

Annual

Report 2020

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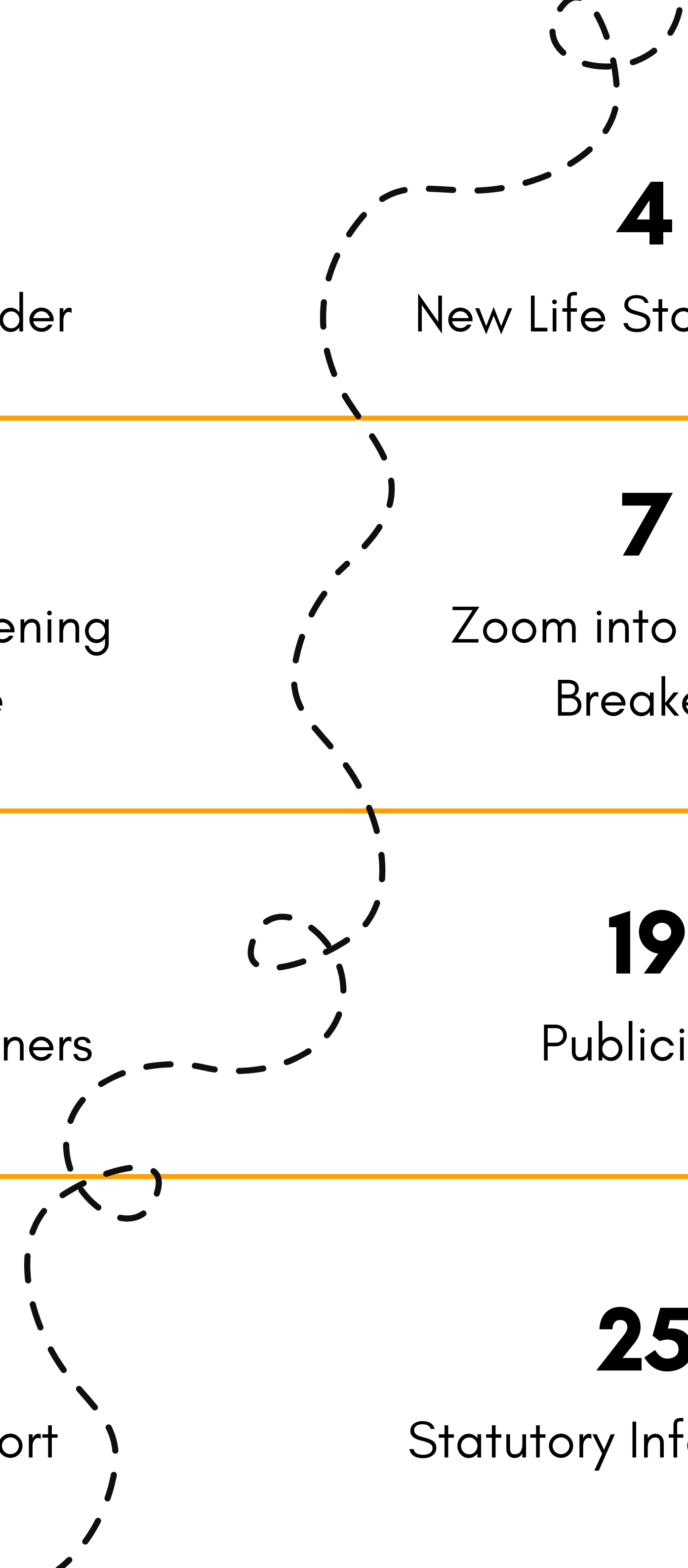
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# Dear Stakeholder,

2020 came and went – where did all that time go? This has been a whirlwind year and the world has changed so much since. We have also had so many changes in New Life Stories the past year! Our family has grown exponentially – from a small team of 5, pre COVID-19, to a 17-strong team. With a growing number of families, from 80 to 160, we further enhanced our services to provide a more holistic suite of programmes by establishing a new case management department and a dedicated family care and therapy team.

We further supported our **Family Strengthening Programme** by introducing a four-pronged approach to help our families in all facets of their lives, equipping them with the necessary resources and tools to communicate better with their families and break the cycle of incarceration. Our programmes – incare, case management, befriending and family care & therapy – supports all our incarcerated parents as soon as they enrol in our incare prison programme.

We have also expanded our incare programme to the men's prison! Since COVID-19 struck, all the incare programmes have had to be put on hold. However, we

continued to serve all 60 families from our incare programme through case management, family care & therapy and befriending.

There were lots of disruptions to our work, especially in the day-to-day lives of our families. With the unwavering support from all our partners and generous donors, we were able to stay ahead of the curve. All our children and families were promptly equipped with computers and stable internet connection before the circuit breaker hit! With their support, our children could attend their home-based learning as well as our online befriending and counselling sessions! Our families were very humbled and grateful for the small acts of kindness shown towards them during this time.

As most of our caregivers are elderly, we felt that they needed additional resources especially during the circuit breaker. We put all our projects on hold to focus on ensuring that all our children and their elderly caregivers received our very first New Life Stories COVID-19 care package, where we provided them with hand sanitisers, masks, disinfectant and some activities to keep them occupied while staying home, such as a DIY coin bank!

Our entire office worked together to rally the community and gathered volunteers from all walks of life to help pack and deliver the care packages within 2 weeks. One of our children from the befriending programme was so touched when he received our care package that he thought it was a gift from us to him, because it arrived during his birthday week!

This year, we raised the most during the Giving Week than we ever did! With the help of our corporate partners, UOB and COMO, we raised over **\$99,840** in December alone! We not only were able to provide our families with financial aid, but we also shared books, toys, masks and even activity packs to help tide our families over this period.

This COVID-19 situation has shown a side of humanity of Singapore that we do not often see. As an organisation, we are very heartened to witness first-hand the generosity and kampung spirit that Singaporeans have shown to our families during this period.

Many of our donors, stakeholders, partners and especially our volunteers answered our call for help willingly and with enthusiasm - we are very touched to have witnessed it this year.

I believe that we are all in this together, and so we

need to work hand in hand to overcome this situation as Singaporeans.

We are at this pivotal moment where a society transformation is happening. I am more than hopeful about where Singapore is heading as a result of this challenging time. I can see the transformation happening at ground level of the Singapore soul. I believe we are at the tipping point of Singaporeans as a society where we are changing our DNA to become more socially responsible and caring towards the people around us.

This has been an unprecedented and challenging time for all of us. But I believe that together as a community, we can all come together to break the cycle for these families and prevent intergenerational incarceration.

**Saleemah Ismail**  
Executive Director  
New Life Stories





**We hope to empower all  
our families to create  
new life stories and chart  
a healthier path for their  
future**



# New Life Stories 2.0

2020 brought a lot of change to New Life Stories. From a small team of five in 2019, we grew to 17 by the end of 2020!



With a diverse team, we are now able to provide targeted services and programmes to support our families holistically.



## Corporate Communications

We can now turn our focus to provide more brand awareness through earned and paid publicity.

## Family Care & Therapy

With a new department, we can now explore family play to strengthen communication at home.

## Case Management

Our case management team educates the family on the necessary tools to be more independent.

## Volunteer Relations

With a bigger volunteer relations team, we are able to provide more support for all our Learning Friends.

# Inspiring young minds, Creating new life stories

Onward to meet our mission and vision.

There is an urgency to support families of the incarcerated to break intergenerational cycles of offending. We believe that prevention and early intervention is critical. Through our Family Strengthening Programme, we can disrupt offending cycles that cut across generations and minimise the perpetuation of negative outcomes across generations.

We are a strong advocate and provider of upstream intervention, to prevent intergenerational incarceration and achieve better outcomes for our children. The child is the centre of everything we do. Our four-pronged approach provides a holistic support system to break the cycle of intergenerational incarceration by providing upstream intervention to support the child first. Our mission and vision is to:



Prevent intergenerational incarceration



Improve the quality of life and community inclusion for the families



Reduce re-offending

# Family Strengthening Programme



## Incare programme

A 20 week in-prison programme, "Dear Papa & Dear Mama" aims to impart parenting skills and works to strengthen the parent-child relationship experientially beyond the prison walls.

Our trainers teach these parents to communicate more effectively with their children and encourage them to write and record stories to their children.



## Case management

Case workers work with the incarcerated and their families, empowering them to work through their challenges and cope more effectively in their daily lives through regular home visits and by working with other social service agencies.



## Family care & therapy

Our therapists help to strengthen the bond between parents and their families by providing them with the tools to build on their relationships through introducing family play.

They also assess the needs of the children by building on their strengths and encourage socio-emotional learning through play.



## Befriending

All the children in our programme are introduced to 'Learning Friends' who will befriend them for at least 6 months.

These Learning Friends will then visit the children's homes every week for storytelling and to impart pro-social skills.



# Zoom into Circuit Breaker

The pandemic changed the way we work. We had to adapt very quickly to ensure that all our families are properly equipped and receive ample support to tide them over the stressful Circuit Breaker period.

The most urgent aspect was to check in with all our families on their emotional and mental wellbeing, and ensure that they do not feel lost amidst the changing COVID-19 guidelines. Thereafter, we looked into how we can provide our families with resources and tools to tide them through this period.

We reassured all our families that they would not be left stranded and without support by ensuring the following:



Computer donations for our families in preparation for Circuit Breaker



Providing every family with COVID-19 care packages filled with essential items



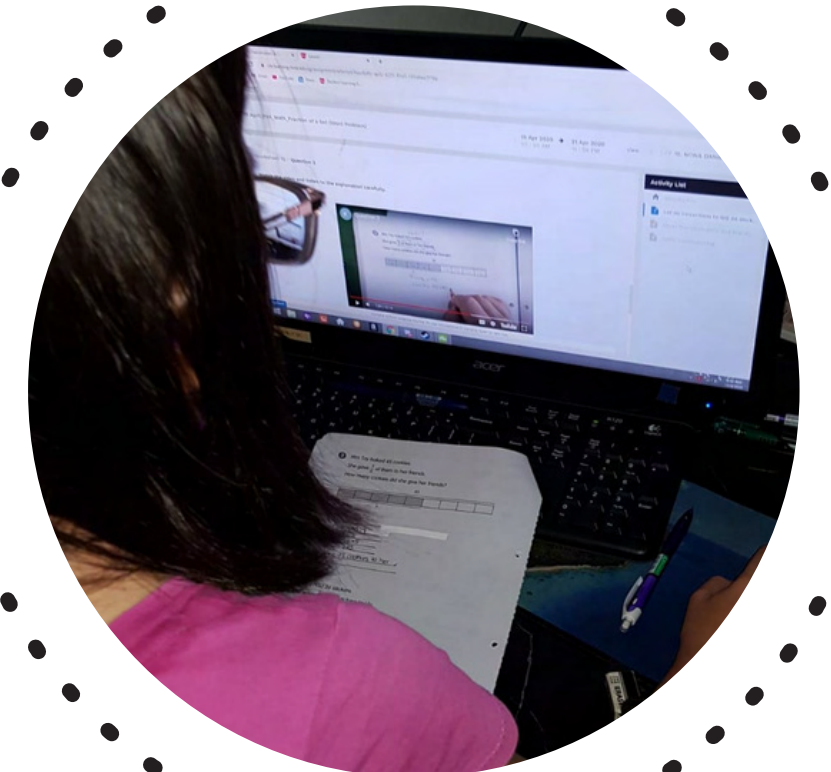
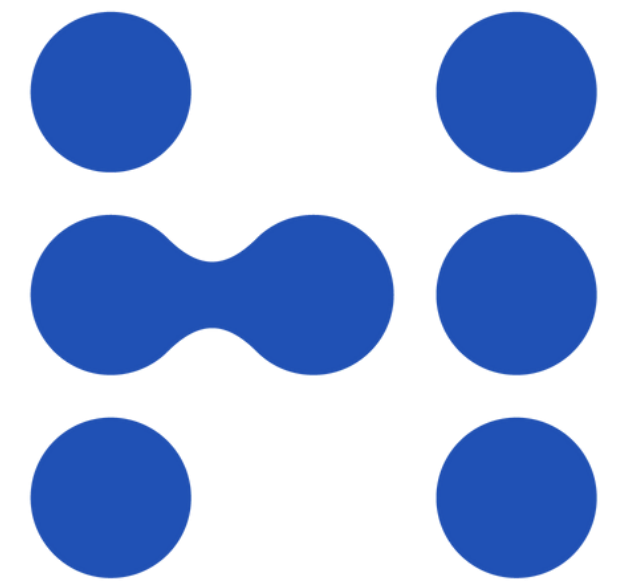
Online befriending and counselling sessions

# Computer Donations

We thought ahead of the curve.

On 3 April, we made a public call via social media, word of mouth and eDMs requesting for computer donations. By 15 April, thanks to the generous donation from *Handshakes* and *The Engineering Good*, we successfully delivered 12 computers to 18 of our families, right before Circuit Breaker was implemented!

We also worked with IMDA to ensure that all our families had proper internet connectivity so that all our children could take part in their home-based learning and online befriending programme as well as our counselling sessions, with no disruptions.



\*Images show our children using their donated computer for their home-based learning.

# #SGUnited

## New Life Stories Campaigns

Our families always come first.

When stories about mass hoarding of hygiene products circulated the news, we sprung into action to help provide our families with their very own COVID-19 care package to protect themselves against the pandemic. We managed to raise over **\$9,000** in 1 month and worked quickly to secure enough hand sanitisers, masks, vitamin C pastilles and disinfectant for 150 of our families!

The care package included a DIY tin can activity, alternative greeting cards and even a set of stickers for the children to keep themselves occupied while staying at home. 23 volunteers answered our call for help to pack and organise the care packs for all 84 households including those who have graduated from our programme. 3 other volunteers were on standby to help deliver all the care packages. Within 2 days, all the care packages were delivered to the families by 6 March.

We learnt that some of our families suffered a drastic loss of income since the start of the year and were worried about the impact on their livelihood with the added stress of the Circuit Breaker.

We sprang into action and in April collected an additional **\$4,500** to provide financial assistance to 50 of our low income families via cash donations to tide them over this period.

\*Images show our volunteers working on the care packages in our office.



# Online Befriending & Counselling

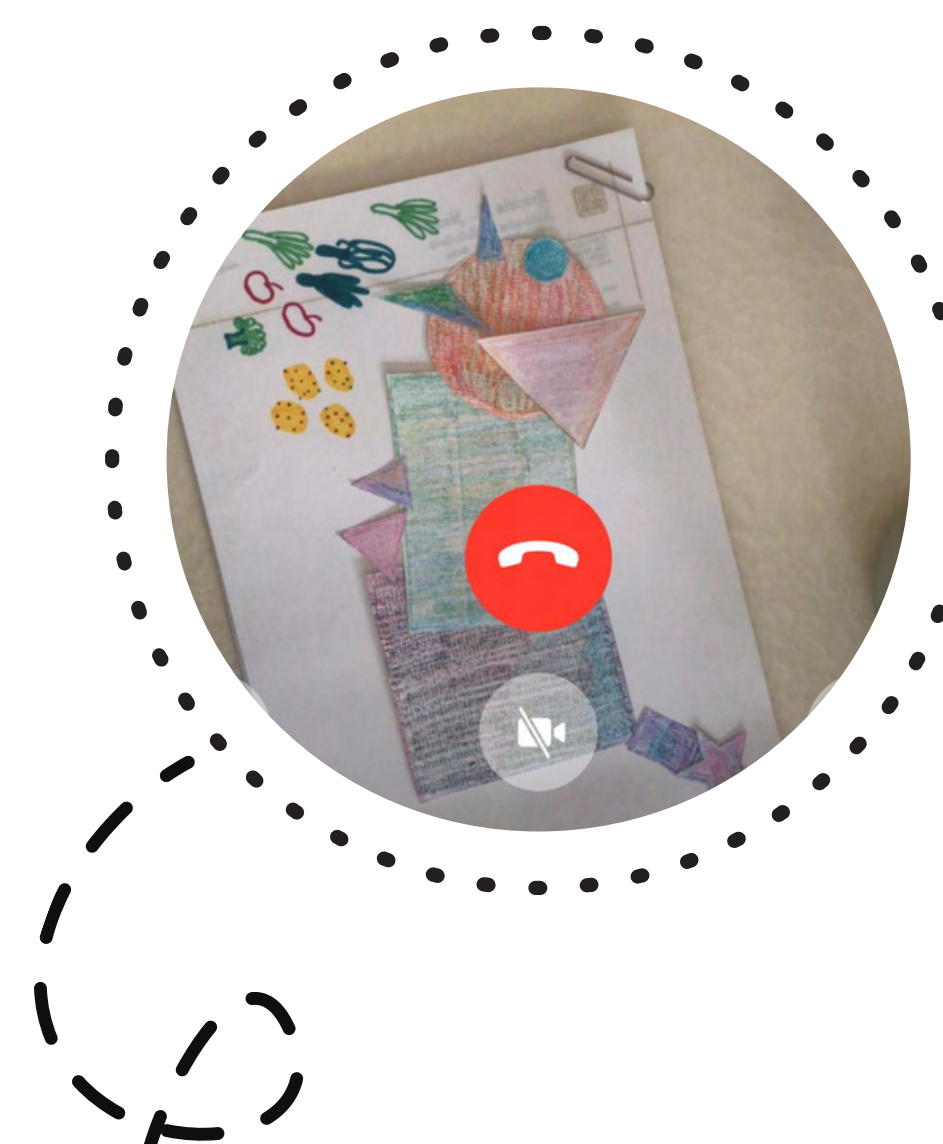
From face to face to computer screens.

With circuit breaker restricting movement and everyone staying at home, we had to suspend all our befriending sessions. However, our children still needed support from our volunteers, and we could not deprive them of that much-needed interaction. We cannot thank our volunteers enough for being so enthusiastic in coming up with creative ways to read and engage with our children via video conference calls! Many of our volunteers went a step further by creatively engaging and interacting with the children via Zoom, Google Hangouts and WhatsApp.

We also sent blank thank you cards to our volunteers for them to write messages to their Early Readers. Our children were so touched that their Learning Friends continued to reach out to them even while

separated by distance.

In addition, our counsellors also engaged with our families through video conference to check in on them and provided support to those who were feeling stressed from having to stay home 24/7 during Circuit Breaker. One of our caregivers shared that he felt anxious during this period as he was working in the dormitories. We provided his family with ample support and motivation so that they would not feel too overwhelmed by the situation.



\*Images show our Learning Friends engaging with their Early Readers via video conference.

# Online Befriending & Counselling



**450**

online counselling  
sessions

**50**

families contacted for  
online counselling



**775**

online befriending  
sessions

**79**

children who attended  
the online befriending  
sessions

# Virtual Events

We had planned so many events and learning journeys for our children, but because of the constant changing COVID-19 guidelines, everything had to be moved online.

Many of our families were looking forward to attending the learning journeys as this gave them opportunities to mingle with each other as well as learn from outside the classroom.

We had to move everything to video conference so that everyone could attend the events while staying at home.

We were lucky to have been invited by Istana for the first virtual open house, and subsequently to have Minister Shanmugam be the guest-of-honor for our very first virtual Children's Day Carnival!



Virtual Tour at Istana with Madam President for Hari Raya



Children's Day Virtual Carnival

# Istana Hari Raya Virtual Open Visit

Tour of the Istana grounds from home.

New Life Stories was honoured to be invited by Istana and Madam President Halimah Yacob as one of the social service agencies to tour the Istana grounds virtually for Hari Raya! This is the first tour of its kind for Istana, hosted by Madam President.

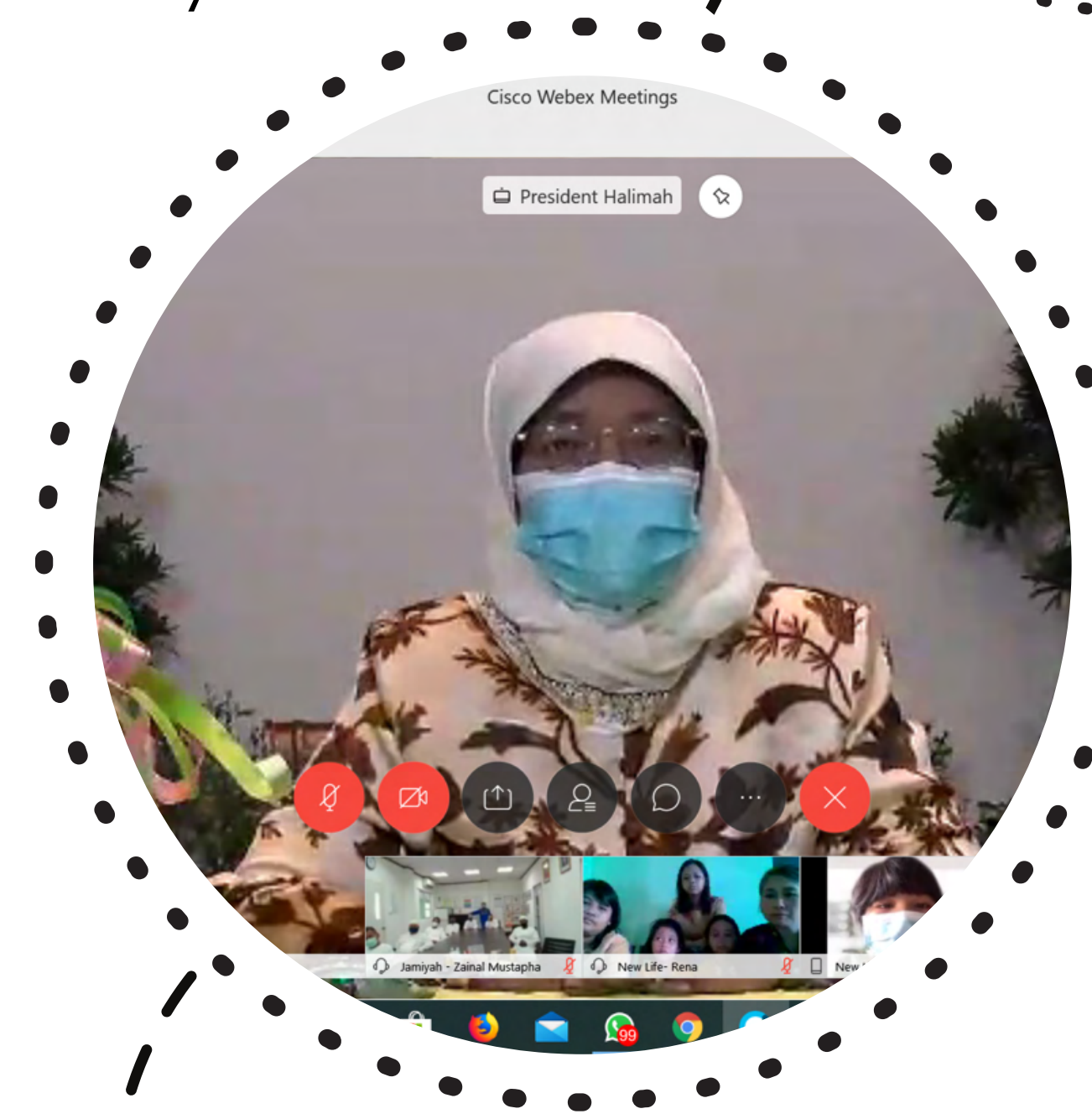
We selected 20 of our families to be part of this event. All of the children were so excited and made sure to dress themselves up in their festive clothes for the tour. The children were so engaged with the session and, especially enjoyed the changing of guards ceremony. All the invited guests were also treated to a virtual tour of the main building, and were brought around the State Room, Reception Room, and Banquet Hall.

The guests were then treated to a screening

of Istana's 150 Lightshow which touched on how Istana has been an integral part of the Singapore story.

Thereafter, the floor was open to all guests where they could ask Madam President questions about everything and anything under the sun!

It was a very meaningful event, and our families enjoyed themselves very much!



\*Images show screengrabs from the Virtual Open Visit at Istana.

# Children's Day Virtual Carnival

## Celebrating Children's Day with Minister Shanmugam

On 3 October 2020, we were honoured to have Mr K Shanmugam, Minister for Home Affairs to be the guest-of-honour for our very first Children's Day Virtual Carnival.

Minister Shanmugam graciously read the story, *Power of Faith*, written by our very own mother, June, to 39 of our Early Readers. The children listened intently and were very enthused during the storytelling! Minister Shanmugam also spoke to June and asked her about her inspiration behind the story.

After the storytelling session, we opened the floor for our children to ask Minister Shanmugam questions that they would like him to answer. Minister answered many questions from the floor, including those on the names of his dogs and if he could share tips on how to be successful in future!

After the Q&A session, our partners Busy Bees and Preschool Market took over to engage our children in some fun hands-on activities! Preschool Market engaged a trainer to teach our children how to make their very own slime with a DIY slime-making kit!

Marlina Sarkan, Head, Corporate Social Responsibility from Busy Bees closed the carnival with a virtual Zumba session with the children. The children had so much fun, and were all laughing in stitches by the end of the programme.



\*Images show  
screengrabs from  
the Virtual Carnival.



# Corporate Partners

Thank you to all our corporate partners for your continuous support!

Our corporate partners have been very supportive and worked closely with us to run both fundraising campaigns and provide us with in-kind donations for our families!

In December, COMO partnered us once again for a Christmas campaign where their customers can donate to New Life Stories via gift wrapping services or as they make payment at the cashier. In a month, COMO managed to raise **\$30,000** which we will be using to fund our pilot Family Play Box project!

Aside from COMO, we also worked with Ming Tan where she donated the proceeds of her book, *Near and Far* for our programmes as well as with UOB for their annual Gift for Good Christmas campaign.



In-kind donations from other non-profit agencies



Close The Gap with Ming Tan's *Near and Far*



UOB Gift for Good

# In-Kind Donations



## Tamil Seithi Mediacorp

Tamil Seithi Mediacorp donated bags of goodies and snacks to 5 of our Hindu families in time for the Deepavali festivities.

The bag included traditional snacks, fairy lights and even a mini cookbook!



## ContributeSG

In October, ContributeSG generously donated 250 beautifully printed masks, which we distributed to all our families and volunteers!



## Hopefull

We started working with Hopefull in June to provide our children with curated *Tinker* kits to keep children entertained and occupied while staying at home.

Tinker is a monthly-themed kit made of activities, stories, games, and projects. From science models to crafts to comic books, they aim to make holistic learning available for all.

In 2020 alone, we distributed over 240 Tinker kits to our children!

# #CloseTheGap with Ming Tan

Close The Gap with *Near and Far*.

*Near and Far* was written by Ming Tan in the first week of school closure due to COVID-19. For the first time, many of us experienced the isolation of social distancing - something that we have worked for years to bridge with our families. In the story, a child reacts to being kept home by exploring the many ways that animals communicate.

The #CloseTheGap activity pack was created to mitigate feelings of self-isolation and provide the children with activities to connect with their peers. The pack contains fun and engaging items inspired by the ideas shared in the book, such as colour pencils, drawing block, DIY postcards, activity sheets and a DIY Microgreen plant-growing kit.

The campaign was launched on 25 September on Giving.sg and via our social media pages. We exceeded our target and

managed to raise **\$11,972** over 2 months!

We delivered the activity packs to 108 of our Early Readers within 2 days! Our children were so excited to receive the packs and were quick to start on the activities, especially the plant-growing kit! One of our Early Readers immediately started working on the plant and lovingly placed it near her window!



# UOB

## Gift for Good

In the spirit of giving, everyone wins!

UOB graciously partnered with us again to reach out to all their staff and customers to give back to the community. This year, UOB roped in their partners, Grab, Shopee & Dairy Farm Group to celebrate the festive season with our families!

From 1 to 15 December, we put up a microsite for UOB customers and staff to purchase books, toys and vouchers for our families. And what a response we received – we were so overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and generosity from our partners! Many of the items were sold out within days and in two weeks, we managed to raise over **\$69,840** for our families! This is an unprecedented amount, especially since the pandemic had affected so many local businesses and everyone was tightening their pockets. Compared to the \$15,000 we raised in 2019,

we can now provide more resources to our families in time for the year-end festivities, and alleviate their pandemic fatigue.

Once we received all the donations, we quickly worked to gather all the items, packed them and delivered them to all our families before Christmas Eve! Our families were so grateful for the gifts, especially the vouchers to help with their daily groceries.



\*Images show our staff delivering the books, toys and vouchers to our families.

# Social Media Reach



<b>Followers</b>	1,342 (↑ 19%)	697 (↑ 22%)	136 (↑ 7%)
<b>Number of posts</b>	110 (↑ 267%)	72 (↑ 242%)	88 (↑ 2,833%)
<b>Impressions</b>	95,258	25,425	69,158

\*Figures are compared to social media statistics from 2019.

# Social Media Highlights



29 likes 5 Shares



**NVPC - Towards a City of Good**  
December 30, 2020

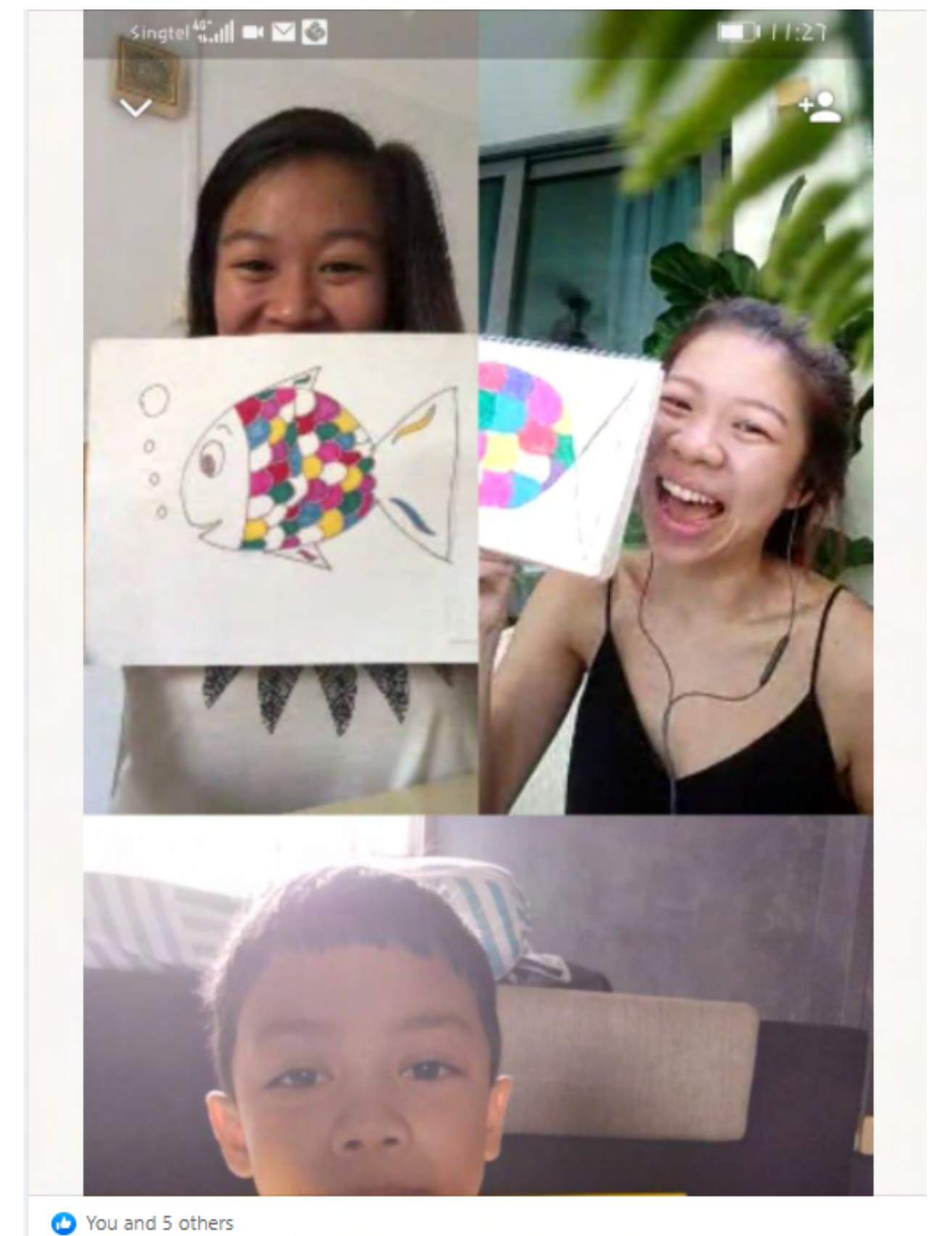
**New Life Stories** is a charity that provides reading sessions to children with incarcerated parents. Magdeline and Michelle are New Life Stories volunteers that have gone above and beyond to assist Affif and his caregiver.

When Affif's school project required him to use certain apps on the computer which he was not familiar with, Magdeline took the trouble to screenshot step-by-step instructions so Affif could complete his assignment.

Through Magdeline and Michelle's reading sessions, Affif has become an independent reader. He even wakes up especially early on his reading day because he is excited for his session!

New Life Stories is part of SG Cares Giving Week Fund. Support the charity here: [www.giving.sg/gwfund](http://www.giving.sg/gwfund)

#CityofGood #GivingSG #GivingWeekSG #SGCares #TheBestWeekEver #charities #fundraise #donate



You and 5 others

# Media Coverage

Coronavirus: President Halimah Yacob hosts first virtual tour of the Istana for Hari Raya Puasa



President Halimah Yacob chatting with participants during a virtual tour of the Istana for the Hari Raya Istana Open House. PHOTO: MCI

Article on The Straits Times about the Hari Raya Virtual Open Visit to Istana



In the workshop performance Men With Pens (above) by Beyond Social Services, stories of young men living in rental flats and dealing with challenges such as mental illness come into the spotlight. PHOTO: ARDHI ANDRIEN ANG

## ARTS OUTREACH THAT PACKS A PUNCH

From drama workshops to storytelling sessions, organisations are using varied arts outreach programmes to help at-risk children and youth



Ong Sor Fern  
Senior Culture  
Correspondent

A spotlight illuminates a punching bag. A young man steps up and starts punching as a voiceover begins, telling his life story. He is one of six young men who live in Whimpoa rental flats, and their stories speak of adversity, mental illness, family violence and academic challenges.

This workshop performance...

Men With Pens is an ongoing project by Beyond Social Services, which reaches out to underprivileged communities. It was presented at The Substation as part of its Sep'fest fringe recently.

A theatre workshop is not the first activity one associates with social services. But arts outreach programmes, ranging from drama workshops to storytelling sessions, have been sprouting at the grassroots level as community workers and artists recognise how the arts can help unlock communications with at-risk children and youth, as well as serve therapeutic purposes.

Community worker Muzammil Sobhan Najar, 21, who worked with volunteers Yanni Chia and Sahbas Nair on Men With Pens, observes: "A lot of boys go for counselling, but they find it hard to describe their feelings. What I notice in the arts programmes is that they help to externalise 'messy' thoughts."

Men With Pens park giant Abduljab Al Sahil, 16, says: "I was shy at first and, to be honest, I didn't want to come. But all of my friends and Sahil, Yanni and Sahbas gave me the courage to join."

"It turned out to be the best experience, and we had fun together as a...

family and learnt a lot of new things. We all left the session realising one another's woes."

Arts practice helps draw children and youth out of their shells, says Ms Saleemah Ismail, 52, co-founder and executive director of New Life Stories, which works with incarcerated parents and their children. "The children are not expressive verbally, some of them are withdrawn and prefer expressing emotions through drawing," she says.

Ms Lin Shiyun, 36, an arts producer and creative director of community arts group 3Pomptin, which runs the Tai Takoo Kids Club in Boon Lay Drive, adds that language therapy can be another barrier to expression.

Adults and counsellors also use art as a way of understanding the children's mental states and emotional needs.

Ms Sokemah cites the example of a young boy, who lived with his 24-year-old brother from one to five years old because his father was in prison and his mother was absent. "The older brother was a fan of zombie movies and violent first-person shooter games. The child's drawings were 'very dark, with...

blood splatters and people being stabbed", she recalls.

"We could analyse through his drawings that violence has been normalised in his life. His narrative is 'you have to kill these people before they can hurt you'."

A New Life counsellor worked intensively with the child for a year and his drawings reflected a gradual change in perspective. "His drawings now have him holding hands with his father, who is home with him, and with his father and brother in the park," she says.

While social enterprises like Beyond and New Life focus on arts outreach in Singapore, the Singapore International Foundation's Arts For Good initiative is supporting arts outreach programmes that cross national borders.

Singaporeans Teng Zi Ying, 27, and Rebekah Lim, 34, came up with ArtSEA, a digital resource and training pack focusing on South-east Asian artists, which helps community workers and arts educators in under-resourced communities. They targeted five communities in South-east Asia, but ended up working with 20 across Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines because of demand.

The idea, says Ms Lim, is to equip community workers and support educators so that they, in turn, can help the children in their communities.

She says: "We provide and structure our workshops and materials in a way where even if they cannot have access to the Internet and printing, when they go back and teach the other people in the communities that they work with, we are able to translate it."

"There's a lot of emphasis on making arts an accessible experience."

BRINGING HOPE TO VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

ABDULLAH SAHIL, 16, 2020 participant on Men With Pens

Article on The Straits Times featuring our Close The Gap campaign

UOB distributes 2,000 gifts to children from underprivileged backgrounds



UOB, together with key partners Dairy Farm Singapore, Grab and Shopee, delivered gift boxes to beneficiaries. PHOTO: UOB

Article on The Straits Times sharing about the UOB Gift for Good campaign

Source:

- The Straits Times @ Singapore Press Holdings. Permission required for reproduction.

# About the Board



**Abdul Majid Maideen**  
Board Director  
since 17 Oct 2017



**Graham Kelly**  
Board Director  
since 11 Sep 2015



**K. Veerapandiyan**  
Board Director  
since 11 Sep 2015



**Su Czheng Ong**  
Board Director  
since 19 Sep 2016

The Board of Directors held 6 meetings and an AGM in 2020.  
The meeting attendance are as follows:

- Abdul Majid Maideen - 6 meetings
- Graham Kelly - 6 meetings
- K. Veerapandiyan - 6 meetings
- Su Czheng Ong - 6 meetings

#### **Management of Conflict of Interest**

During the current and previous financial year, none of the Board members received any remuneration from the Company. Board and Management members are required to disclose any interest that they may have whether directly or indirectly, that the Company may enter into or in any organisation that the Company has dealings with or is considering dealing with; and any personal interest accruing to him as one of the Company's supplier, user of services or beneficiary. Should there be any potential conflict of interest, the affected members may not vote on the issue that was the subject matter of the disclosure. Detailed minutes will be taken on the disclosure as well as the basis for arriving at the final decision in relation to the issue. The Charity has no paid staff, who are close members of the family of the Executive Director or Board members. No Board Members were remunerated.



# Financial Highlights

Unrestricted funds \$000

**FY2020**                      **FY2019**

Grants and Donations	598	266
Operating Expenses	410	111
Net Surplus	188	155

## Reserve Position and Policy

Reserve at December	543	355
Total Operating Expenses	410	111
Reserve position in months	16	38

Reserve position at 16 months, is below the Company's policy of 18 months. For more information on the charity's reserves policy, please refer to Note 14 of the Charity's Financial Statements FY2020.

Tax Deductible Receipts	151	108
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Certified with the Institution of Public Character (IPC) since 2016.  
Current approved status from 27 April 2021 to 26 April 2023.

# Financial Summary

Year	(\$000)	2020	2019	2018
Grants		646	348	281
Donations		194	130	192
Total Income		<u>840</u>	<u>478</u>	<u>473</u>
Charitable activities/ Programme expenses		782	334	223
Governance expenses		8	7	23
Other expenses		17	3	
Total expenses		<u>807</u>	<u>344</u>	<u>246</u>
Surplus		<u>33</u>	<u>134</u>	<u>227</u>
Total Reserve Balance		418	385	250
Unrestricted		543	355	200
Restricted		-125	30	50

# Statutory Information

ACRA UEN: 201411304Z

Registered Address: 1 Lorong 2 Toa Payoh, #07-01 Braddell House Singapore 319637

NLS was incorporated as a Company limited by guarantee from 17 April 2014

NLS was registered as a Charity under the Charities Act from 16 April 2015

NLS was accorded an Institution of Public Character (IPC status) from 1 July 2016.

Current IPC status - from 27 April 2021 to 26 April 2023

NLS has a Memorandum and Articles of Association (M&AA) as the governing instrument.

Main Bank: DBS Bank Ltd

Account Number: 288-901500-0

Pay Now code: 201411304ZNLS

Auditor: True Assurance PAC, Singapore



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