharpen their skills. Since 2016, she has worked with Nanyang Polytechnic's School of Health Sciences (Nursing) in training Guides in first aid and Emergency Helper proficiency badges.

Perhaps it is Anna's efficacious, can-do attitude or simply her poise and innate charm. The drive she brings to her programmes and initiatives is infectious, and her projects are often met with enthusiasm. The Centenary International Camp she organised in 2017 saw about 1,000 campers -- both local and overseas -- taking part,

## St Andrew's Orthopaedic Hospital

In the 1950s, Anna Tham and other Girl Guides from the 11<sup>th</sup> Company, would visit and bring cheer to young patients in St Andrew's Orthopaedic Hospital.



from as young as nine years old to the age of 86.

The secret to her success? A wholehearted commitment to serve. "Time must be invested, personal experiences, failures and successes must be shared with the members and Guide family I come in contact with, in order to encourage and motivate them to do their best and reach for the stars as embodied in the Guide Promise, Law and Motto: Be Prepared," she explains. "A leader must have empathy for her members and team, a listening ear and a sense of humour. A leader is also a team member. She helps the members build self-confidence to meet challenges head-on."

She hopes other young women will follow in her footsteps and give back. For her, age or a lack of knowledge is no hindrance because she firmly believes everyone has the capacity to share something for the benefit of someone else. "Use whatever skills and knowledge you have acquired to give back and to help others. Be passionate about what you believe in and what you are doing," she adds.

*"My aim is to empower young girls and leaders to maximise their potential as responsible citizens of the world through Guiding as a game of adventure, knowledge and skills."*

- Mrs Anna Tham



## Guiding with Passion

Post-activity debrief of Girl Guides in Methodist Girls' School - Anna Tham's alma mater.

# TONIGHT'S ENTERTAINMENT



**TONIGHT, SHE IS HONOURED TO BE A PART OF THIS YEAR'S PRESIDENT'S VOLUNTEERISM & PHILANTHROPY AWARDS.**

Host

## *Yasminne Cheng*

Popular radio and television personality, Yasminne Cheng, is a familiar voice to many. She currently hosts the number one English lunchtime show "Lunchbreak" on Singapore's number one English radio station Class 95FM. She was also host of Singapore's first daily English talkshow "The 5 Show", and the popular renovation programme "Designer In The House".

Her 14 years in the media industry has also seen Yasminne hosting several editions of the annual Chingay Parade and Mediacorp TV's year-end countdown show, on top of making appearances on a variety of other programmes.

An animal lover, Yasminne has volunteered and advocated for animal welfare causes.



**AS TONIGHT'S CO-EMCEE, FLORENCE HOPES TO SHOW THE WORLD HOW GROWING UP IN AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT WITH THE RIGHT SUPPORT AND OPPORTUNITIES CAN ENABLE SOMEONE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS AND FULFIL THEIR TRUE POTENTIAL.**

Co-Host

## *Florence Hui*

When Florence Hui was younger, she did not believe in herself as learning challenges inhibited her. Transferring to APSN Katong School at eight saw her blossoming as she started to become involved in leadership roles such as serving as a school prefect, as well as gaining exposure to various sports.

Today, this 18-year-old student of APSN Delta Senior School is the confident captain of her school's bowling team. Florence is also one of Singapore's highly decorated medalists with Special Olympics Singapore, having won medals in numerous bowling and athletics competitions. These include an individual silver medal at this year's Special Olympics Singapore bowling competition, silver and bronze team medals for bowling in the Singapore Sports School Para Games 2018, and in the National Inclusive Athletics Championships in 2017 and 2018.

She is also an athlete leader and a Health Messenger for Special Olympics, sharing the transformative power of sports and the importance of health and fitness with other athletes with intellectual disabilities.



## THE LORONG BOYS

The Lorong Boys are award-winning musicians with eclectic versatility who burst into the local music scene in 2014 after a video of them performing in a MRT train went viral. Since then, their group energy, spontaneity and love for sharing music have brought them on many more adventures including performance tours to various parts of Indonesia, multiple features on local television channels and radio stations, performances at the Esplanade, President's Star Charity 2015, amongst others. They have also enjoyed collaborations with various international and local

musicians such as Inch Chua, Nathan Hartono and The Sam Willows. This is the second year that The Lorong Boys are performing at the President's Volunteerism & Philanthropy Awards.

**"WE ARE DEEPLY HONOURED TO BE PERFORMING AGAIN THIS YEAR FOR AN EVENT THAT CELEBRATES THE GENEROUS SPIRIT OF HUMANITY AND WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE CONTINUED SUPPORT TOWARDS LOCAL MUSICIANS AND LOCAL MUSIC. AS PERFORMERS, WE AIM TO INSPIRE THROUGH OUR MUSIC AND WE HOPE OUR AUDIENCE WILL ENJOY TONIGHT'S PERFORMANCE."**

-  
JOACHIM LIM, DRUMS & PERCUSSION



## ONWHEELS DANCE GROUP

Founded in 2015, OnWheels Dance Group is a wheelchair dance community formed by a group of physically challenged individuals and volunteers who share a deep passion to keep up an active lifestyle. The group's ethos is to nurture fellow

wheelchair-user friends and inculcate in them a love for wheelchair dancing. This sport also promotes as well as encourage rehabilitation for those with physical disabilities as performers develop better physical awareness, motor skills, self-confidence and poise. OnWheels Dance Group has been invited to perform at events held by various professional organisations.

**"MY TEAM AND I ARE HONOURED AND EXCITED TO BE INVITED TO PERFORM AT THIS PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS DINNER, IN FRONT OF PRESIDENT HALIMAH YACOB AND THE WINNERS. WE GREATLY APPRECIATE NVPC FOR GIVING US THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHOWCASE OUR TALENTS AND SHARE OUR LOVE FOR WHEELCHAIR DANCING WITH ALL PRESENT."**

-  
FLORENCE TAN, CO-FOUNDER

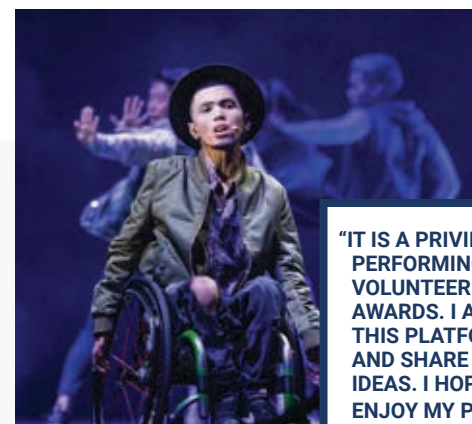


## CACTUS ROSE BAND

Cactus Rose Band is a 7-piece music band comprising persons with various disabilities. Its members includes a vocalist cum guitarist with visual impairment, a 1st keyboardist with autism spectrum disorder, a 2nd keyboardist with visual impairment, a drummer/vocalist with Down syndrome, a drummer/percussionist with intellectual disability, a bassist with multiple disabilities and a guitarist with visual impairment. The band has been engaged by corporations such as SkillsFuture Singapore, Singapore Pools and SG Enable to provide numerous corporate, social and public performances. The band is one of Faith Music Centre's (FMC) persons-with-disability bands. Established in 2008, FMC is a member of Singapore Centre for Social Enterprise (raiSE). One of FMC's social objectives is to transform disability into "musicability" through the equipping of music skills and helping to build confidence in its musicians.

**"WE ARE TRULY HONOURED TO BE ABLE TO SHARE SOME OF OUR ORIGINAL MUSIC TONIGHT, TO SHOWCASE THE TALENTS OF OUR BAND MEMBERS WHO HAVE RISEN ABOVE THEIR INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGES TO STAND CONFIDENTLY ON STAGE. THANK YOU NVPC FOR THIS WONDERFUL, INCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITY."**

-  
ALVIN YEO, FOUNDER OF FAITH MUSIC CENTRE



## WHEELSMITH AKA DANIAL BAWTHAN

Popularly known as Wheelsmith, Danial Bawthan is a rapper, music producer, emerging theatre artist, beatboxer and wheelchair rugby national player. This 24-year-old self-taught musician finds music and the arts gives him the freedom of identity and a sense of self-worth – showcasing his artistic ability before his disability and liberating him from his muscular dystrophy that saw his muscles weakening since

he was four years old. Today, Wheelsmith is a fearless and brazen performer who has performed at festivals, gigs and shows. Ever challenging himself as a musician and songwriter, Wheelsmith is set to release his first album "Vanilla Sunshine" later this year which will contain his original compositions.

**"IT IS A PRIVILEGE FOR ME TO BE PERFORMING AT THE PRESIDENT'S VOLUNTEERISM & PHILANTHROPY AWARDS. I AM EXCITED TO HAVE THIS PLATFORM TO DEMONSTRATE AND SHARE MY THOUGHTS AND IDEAS. I HOPE THE AUDIENCE WILL ENJOY MY PERFORMANCE."**

-  
DANIAL BAWTHAN



## HUSH TEABAR

Hush is Singapore's 1st Silent TeaBar bringing self care, inclusion and community empowerment to every workplace, every community - with a cup of tea in silence led by the Deaf. It is also the first not-for-profit social enterprise that is completely powered by the Deaf and persons in recovery/ persons with mental health issues.

**"AT HUSH, I CAN BE MYSELF AND INVITE YOU TO MY WORLD - MY LANGUAGE, MY SILENCE - AND HELP CONNECT US. THIS MAKES ME HAPPY. I AM EXCITED TO BE HERE TONIGHT, TO TEACH THE SIGNING OF THE PLEDGE."**

-  
LOW KOK WAH, DEAF LEAD PARTNER, HUSH TEABAR

# An Expression Of Good

This year's President's Volunteerism & Philanthropy Awards (PVPA) trophy, De Starry Plate, marks a first in the history of this prestigious event – its unique design brought about by a rich collaboration between three parties who came together because of one enterprise's visionary corporate giving initiative.

**It all started with Tru-Marine** – a local small and medium enterprise that is also a Company of Good – looking for opportunities to expand its ability to do good. Learning about the PVPA, it decided to build upon its current corporate giving initiatives and took the lead to have a work of art turned into this year's trophy. For more than 30 years, the company which specialises in the maintenance of marine turbochargers, has been supporting young talent development through art collaborations with charities and schools as well as availing scholarship, internship and employment opportunities to diverse groups of people. The art projects often involved the theme of recycling and upcycling materials, such as repurposing scrapped turbocharger components into works of art and transforming wooden packaging used to ship turbochargers into unique art canvases. "We are passionate about engaging in meaningful projects that also serve to further the objectives of our partners," says Mr David Loke, Executive Chairman and Group Managing Director of Tru-Marine.

To design this year's trophy, Tru-Marine tapped on the talents of Art Elective students in **Yio Chu Kang Secondary School (YCKSS)**. The students were entrusted with drawing designs that would reflect the spirit of giving that is epitomised in

the awards. To inspire the students of YCKSS, Tru-Marine arranged for local water colourist and 2015 UOB Painting of the Year, Gold Award, Established Artist Category, Singapore winner – **Aaron Gan** – to visit them.

Aaron shared about his journey as an artist while giving insights on his thought process behind his watercolour creations. He also talked about the importance of art in society. At the end of his sharing session, he encouraged the students to find their own voice and express themselves in their creations. "It is important for established artists to share their experiences with the next generation. From our successes, they can find inspiration; and from our failures, they can find courage and perseverance," he says.

Aaron's words of motivation and his award-winning watercolour piece, *Starry Night*, stirred the creative juices of Goh Yee Fong, a Secondary 3 Art Elective student, who went on to design De Starry Plate. "The upward-pointing geometry reflects our value of progress. In between these steps aspiring upwards, sometimes, something brilliant occurs and it makes all the difference," says Yee Fong of her eye-catching design. For Yio Chu Kang Secondary School, an institution founded the same year as modern Singapore, it has been a privilege to be a part of this collaboration.

Just as tonight's winners are celebrated for their contributions to improving lives and enabling others to dream of a better future, this trophy is a reminder to reach for the stars and make a greater impact through our own giving journeys.



Yio Chu Kang Secondary School



Aaron Gan



**The National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) is a non-profit organisation promoting a giving culture in Singapore through catalysing development in volunteerism and philanthropy to build a City Of Good.**

**We facilitate partnerships with non-profits, companies, public sector bodies and individuals to enliven the giving ecosystem within Singapore.**

**We create the national narrative on giving and stories that influence hearts and minds. We also conduct research on giving motivations and behaviours, create roadmaps and provide resources within the giving sector, and aspire to be the go-to place for giving.**

**We honour and recognise giving champions because giving is part of our culture and DNA that we want to model.**

**We connect and convene to create networks and build communities to impact the giving space on a national level.**

**We activate giving and use strategies that multiply our impact on a national scale, including national-level giving campaigns.**

Visit us at [www.nvpc.org.sg](http://www.nvpc.org.sg)

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## AT A GLANCE:

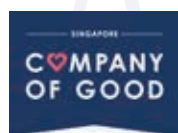
# OUR PLATFORMS, PROGRAMMES & INITIATIVES



Website:  
[www.giving.sg](http://www.giving.sg)

### ARCHITECTING THE GIVING PLATFORM ECOSYSTEM

Giving.sg is Singapore's online platform to match donors and volunteers to charities. As Singapore's one-stop portal for all givers, Giving.sg is home to over 500 charities - givers can help by giving their time (general volunteering for activities), talent (skill-specific volunteering or starting a fund-raiser) or treasure (making a donation). Givers can explore any of the 14 causes to support, ranging from Women & Girls, Animal Welfare, Arts & Heritage, Environment, to Humanitarian. No matter what form of "gift" you give, it will help change lives and do good. **#CityofGood #Givingsg**



Be a Company of Good at  
[www.companyofgood.sg](http://www.companyofgood.sg)

### GOODNESS IS THE BUSINESS OF EVERY ORGANISATION

#### Company of Good

Company of Good looks to build a community of givers and ignite a giving movement through corporates. We inspire and activate companies to give strategically, sustainability and with impact, benefitting both businesses and the community. Companies can tap on opportunities to acquire knowledge, build capabilities, network and collaborate through our various programmes and initiatives. Company of Good is brought to you by the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre. Goodness is the business of every organisation.



### COMPANY OF GOOD FELLOWSHIP

The Company of Good Fellowship is a talent development programme that empowers and develops top talents in organisations. The Fellowship seeks to develop a community of corporate leaders who will strengthen the eco-system of giving in Singapore. Over a course of five months, top talents will have opportunities to sharpen their business perspectives and build capability in leadership and corporate giving.



### CHAMPIONS OF GOOD

Champion of Good is a status conferred annually to companies that practice good giving who are also committed to influencing and multiplying corporate giving in Singapore. Champions of Good believe in giving back and advocating for companies to do their part to build and sustain a cohesive and collaborative society. Taking the initiative to lead, connect and influence fellow companies, Champions also look for like-minded companies, intermediaries, and NPOs to enable their work. The Champion of Good status is part of the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre's Company of Good programme that inspires and activates companies to do good.

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Website:  
[www.givingweek.sg](http://www.givingweek.sg)

### IGNITING A GIVING MOVEMENT

Organised by NVPC, and supported by the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, Giving Week is a national movement that encourages everyone to give back. It includes two global celebrations, starting with the global day of giving (#GivingTuesday) and ending with International Volunteer Day (5 December). During this week, corporates, non-profits and individuals across Singapore come together to make a difference by supporting/adopting a charity of their choice through donating, volunteering and/or fundraising. There are also numerous lifestyle and F&B activities that support causes organised all around Singapore during Giving Week. **#GivingWeekSG**



Website:  
[www.nvpc.org.sg/colabs](http://www.nvpc.org.sg/colabs)  
[www.colabs.sg](http://www.colabs.sg)

### CO-CREATING SOLUTIONS FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Colabs is a philanthropic initiative by the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre and the Community Foundation of Singapore. It drives collaboration by bringing together the public, private and social sectors to tackle complex social issues. It enables philanthropists, businesses, non-profits and sector experts to collectively build insights and co-create solutions for lasting change.



Website:  
[www.15shorts.com](http://www.15shorts.com)

### 15 SHORTS

15 Shorts is a ground-up initiative where fifteen Singapore filmmakers come together to produce fifteen short films. Focusing on the nation-building years between the 1970s and 1990s, 15 Shorts unearths little-known stories of Singaporeans who performed extraordinary acts of generosity. 15 Shorts is a collaboration between local film company Blue3Asia and NVPC. **#15Shorts**



Website:  
[www.sgcares.sg](http://www.sgcares.sg)

### BUILDING A MORE CARING, COMPASSIONATE AND INCLUSIVE SINGAPORE

SG Cares is a social movement championed by public agencies, corporate and community partners to build a more caring and inclusive home for all. The movement invites all Singaporeans and people who live in Singapore to put values into action through active volunteerism, ground-up efforts and everyday acts of care. It also aims to build capability and share resources across various sectors and organisations to grow opportunities for volunteering. By inspiring and supporting one another, we can show the world that we are a nation that cares.

SG Cares is co-led by NVPC, NCSS, and supported by the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and Ministry of Social and Family Development. **#SGCares**



Website  
www.cnpl.org.sg

### ADVOCATING EFFECTIVE BOARDS AND BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY FOR THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR

The Centre for Non-Profit Leadership (CNPL), a part of NVPC, advocates planned leadership and nurtures leadership capability for the non-profit sector. Through people search, leadership and organisational development, CNPL helps the non-profit sector by creating a leadership pipeline, building effective boards and partnering non-profits leaders and corporate professionals. Its vision is to transform the non-profit sector through effective, committed and passionate leaders.



**Board Match** is CNPL's flagship programme to bring diversity and rejuvenation to Boards of non-profit organisations (NPOs) by matching senior executives with at least five years of management and leadership experiences from both the public and private sectors to the Boards of NPOs. Board Match is designed to address and build leadership capacity, diversity, continuity and renewal at the Board level of NPOs. By partnering large corporations, professional associations, governmental organisations and highly qualified individuals, we have built an extensive database of volunteers who are successful entrepreneurs, senior civil servants and corporate professionals with diverse backgrounds and expertise ranging from accountancy to marketing and from fundraising to strategic planning, who are committed to serving on NPO Boards and committees.



The **COMPass Programme** is a personalised leadership development journey for each participant that comprises Leadership Diagnostics, Development Centre and Executive Coaching. It enables an organisational leader to better understand and hone their competencies in tackling the challenges of running a non-profit organisation, through defining a professional development plan. It is targeted at Executive Directors/Chief Executive Officers of NPOs.



**Pulse Check** is a self-assessment process for non-profit boards to strengthen their leadership capacity. It invites Boards and the Executive leadership team to reflect upon developmental next steps to enhance their overall effectiveness.

# CORE RESEARCH PRODUCTS, SURVEYS & PUBLICATIONS

### INDIVIDUAL GIVING SURVEY (IGS)

Developed by NVPC, the Individual Giving Survey (IGS) is a landscape study of volunteerism and philanthropy in Singapore. The biennial survey determines the extent of giving by individuals at a national level and profiles behaviour of givers, former givers, and non-givers. With the insights gleaned, NVPC aims to inform and influence national policies, strategy, and behaviour so as to deepen the culture of giving in Singapore.

### CORPORATE GIVING SURVEY (CGS)

The NVPC Corporate Giving Survey (CGS) is a study of volunteerism, philanthropy and other ways of giving among business corporations in Singapore. Its findings are intended to be used for policy making and strategy development at government levels, corporates and by non-profit organisations. The outcomes of this study are meant to provide a better understanding of the corporate giving landscape, attitudes, and the corporate giving journey that business entities go through. Our latest edition, CSG 2017 was conducted by global market research and consulting firm Ipsos Pte Ltd.

### BOARD LEADERSHIP SURVEY (BLS)

Developed by NVPC, and CNPL, in partnership with the Charity Council, the inaugural Board Leadership Survey (BLS) is a study of board practices in Singapore on the non-profit sector. The biennial survey sheds light on the understanding of board practices, its policies and activities of charities and IPCs in Singapore. With this dip-stick study, CNPL aims to provide recommendations for the non-profit boards in view of the refined code of governance institutionalised by the Charity Council.

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# GIVINGWEEK

27 Nov – 5 Dec 2018

[www.givingweek.sg](http://www.givingweek.sg)



## DISCOVERING THE CITY OF GOOD TOGETHER

Be part of the global giving movement and discover how businesses, communities, people and non-profits come together to celebrate the spirit of giving. Share your Time, Talent, Treasure, and Voice to support the causes and issues you care about in all ways big and small to help us become the #CityofGood.

Because we believe that little acts, when multiplied by millions, can make a world of difference.

An initiative by:



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### #GivingWeekSG

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## Giving is just a click away.

[giving.sg](http://giving.sg)



Join over 132,000 Singaporeans to donate, volunteer and fundraise for your favourite causes and build a #CityofGood.

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# 15 REAL STORIES 15 ACTS OF GIVING


“Very touching films. I can't help but teared several times...”



Watch now

[www.15Shorts.com](http://www.15Shorts.com)

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## 2018 marked a special year

where for the first time, SG Cares and National Day Parade (NDP) 2018 Organising Committee brought the nation together in growing the Singapore Cares (SG Cares) movement with the 18 Days of Giving, A Lifetime of Caring initiative. 40,000 participants celebrated National Day by coming together and contributing both time and resources to care for the vulnerable members of our community.

The journey to build a strong culture of care continues. Big changes come from little steps. Every act of care forms a building block, and will add up to our aspiration of a more caring and inclusive home for everyone. With your actions, you play a key role in encouraging and inspiring others to do good in their own ways and impact the community.

**Congratulations to all nominees and winners of the 2018 PVPA! Thank you for your dedication in making Singapore a more caring, compassionate and inclusive home.**

FIND OUT MORE AND JOIN US IN OUR NATIONWIDE CARING MOVEMENT AT  
[sgcares.sg](http://sgcares.sg)



# Acknowledgements

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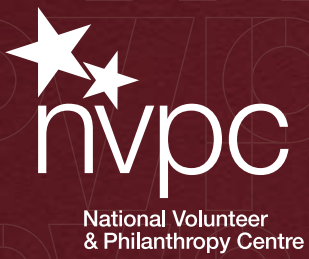


Yio Chu Kang Secondary School



Aaron Gan





Scan here to download an e-copy of the PVPA 2018 citation booklet.



[www.NVPC.org.sg](http://www.NVPC.org.sg)