

LAUNCH OF TOUCHPOINT@AMK 433

Singapore's first-of-its-kind activity node to enable residents to support ageing in community

TOUCH Community Services has set up TOUCHpoint@AMK 433 as part of its Community Enablement Project (CEP) to mobilise residents and stakeholders to support ageing and reabling of the elderly in the community.

"With TOUCHpoint@AMK 433, we have enhanced efforts, draw on community assets to catalyse learning, creativity and community bonding. We have seen isolated seniors getting connected; elderly wheelchair users exercising alongside residents; caregivers growing confident; and people with diabetes becoming health advocates. Residents who are fitter can help their vulnerable neighbours, while the frailer seniors can become stronger as they are reabled physically through our strength building programmes. This way, they can be more independent and lead more empowered lives," said Mr James Tan, Chief Executive Officer of TOUCH Community Services.

TOUCHpoint@AMK 433's design by community space specialist COLOURS, recently won them the Silver Architecture Award (Wellness Integration) for having the best architecture design in the Asia Pacific region. It has most parts accessible 24/7 and also features a ribbon of spaces extending from indoors to outdoors, providing an open and welcoming environment for residents to gather and hold activities.

TOUCHpoint brings to life a concept that was first published in 'Second Beginnings – Senior Living Redefined', a book of architectural designs commissioned by the Lien Foundation, that put forward 10 new ideas on how unused and underused spaces in land-scarce Singapore could be re-purposed into thriving communities for seniors.

"We are happy to partner TOUCH in this innovative approach to tap on community assets and turn residents into resources to support ageing in community. It is in line with the Foundation's approach to forge a better future for our seniors by harnessing the community's natural strengths to foster a culture of mutual support by connecting people, building inter-dependence and enabling residents to remain active and engaged for as long as they can, and learn to help each other, should they need care," said Mr Lee Poh Wah, Chief Executive Officer, Lien Foundation. "Such an approach will complement formal care services, at a time when the sector is facing an acute manpower shortage."

The new centre, he added, was the culmination of quiet groundwork done by TOUCH over the past four years to equip the community with resources that can help seniors thrive. To ward off frailty and remain physically fit, for instance, residents can attend strength-training sessions as part of the Foundation's Gym Tonic programme. They can also initiate interest-based group activities, such as calligraphy sessions, potter around

in the community garden, cook meals together and take part in regular health and wellness talks. Those who are living with chronic conditions, can attend peer support groups – such as one for diabetes -- and can take part in regular health screens and checks provided by community nurses.

TOUCH has also reached out to more than 500 residents through its activities and empowered a group of 80 volunteer befrienders, most of whom are seniors themselves, to watch out for frailer and older residents in their midst.

Mr Tan Seng Chai, Group Chief People Officer for CapitaLand Group and Executive Director of CapitaLand Hope Foundation said: “As a responsible real estate developer, CapitaLand recognises the social value in creating inclusive spaces for the community to interact, integrate and improve their quality of life. With the support of CapitaLand’s philanthropic arm, CapitaLand Hope Foundation, TOUCHpoint@AMK 433 will be a vibrant community touchpoint for the seniors in the neighbourhood to age in place. TOUCHpoint@AMK 433 facilitates their access to activities and services, drawing them out of isolation and keeping them active and healthy. Beyond providing financial assistance, to further our support for the vulnerable elderly, we plan to activate our staff volunteers to extend our outreach and engage more seniors.” TOUCHpoint@AMK 433 is one of the first projects supported by CHF’s CapitaLand Silver Empowerment Fund.

Partnership with key stakeholders

In 2016, TOUCH co-founded the Ang Mo Kio Partners Network alongside AMKFSC (formerly Ang Mo Kio Family Service Centre), Ang Mo Kio-Thye Hua Kwan Hospital, AWWA and National Healthcare Group. The network aims to coordinate care for older residents and connect services to better support residents.

“We are also thankful for the strong friendships and trust built amongst our strategic community partners in this precinct. Together, we can do so much more for our residents as we share a common goal - leveraging strengths, pulling together resources to upskill residents, improving access to health and social services, and strengthening formal and informal support networks,” added Mr James Tan.

To create a safer and more accessible environment for residents, TOUCH partnered residents of varying mobility abilities, COMNet (AMKFSC) and the AMK Town Council to conduct Town Audits to survey the physical attributes of the CEP precinct and recommended solutions.

Other key community partners include:

- National Healthcare Group, Health Promotion Board and Tan Tock Seng Hospital for health promotion activities and health monitoring
- The Community Network for Seniors, AMKFSC and People’s Association for community activities and talks
- Deyi Secondary School in educating students on caregiving issues through *TEENacious* and providing volunteering platforms to support frailer residents.

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About TOUCH Community Services

Since 1992, TOUCH Community Services has served people of all ages, races and religions to see sustainable change and transformation in their lives. It believes in the worth and potential of every child, youth at-risk, family in need, senior and person with special or healthcare needs to grow, participate and contribute in the community. The heartbeat of TOUCH is to **activate potential, build independence, connect people** into their lives for mutual support, and **deliver impact** by developing sustainable solutions in society. For more information on TOUCH, please visit www.touch.org.sg

About the Community Enablement Project (CEP)

The CEP – a pilot project by TOUCH Community Services from 2016 – activates communities to provide a safe, inter-reliant and stimulating environment to help seniors age in community. At TOUCH, we believe in activating our clients' potential and enable them to build their independence while being connected to others in the community. The CEP taps on TOUCH's two decades of eldercare experience to build an enabled community within Ang Mo Kio, where older people can be supported to live independently and contribute. The newly launched TOUCHpoint@AMK 433 – one of CEP's key platforms – develops residents and other stakeholders as community resources. The CEP aims to create a local care eco-system, bringing healthcare and social services closer to residents, strengthening formal and informal support networks, while considering infrastructural requirements and technological interventions to support ageing in community. The CEP is part of TOUCH's efforts to explore sustainable and practical care solutions to reduce care needs while increasing support for seniors.