



佛教慈濟慈善事業基金會(新加坡)
BUDDHIST COMPASSION RELIEF TZU-CHI FOUNDATION (SINGAPORE)

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New Active Ageing Centre in Bukit Batok Harnesses Humanistic Arts to Help Seniors Age Well and Improve Their Emotional Well-being



The AAC has designed a supportive and safe space where seniors can share their life experiences and uncover a renewed sense of purpose.

SINGAPORE, 1 August 2026 – When it comes to helping seniors age well, the Singapore government has spared no expense in building senior-friendly infrastructure, expanding preventive healthcare, and providing regular health screenings and exercise programmes. But beyond physical health, how can we build on these efforts to help seniors thrive emotionally as well?

GLOW (Bukit Batok), Tzu-Chi Foundation (Singapore)'s newest Active Ageing Centre (AAC), believes the answer lies in humanistic art. Here, art is more than just a project to complete. The AAC has designed a supportive and safe space where seniors can use art as a tool to discover their own voices, share their life experiences and uncover a renewed sense of purpose.

At its heart is the signature **H.ART Programme** (short for Humanistic Art), helmed by a full-time staff member with a background in dance and the arts. The inaugural edition is themed “Remember When – Collective Memory”, and is anchored in four pillars: connection, creativity, reflection and healing. Each run comprises eight sessions:



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- **Session 1 (Music):** Participants begin by listening to everyday sounds — such as MRT chimes, bus bells, kettle whistling, or the tapping of a keyboard — as well as songs that hold personal significance. Through reflection, they explore how these sounds may evoke different memories and reactions.
- **Session 2 (Storytelling):** Using a favourite photograph as a conversation starter, participants reflect on the stories it holds — where it was taken, who is in it, why it has been kept, and the memories and relationships it represents. Sharing these personal stories creates opportunities for reminiscing, meaningful conversations, and unexpected connections.
- **Session 3 (Movement):** The everyday objects we own often reflect who we are. In the third session, participants bring a personal object that serves as a starting point, anchoring personal memory while opening pathways into physical expression. Their experiences are translated into movements inspired by everyday activities, such as washing one's face, getting dressed, or writing. By discovering how familiar actions can be shaped by different habits and life experiences, participants forge empathy and recognise individuality within togetherness.
- **Session 4 (Photography):** The session implores participants to answer a simple question: How can we capture ourselves feeling proud and empowered? Using photography as a creative medium, participants will pose with a meaningful item — such as a favourite outfit, hat, keepsake or trophy — that reflects an important part of their identity. This exercise teaches them that every day is an opportunity to feel proud and empowered, and they need not wait for a special moment to do so.
- **Session 5 (Outing or Artist Sharing):** The focus shifts to uncovering memories in everyday life. Industry professionals will share their work and perspectives, exploring themes of memory, heritage and the everyday. Past volunteers include renowned architect Randy Chan, whose talk, “If the Building Could Speak”, invited seniors to see familiar spaces shape their identities. Participants will also visit museums, markets and other familiar public spaces, discovering how memories are woven into the people, places and everyday routines.
- **Session 6, 7 8 (Rehearsals and Final Presentation):** The sixth and seventh sessions centre on co-creation. Seniors choose the forms of expression that best reflect their stories, be it movement, reading, body percussion or a blend of different mediums. As they rehearse, familiarity with the flow and content grows, strengthening their confidence and presence. The programme concludes with a final sharing, where participants present their work to an invited audience in an intimate and supportive environment.



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At GLOW (Bukit Batok), each class is kept intentionally small, so that facilitators can engage each senior with greater care, attention and empathy.

GLOW (Bukit Batok) was established as an extension of SEEN (Bukit Batok) to meet rapidly growing demand. Originally assigned to serve 1,584 seniors, SEEN (Bukit Batok) now supports a community of more than 4,300 members. At GLOW (Bukit Batok), things are done slightly differently. Each class is kept intentionally small, so that facilitators can engage each senior with greater care, attention and empathy.

Besides the H.ART Programme, residents also enjoy complimentary programmes including yoga, stretch and flow classes, mindfulness sessions, health talks and digital literacy workshops. There is also a health station where residents can measure their body vitals and composition and gain a better understanding of their physical well-being.

Partnerships to testbed new technologies

To explore innovative ways to support seniors in ageing independently, GLOW (Bukit Batok) partners with private companies as well as educational institutions such as Singapore University of Social Sciences and Republic Polytechnic (RP).

Under its collaboration with RP's School of Sports & Health, GLOW (Bukit Batok) is piloting the use of suitable wearable exoskeletons to help seniors experiencing declining mobility. The



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initiative targets seniors who score between levels 5 and 6 on the Clinical Frailty Scale, and are at risk of becoming wheelchair dependent.

They are also developing training programmes to equip staff with the skills to safely support seniors and their caregivers in using the devices and transitioning to exoskeleton-assisted mobility.

Through this initiative, GLOW (Bukit Batok) hopes to provide pre-frail seniors with an alternative solution to maintain their independence. Scheduled to commence in September 2026, the six-month pilot will allow participating seniors to trial different exoskeleton models and technologies. Their experiences will provide valuable insights into the suitability of exoskeleton in supporting their needs.

Other initiatives, born out of past collaborations, will also be available here. They include:

- **AI-powered WhatsApp nudges:** In tandem with Marymount Labs, Tzu Chi developed a platform that engages less active seniors through friendly messages and wellness tips, which in turn builds trust while encouraging participation in centre activities. Powered by analytics that track sentiment, learn preferences and personalise activity recommendations, the platform delivers meaningful engagement at a cost of less than 50 cents per senior. During Tzu Chi's trial, 40 per cent of 250 participating seniors eventually became active members.
- **Project Humanistic Hands & Heart:** Developed with digital enablement and community technology partner Healthy-Tec, this initiative harnesses a Phy-gital (Physical + Digital) Platform to strengthen caregivers' resilience and enhance their well-being. The platform brings together respite care, micro job opportunities, holistic support services, evidence-informed stress relief resources and corporate partner discounts, making support more accessible and holistic. The project is supported by the Income OrangeAid Caregiver Support Accelerator Grant.

GLOW (Bukit Batok), which stands for “Go! Live Outrageously Well”, officially opened on 1 August 2026, with Senior Minister of State for Law and Transport Mr Murali Pillai as the Guest-of-Honour. It is the fourth AAC in Tzu Chi's ecosystem, and is supported by the Jurong East-Bukit Batok GRO.

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About Tzu-Chi Foundation (Singapore)

Founded in 1966 by Taiwanese nun Master Cheng Yen, the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation is a global humanitarian nonprofit organisation providing aid across over 100 countries, with missions in charity, medicine, education, and humanistic culture.

Established in 1993, Tzu-Chi Foundation (Singapore) began with charity work and later expanded to medical, educational, environmental, and cultural initiatives.

“Tzu Chi” embodies the spirit of compassion and relief for all.

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