

Impacting Communities, One Step at a Time

Read how our volunteers help impact lives by just walking neighbourhoods

Care Corner is a charity dedicated to helping the under-privileged. Serving more than 60,000 clients per year, it operates from social service centres positioned across the island. The youngest beneficiaries are served by the Circle of Care • Child Services (CoC).

CoC started in 2013 and is funded by the Lien Foundation. It supports children from low income and disadvantaged families, aged 2 months to 6 years, who need learning, developmental and/or behavioural support. The unique CoC service framework believes in supporting children within the community they are in. As such, CoC social work staff and educational therapists adopt an inter-disciplinary approach, as they work with the significant individuals in the child's life, including his/her family, principal and teachers. The main aim is to provide early intervention support, individualised for each child, to help them grow and develop well.

In empowering families, CoC also facilitates awareness of the community resources available to these families. In achieving this, CoC has recently embarked on an interesting project with Ngee Ann Polytechnic to walk the neighbourhoods and map the various community resources.

This mapping project took place from 6 Apr 2017 to 25 May 2017, and involved student volunteers from the Ngee Ann Polytechnic's Early Childhood Education programme. They faced the task of mapping community resources across 8 communities; namely Taman Jurong, Jurong West, Teban Gardens, Bukit Batok, Sembawang, Admiralty, Leng Kee / Redhill and Tampines (Changkat).



*Resources are aplenty
in our community*

Despite the irregular hours needed to work on the project, the response to join the project was promising and it soon became oversubscribed, as students' registration poured in. Polytechnic lecturers Janet Ng and Peggy Leong then had the daunting task of shortlisting 30 students to participate. After rounds of interviews, training sessions and a written test, the selected students then began the seven-week long project. During this time, they had to juggle their involvement in the project with their other assignments and CCA activities. They were able to rely on a robust support structure, as Ngee Ann Polytechnic strongly supports 'service learning'; service and learning which results from the students' involvement with their

community. According to Janet, “service learning” is Ngee Ann Polytechnic’s signature pedagogy, [and this experience showcases] how our students’ involvement can help the young children and their families.

So, braving blazing sunshine and pouring rain, they scouted the neighbourhoods for little-known gems of community resources. And the effort paid off, as the many sweaty hours of pounding the pavements produced a wealth of data. But yet, this was only the first part of the project. The project team then had to go through many hours of intense evening discussions as they collated and organized the data.

The result of their tireless labour was a meticulous map that thoughtfully, and appropriately, also included a game, which families could easily use.

It takes selflessness to commit to projects this intensive. But as with all volunteer work, the project abounded with intangible reward for the students, as their lives are impacted by it. The students concluded their experience with a deep appreciation of what they have. Student Sheryl Ho Jia Min shared about being more conscious of “the things we have been blessed with”. Student leader Therese Marie Tay realised the need to “[grow] individually, and [as a] society”.



Here’s a playground...



Fancy bonding with your family through BBQ?

Also, having seen the difficulties that the less-fortunate must surmount, it inspired the volunteers to overcome challenges in their everyday lives with confidence; something which Sheryl aptly describes as one’s “resilience”. On a lighter note, the most memorable moment experienced by one of the volunteers was the realization that “there are many places in the neighbourhood [not found] on Google [Maps].”

Care Corners’ ongoing efforts to serve the community are often as unseen as the communities they serve. As Therese commented, whilst we see many crises overseas reported in the media, “many of us fail to realise that we have our own communities in Singapore that need help too.” To this

end, Care Corner runs a highly diverse range of programmes which caters to all ages, life stage, families and individuals; be it children, youth, adult or seniors.



Let's organize all the gems we've got...

They are constantly seeking volunteers to come alongside to help, and contributions need not be as onerous as the mapping project described above. As student leader Lim Wei An commented, "no matter how small or insignificant a volunteer's work may seem, we are helping our community in one way or another. No matter how small the contribution may seem, it has the potential to change someone's life."



Colourful maps to help families navigate around

Commenting on the project, Mr Ong Kah Hong, Social Worker of Circle of Care Child Services has this to say, "I am heartened by the effort the volunteers put in to complete this project; from the hours spent walking the ground for the mapping, to the conceptualisation of the prototypes, and finally the

production of the community maps for the project finale presentation. They took time out from their school hours to participate in this project, and I am thankful for it. Their innovative ways of presenting the information e.g. using a moving ball game and card game was indeed refreshing and much welcomed. We wish them the very best as they complete their final year of their studies."

For more information on how you can volunteer, please visit Care Corner's volunteer page at <http://www.carecorner.org.sg/volunteer.html>

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Ngee Ann Polytechnic students

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OUR EDITORIAL VOLUNTEER CAITLIN



Writing is my passion, so I am thrilled to be involved on this project. Creative writing has always been a part of life, whether it be planning the plots or the actual writing itself. When not typing frantically, I can be found in most movie theatres, and shopping malls. A bit of a techno-snob, my reading is done mostly from e-readers, which I do whenever I can. The minor hobby is playing the piano, which is a revived childhood pastime. Between family, friends, and work, I volunteer at a few organisations, trying to make the world a better place.