

Golden Hourglass

#7-03

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Multi-year project

Project overview

A) Area of Concern

According to projections from the United Nations released in december 2017, almost half of Singapore's population will be at least 65 years old in about 3 decades. With the elderly being an increasingly significant part of our young, growing community, it is crucial to consider their needs. With the modernisation of our community, advances in technology and medicine, accompanied with the shift to greater emphasis on english in schools, these changes are inevitable. However, the elderly are unable to keep up despite their interests. Some of these even concern their physical well-being, such as health, where major illnesses are on the rise within the elderly. This is largely due to the unawareness of these problems the elderly face among youths, which leads to them not teaching the elderly in these areas.

This is backed up by our needs analysis, where a staggering 96% of the 42 elderly we interviewed are not exposed to any form of technology. Furthermore, only, 14% of the elderly are fluent in English, and they were most interested in learning phone functions and basic healthcare out of the topics we offered.

Friends of the Third Age, the organisation we are working with offers a wide array of activities to the elderly that visit Geylang Serai Community Centre. However, as the volunteers are largely made up elderly too, these activities are limited to simple exercises and lessons, something that they are familiar with. This is where our lessons come in, to allow the elderly to step out of their boundaries.

As there is a lack of meaningful activities available for the elderly which leads to them lacking in important skills and knowledge in today's society, we have came up with a three-pronged approach through educating them on usage of technology, basic healthcare and basic english phrases to alleviate this problem.

B) Challenges identified

In order to help the elderly, we worked alongside Friends of the Third Age, which is in charge Geylang Serai Community Centre where people of all ages, specifically the elderly drop by to learn new things during their free time. While there are fun and enriching lessons conducted by the community centre for the elderly, these lessons are limited mostly to entertainment instead of educational purposes, and elderly usually find themselves unable to apply things they learn to good use. Also, the Community Centre has a limited budget for conducting activities, which results in most elderly being less exposed to innovation and perspectives which spur their creativity and imagination. Our lessons serve as a platform to not only entertain but teach the

elderly on what they want to learn through conducting a needs analysis which allows us to cater to their problems and target their interests, therefore piquing curiosity amongst the elderly and enable them to have a more active active lifestyle, improving their mental and physical state through applying what they have learnt from our lessons to real life issues.

C) Underlying Problem

Given that the elderly are not being made aware of or trained in home safety issues as well as certain technological functions, besides being generally unequipped in english language usage, how can we provide the necessary platforms for the elderly to learn, to keep them mentally active and physically healthy in the year 2018 and beyond?

D) Plan of Action

Our plan of action is detailed in the table below which indicates the date of completion of each action. We started off with a needs analysis to determine how we were going to organise our events and lessons to cater to the elderly as well as the chronological order of which we are going to carry out our teaching. Our first aim was to familiarise ourselves with the organisation, the elderly and learn more on how to present our ideas to the elderly in an efficient and understandable manner. Understanding the needs of the elderly also gave us inspiration as to the events we were going to organise.

Date	Summary of activity	Objectives
January-February	- Discussion with Geylang Serai Community Centre on lessons and ideas, conducting of needs analysis	We undergone discussion with the Community Centre to get a better idea on how we should conduct our lessons to get the right message across to the elderly. The needs analysis is meant to learn more about problems faced by the elderly as well as their interests so they would not only learn but also enjoy our lessons
February-May	- Lessons on technology and English Language - Preparing proposal to increase budget	Technology being taught involved usage of social media platforms and different smartphone , including usage of cameras, entertainment through applications, and troubleshooting basic problems. These are the fundamental building blocks of technology and is essential for the elderly to use in their daily lives, especially in the fast paced 21st century we live in. We also needed funds for the

		several fun filled and enriching activities we had for the elderly, thus the proposal.
May- June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lessons on technology and English Language Field Trip to Singapore Discovery Centre - House visits to houses of elderly from the Community Centre 	We incorporated English language vocabulary in all of our lessons, starting off with words, then sentences so it would be easier for them to remember and catch up, which is important as English is becoming increasingly more relevant worldwide and countrywide. Frequent recaps were done to ensure retaining of knowledge. We conducted our field trip to SDC in conjunction with what we taught, showing the wide usage of technology in the 21st century and its capabilities. Exposing them to the plethora of intriguing innovations allows them to relate with the younger generation better. The house visits served as an opportunity for us to understand how we can tailor our lessons to suit their needs, improving the effectiveness.
June-July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concert by our school musicians such as saxophone and violin for the elderly - Advertisements on Social Media Page - Lessons on technology, starting on health and English Language 	In late July, we had a concert for the elderly to show our appreciation for them for their active participation during lessons. The performers are from our school (eg string orchestra). We feel that music knows no bounds and would help develop a closer connection between us and the elderly. Our social media page was meant to teach the elderly on new media platforms and spread awareness to youths today of the pertinent issue we are addressing.

Project outcomes

A) Accomplishments

We managed to reach out to an average of 30 elderly per lesson. During our house visits, we visited 4 households. Our field trip involved 40 elderly, while our concert involved 60 elderly. Our concert involved 2 performers, a saxophone performer and the lead violinist of Hwa Chong Institution. We also have 304 followers on Instagram, some of which including the elderly themselves.

In addition, 78% of the elderly found our lessons useful. We managed to cover all the topics we wanted to teach in phone functions. We also finished lessons on basic first aid and taught most of the home accidents we planned. Regarding our english lessons, we managed to teach the elderly simple words, followed by phrases and even full sentences. We are also in the process of creating a word list for them to take home. The elderly showed much enthusiasm in it, with some even taking down notes.

B) Reflections

This project was an interesting one, which helps to encourage greater interaction between the elderly and the youths of Singapore. We are pleased that we have achieved our targets for the year, having taught the elderly a couple of skills essential in the 21st century, including, technology and health. We also taught them basic English to the point that they are able to communicate decently well in that language. Even though we were shy to speak out at first and found out that some elderly could not understand what we are talking or explaining about, we managed to solve this problem and did our best to make sure that the elderly understood everything taught to them, through recaps as well as small quizzes. However, we can improve on taking into consideration into the constraints faced by our potential volunteers. We are thankful for the beneficiary for helping us in difficult times and helping us to familiarise and speak out more in front of the elderly, as well as all teachers and students who have worked with us. We certainly hope to pass down this project to our juniors so that they can continue the project and bring more elderly the joy of learning by replicating our success.