

North West CDC seeking to double volunteer pool

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SINGAPORE - To drive more community programmes in the next five years, the North West Community Development Council (CDC) aims to double its pool of volunteers from 5,000 to 10,000.

These volunteers will focus on areas such as promoting healthy living and green initiatives, said North West District Mayor Teo Ho Pin, who pointed out that the number of community-driven programmes grew from 300 in 2015 to 340 last year.

“What we’re looking for are good-hearted individuals who are willing to help others build a caring community,” he said.

Mr Teo was speaking to reporters at the North West Volunteers’ Awards, held yesterday at the National University of Singapore’s University Cultural Centre.

He added that there was also a need to develop exciting programmes so volunteers would be inspired to contribute for years to come, and not only help out on a short-term basis.

Mdm Sarimah Daud, 52, is one volunteer who has been contributing for close to two decades, and was recognised for her efforts with the North West Healthy Living Champion Award. She has been teaching qigong, a Chinese form of physical exercise, to Bukit Panjang residents after she was certified as an instructor in 2001.

The housewife initially did not know what qigong was until she took part in a class at the urging of another resident whom she met while brisk walking.

She was later encouraged to be an instructor and underwent a one-year course at the Qigong Shi Ba Shi Association.

“I’m not a very patient person, so when I first went through the course, I found it boring because the physical movements in qigong are so slow,” she said with a laugh. “But the teacher advised me to be patient.”

Now, Mdm Sarimah, who teaches qigong to 50 residents in Bukit Panjang twice a week, feels satisfied seeing her fellow residents benefit from it.

Meanwhile, a group of students from the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine was given the WeCare Award for spearheading a programme for elderly residents in the district.

Under the Tri-Generational HomeCare @ North West, which was launched in 2015, university and secondary school students are divided into teams and tasked to oversee the medical and social needs of two to three elderly households.

One of the programme’s organising committee members, fourth-year medical student Carey Lim, said students would visit the residents every fortnight over a six-month period to

conduct simple medical checks, such as taking blood pressure and doing glucose tests. They would also conduct activities such as grocery shopping and cooking.

The programme’s objectives are to reduce the generation gap between youth and the elderly, and to educate students on the multifaceted issues faced by vulnerable seniors, said

Mr Dillon Yeo, 22, another committee member.

A total of 99 North West volunteers and partners received awards at yesterday’s event.



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Mr Teo Ho Pin
NORTH WEST
DISTRICT MAYOR