

SPH shares festive cheer with elderly



Mr Teo Kiong Chiang (left), 81, a senior at Care Corner Senior Activity Centre, gives the thumbs up as the God of Fortune distributes oranges to the elderly. The man dressed as the God of Fortune is 48-year-old Andrew Lum, SPH's assistant manager of corporate communications and corporate social responsibility, who was born in 1972, the Year of the Rat. ST PHOTO: ONG WEE JIN

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Adeline Leong

Music entertainment, a lucky draw and lo hei - the tossing of yusheng, or raw fish salad, traditionally done during Chinese New Year - were part of an early Chinese New Year celebration for more than 60 senior citizens at Care Corner Senior Activity Centre in Woodlands yesterday.

The event, organised by 18 members of the Singapore Press Holdings' SPH Staff Volunteers Club, was part of yearly efforts to spread festive cheer to the community.

Performances by two contestants of SPH's Got Talent 2019, a staff competition, had the seniors enthusiastically crooning along. Mr Hu Tian Pei, 31, assistant music director for Mandarin radio station UFM100.3, performed two Mandopop songs. "I am happy that the elderly sang along," he said, adding that he could "feel their happiness".

Another highlight was a visit by the "God of Fortune", who distributed mandarin oranges to the seniors. Mr Andrew Lum, SPH's assistant manager of corporate communications and corporate social responsibility, said he volunteered for the role as he was born in 1972, which was the Year of the Rat. "I hope that knowing someone born in the year of the Rat is dressed as the God of Fortune to usher in the Year of the Rat with them puts a smile on their faces," said the 48-year-old.

While the costume was stuffy and he could not see anything for the most part, he said bringing laughter to the elderly and his colleagues made the experience a fun one.

The seniors in turn treated the volunteers to a healthy yusheng. Their version had extra vegetables and vegetarian abalone, and included less oily and fried ingredients. They also tucked into a bento lunch and participated in memory games and a lucky draw.

As part of this annual SPH Cares with Bags of Love event, 120 "fortune bags" were also given out to needy seniors at the centre and at their homes. Each bag contained daily essential items such as brown rice, medicated plasters and oil, a toothbrush and toothpaste, Milo and mandarin oranges.

The SPH staff volunteers first celebrated Chinese New Year with members of this centre last year.

To Ms Chin Soo Fang, SPH's head of corporate communications and corporate social responsibility, this is meaningful as the volunteers get to see familiar faces and deepen their engagement with the elderly.

ELDERLY NOT NEGLECTED

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Care Corner Singapore is a non-profit organisation with 33 service centres islandwide helping, among others, low-income families, youth at risk, lonely seniors and special-needs children.