

## 100 NURSING HOME RESIDENTS LEARN NEW SKILLS, CREATE ART FOR A FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND EXHIBITION



1. Elizabeth Kee, 80, has been living at Lions Home for the Elders (Bishan) for the last 15 years after her epilepsy required round-the-clock supervision. The well-spoken lady loves singing and actively volunteers as a “translator” at the nursing home as she speaks English, Malay and various Chinese dialects. She enjoys painting too, as she finds it a helpful exercise to keep her fingers steady. She never knew there was more to art than just painting. So she was amazed when the artists showed them that even cardboard could be turned into art. “The artists were so friendly. They gave us very clear instructions that were easy to follow. And I can’t

believe that I created a suitcase out of cardboard! It makes me so proud,” shared Elizabeth.

2. Elizabeth’s works – a cardboard suitcase and a dreamcatcher – are part of the 30 art projects on display at the “SPARKS! Art Wellness Exhibition” at Raffles City Shopping Centre Level 3 Atrium from today to 18 March 2018. These projects are the result of an arts residency pilot organised by AIC as part of its Wellness Programme between October 2017 and January 2018. It involved 10 artists matched to nine nursing homes to create art together. 100 residents, whose average age was 75 years, took part. With their care staff and the artists, their art projects explored painting, sculpture, photography and digital media. The exhibition was opened by President Halimah Yacob this afternoon.

3. The AIC Wellness Programme was started in 2014 to improve the wellbeing and quality of life for Community Care clients by offering them a wider range of recreational activities. By trying out new and different activities, they can also pick up new skills and interests. Community Care staff are trained to carry out activities with their clients using ready-made curriculum. There are five activities available, ranging from art to gardening. To date, close to 500 staff from over 100 eldercare facilities have undergone training to conduct wellness activities for their clients. The number of staff trained has increased about 300%, and the number of sites involved has doubled, since 2014.

4. The arts residency was the AIC Wellness Programme’s latest pilot. By bringing in artists to work with nursing home residents, it aimed to introduce creativity and new ideas to using art in eldercare. It also provided artists interested in working with seniors a hands-on opportunity to build knowledge and gain experience.

5. Findings released last year from the Arts for Ageing Well study by the National Arts Council (NAC) found that the arts have a positive impact on seniors’ wellbeing. Feedback from the residents involved in the arts residency pilot matched the findings. Like Elizabeth, they looked forward to the sessions, made new friends, discovered hidden talents and grew in confidence and pride as their art pieces took

shape. The participants also displayed improved mood and greater engagement with each other and their care staff.

6. “It was heartwarming and encouraging when some of the residents took the initiative to recall the steps of creating the craftwork and started making on their own without prompting. I also witnessed residents interacting with each other. I was very encouraged to see them talking, sometimes ‘arguing’ about how the work should be done,” said Joanne Lio, one of the artists who worked with All Saints Home, Yishun Centre and St. Andrew’s Nursing Home (Buangkok).

7. The artists themselves also grew from this unique experience. “The residency turned my way of thinking ‘upside down’. I had to do away with ‘what worked best’ in term of materials or techniques based on my other community art projects. I had to rethink and decide how best to give seniors instructions they can follow, and what materials to use to ‘match’ their creative level, interest and abilities,” said Von Tjong who worked with residents from Sunshine Welfare Action Mission (SWAMI) Home.

8. “Artists bring in new ideas for unique and exciting art activities. Through this arts residency pilot, my staff were able to discover and learn new skills and approaches to creating and tailoring art activities for different residents. This helps us in engaging our residents in a personal and meaningful way, which is a key aspect of psychosocial care. This complements the clinical care that staff provide on a daily basis,” shared Sr Maria Sim, Executive Director of Villa Francis Home for the Aged.

9. Dr Jason Cheah, AIC’s Chief Executive Officer is heartened by the pilot’s warm response. “It is encouraging that so many partners outside of the ‘traditional’ healthcare sector have come together to support our nursing home residents to age well. This truly puts the “community” in Community Care. Every day is a gift and a chance to learn new things, regardless of your age. Working with our partners such as NAC, I am glad that the AIC Wellness Programme has provided those opportunities to surface hidden talents, spark new interests and create joyful memories for our seniors.”

10. The arts residency is a joint initiative by AIC and NAC.

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**About Agency for Integrated Care**

The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) is set up by the Ministry of Health (MOH) to oversee, coordinate and facilitate all efforts in care integration. Our mission is to achieve best care outcomes for our patients by empowering them with health and social care information and arranging for their care when they are discharged from hospitals. We enable stakeholders to raise the quality of care and also enhance collaboration by working with health and social care providers to increase services to support the ageing population. Our work in the community brings care services and information closer to those in need. For more information, please visit [www.aic.sg](http://www.aic.sg).