

SINGAPORE

Series of free law talks to be held during Law Awareness Week

Forty lawyers will be involved as volunteers or speakers while 150 law students from the National University of Singapore and the Singapore Management University will help to organise the talks.

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SINGAPORE: A series of 30 free and ticketed law talks will be held across all districts in Singapore. They are part of efforts to equip the community with basic legal knowledge and cover topics like family law, end-of-life issues, consumer protection, and protection from harassment.

The topics were chosen based on the needs of each district and the talks are organised by the Law Society and Community Development Councils (CDCs).

The initiative is part of this year's Law Awareness Week, which was launched by Senior Minister of State for Law Indranee Rajah on Wednesday evening (Jul 22). This is the first time events will be held on such a large scale, instead of at one location like previous years.

Forty lawyers will be involved as volunteers or speakers while 150 law students from the National University of Singapore and the Singapore Management University will help to organise the talks.

About 3,000 residents are expected to benefit and the public can sign up through the CDC or Community Centres.

Last year, the CDCs and Law Society signed an MOU to start the Community Legal Pro Bono Services Network to help Singaporeans and Permanent Residents who need free legal advice. Among the top five common legal issues raised were divorce, employment, as well as harassment and assault.

Since September last year, more than 60 law firms and 280 volunteer lawyers have come on board to provide free legal advice at the various community legal clinics. Ms Indranee said more have registered for pro bono services at the law clinics since from an average of 600 applicants per quarter to more than 630 in the first quarter of this year.

She said: "Having access to basic legal advice is, while beneficial, not enough. It is just as important for the man in the street to have a basic awareness of the law as this helps strengthen access to justice.

"Knowing what the law is, how and why it matters to people, and what to do when faced with a legal issue or problem, will give the individual greater confidence in handling legal issues that may arise."

Ms Indranee added that due to overwhelming interest, many follow up events and talks will take place in the CDCs in subsequent weeks.

The series of law talks ends on Sunday.

- CNA/xk