

New initiatives to build caring commuting culture here

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Commuters will soon be able to share inspiring stories of care that they have witnessed or received during their commute, on an online portal that will be launched next month.

The portal, which is one in a series of new initiatives by the Caring SG Commuters Committee, will also allow more effective engagement with commuters on how to shape an inclusive, caring and gracious commuting culture.

This new move was announced at a virtual event held yesterday for the unveiling of an appreciation wall at Kent Ridge MRT station.

The wall, which was created by students from the National University of Singapore Students' Union (Nussu) in partnership with the Caring SG Commuters Committee, will give commuters an opportunity to pen messages of appreciation to front-line workers in the fight against Covid-19.

Yesterday's virtual event was attended by Minister for Transport Ong Ye Kung, public transport workers and staff from the National University Hospital (NUH), as well as students representing Nussu.

Mr Shaun Tan, internal vice-president of Nussu, said: "We wanted to work with the Public Transport Council to see how we can create this caring culture... A public appreciation wall is actually a very special part of Nussu's history as we had a very similar initiative during the severe acute respiratory syndrome (Sars) outbreak."

Ms Grace Ting, a senior staff nurse from NUH, praised the appreciation wall initiative and said: "Public transport is not only for an individual to get from work to home, but also for everyone to create an inclusive society where even the elderly and handicapped are able to travel to their desired destination."

Other new initiatives by the Caring SG Commuters Committee, which was formed in January, include a video campaign that will be launched next month to raise awareness of the challenges faced by commuters with special needs and the fellow commuters who help them.

Through a series of short films based on real life experiences, the committee hopes to build a sense of empathy and showcase everyday heroes. The video series will be rolled out monthly on the online portal as well as on social media.

The public can follow the Caring SG Commuters Facebook and Instagram pages to stay updated on the launch of the online portal and video series.

The committee also continues to work with public transport operators on an ongoing pilot programme, where commuters with invisible medical conditions can obtain a special sticker to alert fellow commuters that they require a seat.

Mr Ong said: "We live in difficult times with Covid-19 and in these times... But I think we can always fall back on the kindness and the help of our fellow Singaporeans, and our family and friends around us. And this has been a source of strength for all of us."

The committee will also organise the annual Caring Commuter Award in recognition and celebration of everyday heroes on public transport. Nominations for the awards are now open and can be submitted online at go.gov.sg/caringcommuter2020

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