

Kim Eng founder's family funds projects to improve well-being of Queenstown residents

Jordan Loo

A monetary gift from the family of the late Mrs Gloria Lee Woo, founder of stock brokerage Kim Eng Holdings, will be channelled to several projects to improve the mental and social well-being of Queenstown residents.

The three projects, which are parked under Health District @ Queenstown, a pilot programme to help residents lead healthier and more productive lives, were announced by the National University of Singapore (NUS) on June 12.

The projects, which will be led by NUS researchers, are an initiative to encourage intergenerational bonding, a programme to understand the challenges of Malay female caregivers, and a study on meaningful retirement.

The children of the late Kim Eng founder – Mr Douglas Ooi, Mr Ronald Ooi and Ms Carole Ooi – are not disclosing the value of the donation. The gift will fund research initiatives under these projects.

Mr Douglas Ooi said: "Our mother was deeply committed to the well-being of others. In her memory, we chose to support the impactful initiatives at the Health District @ Queenstown. This gift is our way of giving back to Singapore and ensuring her legacy lives on and continues to benefit future generations."

The first project aims to improve mental, physical and social health at all life stages through intergenerational bonding. The study will start in July 2024 and be completed by June 2025.

GIVING BACK

Our mother was deeply committed to the well-being of others. In her memory, we chose to support the impactful initiatives at the Health District @ Queenstown. This gift is our way of giving back to Singapore and ensuring her legacy lives on and continues to benefit future generations.



MR DOUGLAS OOI, son of the late Mrs Gloria Lee Woo, who founded stock brokerage Kim Eng Holdings.

It is a 12-week programme where 30 young people (aged 10 to in their 20s), 30 people older than 65 and 30 adults who are caring for both their children and parents will be divided into groups to take part in activities such as storytelling, park exercises and gardening.

Dr Cyrus Ho, 41, an assistant professor from the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and senior consultant at NUH, who is overseeing the project, said that everyone – from the young and elderly to the sandwiched generation of adults – faces mental health challenges.

He said: "We aim to use an intergenerational programme to pro-

mote wellness across various age groups by facilitating interaction and learning among people of different ages, thereby fostering empathy and understanding."

The second project targets Malay women caregivers from low-income families. The study will start in June 2024 and end by December 2025.

Forty Malay female caregivers between 40 and 60 years old will be interviewed and observed in their household environment and on how they use health, support and family services. The study aims to understand why they do not fully use such services.

Associate Professor Noor Aisha

Abdul Rahman, 60, from the NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, said previous studies on caregivers and their challenges have not focused on the Malay community.

She added: "Studies consistently reveal that this group tends to suffer burnout and neglect their health and well-being."

The study is expected to equip caregivers with better health knowledge to improve the quality of care they provide to those they care for, as well as help them better manage their own lifestyles.

The third project, which starts in July 2024 and lasts 12 weeks, focuses on retirees, with the aim of en-

couraging healthy and fulfilling ageing.

Dr Shan Xiaoyue, 34, an assistant professor from the NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, who is overseeing the project, said that research has shown that retirement affects mental and physical health. The separation from a stable social network built during the retiree's working life may lead to loneliness, depression and more stress from less income.

Hence, the initiative will study the impact of reintroducing part-time work to retirees, and the ideal workloads and tasks for this group of people.

A total of 250 participants aged

50 and older who are unemployed or retired will be provided with part-time work of different intensities, while their well-being based on factors like cognition, sleep quality, happiness levels and mental health will be monitored through regular surveys.

The Queenstown estate has one of the oldest populations in Singapore, with nearly one in four residents aged 65 or older.

The Health District @ Queenstown programme is a collaboration by the Housing Board, the National University Health System and NUS.

ljordan@sph.com.sg



(From left) Dr Cyrus Ho, Associate Professor Noor Aisha Abdul Rahman and Dr Shan Xiaoyue with tokens of appreciation for the donors, whose gift will fund their research. The trio are involved in projects to improve the mental and social well-being of Queenstown residents. PHOTO: NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE