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慈光福利协会
METTA WELFARE ASSOCIATION

Caring For Our Communities
关爱我们的社群

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Together We Will Overcome



As we exit the extended circuit breaker this week, it is heartened to know that many of us have complied with the regulations and learning to adapt to these new changes as the new normal. From physical contact, we have moved away to the necessary usage of IT devices, video conferencing tools and apps in place of our physical presence at schools, workplaces, centre-based services, and social gatherings which will set to shape the new changes of how we used to do things.

With community cases gradually easing by the day in the past week and some of us returning to work in the office, life will still not go back to what it was before the pandemic as many businesses and livelihoods that are affected by the health crisis continues to take a hit in the economy, including family members of our clients in Metta. The grim situation at home cascades down to everyone in the family due to the uncertainty for the future as our clients and their caregivers expressed their worries over their family's financial circumstances.

But our work continues. Our team of dedicated essential workers at Metta Home for the Disabled, the staff at Metta Cafe, nursing staff from Metta Medical Care to the teachers and social workers at Metta School and Metta PreSchool @Punggol continue to stay on the ground to assist and care for our clients during this challenging time. As the aphorism goes, when we learn to be resilient, we also learn to embrace the beautiful broad spectrum of the human experience. May we take this moment to offer strength and encouragement to those who need it. With the collective efforts and contribution of everyone, we can overcome this, turn things around and emerge stronger.

Triple Gems Blessings

Venerable Chao Khun Fa Zhao BBM
President
Metta Welfare Association



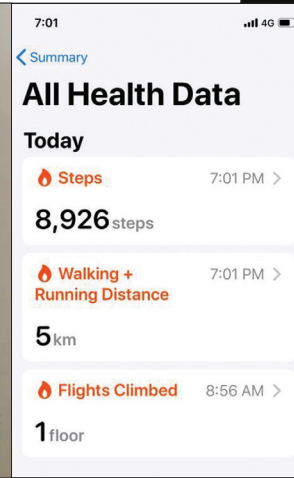
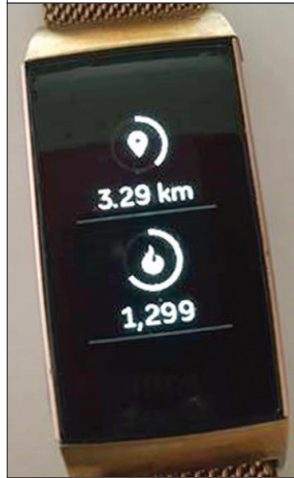
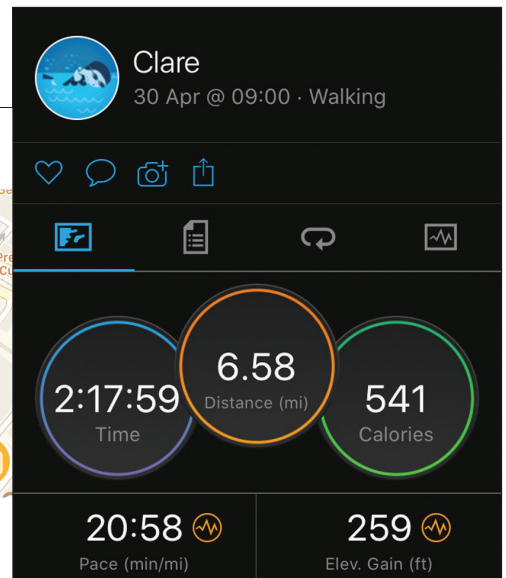


Walking to Good Health

Close to 300 participants took to continue a healthy lifestyle during the circuit breaker period when they registered for Metta Welfare Association's Virtual Charity Walk that ended on 7 June 2020. In line with circuit breaker measures, participants can clock in their mileage of 3km on their step trackers at their own time, pace and venue and submit their results online as part of their participation in this virtual event.

The event aims to promote a continuous healthy lifestyle in spite of the strict circuit breaker measures in place over the last two months. With a registration fee of \$15, participants who have registered are also given a Charity Walk t-shirt, \$5 worth of coupons for Metta's Green Charity Carnival 2021 and one goodie bag as a token of their efforts.

Proceeds raised from the Virtual Walk are directed towards supporting the development and enrichment programmes of over 1,200 beneficiaries from various races and religions. These centres are segregated into the areas of Disability Care, Medical Care, Special Education and Early Intervention programmes and Alumni Care that Metta Welfare Association provides.



Above: screenshots and photo submissions of our virtual walkers' clocked mileage

For Community, Purpose and Benefit

Metta Welfare Association is grateful to Singapore Pools (Private) Limited for their very generous donation of \$20,000 for the purchase of COVID-19 related supplies and services in their support towards the vulnerable communities in the fight against the health crisis in Singapore. The donation was indeed timely as it was used for the purchase of face masks, hand sanitisers, disinfectant products and services, personal protective equipment (PPE) suits, face shields and medical supplies among others for Metta's staff and beneficiaries. As more of our Centres prepare to reopen to serve the vulnerable in the community, these equipment and supplies are crucial to provide support to those in need of

medical care and assistance during this pandemic.

Singapore Pools has long been a leading benefactor in Singapore society, placing the community at the heart of what they do, to uplift the community by reinventing giving. Their efforts to fight against the virus is among their many efforts to support and uplift the wellbeing of the community.

The donation-in-kind supplies helps to ensure that Metta's staff and beneficiaries stay safe in these trying times especially as we continue our battle with COVID-19 while working to meet the needs of our beneficiaries.



For Community Purpose and Benefit





Support the Needy and Vulnerable

#EverybodyMatters

Over the past two months of circuit breaker, many of our centres were not able to open and could only provide remote assistance and support to our vulnerable beneficiaries. Our centres are slowly opening up again as we enter phases of safe re-opening.

But new challenges awaits us. Some of our beneficiaries have regressed during this period, losing skills which have taken years that they were trained in. They will require more intensive training when they return.

“With the closure of IDAC, our training process has been interrupted. It makes me worried as one caregiver shared that one of our beneficiary has reverted to rolling and laying on the floor. She also refuses to sit on the chair which she was previously trained to do.”

Ms Sujata, Training Officer at Metta Day Activity Centre for the Intellectually Disabled (IDAC)

“Another caregiver voiced her concern that her son with intellectual disability, who was previously able to put on his shirt and socks on his own, had suddenly forgotten how to do it all over again since he wasn’t able to attend his training programmes.”

Ms Kookila Kunju, Centre Supervisor at IDAC

Though remote support is in place, daily skills training, memory, motor skills, and Active Daily Living skills (ADLs) needs to be regularly reinforced to our beneficiaries with face-to-face interaction and training.

Due to the COVID-19 situation, much of our physical fundraising events have been scaled back or cancelled which affected our donations. We are appealing for funds so as to continue the programmes and services of our clients. These funds will mean a lot to our clients and their caregivers for their wellbeing.

Help us so that we can continue doing what we are doing:

- Conduct counselling, special education and help students during this stressful period
- Continue our medical home visits to patients of Metta Hospice Care and HomeCare
- Provide a shelter over the heads of our clients with intellectual disability with meals, training, activities and medical assistance.

Let us ride through these difficult times together as a community, because the faster this health crisis ends, the better we can move on with our lives. Please donate through the following options. #SGUnited #COVID-19



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We Don't Do It Anymore Like They Used To

As our nation progresses over the decades, much nostalgia, practises and memories are long forgotten. Three clients at Metta Day Rehabilitation Centre for the Elderly, from the Pioneer Generation, shares with us the old spirit of Hari Raya that they miss.



Hajjah Limah Bte Ahmad
(83 years old)

"In modern times due to our busy schedule, we get our traditional clothes off the racks in shops and malls and baked treats from bazaars. But back in Mdm Hajjah's childhood days in Jalan Cenderai (Johor), baking traditional Malay cakes (kuehs) and sewing traditional Malay attire for adults and children is the norm which she enjoys doing it with her family members."



Zainab Binte Sulaiman
(85 years old)

"When I was growing up in my kampong in Jalan Tangi (present day Eunos), I was tasked with manning the kitchen. Hari Raya would mean a full day of cooking starting from early morning before sunrise for my family and our many guests. As a young girl, it was a pride for me to hold such a big responsibility for the family. My late mother would guide and instruct me in the kitchen while giving me full authority in cooking the traditional dishes. She had confidence in me as I had learned the ropes of cooking and preparation of our family recipes at a very young age from her."



Asmah Binte Haji Abdul Shukor
(86 years old)

"Last time in Singapore when we could still have fireworks, my siblings and I would play with them during every Hari Raya. It was our way of celebrating the festival. I grew up in Kampong Jawa (present day Arab Street) where families and neighbours played and ate together. As I got older, I helped my family to sell kuehs along the five foot way at the marketplace whenever Hari Raya was near. We didn't have much back then but our lives were simple and we were all happy."

Interview is translated by
Ms Nurjannah, Training Aide
at Metta Day Rehabilitation
for the Elderly.



Traditional Kampong-Style Mee Rebus

Mee rebus is one of the many noodles dishes popular in Southeast Asia and synonymous with the Malay food culture. It is yellow noodles served with a thick mildly spicy, sweet potato-based gravy and garnished with a hard-boiled egg, bean sprouts, tau kwa (firm tofu), green chillies and lime juice.



Ingredients (Yields 10 servings):

- 2kg thick yellow noodles
- 1kg bean sprouts
- 3 cakes of *tau kwa* (diced into small pieces and fried)
- 30g green chillies (sliced)
- 10 hard-boiled eggs
- 400g sweet potatoes (boiled and mashed)
- 2 stalks of lemon grass
- 30g turmeric (finely chopped)
- 20g blue ginger (*lengkuas/galangal*) – finely chopped
- 4 tbsp peanuts (roasted and ground)
- 4 tbsp soya bean paste
- 4 tbsp corn starch (to thicken gravy)
- 2 litres of water

Seasoning:

- 1 ½ tsp salt
- 4 tbsp sugar

Preparation:

1. Blend the ground spices (turmeric, galangal, lemon grass, and soya bean paste) and saute till fragrant.
2. Add water and bring to boil.
3. Once the gravy bubbles, add in the mashed sweet potato. Stir well till the mashed potatoes are well blended in.
4. Pour in the crushed roasted peanuts and season with salt and sugar to taste.
5. Thicken the gravy with corn starch solution.
6. Blanch the yellow noodles and bean sprouts separately in boiling water.
7. Drain and portion into individual bowls. Spoon the gravy over the noodles and garnish with sliced green chillies, fried cubed *tau kwa* and boiled egg slices.



Recipe courtesy of Mdm Goh Siew Choo, a Cook at the Metta Day Activity Centre for the Intellectually Disabled (IDAC).

Mdm Goh started her vegetarian culinary experience in 2001 when she was with the now-defunct Metta Student Care Centre at Pasir Ris. Cooking for over 80 students at a time was no mean feat but Mdm Goh pulled it off. When the Centre closed in 2009, she joined IDAC to continue her culinary passion to impart love into her cooking for Metta's beneficiaries.



Home-Based Learning (HBL) With Our Teachers and Students

With the extended circuit breaker recently ended, here's a look at our SPED students from Metta School and Metta PreSchool @Punggol who have been doing their Home-based Learning (HBL) from home with their teachers.



Metta School

The Schedule

Schedules are meticulously planned and scheduled for various programmes and age group exercises. Lessons for students are conducted on a daily basis at 3-4 lessons a day. Each lesson can take 30 mins or 45 mins long or up to 1 hour, (timing is based on the subject and level of student).

Mode of Teaching

Via various modes/platforms and resources including but not restricted to the following :

- LMS (Learning Management System)
- IXL (a free app learning platform)
- SplashLearn (maths learning programme)
- Matholia (maths learning programme)
- Video call
- Zoom
- Pre-recorded video modelling and lessons
- PowerPoint (with printed guides for parents)
- Hardcopies with instruction for parents & child
- Email
- WhatsApp
- Online platforms e.g. Nearpod, Kahoot!, Quiz for interactive lessons.
- Instructional videos for skills training
- YouTube
- Get Epic (an e-reading and learning platform)
- BrainPop (an animated educational website)

- Teaching resources created by teachers – visuals, daily schedule, work system charts, checklists, worksheets etc

What are taught during the HBL for the ASD, B, C and Vocational programmes?

ASD-Junior:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Time-Telling
- Personal Management
- Communication
- Art & Craft
- Physical Education (PE)
- Home Economics
- Brain Gym
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

ASD-Senior:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Money Skills
- Home Economics
- Housekeeping
- Laundry
- Self-management
- PE

B Programme:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Personal Management
- Visual Arts
- PE
- Character and Citizenship Education (CCE)
- Household Management (HM)
- Science

C Programme:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Vocational Education (VE)
- HM
- Adapted Physical Education (APE)
- Science
- Home Economics

V Programme:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- CCE
- VE
- ITE Skills Certificate (ISC)
- PE

Employment Pathway Programme:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- APE
- Soft skills
- CCE
- Personal Management
- Vocational Training

Teaching is a challenging profession. HBLs are not without its struggles faced by many educators. For most parents as well, these are some pointers they can also relate with:

• Students

- Discipline issues: for older students, some of them are not able to keep to the schedule given, some are late for their lessons while some others are unmotivated. Even though a daily timetable is provided, a few may have issues following through or they take a longer time to submit their tasks on time.
- There are a few who are not as cooperative, and often display undesirable behaviour when their parents tried to remind them or check on their work.
- By the fourth week, some students began to lose their enthusiasm towards HBL.
- For younger ones, they are more complaint yet they are not as independent and require more support, guidance and presence of their parents in the process.

• Parents

- There are responses from parents expressing their concerns as being unable to support their children totally. This may be due to various reasons.

- With a whole family to take care of, parents are already busy with household chores and looking after other siblings throughout the day.
- It is not easy to pick up a teaching role and conduct the lessons without hiccups. Parents know their children and love them. They are able to nurture them on self-care, behaviour, personal interests and other daily living skills, but may not be school academics work. While teachers attempt to provide sufficient information and instructions on Literacy and Numeracy subject areas, parents may still not be familiar with the diverse approaches and pedagogies, and the online platforms like LMS, IXL, SplashLearn, Matholia, Get Epic and other online programmes and Apps which the teachers adopt using in lesson delivery.
- Apart from that, some skills including Maths abstract concepts and soft skills are not easy to be conducted via HBL as these require a lot of role playing, and even manipulatives. It is challenging for some parents as well.
- Among the parents, there are people who are employees and have to work from home. They did not have time to do the HBL packages with the young children.
- All these can cause stress and anxiety to parents and subsequently to the children, affecting the harmony of the family, which is not anything we want to see.
- Besides, for a few families, there is the need to provide digital devices. Fortunately, school has looked into the need and offered loans of IT devices to ensure resources are sufficient for HBL of the children.



Watch the full video of our teachers sharing their HBL experience at: <https://youtu.be/MaQPuMaqyMA>

*Names of teachers and classes are omitted to protect the privacy of the students.

• Teachers

- Our teachers work hard to prepare the HBL packages with details, ensuring parents understand the instructions or are able to carry out lessons in ways suggested.
- They are very concerned with the progress of the students and are eager to witness their performance. However, with HBL, they are unable to provide face to face feedback to the students when they are doing their work and video calls are not as equally effective.



- While some parents recorded the process and send to the teachers for comments and feedback, corrections and explanation of mistakes made cannot be given immediately on the spot, which makes learning less effective than face to face interaction.
- Assessing performance of students is also a challenge, for example , the pronunciation of a child may sometimes sound a little muffled over the phone and this affects the teaching or assessment.
- It is also a big challenge for the teachers to check on the students' progress and obtain immediate feedback from the parents due to timing and other home front commitments.
- As such, for some teachers, there are difficulties in monitoring the true progress made by the students so as to adjust the content of the next HBL session.

However, it is glad to know that the Full HBL during circuit breaker period has also brought out its equal share of positivity throughout this episode.

Here are some positive feedback from our teachers:

"Through HBL, it is observed that parents are more involved in the student's learning and they gain a better understanding of the curriculum that the students go through in school.

It was mentioned that a student was able to carry out the task of dressing himself with minimal prompts during the lesson but was reluctant to do it in his daily routine as he is used to his helper doing it for him. HBL brought about awareness which was pivotal in encouraging parents to work closely with the teachers to implement and practice the skills taught in school. Furthermore, HBL also allowed parents to see the effectiveness of the strategies used in school.

When HBL first started, a schedule was provided and parents were taught how to use it. However, there was some resistance in the use of schedule from one of the parents and she commented that it was difficult for the child to carry out the activities for the day. Hence, the importance of using schedule was reiterated and other strategies like "First-then" were recommended. Upon follow up, it was conveyed that there was an improvement in the student's attention span and he was able to follow through the lessons better."

From a PM ASD teacher*

"On usual days, some parents do not have the time or energy to spend time doing school work with the child at home, as some children are not very compliant when doing school work with their parents. So parents will leave it to the teachers to do all the teaching and all the school work. Now, because of CB and HBL, the parents are given the opportunity to work with their children at home. The children have also learned to listen to their parents as a result of this. And parents are not alone. When they faced difficulties or do not have the idea of how to deliver the lessons to the children, or when they refused to do work with their parents, they could communicate with their child's form teachers. I will video call the student and his family on a daily basis. This helps the child to listen to their parents even more."

From a PM B programme teacher*



Metta PreSchool @Punggol

Over at Metta PreSchool @Punggol, HBL for our children requires their parents/ caregivers to be more involved and hands on in their learning. The HBL resources including pen-and-paper worksheets, flash cards, online activities provided by teachers are in line with their IEP (Individualized Education Goals) across various domains such as Fine Motor, Gross Motor, Social, and so on. With teaching strategies shared by teachers and therapists remotely as part of parent training during regular check-ins, parents/ caregivers are empowered to work with their children with HBL.

Challenges

Among the challenges faced includes the availability of parents/caregivers who may be working from home and have busy schedules.

Follow-Up

Through various communication platforms such as video conferencing, emails and phone calls, teachers and therapists check in with parents/ caregivers regularly to follow up on the learning progress of their students. These check-ins also include sharing of teaching strategies with parents/caregivers for them to work with their children at home.

Additional Assistance

In view of the unprecedented COVID-19 situation, we have seen an increase of families requesting for monthly food rations to help tie them over this period.

Moving forward, as our preschoolers resume face-to-face intervention in Metta PreSchool in phases from 2 June 2020, to safeguard the health and safety of centre staff and children, Metta PreSchool is required to adhere to safe management measures under "COVID-Safe ABCs".



Because He's Our Dearest Father

Koh Hwee Yik and her siblings would never have gotten a good job and academic tertiary education if not for their father, Mr Gu Keng Khiang who worked hard for many decades to put the four siblings through university. At 83 years old and retired, Mr Gu is now a client of Metta Hospice Care since 2019. Due to his lifestyle as a business person, Mr Gu had to work long hours and entertain his clients. So much so that keeping a healthy lifestyle was almost impossible for him. After many years of neglect for his health, age and ailments finally caught up with Mr Gu when he retired in 2012.

Despite being stricken with dementia 5 years ago, Mr Gu's health worsened when it was discovered through a routine health check-up that he suffered from low haemoglobin levels, which also resulted in heart complications and kidney failure. The doctor's prognosis wasn't bright for Mr Gu, further complicating the situation as he wasn't recommended for surgery or dialysis due to his advanced age. The chance of a recovery for Mr Gu was slim but his children persevered and stuck to the

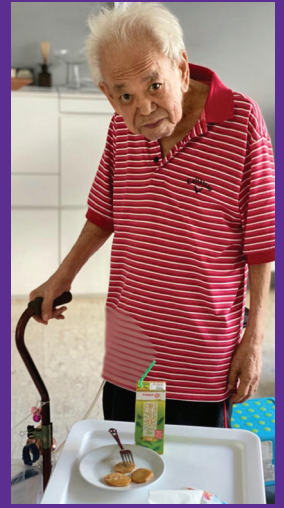


believe that however small the hope may be, they will never give up.

Mr Gu was a doting father and a much well-liked person to those who knows him. A humble man in spite of his status, he never lacked hospitality to others nor reject help when approached. Mr Gu also firmly believes in good virtuousness through which he instilled valuable moral values in his children that set the foundation for them to be well-brought up adults. It is this upbringing that Hwee Yik and her siblings uphold the principle of filial piety to their father and even more so after they lost their mother 9 years ago.

The Bright Side

By a stroke of luck, through rehabilitation, treatment and medication, Mr Gu's condition miraculously took a turn for the better. His cholesterol level and blood pressure stabilised with medications



which also did not placed additional stress on his heart. Hwee Yik and the family are equally thankful to the hospital doctors that treated their father and also staff nurse Bee Suan, from Metta Hospice Care who constantly comes by to check on Mr Gu as part of his regular medical check-up. Coupled with Mr Gu's dementia, his children do not feel safe to let him leave the house on his own. Seeing that her father is now well taken care of, Hwee Yik's concerns are put to rest. As she opined, "We know our father will still have to go one day. But all that we ask for is that he is well taken care of, live comfortably and be free from pain and suffering in his ageing years."

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