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More than 50,000 pre-schoolers pack food for migrant workers, send thank-you messages to healthcare staff



A record number of pre-schools took part in this year's Start Small Dream Big movement, with a total of 53,000 children from 950 pre-schools spending 1.5 million hours. PHOTOS: EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



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SINGAPORE - Young children showed their big hearts and expressed their gratitude to those at the front line of the fight against Covid-19 by packing food for migrant workers and sending messages of appreciation to healthcare staff.

A record number of pre-schools took part in this year's Start Small Dream Big movement, which is part of the President's Challenge.

In total, 53,000 children from 950 pre-schools spent 1.5 million hours working on community service projects aimed at teaching them the values of kindness and compassion, said the Early Childhood Development Agency - that initiated the movement - on Wednesday (Oct 7).

Thanking the children for showing care and compassion, President Halimah Yacob called for Singaporeans to "work together to make Singapore a more caring and inclusive home for all."

Initiated in 2015, the movement saw 8,000 children from 150 pre-schools take part in the first year.

Since then, the initiative has gone from strength to strength, with 49,000 children from 820 pre-schools participating in last year's edition.

One pre-school which took part this year was the YWCA Child Development Centre in Outram.

It compiled a video conveying their pre-schoolers' messages of appreciation and encouragement to the healthcare workers at Singapore General Hospital.

The children also prepared mask cases and handmade posters, which were then delivered by their teachers to the healthcare staff on their behalf.

Meanwhile, children from Greenland Childcare @ Punggol collected and packed dried food supplies for migrant workers that were delivered with the help of SG Accident Help Centre- a non-profit organisation.

The pre-schoolers also created art pieces inspired by South-east Asian artists and sold them to parents via Zoom during a virtual charity event to raise funds for migrant workers.

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In addition, they brought some cheer to seniors living in nursing homes who have seen fewer visitors due to safe distancing measures amid the pandemic.

Children from Little Greenhouse @ Jurong West 502 prepared board games using recycled materials and filmed their own instructional videos to teach seniors how to play them.

Over virtual engagement sessions facilitated by the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) and the Community Chest, the children spent time with residents at St. Andrew's Nursing Home in Taman Jurong and the All Saints Home in Jurong East.

"It is heartening to know that the virtual intergenerational visits and instructional videos have helped bridge safe distancing measures to connect children with seniors," said Mr Tan Kwang Cheak, AIC's chief executive.

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