

VOLUNTEER ORGANISATIONS

Help for helpers

Three more VWOs nominated to share their expertise

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TO BETTER help meet the needs of families, youths-at-risk and the terminally ill, three new Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs), already considered exemplary in their fields, have been appointed to spearhead the development of specialised expertise in the social work sector.

The Centre for Promoting Alternatives to Violence, Singapore Children's Society and HCA Hospice Care join four pioneer centres of specialisation — the Alzheimer's Disease Association, the Presbyterian Community Services, Students Care Service and the Tsao Foundation — appointed last year by the National Council of Social Service (NCSS).

One newcomer, the Singapore Children's Society, aims to share with other local youth agencies its knowledge on how to start programmes and appeal to different types of youth.

Mr Alex Lee, its social work standing committee chairman, said: "We hope that we can help reduce anti-social behaviour in youth and the numbers dropping out of school."

The Tsao Foundation will focus its efforts on specific issues affecting the elderly.

Chief executive Tan Bee Wan said: "One main challenge that came up in the focus group was growing health problems among the elderly. Hence, their health — both physical and psycho-emotional — will be a priority in the new initiatives."

These will involve collaborations with other agencies in its area of social work.

The Students Care Service last year organised forums and seminars to share expertise with other agencies involved in school social work, such as the Ang Mo Kio Service Centre.

This year, executive director Morene Sim said, it would publish a book to help others to implement or evaluate their programmes.

NCSS president Kwek Siew Jin said the VWOs were "already models in developing good practice guides on conducting needs assessment, programme planning and evaluation, and even training guides for volunteers".

In their role as centres of specialisation, he added, "they will help to foster the spirit of greater collaboration within the social service sector — and this will improve lives and benefit those we serve".