

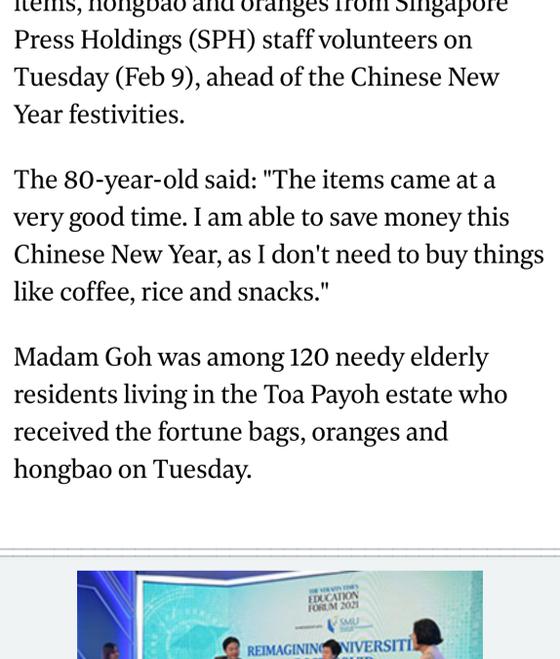
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SPH volunteers give out fortune bags to elderly residents in Toa Payoh ahead of CNY



Madam Dass Rose (right) receiving fortune bags and oranges from SPH volunteer Tan Poh Ling and Mr Damien Ow from the SVC and Care Corner Senior Activity Centre, on Feb 9, 2021. ST PHOTO: YONG LI XUAN

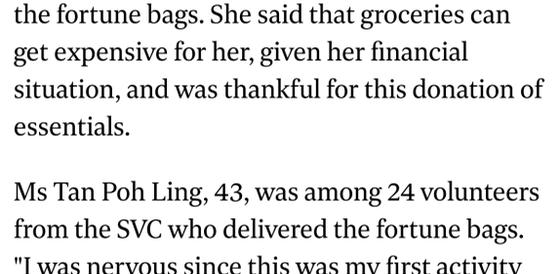
Luqmanul Hakim Ismail

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SINGAPORE - Madam Goh Choo Lee, a foster mother of three teenagers, received essential items, hongbao and oranges from Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) staff volunteers on Tuesday (Feb 9), ahead of the Chinese New Year festivities.

The 80-year-old said: "The items came at a very good time. I am able to save money this Chinese New Year, as I don't need to buy things like coffee, rice and snacks."

Madam Goh was among 120 needy elderly residents living in the Toa Payoh estate who received the fortune bags, oranges and hongbao on Tuesday.



The bags included items like rice, vermicelli, instant coffee, toiletries, masks and hand sanitisers donated by sponsors and staff of SPH.

This donation drive to benefit the elderly ahead of the festive season is part of "SPH Cares with Bags of Love" - an annual event organised by the Staff Volunteers Club (SVC). The SVC partnered with Care Corner Senior Activity Centre in Toa Payoh this year.

It marks the third consecutive year that SPH has partnered with Care Corner Singapore, a non-profit organisation established in 1981, which provides social services to families in need, youths at risk, lonely seniors, and children from low-income families or with special needs.

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Madam Dass Rose, 74, a part-time marketing officer who lives alone, was also a recipient of the fortune bags. She said that groceries can get expensive for her, given her financial situation, and was thankful for this donation of essentials.

Ms Tan Poh Ling, 43, was among 24 volunteers from the SVC who delivered the fortune bags. "I was nervous since this was my first activity with the club. But when I heard one of the elderly say how thankful she was to receive the bags from us, I felt glad and enlightened," she said.

The club started the annual initiative in 2016 with the goal of spreading joy and festive cheer to elderly people facing adversity. Before the circuit breaker last year, the volunteers helped organise a mini Chinese New Year celebration at the Care Corner Centre in Woodlands.

This year, the SVC planned to deliver the fortune bags to the elderly, as it was the safest option amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ms Chin Soo Fang, head of corporate communications and corporate social responsibility at SPH, said: "2020 was a challenging year for everyone. With the Chinese New Year approaching, we want to spread some festive cheer and uplift the spirits of our elderly friends in Toa Payoh. We hope this event will put a smile on their faces."

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