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Senior volunteer finds joy in making others happy



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BY MARISSA YEO - SEPTEMBER 5

SINGAPORE — Thrice a week, 66-year-old Lily Kow can be found either teaching Sudoku or conducting information technology classes for senior citizens, or training caregivers on various chair exercises for wheelchair-bound elderly folk.

Such volunteer activities are part of her weekly routine since the mother of two retired at the age of 55.

Ms Kow, and another active volunteer, Ms Noorjahan Kamaruddin, 55, were cited by President Tony Tan Keng Yam during the opening ceremony of this year's National

Senior Volunteer Month held at the HDB Hub in Toa Payoh today (Sept 4).

Ms Kow started volunteering as a young adult, helping out at the Singapore Association for the Visually Handicapped (SAVH).

While she stopped volunteering after she started working and got married, her passion for helping others remained strong.

“I found joy in sharing my knowledge and bringing happiness to the less fortunate,” she said.

Following her retirement, Ms Kow started to be active in volunteer work again. For the past 10 years, she has been involved in several voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs) including the SAVH; Women’s Initiative for Ageing Successfully (WINGS); Tsao Foundation; and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme.

For Ms Kow, her biggest challenge as a volunteer is not about learning new skills and conducting training, but managing her time to help the various VWOs. “Sometimes, programmes from the VWOs may coincide, but I need to choose various programmes (to volunteer) and manage my schedule,” she said.

One of her many memorable moments during the past decade as a volunteer is while teaching a Sudoku class at WINGS.

Ms Kow recalled having a participant who did not know anything about the puzzle game, but ended up being addicted to Sudoku by the time the class ended. “Seeing them happy, makes me even (happier),” she said.

Throughout her years of volunteering, Ms Kow said she had met senior citizens who were not keen on volunteering because of family commitments or disapproval from their spouses. Ms Kow said: “I will always ask them to search themselves and (discover) what they enjoy doing, then find the happiness to do it (voluntarily).”

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