

News



SPREADING THE CHEER: Staff and students of Ngee Ann Polytechnic entertaining some senior citizens at the Lions Befrienders (Mei Ling) Seniors Activity Centre. TNP PICTURE: YANG RONG

Polytechnic with a heart

Ngee Ann Poly gives more than just money to Project Helping Hands

REPORT: **GAN LING KAI**
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PROJECT Helping Hands is about to cross the \$300,000 mark. The community was brought closer to its \$1 million target with a \$48,665 donation yesterday from Ngee Ann Polytechnic staff members, bringing the donation tally to \$294,000.

The project aims to set up an alert system to help seniors living alone (see report at right).

About 30 staff members and students also took some Christmas cheer to 25 seniors at the Lions Befrienders (Mei Ling) Seniors Activity Centre yesterday.

The centre at Mei Ling Street serves 180 elderly residents living nearby.

Mr Foo See Meng, 58, the deputy principal of Ngee Ann Polytechnic, said: "We don't wish to be an institution that merely imparts knowledge and skills. We want to have a heart."

Lions Befrienders volunteers and the poly students performed magic tricks and song items at yesterday's event.

Bringing joy

Second-year electrical engineering student Wendy Chua, 20, who sang Sweet Honey, said: "I'm glad I can bring joy to the seniors."

The poly plans to start a donation drive among its student population of about 15,300 early next year for Project Helping Hands.

It will also donate its optometry centre's consultation fees collected since its opening on Nov 15 until the end of the year to the project.

Each consultation costs \$5.

Every little bit helps, said Mr David Lee Pheng Hock, 53, the chairman of Lions Befrienders Service Association.

"The need to help our seniors has always been urgent."

Lions Befrienders reaches out mainly to those aged 65 and above who are living alone.

"Although we visit our seniors regularly, there will be days when we have no contact with them," Mr Lee added.

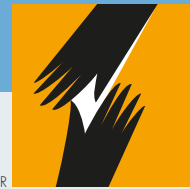
"The alert system created by Ngee Ann Polytechnic will bridge the gap. We need to raise enough funds and set up the system as soon as possible. It's a race against time."

Widow Molly Zhou Yamei, 80, who lives alone, is one of the two trial users of the NP Elderly Monitoring System.

Madam Zhou said in Mandarin: "I'm glad (the system) has been set up in my home, but what about my neighbours? They need help, too."

The New Paper editor Dominic Nathan, 46, hopes more organisations will follow Ngee Ann Polytechnic's lead.

He said: "Over the last two months, we have had many individuals, neighbours and organisations come forward to hold fundraising activities of their own. It's really in keeping with the helping hands spirit of this project."



THE NEW PAPER

PROJECT HELPING HANDS

tnp.sg/helpinghands

Help us reach out to them

TO HELP the elderly who are living alone, The New Paper has partnered the Lions Befrienders Service Association and Ngee Ann Polytechnic in Project Helping Hands.

THE PROJECT

DESIGN

It involves installing wireless motion sensors in the apartments of senior citizens living alone.

The system tracks the resident's movements and sends an SMS to a caregiver or volunteer if it detects unusually long motionless periods – for example, if the resident stops moving due to an injury or illness.

This technology, known as the NP's Elderly Monitoring System, was developed by the staff and students of Ngee Ann Polytechnic. Lions Befrienders has identified 1,000 needy elderly Singaporeans living in one-room flats as potential beneficiaries.

ROLL-OUT

To get the hardware portion of the project up and running, at least \$1 million is needed by the end of the year – \$1,000 for every home.

Equally important is the heartware. Volunteers are needed to adopt seniors living on their own.

Their main responsibility is to receive and act on the SMS alerts that will be automatically sent out if the sensors detect unusually long motionless periods.

HOW TO DONATE

A donation of \$1,000 will pay for sensors to be installed in one flat.

You can donate more if you wish to adopt more than one household, but any amount is welcome.

We hope students in the same class, colleagues in a department or neighbours on the same street or community group will come together to adopt a home.

Please make out your cheque to "Lions Befrienders", and mail it to:

Lions Befrienders Service Association (Singapore)
Blk 130, Bukit Merah View, #01-358, Singapore 150130

Please indicate on the back of the cheque:

- Project Helping Hands
- Your full name
- NRIC
- Address
- Contact number

Corporate donors should also indicate their company's name (as registered with Acra) and their business registration number.

Donations can also be made by cash at the Lions Befrienders' office during office hours (9am-6pm) on weekdays.

You can also donate online at tnp.sg/helpinghands. All donations are tax-exempt.

All funds raised for the project will be handled and disbursed by Lions Befrienders.

HOW TO VOLUNTEER

To sign up as a volunteer, please call **1800-375 8600** or visit www.lionsbefrienders.org.sg

Treat your body for a cause

FEEL good while doing good.

That's what certified Rolfers Mr Hee Tan and Ms Anthea Lim, are offering to those who want to try the treatment.

They will conduct Rolfiging sessions on Dec 27 and 29. All proceeds collected will be donated to Project Helping Hands.

Gallery Helios is sponsoring the use of its premises for these sessions.

Rolfing is named after its creator, Dr Ida Rolf, a biochemist from New York City who studied alternative methods of bodywork and healing in the 1920s.

Rolfers apply pressure to the body to loosen connective tissue that binds muscles together and to correct posture.

FYI

WHAT: Rolfing therapy (\$150 for an hour)



WHEN: Dec 27 and 29, from 9am to 9pm
WHERE: Gallery Helios (38 Petain Road)
BOOKING: Call Mr Hee Tan at 8498 5673

HELPING HAND:
Mr Hee Tan demonstrates Rolfing therapy.