

# Future4Seniors, United World College South East Asia Singapore

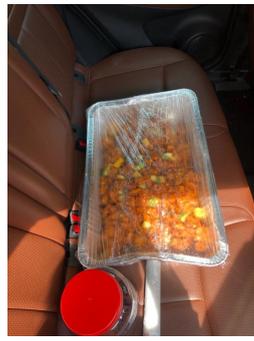
Group of three high school students from UWCSEA (Dover) who are passionate about bringing positive change to the group of less fortunate elderly.

Name	Role
Soomin You	Leader, Chief of Communications
Gwyneth Garlinghouse	Administrator, Chief of Logistics
Bryan Carmichael	Chief Volunteer Management

## Our story

March 2020, COVID-19 put Singapore on lockdown. We didn't want the months of quarantine to be wasted. We wanted to take action and give back to our community. While researching the different problems in Singapore, we were contacted by \*\*\*, a hospice care centre in Singapore who were interested in receiving our help. This marked the beginning of our journey to help the less fortunate seniors in Singapore.

After helping out the hospice care centre, we felt compelled to continue helping the elderly community. Being stuck in the COVID situation, we knew there was not much that we could do, however, we took every opportunity we could to make any sort of difference. We made brownies and local food to distribute to the seniors' homes (in line with COVID regulations). Even though it was a one time event, it continued to drive our passion.



We were invited, again by \*\*\* to visit their centres to give performances to the seniors and interact with them. After finding out about the impact we made upon them, we knew we had to do more. For months on end, we tried and tried to formulate a plan which would help the elderly community in the best way, but faced little success. We were often looked down upon by some organisations and companies, even after months of repeated online meetings with them.

Eventually, after hearing about how other people were giving back to their communities and vulnerable people in their societies, we came up with the solution that we currently have. We also managed to find organisations who were extremely supportive to help us carry out this project.

## Background Information about Singapore seniors

- ~46,000 seniors are isolated with no source of income
- Seniors not able to visit activity centres due to COVID

## Our solution

- 1) Monthly distribution of basic necessities
- 2) Virtual interactive music concerts (Every other month)

We have partnered with Lion Befrienders Singapore (LB) and Carecorner Singapore (CCSG) to aid the seniors under their program. Through LB, we aim to aid 50 seniors, and 1,000 seniors through CCSG. Alongside this, CCSG has invited us to hold monthly birthday parties for the seniors.

The distribution boxes include:

1. Mask
2. Face Towel
3. Rice
4. Fruits
5. Vegetables

\*These products were chosen after surveying the seniors regarding what they most needed as well as input from the leaders of LB and CCSG

During distribution sessions, volunteers have a befriending session with the seniors to check in on them, lasting no less than fifteen minutes. They then report back to the team leader's about both the senior's physical and mental health as well as anything else they think is worth noting. Through regular distribution sessions, we hope that our volunteers will be able to make deeper connections with the seniors that they aid.

## Virtual Concert

Our team loves music, naturally, we wanted to bring joy with it. We carried out a 'pilot' where we visited several senior homes (Hospice Centres) and gave performances for Singapore's national day. The staff at these centres told us that the seniors were overjoyed and continued to hum for days after we left. This sparked our idea to hold interactive virtual music concerts.

## SDG goals



We are targeting the United Nations Sustainable Goals for Development numbers one, two and three.

**Goal 1: No Poverty**

Provide lower-income communities who don't have guaranteed access to basic necessities.

**Goal 2: Zero Hunger**

Helping the seniors gain easier access to basic food necessities.

**Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being**

Brightening up the lives of the seniors through music, the opportunity to connect with new people and re-spark their joy with small gifts and cards made by young students from our school.

**Organisations Involved**

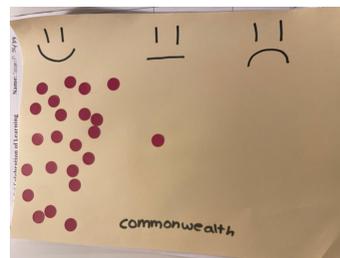
Lions Befrienders	Partnered NGO
CareCorner	Partnered NGO
LPY Masks	Donated 1000+ Masks
Students	Created cards/letters for the Seniors
	Created videos for virtual concert
Pasir Panjang WC, Toa Payoh VNM	Donated vegetables

**Impact**

Lions Befrienders: 50 Seniors  
Carecorner Singapore: 1000 Seniors

Impact measured through "happiness" rating.

As seen, seniors were extremely happy that we visited them!



Our team spent 400 hours of work since mid-2020 to make our dream a reality

**Experience**

We held our first distribution on April sixth and we gained a lot. In the preceding days, we visited partner organisations and picked up donations. We also visited other markets once they closed to ask for leftovers which they would have otherwise thrown out. After quality checking goods received, we packaged everything into reusable bags that were then used for distribution.

On the day of the distribution, we met with our volunteers early in the morning and gave everyone a rundown of what was expected and spoke with the leaders of LB to make sure there was a general understanding of what the day would look like. We then walked to different units to hand out packages to the seniors and conversed with them in their native languages

**Key takeaways**

Every one of our volunteers felt as though they gained something from this session. Some said it helped develop their collaboration skills and others felt as though it gave them a greater appreciation for everything that they are fortunate enough to have and taught them the importance of giving back to everyone in their community; especially to those who, at first glance, might not appear to need it.



**Not so great moments :(**

- In the beginning of the project, we were often looked down upon by NGOs and companies. This was very challenging for us because we wanted to help the seniors but just could not do that because we were lacking support.
- Balancing school life with our project was another challenging factor as we wanted to put in 100% of our effort. On the days leading up to our distribution day, we spent hours after school going through our plan, and making sure we did not have a hole.

For us, it was an experience full of tears, stress, joy, resilience and perseverance. At our age, we are more than proud of what we have achieved. Looking back at the past year, it has been an opportunity for us to learn, grow and enjoy ourselves. It helped us see that anything and everything is possible if you persevere, work together, and support each other.

