

Contributing to the Community

Throughout the year, NUS held firmly to our tradition of supporting each other, and together, we have extended our reach to serve and contribute to Singapore and the wider society.

To help students who are experiencing financial difficulties during this period, NUS set up an **NUS Students Solidarity Fund** in April 2020. I had made an appeal to the NUS community to donate to this Fund. I am grateful for the generosity of alumni, staff and students, who have contributed more than \$1.6 million to the Fund, which has provided immediate support and help to 3,100 students. The NUS Students' Union (NUSSU) has also provided support through the **NUSSU Unity Relief Fund**, which was set up in June 2020 with an initial sum of \$220,000 from NUSSU's financial reserves and supplemented by student donations. The Fund offered a one-time payment of \$250 to students, whose families have suffered substantial income loss due to COVID-19, but did not receive a Solidarity Grant.

NUS remains committed to ensuring that our education remains affordable to our students. Tuition fees have been held steady, even as the University has had to take on increases in operating costs, such as the implementation of safe management measures, and increased financial aid.

NUS is also mindful that our students graduating in 2020 face a more challenging time in securing a job as a result of the global economic uncertainties. We took swift steps to launch the **Resilience and Growth Initiative** specially for our graduating students. Under this initiative, the University offered 1,000 full-time job positions and traineeships across our faculties and research institutes as well as administrative units. With the traineeships, the employment rate for the Class of 2020 is comparable to that of previous years.

For students who wish to upskill and make themselves more competitive in their job search, NUS extended four free continuing education and training modules to all fresh graduates, and these are stackable towards Graduate or Professional Certificates. Additionally, NUS committed \$6 million to support 115 meaningful projects led by graduating students, as part of NUS' 115th anniversary. Under the **R&G Innovation Challenge**, each project selected receives funding of up to \$50,000 for a period of six months.

Beyond meeting internal needs, the NUS community carried out many acts of service, both planned and spontaneous, to the wider community. Amongst others, NUS supported Singapore's plans to provide care to COVID-19 patients, alongside hospitals and community care facilities, by **converting 28 blocks at Prince George's Park Residences (PGPR) to a Community Recovery Facility** from May to July 2020. NUS students and staff put in considerable efforts to give the guests a warm reception and make them feel comfortable. Some of the projects included a welcome video in various languages, a blog in seven

languages on information about PGPR, and a list of programmes, which were both entertaining and informative.



Prince George's Park Residences Community Recovery Facility

Our international students also joined hands with local students in Singapore's fight against COVID-19. In May, 42 mainly international students and two staff volunteered as translators to support medical practitioners and community partners. Students joined Telegram groups categorised by languages, where they received requests for text, audio or real-time translations. The team translated over 135 documents and worked with 10 partners to empower and bring hope to migrant workers as part of the COVID-19 outbreak response.

Apart from COVID-19 patients, as part of a module called "*Communicating Social Issues in Singapore*" offered by the Chua Thian Poh Community Leadership Centre (CTPCLC), a team of NUS students created the **4Hearts** project to alleviate social isolation faced by elderly residents at nursing homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 4Hearts team engaged senior citizens via online social activities as face-to-face volunteering could not take place during the pandemic.

NUS' traditional community service activities continued strong in 2020. In its 10th edition, the **NUS Bizad Charity Run** organised by the NUS Business School Alumni Association (NUSBSA), was held on 11 January 2020. The event featured more than 1,300 participants, and it raised a record sum of over \$400,000 for TOUCH Community Services as well as financially needy NUS Business students through the NUSBSA Bursary Fund, NUS Business Student Support Fund, Lim Chin Memorial Fund, and the NUS Malaysian Community Bursary Fund. To date, the NUS Bizad Charity Run has raised over \$1.7 million in support of a wide range of causes.

For the first time since it was launched in the late 1950s, NUSSU's annual **Rag and Flag** day took place online, but this did not dampen the decades-long NUS tradition of giving back to the community. Themed "*Bring Me Along*", this year's annual charity project sought to recognise the marginalised segments of society, such as people with disabilities, the elderly, vulnerable women and foreign domestic workers, and to celebrate their contributions to nation and community building. Flag Day took place through a digital donation platform from June 2020, while Rag performances were pre-recorded and broadcast online on 8 August

2020. The students' efforts paid off and the event raised nearly \$135,000, benefitting 22 charity programmes.



NUS Rag and Flag 2020

In spite of the restrictive circumstances, more than 200 in the NUS family, including those based overseas, stepped up to serve the community in support of the **NUS Day of Service** (DOS). In its fifth year, DOS 2020 featured 16 community projects from assisting the home-bound elderly to cleaning up the environment, championing the arts to befriending migrant workers; the projects had an impact on over 3,000 beneficiaries.



NUS Day of Service 2020 in Singapore, and in overseas alumni chapters

NUS students have also been helping and engaging the migrant worker community. When the Ministry of Health reached out to the National University Health System (NUHS) for volunteers to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, nursing students from the NUS Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies stepped up to join its serology team to undertake testing of migrant workers at dormitories with higher levels of infection. In addition, **Tap4You** was launched by an NUS Residential College 4 interest group, RC4lunteers. Students interacted with migrant workers through meal-sharing; participating RC4 residents also conducted a 'tap-out' meal credit from their accounts for migrant workers to eat at the College's Dining Hall. Another initiative involved the College of Alice and Peter Tan students and alumni, who co-volunteered with migrant workers to carry out a neighbourhood anti-dengue clean-up in August, together with Tampines Town Council and SG Accident Help Centre.



NUS Nursing student volunteers conducting Covid-19 serology tests at migrant worker dormitories