

National University of Singapore (NUS) students from Kent Ridge Hall mingling with migrant workers who were invited to visit the hall for an interaction and bonding session last October. So far, 13 Kent Ridge Hall students have been roped in to plan and deliver a course on financial literacy for migrant workers recovering from Covid-19 at NUS. PHOTO: NUS KENT RIDGE HALL



## Migrant workers recovering at NUS can take 'classes'



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Associate Professor Tan Lai Yong, director for outreach and community engagement at NUS' College of Alice and Peter Tan, is coordinating the curriculum for the workers together with student residents.

Learning how to plan their finances, avoid being scammed and ways to manage mental health – these are “classes” migrant workers recovering from Covid-19 will be taking after they move into the National University of Singapore (NUS) from this week.

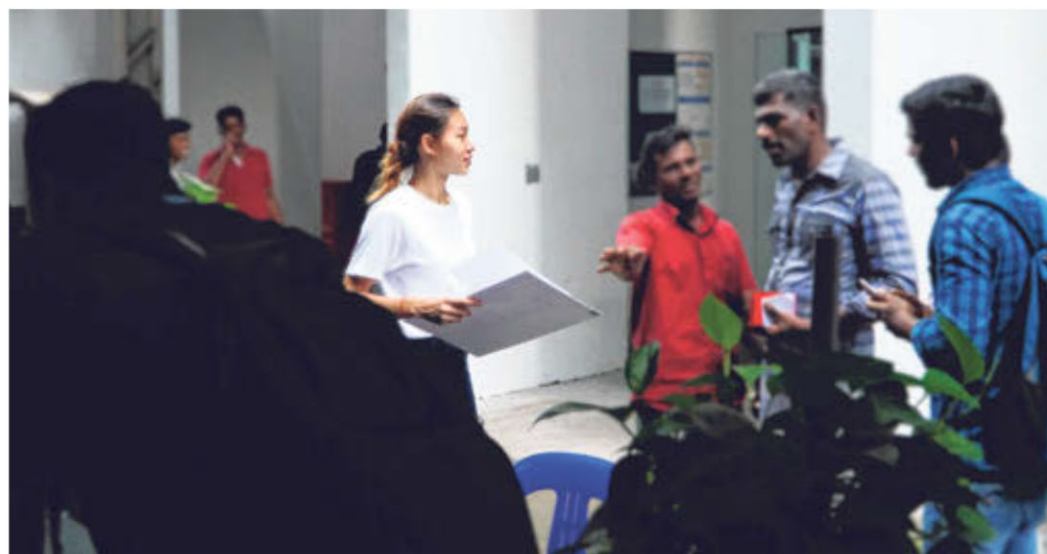
It was confirmed last week that the university's Prince George's Park Residences would be converted into a community recovery facility to house individuals recovering from Covid-19.

Associate Professor Ho Han Kiat, NUS' vice-dean of students, said: “We want to give migrant workers a good experience, and what NUS does best is education. We want to treat them like they are our guest students.”

The workers will be moved to about 2,900 rooms in 28 blocks, staying alone in each room for about a week at a time, from this week. The rooms will be available until July.

The patients can step outside to the common corridor for exercise, and walk to the pantry to collect their meals, but they have to remain in their rooms from 11pm to 5am.

They will have access through an



Ms Grace Cheong, a resident at NUS' College of Alice and Peter Tan, interacting with migrant workers at a dormitory during a Father's Day activity last year. She says the recovering workers can also take part in informal singing, dancing and drawing contests. PHOTO: LINUS LOH

NUS blog to a series of online activities such as physical exercise videos and bite-size courses, which have been planned by students and staff.

Topics such as back injuries and back care, financial literacy, phone scams, and mental health and anxiety are in the pipeline.

Videos and Powerpoint slides will be done in English as well as the workers' native languages.

Staff and students have recorded a welcome video message in six languages – Bengali, Burmese, Mandarin, Tamil, Telugu and Thai – with key information about the residences and what to do during their stay.

NUS also has a pool of 40 to 50 volunteers – mostly international students – to tap for translation work.

Associate Professor Tan Lai Yong, director for outreach and community engagement at NUS' College of Alice and Peter Tan, is coordinating the curriculum for the

workers together with student residents.

“Over the years, as we visit dormitories, worksites, Geylang and Little India as part of our curriculum and learning, the migrant worker community has been very welcoming, answering our questions, helping us discover the world beyond our classrooms,” he said.

“Now that they're here on our campus, we would like to help in their recovery.”

Prof Tan said the workers will be asked to give feedback on other topics they may be interested in.

First-year English language major Grace Cheong, a 19-year-old resident at College of Alice and Peter Tan, said the workers can also take part in informal singing, dancing and drawing contests.

“Besides showcasing their talents, we also want to show Singaporeans that migrant workers have colourful perspectives.”

Dr Ng Kah Loon, master of Kent

Ridge Hall, which is preparing video clips on financial literacy, said: “We hope that in their short stay, they will pick up some useful skills that benefit them in the long run.”

The content is based on an earlier programme students designed for foreign domestic workers last year, as part of the hall's volunteer work.

This includes financial budgeting, tracking expenditure and income, digital banking and remittances.

So far 13 Kent Ridge Hall residents have been roped in to plan and deliver the course, said third-year social work student Melvina Yeo, 22, who is leading the effort.

“We're very interested in working with migrant workers, and very excited about it,” she said, adding that the team will be finding out what other needs they can help to meet.

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