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Residents gain from wellness kampungs



Residents taking part in a mass morning exercise during the official opening of a wellness kampung at Block 765 in Nee Soon Central yesterday. The kampung aims to get people to adopt healthier lifestyles through activities such as healthy cooking demonstrations, free health screenings and mass exercise sessions. ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG

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There are three in Nee Soon and they aim to help people adopt healthier lifestyles



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Housewife Zauridah Suboh used to spend her days doing housework.

"I always felt lazy and lonely at home, and did the same things every day," said the 42-year-old.

For the past six months, however, she has been going to a nearby "wellness kampung" at Block 765 in Nee Soon Central on weekday mornings to take part in Zumba lessons and cooking demonstrations.

This kampung, or village, consists of a wellness centre and an adjacent eldercare facility run by St Luke's Eldercare. It is part of a network of three wellness kampungs set up by Alexandra Health Systems (AHS), St Luke's Eldercare and Nee Soon Grassroots Organisations for Nee Soon residents.

The initiative was officially launched yesterday by Nee Soon GRC MP Muhammad Faishal. The other two wellness kampungs are at Block 260 in Nee Soon East and Block 115 in Chong Pang.

Run mainly by residents, they aim to give people of all ages a chance to adopt healthier lifestyles through health intervention programmes and social activities. These include healthy cooking demonstrations, free health screenings and mass exercise sessions.

Said Madam Zauridah: "The exercises really help with my aches and bad knee and I'm more active now, which feels great." She had earlier volunteered at the wellness kampung in Nee Soon Central by organising a Hari Raya party.

Since the three wellness kampungs opened in March this year, they have served a total of 620 residents. Some residents also go to the eldercare centres that are part of the kampungs.

Madam Tee Siu Onn, 79, who has dementia, goes to the Nee Soon Central Wellness Kampung. She also goes to the St Luke's Eldercare Centre there and attends the wellness centre's cooking demonstrations.

She said of the eldercare centre: "I have a lot of friends here and I enjoy the activities. It's better to come here and be active, instead of sitting at home the whole day."

Dr Wong Sweet Fun, chief transformation officer at AHS, said while the idea for a wellness centre is not new, its integration with healthcare partners "injects a new meaning" into the activities.

"For example, instead of simply telling the elderly what food to eat to grow strong bones and muscles, our 'Share-a-Pot' community meals introduce high-protein and high-calcium ingredients," she said.

She said the initiative encourages able-bodied seniors to mix with the ill or disabled, and helps to remove social stigma.

"Seniors can help each other - they just need the platform to do so."