

FaithActs and Ibasho join hands to empower residents at Queenstown

Ibasho, a new initiative under the Health District @ Queenstown, is partnering FaithActs' new Active Ageing Centre in Margaret Drive to enable older persons to play a leading role in community change.



Mr Tan Kiat How (right), Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Communications and Information and Ministry of National Development, looking at towel crafts made by residents at the official opening of the FaithActs x Ibasho Margaret Drive Centre. Mdm Wendy Lim Kim Lan (third from left), a Core Committee member of the Centre, conducts craft workshops for residents.

FaithActs and Ibasho are pleased to announce a collaboration between the social service agency and the global non-profit organisation, committed to

creating socially integrated and resilient communities. This partnership aims to infuse Ibasho's eight principles into FaithActs' new Active Ageing Centre (AAC) in Margaret Drive, empowering older persons to lead activities and partake in community building. This project is supported by the Health District @ Queenstown.

The new FaithActs x Ibasho Margaret Drive Centre was launched by Senior Minister of State for Communications and Information and National Development, Mr Tan Kiat How, who oversees the Health District @ Queenstown.

Empowering elders, changing mindsets

Singapore, as one of the world's fastest ageing populations, grapples with the problems of ageism and increasing loneliness among older persons. Studies have shown that loneliness has detrimental effects on physical and mental health, contributes to chronic conditions and reduces the overall quality of life.

The collaboration between FaithActs and Ibasho represents a proactive effort to create a mindset change in society where older persons are valued for their potential to contribute to the community and seen as persons with wisdom and experience. Both organisations hope to foster a vibrant, inclusive community where older persons feel supported and have a sense of purpose and belonging.

The Centre marks Ibasho's first collaboration with a social service agency. Ibasho has been implemented in Japan, Philippines and Nepal. Please refer to Annexe A for more information on Ibasho and its projects.

"I am thrilled about our collaboration with Ibasho," said Ms Shirley Ng, Executive Director of FaithActs. "At FaithActs, we provide friendships and care for older persons to age in place with our facilities and organised activities, so that they may enjoy meaningful and enriching lives. We believe that we can create synergies between Ibasho concepts and our Centre's existing programmes, to accomplish our goals for and with the community."



The FaithActs x Ibasho Margaret Drive Centre was officially launched by Mr Tan Kiat How (fourth from left), Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Communications and Information and Ministry of National Development, in the presence of distinguished guests and residents.

Co-creating a community space where older residents thrive

The Centre will incorporate the eight Ibasho principles - namely elder wisdom, normalcy, de-marginalisation, community ownership, multi-generational, culturally appropriate, resilience and embracing imperfection - to create a place where older residents are empowered to help each other

and make a positive impact in their communities. Please refer to Annexe B for more details on these Ibasho principles.

“Every person deserves an Ibasho as they age. This pilot Ibasho project at Queenstown will enable us to understand the facilitating factors behind implementing community-led interactions in Singapore as well as the different adaptations required. We aim to evaluate the project’s impact on the participants' level of social capital, social network and sense of loneliness,” said Associate Professor Emi Kiyota, National University of Singapore (NUS) Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and NUS College of Design and Engineering, and Deputy Executive Director, NUS Centre for Population Health. Associate Professor Kiyota is also the founder and Director of Ibasho.

The concept of Ibasho was introduced to the Queenstown community through a four-part workshop which was conducted between May and November 2022. The workshop helped the residents identify key community assets within their neighbourhood, which include people, services and infrastructure to facilitate socialisation, and assisted them in envisioning and actualising how they would like to live their lives with meaning and purpose. A 24-member multi-generational core committee, consisting of Ibasho coordinators, FaithActs personnel, community members, academics and advisors was also formed to implement the Ibasho project. Currently, the committee meets every other week to discuss various initiatives for the residents.

“This is very meaningful to me. As a core committee member, not only was I directly involved in the planning and design of the Centre, but I have even made new friends of different ages!” said Wendy Lim Kim Lan, who is 76 years old. “In particular, I have found joy not only in helping but teaching my friends and neighbours to recycle their clothing through alterations and upcycling. I hope to pass on these skills to the younger ones at the Centre.”

The development of the FaithActs x Ibasho Centre has been made possible through the unwavering support of numerous organisations. The Centre's refurbishment and programme were generously funded by CapitaLand Hope Foundation, the philanthropic arm of CapitaLand Group. Nunchi Marine, Faith Methodist Church, RDC Architects Pte Ltd, Takenaka Corporation and the Widjaja family also made invaluable contributions towards the initiative.



Mr Rai Shayaan Ahmed Kharal (left), a Core Committee member of the FaithActs x Ibasho Margaret Drive Centre, teaching an elder how to use a smart phone.

Integrated, purposeful programmes for all ages

The core committee will progressively introduce programmes co-created with other residents. For a start, regular digital clinics and upcycling craft workshops will be organised for residents of all ages to mingle and acquire new skills. Participants are encouraged to support each other to kickstart ground-up activities which could evolve through informal discussions over time.

19-year-old Rai Shayaan Ahmed Kharal, who helped organise a digital clinic session where he taught older persons how to use a smart phone, said, “Even though I was the trainer, I learnt so much from working together with everyone. The older persons that I spoke to were so open to learning from me and even shared their own life experiences with me. The inclusive environment I had while working with the residents has been a source of inspiration for me in my daily life.”

The Centre operates from Monday to Friday, from 9am to 6pm, and on Saturday, from 9am to 1pm. For more information on the new Centre, the public can contact info@faithacts.org.sg.

This first Ibasho project in Singapore is a key initiative piloted under the Health District @ Queenstown as part of its overall efforts to introduce effective, scalable and sustainable interventions to meet the evolving needs of Singapore’s ageing population.

“The Health District aims to bring partners from across society like FaithActs and Ibasho together to co-design initiatives with the community which are scalable and sustainable that enables the longevity dividend,” said Professor John Eu-Li Wong, Executive Director, NUS Centre for Population Health and NUHS Senior Advisor, “We believe that the FaithActs x Ibasho Margaret Drive Centre is just the beginning of many collaborations that the Health District hopes to support in Queenstown.”

Reference:

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