

67,000 young lives, 10 years and the President's Award for Social Impact

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HCA Hospice Care

"I'd like to go out, but I know I can't. If I do go out, there will be no one to look after my mum and I will be very frustrated with myself," muttered a teenage caregiver in a video clip, while a class of secondary school students watched, and sympathised.

The video is a teaching tool in HCA Hospice Care's Young Caregivers (yCG) programme which aims to inculcate empathy, compassion and perseverance in school children in dealing with the elderly sick and dying. The programme has taught the young to relate to this group of senior citizens since its official launch in July 2005. It has reached 67,000 youngsters to date.

And we're thrilled that these efforts have been recognised! HCA clinched the 2013 President's Volunteerism & Philanthropy Award for Social Impact at the President's Volunteerism & Philanthropy Awards, organised by the National Voluntary and Philanthropy Centre on 23 October. In a formal ceremony, President Tony Tan presented awards to organisations that reached the highest standards in promoting the spirit of giving in Singapore.

HCA was commended for its company-wide strategies, organisational and programme excellence, and ability to deliver sustainable impact. The methodical care our yCG team takes in the programme's implementation, from outreach to schools to response analysis, was also a deciding factor.

yCG workshops

Through videos, presentations and interactive means, our yCG facilitators run workshops tailored to a class's unique character and maturity. Students participate in activities ranging from games to spirited debates to learn about providing care and showing compassion.

- **Upper Primary** students learn about life-limiting illnesses, and ways to show love and care.
- **Secondary** students learn about caregiving, and developing empathy with the elderly, particularly those who are sick.



- **Post-Secondary** students learn concepts of a meaningful life, the importance of showing love and compassion for the terminally ill while they still can, and coping with loved ones suffering from life-limiting illnesses.

Several students are moved by what they experience. Some donate their pocket money while others can not choke back their tears after a visit to our day hospice centre.

An upper primary school student wrote on the workshop feedback form: "The workshop made me realise that it is always never too late to care for someone. It is whether you want to or not." A post-secondary school student said that an important learning point for him was to "show care and concern for everyone beside oneself even if he/she is not sick".

Post-workshop, many students put their acquired knowledge to use by volunteering at HCA or other organisations.

As the proverb goes – "Charity begins at home" – we're hoping that these youngsters will grow closer to their older relatives, and then form a strong, sustainable base of caregivers to others. ❤️

Are you a teacher or a student who's interested in getting your class to take part in our yCG programme? Drop us a note at communications@hcahospicecare.org.sg, or find out more at <http://hca.org.sg/yCG-programme-2/yCG-activities>.

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