

Fraser's' hackathon a win-win for all



The Inclusive Spaces hackathon brought together Singapore-based tertiary students and persons with physical disabilities to co-create and co-design solutions to improve Fraser's Property's shopping malls, making them more inclusive for those with disabilities. PHOTO: FRASERS PROPERTY LIMITED

By Vivien Ang
vivang@sph.com.sg

Singapore

FRASERS Property Limited on Saturday announced team ENpower as the winner of its inaugural solution-agnostic hackathon, Inclusive Spaces.

Inclusive Spaces brought together Singapore-based tertiary students and persons with physical disabilities to co-create and co-design solutions to improve Fraser's Property's shopping malls, making them more inclusive for those with disabilities.

The winning team emerged from nine contenders following the judging ceremony, attended by Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Social and Family Development & Ministry of Education and Member of Parliament for Nee Soon GRC, and representatives from the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre.

The winning solution, called Blurring Social Barriers, involved the utilisation of creative and barrier-free furniture set in an open space concept that allows mall patrons with disabilities to pre-book a table digitally and for mall tenants to extend their holding capacity during peak hours in a comfortable and inclusive manner.

The ENpower team comprised Eileen Teoh, Nicole Lum and Florence Wee from the National University of Singapore's School of Design and Environment, together with Alister Ong, ambassador for SPD (formerly known as Society of Physically Disabled). Their solution had the best balance of technology, space optimisation and advocacy. The team won a cash prize of S\$2,000.

Ms Teoh, on behalf of Team ENpower, said: "We want to see more integration between the community and persons with disabilities. We want a safe place for them to interact and socialise with everyone.

Fraser's Property's Inclusive Spaces is a good platform as it encourages persons with disabilities to work together with non-disabled participants to develop and own solutions. After taking part in this hackathon, we have gained more empathy for persons with disabilities and will be advocating to our friends to be more understanding and inclusive."

Team ENpower will next work with Fraser's Property to refine their solution to implement it in a Fraser's Property mall.

Building inclusive communities

The runner-up team, H.E.A.R. I.T., walked away with a cash prize of S\$1,000. Singapore Polytechnic students, Jap Chong Kok Cher, Wong Soon Heng and Kerk Yang, together with Oh Boon Keng, ambassador for the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Singapore and participant of Inclusive Spaces, Agnes Tung, proposed simple yet cheeky and thought-provoking campaign

sticker messages to educate the public on how to be more inclusive in fun and effortless ways.

Christopher Tang, chief executive officer of Fraser's Property Singapore, said: "Inclusive Spaces was developed as part of Fraser's Property's progressive efforts towards building inclusive communities. We wanted to initiate a design conversation around creating spaces that allow for physical, functional and social inclusion, by starting first with people with disabilities. We are proud to have achieved this objective, as evident by the fantastic collaboration and outstanding pitches showcased today, which have surpassed our expectations."

He added: "With vital support from the communities we operate in, we believe we are well on our way to creating more enriching experiences at our malls."

Inclusive Spaces is planned to be an annual innovation challenge that focuses on a different theme and community group each year.