



## This award-winning driver gets his drive helping seniors

HIS 12-hour workday and volunteer work with the elderly would faze many. But for Mr Wong Swee Fun (picture), it is a labour of love that transcends the work week.

Over the weekends, the 51-year-old driver is often found at the homes of those who

cannot make it to the Geylang Senior Citizens' Health Care Centre where he works.

Mr and Mrs Koh, both in their 70s, are just two who have been touched by his selflessness. Mr Koh suffered a stroke years ago. To supplement the household income, his wife has been working as a part-time dishwasher. This means that on weekends, there is nobody to take care of him.

In stepped Mr Wong, who has been helping them to clean the place, sort their mail and help Mr Koh with his bath. He also rid their home of bedbugs and paid for their transport expenses when they moved house.

"They have become my friends," said Mr Wong, who continues to drop by

the couple's home although Mr Koh is now in a nursing home.

Mr Wong is one of 51 recipients of the Healthcare Humanity Award this year. Launched in 2004, it honours healthcare workers who are role models.

Going beyond his official duties of ferrying patients about from 6am to 6pm, Mr Wong repairs their wheelchairs, cooks and sings to them.

Nominated by the centre to study for a certificate course in rehabilitative therapy last year, the former deliveryman — who knew nothing about the healthcare sector before joining it in 2003 — has even been helping the full-time therapists with patients' rehabilitative care. — TAN HUI LENG

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## Small things matter, says PM

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THE minority communities will no doubt take heart from the Prime Minister's words yesterday.

"We will ensure that the minority communities have the space to keep their heritages alive and not feel pressured by the majority Chinese community," said Mr Lee Hsien Loong at the launch of OnePeople.sg — a newly re-branded \$1-million non-profit organisation that will act as the leading organisation for race relations here.

The population in housing estates will be integrated and the common spaces in schools, neighbourhoods and workplaces will be protected so that Singaporeans have ample opportunity to grow up together, live together and play together, he said.

Reminding Singaporeans that the Government alone cannot keep society strong and united, he said everyone has a part to play in this. "Small things like being sensitive to each other's needs, bringing one another into our conversations, extending a hand, or having a meal together, will make a difference and leave a lasting impression. It is this quiet, instinctive sensitivity to each other that ensures that our social fabric remains strong and vibrant, that we maintain peace and harmony in Sin-

gapore amidst a turbulent world."

OnePeople.sg ([www.onepeople.sg](http://www.onepeople.sg)) will pool the resources of Singapore's five Community Development Councils and the five ethnic self-help groups.

"OnePeople will champion racial harmony in our communities by initiating new activities, and fostering interaction between the different races and religions," said Mr Lee who was speaking at the 10th anniversary celebrations of the CDCs yesterday.

The organisation, previously known as the Joint Social Service Centre and set up a decade ago by the Central Singapore Community Development Council (CDC) and the self-help groups, will now involve the participation of the other four CDCs as well.

OnePeople.sg will support the Community Engagement Programme administered by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, People's Association and other community bodies, said Central Singapore CDC Mayor Zainudin Nordin who will serve as its first chairman.

"We should look beyond the simple physical manifestations like donning ethnic costumes on Racial Harmony Day. We need to promote a sense of appreciation, a deeper understanding of the whys and hows of the different cultural and religious practices that exist in Singapore," he said.

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