

Singapore Association for Mental Health Unveils Refurbished SAMH Group Homes – Empowering Community Integration for Nearly 30 Years

SINGAPORE, 31 MAY 2024 – The Singapore Association for Mental Health (SAMH) celebrated the launch of its refurbished SAMH Group Homes today. President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Patron of SAMH, graced the event as the Guest of Honour accompanied by Mdm Rahayu Mahzam, Minister of State, Ministry of Communications and Information & Ministry of Health, and Member of Parliament for Jurong GRC (Bukit Batok East).

Established in 1995, SAMH Group Homes, is the first psychiatric rehabilitation home located within a HDB estate, providing temporary accommodation for persons with stable psychiatric conditions. Nestled in the heartlands, these independent living housing units play a pivotal role in facilitating successful community reintegration, an important part of the normalisation process for SAMH’s clients, given that the majority of Singaporeans live in HDB estates. Clients of SAMH Group Homes receive comprehensive support in their recovery and pursuit of personal goals through the provision of vocational and psychosocial rehabilitation services.

The recent refurbishment, completed in January this year, was undertaken to meet growing demand and accessibility. The revamped SAMH Group Homes now feature an increased capacity, expanding from 36 to 51 beds. This comprises of three housing units with 11 beds each and two housing units with nine beds each, the latter being catered for female clients. Notably, the design emphasises an open concept, fostering greater interaction among clients and SAMH staff.

Successful community reintegration is an important concept of SAMH Group Homes as this empowers clients to gain greater independence and control of their lives. Mdm Rahayu Mahzam, Minister of State, Ministry of Communications and Information & Ministry of Health, and Member of Parliament for Jurong GRC (Bukit Batok East), said, “Encouraging the right mindset and building support in the community for persons with mental health concerns is an important basis of our National Mental Health and Well-being Strategy. We are heartened that we can continue this pursuit together with SAMH Group Homes through joint participation in many community events for mental health over the years, including the annual Build Bond Engage Family Day. Additionally, SAMH Group Homes’ involvement in the Bukit Batok East Well-being Circle, alongside our other partners, signifies a collective dedication to improving well-being skills and nurturing social support for our residents in the community.”

The successful reintegration of the clients of SAMH Group Homes is a community effort exemplified by residents living in the Bukit Batok East neighbourhood, some of whom supported by contributing their time, skills or financial resources.

Ms Jean Wong, aged 71, a resident in the neighbourhood who offers haircuts for SAMH Group Homes' clients at her home, said, "I feel happy when SAMH Group Homes' clients tell me they are pleased with my haircuts and are appreciative. I am not concerned about them coming to my home unaccompanied because if they can go to work and move around freely in the community, they are no different from you and me."

One of our sponsors is Ms Irene Chua, aged 56, who has supported SAMH in its fundraising and vocational training efforts by donating flowers for clients of SAMH MINDSET Learning Hub to learn floral arrangement skills. In addition, she has also sponsored Chinese New Year Reunion Dinner for SAMH Group Homes' clients for the past 15 years. Ms Irene Chua said, "My relationship with SAMH and its clients started since 2009. In my interaction with them, I feel they are just persons who encountered some setbacks in lives which affected them mentally. This can happen to anyone. I am very happy that I can contribute and make a difference in the lives of the clients at SAMH Group Homes."

Ms Helen Yong, Senior Assistant Director of SAMH Outreach Services and who oversees SAMH Group Homes, said, "Today, the rejuvenated SAMH Group Homes mark nearly three decades of commitment to uplifting lives. We are deeply appreciative for the enduring support from our community partners, including grassroots organisations in Bukit Batok East, who have been connecting us to essential resources and encouraging community inclusion. The acceptance of our clients by neighbourhood residents exemplifies empowered community involvement, reflecting the belief that recovery takes a village. Our sponsors and volunteers also significantly aid our clients' journey, reducing stigma and promoting inclusivity."

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About Singapore Association for Mental Health (SAMH)

Established in 1968, the Singapore Association for Mental Health (SAMH) is Singapore's first mental health social service agency that provides a comprehensive range of mental health services, which include rehabilitative, outreach and creative services, to the community. SAMH aims to reintegrate persons with mental health issues back into society through community-based mental health programmes and services that provide rehabilitative care for these individuals, and support for their families and caregivers. With a vision to promote mental wellness for all, SAMH is committed to improve the lives of, and promote acceptance and respect for, persons with mental health issues and improve the mental resilience of the community. In 2023, SAMH celebrated its 55th anniversary and pledged its commitment to step up efforts and address the growing challenge of mental health issues among the people, young and old.

For more information, please visit: www.samhealth.org.sg

About SAMH Group Homes

SAMH Group Homes, established in 1995, is Singapore's first unique model where it provides temporary accommodation for persons with stable psychiatric conditions that empowers them successful reintegration into the community within the HDB neighbourhood and reducing the need for in-patient treatment. Its fully furnished independent living housing units are resided in the heartlands which is an important normalisation process for SAMH's clients since the majority of Singaporeans live in HDB estates. Clients of SAMH Group Homes are further supported in their recovery and personal goals through the provision of vocational and psychosocial rehabilitation services.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.samhealth.org.sg/our-services/rehabilitation/samh-group-homes/>
