

# Connect <sup>2</sup> Collab

DFSG e-Newsletter

## GOOD PRACTICES

Students engaging seniors and applying what they have learnt about ageing and dementia

### Nurturing Understanding And Connections, Across The Generations

#### Youth Hope Intergenerational Programme, CREST NTUC Health @ Taman Jurong

Strong bonds between youth and seniors — this is part of the vision behind the Youth Hope Intergenerational Programme. And the NTUC Health Community Outreach Team at Taman Jurong (CREST NTUC Health @ Taman Jurong) has been partnering with Jurong Secondary School to bring this vision to life.

Starting in 2022, CREST NTUC Health @ Taman Jurong has been conducting sessions to teach Jurong Secondary School students about ageing and dementia. These students are then invited to spend time with seniors from the NTUC Health Active Ageing Centre (AAC), where they gain firsthand experience of what it's like to engage with the elderly and persons living with dementia.

We spoke with **Teh Jin Yu** and **Alan Yong** from CREST NTUC Health @ Taman Jurong to learn more.

#### How did you help youth understand what it's like to have dementia?

**Jin Yu:** We tapped into various experiential learning methods from the Youth Hope Intergenerational Toolkit to help students step into the shoes of seniors and persons living with dementia. For example, they were tasked to button up shirts with gardening gloves that impaired dexterity. Or, sort through differently-coloured pills while wearing customised goggles that restricted their vision. We also screened a short film on dementia, "Going Home", to give them even more insight and understanding.

These students then got to apply what they had learnt through meaningful conversations and activities with seniors from the NTUC Health AAC.

*The Youth Hope Intergenerational Toolkit provides a step-by-step guide on how to start your own Youth Hope programme. Learn more in the Helpful Resources section.*

#### What were some of the challenges faced?

**Alan:** Logistics were challenging at times. We worked with Jurong Secondary School to accommodate the students' academic priorities and schedules, as well as with teachers to manage large class sizes of up to 40 students.

**Jin Yu:** The experience taught us that nurturing relationships is key. Having a strong network supported by community partners made the launch of this Youth Hope programme much smoother.

#### Was the programme successful?

**Jin Yu:** We got feedback that the students found it a positive experience, and teachers also felt encouraged. This demonstrated that students not only enjoyed our training; they were genuinely interested to understand dementia-related issues. This training helped students interact more meaningfully with seniors from NTUC Health AAC. Despite meeting for the first time, students and seniors were singing, laughing, and bonding. The atmosphere was vibrant and cheerful!

**Alan:** Some of the students who participated in Youth Hope were so inspired that they continued volunteering at AAC even after the 7-week programme!

#### What do you want to achieve moving forward?

**Alan:** We want to continue motivating students to volunteer and to get involved. We hope more youth will be galvanised to launch projects that benefit the community and raise awareness about dementia.

**Jin Yu:** We also plan to involve primary school students by developing lessons built for young children. Our goal is to teach them how to approach seniors and persons living with dementia with empathy, dignity and respect from a young age.



**Teh Jin Yu**  
NTUC Health  
Community  
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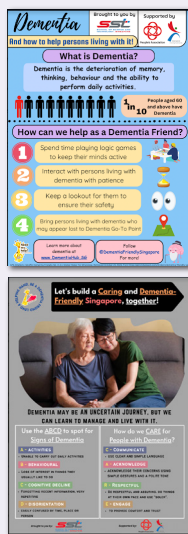
# CASE STUDY

## Empathy In Action: SST Students Advocate For Persons With Dementia

**Basic Advocacy and Service Education (BASE) programme; Fei Yue, SST and AIC**

The School of Science and Technology, Singapore (SST) students are no strangers to Fei Yue Community Services. The Fei Yue Community Outreach Team (CREST Fei Yue) has been engaging SST since 2020 with workshops and talks on the issue of dementia, all as part of their Basic Advocacy and Service Education (BASE) programme. These efforts have paid off, with SST students creating their own posters to educate the public about issues on dementia in 2023. These posters have since run on HDB digital display panels and notice boards across the Clementi Dementia-Friendly Community (DFC).

The posters created by SST students to raise awareness and advocacy for persons living with dementia appeared at digital display panels and notice boards in Clementi DFC.



We spoke to **Chris Tan**, Programme Executive from Fei Yue Community Services to find out more.

### What inspired SST students to launch this advocacy project?

CREST Fei Yue @ Bukit Timah, Clementi & Ulu Pandan banded together to find ways to improve mental health literacy and advocacy. These discussions came to fruition when we reached out to SST to build a programme to instill empathy in students. We took it a step further by training students to become representative advocates for dementia, with a comprehensive session that comprised interactive discussions and practical case studies. Students who went through the programme were able to educate peers and raise awareness about the condition, as well as embark on advocacy projects.

### Why was empathy the focus?

Empathy involves demonstrating compassion towards oneself and others as a means to foster understanding and connection, and is of foundational importance in various aspects of mental health and well-being. It's a fundamental skill for interacting with persons with mental health issues and persons living with dementia, as well as for promoting overall mental well-being.

### Did you face any challenges?

Our team foresaw challenges in engaging youth, particularly during talks. We were concerned that the students might become disinterested or disengaged. We proactively devised strategies to maintain interest and participation. This involved incorporating interactive elements such as case discussions and inter-class

competitions using online interactive platforms. By anticipating these issues, we tailored our approach to actively engage students and make the sessions more dynamic and impactful.

### How has the project made an impact?

The students found the sessions enriching. They offered valuable insight into the importance of empathy and its practical application in life. The advocacy project also gave students the opportunity to deepen their understanding of dementia and acquire relevant knowledge. By exposing these youth to knowledge about dementia and empathy at a young age, they have an opportunity to develop important character traits and a sense of responsibility towards the community. Through this programme, students are empowered to apply their newfound knowledge and skills to support their peers and loved ones living with dementia.

### Do you have further goals for the future?

CREST Fei Yue has introduced similar topics to other schools in Clementi in the last few years, and we hope to continue a close collaboration with these institutions. We aim to see youth take a more active role in raising awareness about dementia and supporting persons living with the condition. With their proficiency on social media platforms like TikTok and YouTube, young people have a powerful means to advocate for dementia awareness and education. By leveraging these platforms responsibly, they can disseminate accurate information about dementia and contribute to reducing the stigma surrounding the condition.

### What tips would you give to others on engaging schools and youth?

Consider their schedules and preferences when planning engagement strategies. Involve motivated student leaders as ambassadors to enhance engagement. Since schools often encourage project-based learning, collaborating as mentors and trainers on mental health or dementia-related projects can be effective. Incorporating interactive elements and competition can capture youth interest and energy. It's crucial to approach youth as equals, maintaining authenticity and avoiding patronising language while fostering genuine connections and understanding. Most importantly, identify and work closely with your key partners to make things happen.



“ It's crucial to approach youth as equals, maintaining authenticity and avoiding patronising language, while fostering genuine connections and understanding. ”

Chris Tan, Programme Executive from Fei Yue Community Services



# GET PERSONAL

300

Team lead of Project Forget-Me-Not, Soh Ke Wei

## Youth Inspiring Youth: Young Advocates

Launched by a passionate group of youth as part of the National Youth Council (NYC) Youth Action Challenge, Project Forget-Me-Not is an initiative to connect Singapore’s younger generation with the dementia community through:



Educational Social Media Campaigns



Immersive and Interactive Exhibitions



Talks for other youth about the issue of dementia



School-Based Student Chapters

### Q&A with Project Forget-Me-Not Team Lead, Soh Ke Wei

#### What sparked your interest in dementia?

A: When my late grandfather was diagnosed (with dementia), watching him slowly slip away was very difficult for my family. I felt this overwhelming desire to understand dementia and how it affects people. That’s what pushed me to volunteer with AWWA Dementia Day Care Centre and interact with persons living with dementia.

#### What inspired Project Forget-Me-Not?

It was a ground-up initiative with this diverse group of young people who all happened to have one cause in common: dementia. We each saw how dementia was becoming more prevalent, and were concerned that our generation was unaware of the condition. So, as youth ourselves who understand what it’s like, we thought “who better to reach out to other youth”. From there, Project Forget-Me-Not was born.

#### How did you get Project Forget-Me-Not started?

We were very fortunate to connect with Dementia Singapore and the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC). Dementia Singapore provided a ground-up perspective on the pain points faced by people in the dementia community. AIC provided us with overarching guidance on the dementia landscape in Singapore. These partnerships really helped us get Project Forget-Me-Not off the ground.

#### Did you face any hurdles at the start?

Tackling the stigma around dementia is difficult as it is an invisible condition. Most young people we engage with don’t know that dementia includes conditions like Alzheimer’s or early onset dementia, each of which have different symptoms. Project Forget-Me-Not tackles this problem by conducting engagement and educational activities targeted at youth.

#### What impact has Project Forget-Me-Not made?

We’ve kickstarted a “Makan with Persons Living with Dementia” programme that connects youth with persons living with dementia. We’re also engaging youth on social media, and are set to launch an exhibit and student outreach programmes. There is also an upcoming video series highlighting the unique experiences of 6 caregivers to be aired soon!

#### In your opinion, how can we get youth engaged in dementia awareness ?

We need to emphasise that dementia is not a matter of “when”. It’s already present in our lives, affecting elderly relatives, close family, friends, and local communities. By making dementia relatable to youth, we can start from a position of empathy, and better educate youth about its causes, symptoms, and the importance of treating persons living with dementia with dignity and respect.

#### What are your goals for the future of Project Forget-Me-Not?

We want to keep pushing for change and making Singapore a more dementia-friendly country. Our goal is to reduce the stigma against dementia and spread accurate information about the condition. We hope that Project Forget-Me-Not will inspire more youth to get involved in making the world a kinder place for persons living with dementia!



Youth interact with seniors and persons living with dementia as part of Project Forget-Me-Not.

# HELPFUL RESOURCES



## Youth Hope Intergenerational Toolkit

This toolkit provides a step-by-step guide to starting the Youth Hope programme, which aims to foster intergenerational bonding between youth and seniors. The toolkit also outlines the steps to implementing Youth Hope in the community and how individuals and community partners can play a part to engage youth to support seniors and persons living with dementia.



Scan this QR code to download the toolkit.



## Spark Conversations: A Journal of Shared Memories

Download this journal developed for youth to start conversations with their grandparents, starting with "what's your life story?". By initiating meaningful conversation between the elderly and youth, this guide aims to cultivate deeper understanding and bonds that can bridge generations.



Scan the QR code to download the journal.



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- Ask: **1800-650-6060 (AIC Hotline)**

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