Gladiolus Place

Jan - Jun 2023

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FOREWORD

We flipped open the chapter of 2023 for Gladiolus Place, and behold, the pages of the first few months were filled with much! Many moments of flurried activities, settling into newly renovated spaces in our Home, making room in our hearts for more Girls that have come to us looking for a place to belong, making new friends as we went out to champion our cause – the first 6 months of 2023 have been so special to us, and we hope to remember a slice of that through this issue of our newsletter!

2023 holds a different kind of hope for us at Gladiolus Place, as we celebrate our 25th Anniversary. For a quarter of a century, we have been a safe, healing space for vulnerable teenage Girls, who have come under our wings in their time of need. Through the many seasons, we have come to see it as a journey of perseverance, courage and with it, great joy and purpose.

As Gladiolus Place renews her commitment to Rebuilding Lives, Restoring Families, it is our hope that we will be well supported, prayed for and invested in. As always, we as an organisation are only as strong as our community, so thank you to all who have shown great warmth to us. Each of your acts of love play an instrumental role in helping us understand love.



Later in the year, we will be holding a thanksgiving and opening ceremony to celebrate the completion of our newly renovated premises, and we cannot wait to have each of you come see Gladiolus Place standing tall at 6A Mattar Road!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTE



Dear Friends, Supporters, Partners of Gladiolus Place, warmest greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Welcome to our first bi-annual newsletter of Gladiolus Place for 2023!

"Rebuilding Lives, Restoring Families". As we celebrate our 25th Anniversary this year, we pondered upon the very reason for our existence as an organisation, as a ministry. At the very core of what we do daily, we distil, is simply this - we have spent the last 25 years rebuilding lives, and restoring families. Restoring lives that have been downtrodden, spirits that have been crushed, hearts that have been so broken; Restoring these young lives back to these families, which have been so fragmented, wrecked, destroyed ; Cushioning them in their journeys as you would a fragile, precious valuable possession, one who was made in the image of God and dearly loved, one life at a time, one family at a time, one step at a time.

There were countless occasions where children and families were sent to our doorstep. Young girls with their dignities stripped away, families torn apart. And being the humans that we are, there was nothing we felt we could do or say, but to sit down and cry together with them. And then, being the trained professionals that we also are, extend a hand, an ear, our expertise, our very being, to help them get back on their feet, to hold things together where they have fallen apart, and to mend those precious relationships. These things are easier said than done. While we love to feature stories of success because it warms everyone's hearts, often than not, it has taken years before we see a glimmer of light. There are also, of course, those who, by our human standards and limited ability to fathom, did not quite turn out as we would have hoped.

Despite the many ups and downs we have encountered over the past 25 years, since the early days at Dedap Road, to Telok Kurau, and our current place at Mattar, we hold fast to our founding mission in Matthew 25:35-40, for the next 25 years and beyond. 'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?"

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

We eagerly await in excitement, to see where the Lord will take us in the years to come, as we "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." (Psalm 118:1) His goodness, faithfulness and everlasting love, that we have witnessed and know for sure.

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The Wimbledon 2023 finals was just over as I was penning this reflection. I was particularly captivated and inspired by what 20-year-old Carlos Alcaraz said in his interview after defeating Daniil Medvedev in the semis, when he was asked how he felt about the upcoming finals where he would meet 7-time Wimbledon champion Novak Djokovic. The Spaniard said, "There's no time to be afraid, no time to be tired." Alcaraz went on to clinch the men's single title after battling it out with Djokovic in a 4hr 42min five-setter.

There's no time to be afraid, no time to be tired this year, or the years ahead, as we push forward in what we count ourselves privileged to be a part of. Thank you for being part of our journey, supporting and cushioning us with your prayers, smiles, words of encouragement, and donations. I hope that pages ahead will find you captivated by what the Lord is doing among us! May He be glorified always!

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Shalom, Michelle

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MAJOR EVENTS &

Connecting Hearts with Breakfast

With church activities returning back in full swing after the easing of the Covid-19 pandemic measures, we went to churches such as Covenant Presbyterian Church, Grace Baptist Church and Boscombe Life Church to share breakfast with fellow congregation members.

In the sweet moments of serving breakfast and coffee, seeing how members of the church encouraged and interacted with us made the early Sunday mornings heartwarming and fruitful!

Our Girls had a whale of a time meeting new faces, while preparing food and drinks for the lovely Sunday crowds. We are excited for more Breakfast Outreaches to come!





Annual Staff Dedication at Covenant Presbyterian Church

On 5 March, all the Staff travelled to Covenant Presbyterian Church to attend the Annual Staff Dedication Ceremony, together with our Board Members and the church congregation. Through a time of thanksgiving and prayer, we were reminded of how precious it is that we get to steward the young lives of those who have entered and will one day leave our Home.

REGULAR HAPPENINGS

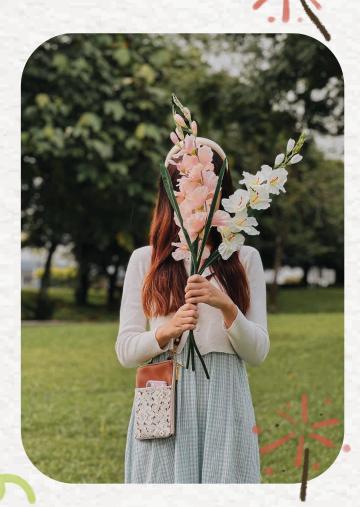
Soaking in Life Stories with Volunteers from San Diego-based Renewal Missions



We shared Mexican cuisine for dinner with Volunteers from Renewal Missions, a non-profit organisation based in San Diego! Volunteers hailing from countries such as Columbia, Hong Kong and San Diego shared their life stories with us, and how they began their volunteering journey. They also shared about how they make their daily commute across the border from their base in San Diego to Mexico to work with orphans and vulnerable people. That evening, we were thankful to have crossed paths and hear from Volunteers who are engaging in such meaningful work!

International Women's Day Collaboration with Mori Official

In conjunction with celebrating International Women's Day on 8 March, we collaborated with Mori Official, a local brand that sells personalised bags and gifts! In a social media campaign jointly run by both sides, we managed to raise awareness for the work we were doing in Gladiolus Place, and a portion of Mori Official's proceeds were donated to us!



Renovation Works in Progress

Our Cyclical Maintenance renovations have progressed well, as we prepared to shift around various parts of our Home to make way for the works happening in sections. By the end of January, Level 4 Gift of Grace Cluster, was ready. And in March, all our Girls were well settled and shifted into their new living spaces when the Level 3 Joy Cluster and Peace Cluster bedrooms were ready! The names of each cluster were lovingly coined by the different donors for this renovation project, and each of the 3 clusters serve Girls of various care needs.

As for the Staff, rebuilding work started in our offices, and we shifted to our makeshift offices in other spaces of the home, as we eagerly awaited the completion of our offices. By mid-May, the scaffolding of our building was taken down, and looking at our refreshed facade, we stopped to remember how far we have come along this project.

To cover the increasing and additional renovation costs that accumulated along the way due to inflation, as well as rising material and labour costs, we continued to garner additional financial support. With the help of organisations and individuals who rallied around us to chip in financially, we were able to hit the goal we set!





Here are some of our top contributors for Cyclical Maintenance:

Before

- Redemption Hill Church
- Rotary Club of Raffles Place
- Covenant Presbyterian Church
- Grace Baptist Church

And many others who wish to remain anonymous.

Come early October, we look forward to safe and homely premises where we can come Home to, as a place of refuge, warmth and strength.



Celebrating Our 25th Anniversary!

1. Logo Refresh

In conjunction with celebrating our 25th Anniversary, we are excited to unveil our refreshed logo! Representing Gladiolus Place within the circle, we envision a safe refuge and a place of transformation for the Girls to heal from their brokenness and renew their minds, embraced by the significance of the beautiful Gladiolus flowers - strength, honour and dignity.



Aligned with our mission, we hope that our Girls may step out of the circle as individuals restored to their families and communities when it is time for them to leave our Home. With this refreshed logo, we hope that the branding of our organisation will tell the story of our work here at Gladiolus Place.

2. CycleHome 2023

To kick off the year of celebration, we held our first ever cycling fundraiser - CycleHome! In partnership with Togoparts, a virtual event organiser for cyclists and runners in South East Asia, we launched our Cyclehome.sg campaign on 23 May. The heart of CycleHome is to raise funds so that we can continue to support the reintegration work of each Girl back to her family.

We know that sometimes families walk through a rough patch, and just when they are down and out, we provide a safe and nurturing Home for their teenage daughters to continue to grow and thrive. Meanwhile, we work with each Girl and her family to support them, so that we can see all our Girls safely back home!





This journey of planning, executing, rallying a wider community has been particularly heartwarming. On 25 June, some of our Girls and Staff cycled 25km to celebrate our 25th Anniversary. Many came forward to extend their support in financial giving, corporate sponsorships, and especially as participants for the cycling challenge. For this, we bask in the gratitude of being known and loved.

We would like to thank all who have supported us in this fundraiser, and we are excited to have our cyclists onsite with us on 2 September for our appreciation ceremony!

MARCH HOLIDAYS



Paving the Future with Resume and Interview Skills Session with UBS Bank C05 8 8

We learnt how to craft our own resumes, and got a hand at practising our interview skills in a workshop conducted by Volunteers from UBS Bank! What a new experience it was, thinking about how to position ourselves as future employees!

Sparkling Up our Smiles with Volunteers from 'Project WE'

We learnt more about the dangers of dental plaque and the importance of flossing from Volunteers behind Project WE, a student-led initiative of DUKE NUS Medical School. We were also educated about common misconceptions about dental health, and also how common foods and drinks can have different effects on our teeth!

Reaching out to 'Bless The Parents' with our Girls and Volunteers

Last December, we launched our 'Bless The Parents' project, where Volunteer Sunny gathered other volunteers to pack and distribute care packs for our Girls' families, as a step to engage the families of our beneficiaries better. This quarter, we got our Girls involved with helping to pack the care packs! Our Girls were excited and enthusiastic about the task and it was heartening to see them humming while packing together.

The heart of 'Bless the Parents' project is to reach out and connect with the families of our Girls. While we work with each Girl in our care towards restoration and wholeness, we also need to work hand in hand with their families. Hence, through the relational and intentional giving of a small gesture like a care pack and a listening ear, we hope that it will pave the way for eventual restoration of our Girls back to their families.

Flying with Société Internationale de Télécommunications Aéronautiques (SITA)



In conjunction with International Women's Day,

Société Internationale de Télécommunications Aéronautiques (SITA), a multinational information technology company, invited the Girls for a tour of their premises, where we learnt about the history of aviation and key historical figures.

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Various female staff from sales, marketing and computer science backgrounds shared their educational journeys and career experiences with us!



Strengthening Family Bonds with Art Jamming

We hosted our Girls and their families for an art jam session! Cynthia and Claire, 2 Art Therapist Interns from the LASALLE College of the Arts, facilitated the session where we made art with acrylic paint. Over the hours spent over creating abstract art pieces that represent each of our families, we paved the way for stronger bonds in time to come!

Tinkering Away with Creativity at Science Centre Singapore

We visited the "Tinkering Too" Workshop at Science Centre Singapore! During the 2-hour workshop, we expressed our creativity through handmade mural wall clocks, where we painted on canvas art and turned them into functioning clock faces. We also explored the Science Centre after the workshop, and learnt lots about science!



JUNE HOLIDAYS



Catching Shakespeare in the Park with NBCUniversal

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We got to catch Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' at Fort Canning Park with some Volunteers from NBCUniversal! The play by the Singapore Repertory Theatre was captivating, as we watched it under the night sky, while enjoying some snacks together with each other!

Learning about Road Safety with the Singapore Traffic Police

Facilitators from the Traffic Police came down to speak to us about road safety! They covered areas around personal safety when crossing the roads and being aware of our surroundings when using the road.

Keeping Fit with Coach Agnes at Amplify Gym

Coach Agnes and her Team from Amplify Fitness guided us in a crossfit session that had all of us breaking out in heaps of sweat! From learning to do squats with the right form, to learning how to use gym equipment correctly, we had such a fun time working out!

Self-Love with 'Girls Love Ourselves Workshop' (GLOW)

We participated in 'Girls Love Ourselves Workshop' (GLOW), lovingly organised by Volunteers from Bible Church! We learnt about skincare and makeup skills, as well as appropriate dressing for various occasions!

Experience Urban Farming at City Sprouts with Redemption Hill Church

We visited City Sprouts, an urban farm within the city! Together with Volunteers from Redemption Hill Church (RHC), we went on a guided farm tour, and got to try an array of edible plants, play with the farm animals, as well as learn more about sustainable farming methods! We also made Vietnamese rice paper rolls with hand-picked vegetables from the farm!

All About Eye Care with Dr Ken Tong

Optometrist Dr Ken Tong, the President of the Singapore Optometric Association shared with us about how to care for our eyes gently in this age where we spend hours staring at the screens of our digital devices. He also ran eye-checks for all our Girls to identify who needed glasses, so that we could arrange for them to go to his optical shop at a later date to select the frame we wanted!

Learning to be Cyber Safe with Cyber Wellness Camp

Our in-house Therapy Team held a 3-day workshop on Cyber Wellness! We learnt about safety within the internet sphere and appropriate behaviours when participating in the online space. We were also given the opportunity to learn and receive inputs from each other and the facilitators from the Therapy Team about how to safely participate in and use the Internet and Social Media.

Charting our 'Pathways to Success' with NIE Postgraduate Students

Our in-house Therapy Team partnered with students of the Master of Arts (Applied Psychology) programme to run the 'Pathways to Success' workshop for our Secondary 2 and 3 Girls. Based on principles derived from the Identity-Based Motivation theory, 'Pathways to Success' was conducted over 6 sessions. We were guided on how to envision our future selves in 10 years' time and set goals around it, such as completing school and being motivated to do well!

Equipped with the curriculum to run this workshop series in-house, we look forward to having this workshop feature as one of our core group work interventions.

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Outing to Fort Canning Park with UBS Bank

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We went all around Fort Canning on a scavenger hunt planned by a team of Staff at UBS Bank, following which we toured the UBS office and shared lunch with them.

It was eye opening to see the workstations of these Volunteers. It gave us a better picture of what working at a bank would look like!

Bonding Over Dinner and Games with Grace Baptist Church!

Every 2 months, our friendly neighbour Grace Baptist Church (GBC), has been inviting us over for a time of dinner and games! Over dinner conversations, we have made new friends, traded life experiences, and enjoyed bonding with them!

We look forward to forging stronger bonds with our big sisters at GBC!

Ice Skating with Pasir Panjang Church of Christ!

We enjoyed iceskating with Volunteers from Pasir Panjang Church of Christ (PPCOC) last December and we are thankful that we get to go again this holiday!

GROWING TOGETHER TOWARDS ADULTHOOD

When we think of the age 21, it is the age where we are on the cusp of freedom and adulthood. We sleep under the roofs of comfortable, well-furnished homes that our parents own, and return daily to home-cooked meals with family.

This is the life the majority of us have, but not the reality for all our Girls here at Gladiolus Place.

For Girls who are mandated by the court to stay with us till age 21 due to their unsafe family backgrounds, the dream of returning home for good in the near future is slim. By age 21, they will have to, by instinctual habit, know the ins-and-outs of being an adult in Singapore, should they want to thrive.



Talia and Rose posing for a photo in our backyard!

Paving the way for Adulthood

As we watch our Girls eating heartily at mealtimes, lovingly expressing their affection to us Staff, excitedly dancing to the latest Tiktok trends – we carry an ache in our hearts, as well as a firm determination that Gladiolus Place needs to prepare our Girls well for adulthood, so that we can with confidence say that when a Girl leaves us for independent living one day, she will bloom outside our walls.

Talia and Rose are a pair of sisters whom we are currently working closely with to nurture and prepare them for independent living.

They came into our care as they struggled to get along with their foster parents, and eventually their foster placements broke down. Their disagreements often developed into episodes of verbal and physical altercations, and this put their other foster siblings at risk in the household. Due to the safety concerns that were posed to the foster family, Talia was first transferred to Gladiolus Place, and not long after, Rose.



Nurturing Talia

Through hours of counselling sessions held for Talia, she slowly learnt to see things from the perspective of others, and began to better express her emotions in healthy ways. On the ground, we were pleasantly surprised to see that Talia was better able to regulate her emotions when she felt overwhelmed. Instead of lashing out when agitated, Talia would request for personal space to calm down, before re-emerging to join the other Girls for programmes.



One of Talia's greatest passions is playing soccer, and she has been playing for her team under the Soccer Night Lights programme. Soccer Night Lights is an initiative under SportCares targeted at at-risk and underprivileged youths. Since 2022, Talia has been a regular attendee and has represented her team in the Delta League. While encouraging Talia to pursue her passion for sports, her caseworker has also been working closely with her to complete her 'N' Levels and move on to tertiary education.

Encouraging Rose

Rose came into our care a few months before taking her 'N' level examinations. It was a period of transition for her even as she adapted to living in Gladiolus Place, on top of juggling the academic rigour demanded of her. Through tuition support that was provided to her, she successfully completed her examinations!

When her 'N' level examination results came back, she carefully deliberated her course of choice to pursue in the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) and after seeking the opinion of various Staff, Rose eventually decided to pursue a course on beauty and wellness! The teenager dreams of developing her interest in nail art and makeup, and hopes to be a make-up artist in the future! Talia and Rose are among the handful of Girls who will be staying with us until they turn 21, as mandated by the court. Each Girl will, by then, have been equipped with Independent Living skills, thanks to our in-house set of programmes in place to arm them with skills they need to live on their own after they age out of Gladiolus Place. From financial literacy, to resume writing and enhancing their work capabilities, to cooking nutritional meals, as well as finding accommodation – these are some of the necessary skills we impart to our Girls.

We believe that adulting is not a process that can be rushed through hastily just before our Girls leave us. It takes years of practice, maturing, learning from mistakes, and trying again in order for them to be really ready to thrive outside the walls of Gladiolus Place.

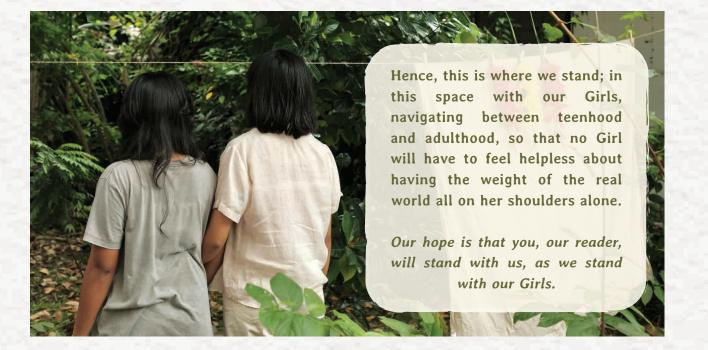




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The age of 21 is not the cusp of adulthood for these Girls. The age of 21 would be the time where they put into practice the routines of adulthood they have started to pick up since teenhood. And this is their reality.

But this does not mean that they have to "adult" alone. While it does take a village to raise a child, it takes a community to see an adult thrive. This is where community support comes in to aid our Girls as they grow into standing on their own feet. The caseworkers of the Girls rally befrienders to walk alongside them as older mentors to see them through first their teenage years, and later into adulthood. They also look for partnerships with other community agencies, to support our Girls even after they have been discharged from our professional care.



STAFF FEATURE: SENIOR CASEWORKER JOY



Joy is a Senior Caseworker here at Gladiolus Place (GP). She first joined GP in August 2020, after graduating with a degree in Psychology from the National University of Singapore (NUS)! It's been 3 years since she began her career at GP and it has been such a journey from starting as a Family Care Officer, to now being a Senior Caseworker. We caught up with Joy to find out more about what motivates her every day!



Why Gladiolus Place?

When I was searching for job opportunities as a fresh graduate, GP was accepting applicants without prior experience in working with beneficiaries with trauma. While I knew I was interested in the social service sector, I was unsure about the type of services I wanted to do, so GP provided a very good platform for me to explore this interest. I first joined GP as a Family Care Officer, and later in mid-2021, I was redesignated as a caseworker.

What is your role as a Family Care Officer (FCO)?



An FCO sets the benchmark for what a healthy interaction between an adult and child looks like. We do the day-to-day tasks of caring for the child, from ensuring they have their meals on time, to preparing them for the school day, being a listening ear, to helping them settle into Gladiolus Place. During critical moments, an FCO is the closest point of adult contact for the Girl, and thus the role an FCO plays is crucial in helping the child reframe perspectives, correcting unhealthy behaviours and mindsets. It is these small things that add up to the role of being an FCO.

Over time, I still wanted to work on the therapeutic side of things with the Girls. When I raised my interest to the management team, they offered me an opportunity to join the case work team, where I could pursue more direct therapeutic work.

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What is your role as a Caseworker?

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Compared to an FCO that looks after the day-to-day moments of the child, a Caseworker looks at a more macro picture of the child's development. The Caseworker charts the goals with our Girls, and puts in place systems to help our Girls achieve those goals. The FCO works hand in hand with the Caseworker to ensure that the small steps that lead up to this goal are carried out together with the Girl.

In the beginning, I had to adjust and set the tone for the Girls and myself, as I previously related to them in a more casual way as an FCO. Picking up the technical parts of the job was made smooth with the help of my supervisor and the team, as I was taught what to write for each report and how to carry out my duties.

The most challenging part for me in this role was recognising how critical my work is with the Girls. Because the mission of this role is to restore our Girls back to their families, you feel the sense of responsibility that things have to go well. But this isn't always the case in reality, when sometimes their families are not ready to receive them back, or the Girl herself is not ready to return home.

I had to learn that even when things go wrong, my role is not to be a pseudo parent to the child. Rather, I'm like a mentor, who guides the Girl to make the right decisions and guide them towards the future they envision for themselves. The best service I can offer to the Girls is not by staying up and worrying or blaming myself, but to focus on what's next, and to remain a safe and non-judgemental space for them to turn to.

Q4 What is your greatest joy at work, and what keeps you going?

Discharging Girls successfully back to their families, and coming out of a difficult period with a Girl. These are the living reminders of why I do my job, and why GP exists. At times work seems like I am not making a big difference because the needs out there in Singapore are countless. But yet I'm reminded of The Starfish Story, and what heartens me is that I have made a difference to the cases in my care.

What keeps me going is also the support of my team. When I face a roadblock in some of my cases and I'm unsure how to move forward, I can share with my team and together they provide advice and ideas that spur me on.

Q5 What is one hope you have for GP?

I hope that GP will have more resources to further the work we do with the Girls, and for us to continue with this mission we have started, to see more Girls loved and more lives transformed. At the moment, we serve a clientele of about 40 Girls, but the needs are growing rapidly, and if we have the capacity to do so, I hope that we can extend this refuge to others in need as well.

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Dear Supporters,

Your hands have lifted and carried us a long long way. Look how far we have come! Over the past 25 years, we have found that the hands holding us as a Home were steadfast, faithful, and comforting.

Thank you for the compassion you have extended to us Staff and Girls, from checking in to ask how we are doing, to the hours you pour into planning programmes for our Girls, to the tangible and intangible investment you have made to each of our lives here.

Your showing up with open arms of embrace has been such a blessing to each of us here at Gladiolus Place.

The colour you have added to each of our lives has been so abundant we can't even begin to count the myriad of shades. We hope that for a long, long time to come, our Home will be flooded with the joy that you bring.

With Love, All the Girls and Staff here at Gladiolus Place





About Us



If you are new here, we would like to tell you more about us!

Gladiolus Place is a Christian residential refuge for teenage girls from all walks of life. Here, we strive to develop each Girl holistically, in body, mind and spirit, in a safe and loving family environment.

Our therapeutic interventions are specifically designed for this purpose, in the core areas of academics, life skills and socio-emotional resilience, sports and the arts, character and values. We envision for each Girl, under our care and nurturing, to bloom like the Gladiolus flower.

The Gladiolus flower symbolises strength, honour and dignity.

Likewise, we hope that each Girl that passes through our doors will be empowered to become women of great character, so that they may live their lives to the fullest, as intended by Christ.

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Scan our Linktree QR code to find out more!

SPONSOR-A-GIRL

Make a recurring monthly donation at this link: <u>Give.asia/charity/gladiolusplace</u>!

As a non-profit residential Home, we are continuously seeking out like-minded individuals who would support the mission of the Home by funding the everyday needs of our Girls, which includes meals, school allowance, daily necessities and therapeutic interventions.

This enables us to carry out our mission to bring about healing for brokenness, renewal to minds, and restoration of our Girls to their families and their communities.

Books

Cost per month per Girl:

\$100 School Necessities

\$150 Utilities & Daily Care

\$300 Counselling & Therapy

> \$450 Meals



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SAG

Do remember to type "SAG" in the reference section!

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Volunteer





Have a desire to walk with and inspire our Girls?

We are always on the look out for individuals and organizations who want to make a difference!

Write to us at info@gladiolusplace.org.sg and we will get in touch with you shortly!

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For any queries, email us: mingshiang@gladiolusplace.org.sg



Every Girl Loved, Every Life Transformed



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