

Volunteers go the extra mile to tutor needy children

GRACIA YAP

Helping children from lower-income families in Chai Chee is a family affair for the Chew siblings.

Since 2019, Miss Samantha Chew, 21, and her sister, Miss Nicole Chew, 19, spend alternate Wednesdays giving tuition to secondary school students as volunteers of KidzCare@Kembangan-Chai Chee, an initiative under the Kembangan Chai Chee Youth Network.

Miss Samantha, a law student at the National University of Singapore, teaches Secondary Two English while Miss Nicole, a graduate from Victoria Junior College, teaches Secondary One mathematics. Lessons are conducted remotely over Zoom or physically at ESR Business Park in Chai Chee.

Started in 2013, KidzCare is a mentorship programme that offers free tuition to students from Primary 5 to lower-secondary. It also has a homework club where students can get help with their schoolwork.

Miss Samantha said: "I enjoy seeing the children's growth and how they become more confident, not just in academics but how they carry themselves."

Prior to the pandemic, the sisters would also walk the children home after lessons.

Their parents are among the 100 volunteers too, with their mother as the main contact person for the students' parents while their father would help set up the visualiser for lessons.

Mr Reuben Wee, 24, joined KidzCare last September as a homework club volunteer after a friend introduced him to the programme.

MEANINGFUL IMPACT

"We play badminton sometimes after lessons and even have a WhatsApp chat (group) to discuss when to play (video game) Mobile Legends together," said the Singapore Management University accountancy student.

"Setting aside two hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays is meaningful and I've learnt from volunteering in this programme that you can make an impact just by being there for the children, to listen and identify ways to support them.

"It means a lot when they open up to you, and share their future aspirations."

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(From left) Miss Samantha Chew, Ms Nicole Chew and Mr Reuben Wee are volunteers of KidzCare@Kembangan-Chai Chee, an initiative under the Kembangan Chai Chee Youth Network. TNP PHOTO: **KHALID BABA**