

PA WELLNESS PROGRAMME

Introduction

The PA Wellness Programme was piloted in March 2008 in 12 constituencies. The nationwide rollout of the PA Wellness Programme took place in May 2010. The People's Association (PA) is leading this Programme, with the support of the Ministry of Health (MOH), Health Promotion Board (HPB) and Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF).

2 The PA Wellness Programme seeks to reach out to Singaporeans and Permanent Residents, aged 50 and above, to engage in programmes and activities so as to be mentally, physically and socially active. The aim is not only to achieve a mindset change, but to see a change in behaviour where more residents adopt healthy lifestyles in a sustained manner, resulting in more people enjoying a healthier lifespan and higher quality of life.

3 The target is to reach out to 50% of the senior population aged 50 and above in every constituency. This requires a concerted effort by multiple agencies and grassroots organisations in order to reach out to all seniors and engage them. PA, residents and other agencies and institutions in the community would need to work in synergy to better serve and reach out to seniors in the community.

Health Screening with Intervention

4 PA is working with various Regional Health Systems (RHSes) and HPB to conduct health screening for seniors. Those found to be at-risk of developing chronic illnesses will be persuaded to participate in follow up interventions by the RHSes and HPB and adopt a healthier lifestyle. The PA Wellness Programme message is simple – Stay active. Eat healthy. Exercise regularly. Enjoy more years free from disease and disability.

Social Interest Groups

5 It is not enough for individuals to be healthy alone. They need to be socially engaged too. Evidence-based studies have shown that people who are socially active tend to be mentally and physically active too. The PA Wellness Programme promotes a myriad of activities for its participants. There is something for everyone in the community.

6 Seniors are encouraged to come forward and make friends. They can participate in the wide variety of programmes organised by the Community Clubs, Senior Citizens' Executive Committees, Active Ageing Committees and Residents' Committees or even form interest groups among themselves. Examples of programmes include easy-entry activities like briskwalking, health qigong, line-dancing, handicraft and gardening, as well as niche activities like conductorcise, rummy-O mind game, ukulele and sports stacking. They learn something, make new friends, feel at home with the group, bring in their own friends to join the group and become happier and healthier as a result.

7 These interest groups also serve as a form of informal roll call. If a member from any group is absent or exhibits a change in behaviour, others would notice or come to know, and be able to help. Seniors can establish strong social networks with other seniors through these interest groups. Important information and advisory can also be disseminated to members of these groups through talks, workshops and programmes.

Senior Volunteerism

8 When seniors volunteer in community programmes, and help others to be active and engaged like themselves, they develop a sense of meaning and fulfilment in life. Seniors can volunteer in many ways. They can lead interest groups or even start new interest groups so as to reach out and engage like-minded seniors, and help them live good quality of lives.