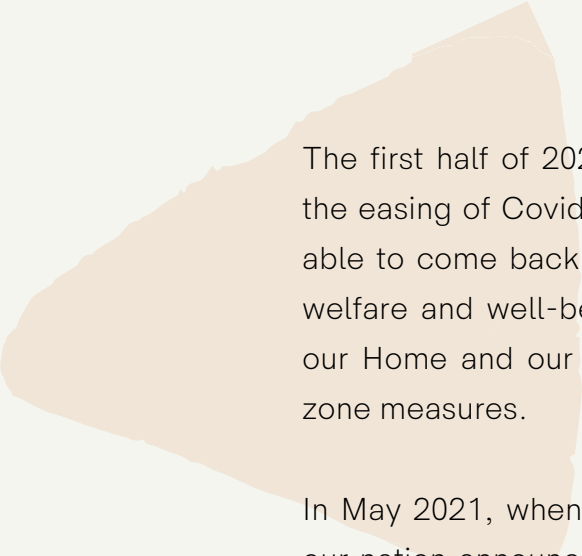


Gladiolus Place

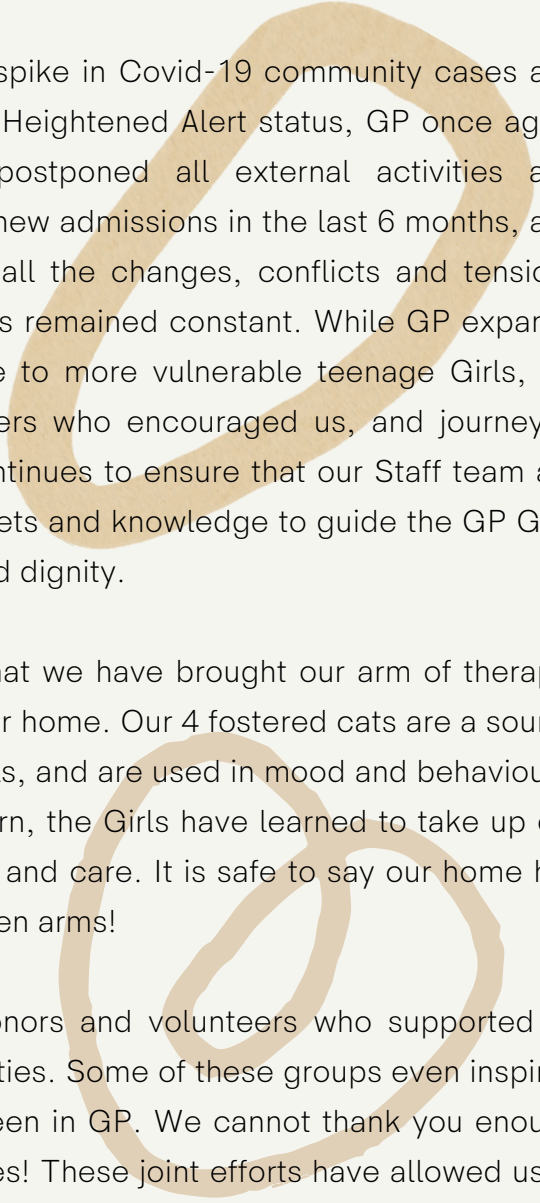


GLADIOLUS NEWSLETTER | JANUARY - JUNE 2021

BI-ANNUAL EVENTS & UPDATES



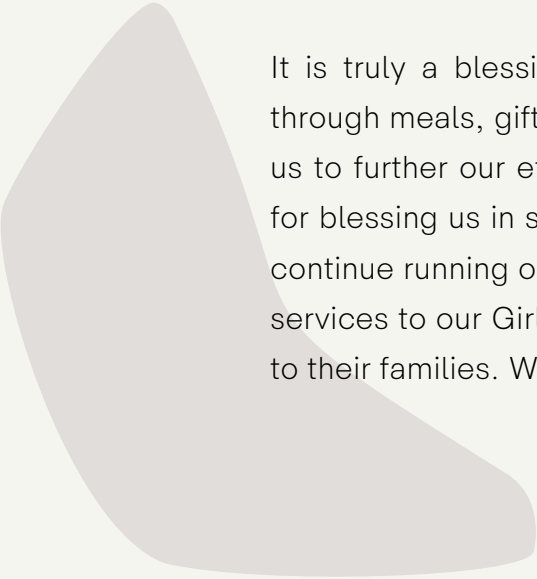
The first half of 2021 was a roller coaster ride for Gladiolus Place. With the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, more volunteers and supporters were able to come back to our Home to dedicate their time and support. The welfare and well-being of our Staff and Girls remained a top priority for our Home and our Girls. Hence, we continued our split teams and split zone measures.



In May 2021, when there was a spike in Covid-19 community cases and our nation announced a Phase 2 Heightened Alert status, GP once again tightened our measures and postponed all external activities and volunteering. GP also saw a few new admissions in the last 6 months, and recognised that in the midst of all the changes, conflicts and tensions within the community and families remained constant. While GP expands and extends its shelter and care to more vulnerable teenage Girls, we would like to thank our supporters who encouraged us, and journeyed alongside us. Our Home also continues to ensure that our Staff team are equipped with the relevant skill sets and knowledge to guide the GP Girls to become women of strength and dignity.

FOREWORD

We are also glad to announce that we have brought our arm of therapy, Animal-Assisted Therapy, into our home. Our 4 fostered cats are a source of comfort and support to our Girls, and are used in mood and behavioural regulation during therapy. In return, the Girls have learned to take up cat husbandry duties to provide love and care. It is safe to say our home has welcomed furry additions with open arms!



It is truly a blessing to have donors and volunteers who supported us through meals, gifts, and necessities. Some of these groups even inspired us to further our efforts to go green in GP. We cannot thank you enough for blessing us in such tough times! These joint efforts have allowed us to continue running our Home to provide basic care, shelter, and therapeutic services to our Girls so that they may heal, blossom and be restored back to their families. We are looking forward to a greater 2021 with all of you!

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 2021!

Every day as I enter Gladiolus Place, I'm greeted by a beautiful fruit garden - shoots of young plants growing, seedlings in their little pots, saplings beginning to take the form of a tree-bearing fruit. But it was not always like this.


Uncle Loo's Garden, as we affectionately call the fruit garden, is the handiwork of Uncle Loo and his son-in-law, Peter Ong, an old friend of mine. Week after week, in the early hours of the morning, they have been coming in to work on this once-barren plot of land. Clearing out the weeds, ploughing the land, planting the seeds, watering them, just continuously and consistently showering love and care on the plants.

Watching the garden begin to blossom is a daily inspiration to me. In many ways, Uncle Loo's work in the garden parallels the work we do here at Gladiolus Place. The faithful sowing of seeds, come rain or shine. Consistent love and care, regardless of how long the seeds take to sprout. And trust that if we persevere, and if we care enough, the seeds will grow into young saplings, and eventually into trees that will bear fruit. Nature runs her course in her own time, not ours. There are no shortcuts to this work, and no part of this process should be taken for granted. Just the pursuit of sheer skill and know-how on how to work the land, and lots of hard work and heart work.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



Uncle Loo
working in
the fruit
garden



This issue documents the journey and experiences of our Girls and Staff here at Gladiolus. It has been an interesting half-year of having to suddenly adapt to a quasi-Circuit Breaker all over again, where we had to call a stop to all external activities, events, and various plans we had in mind. And yet, in the midst of all these challenges, the young lives we care for daily are slowly growing, developing and blossoming into beautiful trees that will bear fruit. How privileged we have been, to be part of this process of nurturing these young impressionable Girls daily, journeying alongside them, sharing in all their ups and downs, rejoicing and weeping together with them. A challenging work it is, no doubt, and one which requires not just the rigorous honing of our skills and know-how, but also the heart to love, even when it may be difficult to do so.

But great have the rewards been! Every single Girl we discharge home to their families is cause for a huge celebration! And every new Girl we welcome (and our Family has grown indeed!) presents new opportunities to sow and to nurture. Every small milestone is affirmed, celebrated as our Girls take baby steps together with us in their journey towards recovery. We are thankful to be given the honour of being that hand they can hold on to, one that will never let go, even in the most trying of seasons.

And you my dear friends, having been the hands we've been holding on to. Thank you for your unfailing love, and unwavering support, as you continuously reach out to us in encouragement, prayer and giving of your time and resources towards the Girls!

We hope that the pages ahead will give you a glimpse into life at Gladiolus Place. In February this year, we were happy to welcome our foster cats to the Home. While the Girls learn to care for these animals, the felines have been a source of comfort to many of our Girls in their journey of healing. During the March holidays, we were able to take our Girls out of GP with Safe Management Measures in place, for exciting hiking trails in nature. Whereas in June, during the Phase 2 (Heightened Alert), we had to remain indoors, and carry out special programmes so that their indoor school holidays would be a fun and fulfilling one! One of our Girls who returned to her family this year also shares her journey and testimony in this newsletter.

As we look forward to the second half of 2021, we will continue to trust in the Lord, to take us by our hand, and lead us through the various seasons, challenges and uncertainties that lie ahead. Let us all “Be still and know that He is God” – Psalm 46:10. May our Lord be glorified always.

Shalom,
Michelle

**DIRECTOR'S
NOTE**

EVENTS & UPDATES

ANIMAL-ASSISTED THERAPY

GP now has 4 cats as our additional in-house arm of therapy - Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT), in support of our existing therapeutic wings (Family Therapy, Art Therapy, and Psychotherapy). AAT was previously adopted as one of our means for therapy but we had to travel out for such sessions. GP had initially planned to bring this therapy home in 2020 but with the pandemic, we decided to put our Girls as our top priority, and hence only properly introduced our furry additions this year. Nonetheless, we are happy to share that of the 6 furry admissions, 2 have since been adopted into loving homes, and we spent the year building them a comfortable environment to live in!

AAT is a meaningful and unique form of therapy. The aim is for these cuddly animals to become the healing paws and a source of comfort for GP residents (and Staff!). When love and affection comes into play between the pet and individual, mutual trust is fostered and healing can begin to take place. We hope that our dearest four-legged friends can provide solace to more of our Girls and Staff!



DUKE-NUS HEALTH & NUTRITION PROGRAM

GP brought in Project Crane - an 8-week long Health & Nutrition Programme to educate the Girls about Health, Nutrition and First Aid skills. The programme is curated and conducted by a group of medical students from Duke-NUS Medical School. Project Crane provided the Girls with a safe open space to discuss health and food myths, and ways to take practical steps towards a healthy, balanced lifestyle. For the final session, Project Crane ended off with an on-site hands-on experience with the Girls practising how to bandage, conduct CPR on a mannequin and use AED practice machines. Through these, the Girls were empowered to make informed diet choices, and be ever ready to assist in emergency situations!



EVENTS & UPDATES

LAUNCH OF ALOHA CAMPAIGN

GP has launched our third campaign entitled Aloha. Aloha means hello, goodbye, or love in Hawaiian. Aloha was created to welcome new residents into a home away from home, and celebrate current residents who are ready to be discharged from GP and restored back to their families and communities. Aloha represents a gesture of warmth and love from home. When we say Aloha, we welcome every resident and we want them to feel loved wherever they are. Aloha also means that one will always be part of our GP Family even after leaving our premises to the next chapter of their lives.

During an admission, we prepare an orientation package and welcome meal for the new resident with her new GP Family. The package includes personalised gifts and cards from all Staff to make her feel at home. We also provide handbooks/booklets for both the resident and her parents to have a clearer understanding of how GP will journey with them for their stay here.

On the other hand, GP also prepares a discharge package to celebrate residents who are ready to be discharged from GP. This means those who have received healing, renewal to their minds, and are safe to be restored to their families and communities.

To say hello and goodbye to residents is our joy, and we hope to continue this campaign in time to come!

THRIFT STORE @ CORNERSTONE



On 27 March, Cornerstone Community Services invited our Girls to their thrift store, The Barn, where each Girl was given store credits to shop for any thrift items from the store! After their shopping experience, the Girls were blessed with a spread of yummy food and beverages at Cornerstone's very own cafe, CornerStore!

It has been awhile since our Girls had an external outing. We are thankful for this opportunity where our Girls practiced safe distancing measures and are thrilled over this thrift shopping experience with our fellow volunteers!

EVENTS & UPDATES

PLF CONNECTION

In celebration of Women's Day 2021, P.L.F. Connection, a home-grown band that specialises in live music gigs, held an online fundraiser on 14 March to celebrate women with their groovy retro tunes! Gladiolus Place is honoured to be one of the three beneficiaries of this event, alongside Hagar SG and Tamar Village, organisations that also seek to support and empower women.

The event was made possible with the help of many supporters. Eden Resources sponsored the event, LouDanClear Studio provided the venue, PLF (Alexandra Hsieh as lead vocals, Michelle Yap on the keys, Teo Boon Chye on the saxophone) and guest singer, Vivienne Chong, entertained us with lovely songs for the evening.

We appreciate all our viewers who watched the live event closely, and donated generously to our cause!



From left to right:
Michelle,
Alexandra,
Vivienne, Boon Chye

INTRODUCTION TO THE NORDIC WELLNESS ROCKING CHAIR

As an extension of our various forms of therapy, GP's wellness rocking chair was introduced in June. The Nordic Wellness Rocking Chair uses soothing music and tactile stimulation to provide a calming sensory experience for Girls in distress.

We are still in the process of introducing the 20-minute therapeutic session to the girls as a safe space and activity the Girls can go to in times of need. We have seen early promising results, with Girls initiating chair sessions to assist with mood regulation.

We look forward to seeing how our Girls will be able to benefit from this new initiative.



March Holidays



During the March holidays, we were blessed to be able to bring in new programmes into GP! The Girls had four sessions with Buds Theatre where they learned more about drama/acting skills. They discussed social issues such as racism and terrorism, and learnt to write their own scripts to role play! Not only did the sessions teach them how to vocalise and enunciate their speech better, it also taught them patience; and that listening before speaking is an important life skill to acquire!

Class in session!



A purrrfect time spent together!

Our Girls also finally began interacting with our fostered cats, now that the cats are settled into GP! Before meeting the cats, the Girls learned about cat husbandry and carried out the duties diligently. We wanted the Girls to learn that taking care of our therapy cats is the duty of the entire GP family, including the Girls.

Additionally, our Girls and Staff had their first ever anti-drug educational talk by the Central Narcotics Bureau of Singapore (CNB). The CNB officers shared about the variety of drugs and their side effects, and during the session an ex-drug abuser shared about her personal experience of drug use and her rehabilitation process. Through this programme, we hope that our Girls gain a better understanding of the dangers of drug use and be deterred from it. Our Staff were also equipped to help our residents steer away from the abuse of drugs and substance.

GP is proud to announce that we have been invited to be part of the UADC (United Against Drugs Coalition) network with CNB, an initiative alongside public agencies such as MSF and MOE, as a committed pledge to the anti-drug cause.





Catholic Family Life (CFL) Singapore also conducted their "Bulletproof Friendships" programme with our Girls, giving them a space to understand and establish healthy relationships around them. In their teenage years, friendship plays an integral role in their development, and what was taught served to enhance their understanding of this key area in their growing up years.



Apart from these exciting programmes, GP had an array of activities lined up for our Girls. From a group Art Therapy session with our caseworkers and Gee, GP's intern Art Therapist from LaSalle, a hike at Dairy Farm and the Wallace Trail with our FCOs (Family Care Officer), to a movie session with HCI Volunteers. We anticipate more upcoming programmes that encourage our Girls to learn, grow and have fun!



June Holidays



During the June holidays, we were largely stuck indoors due to Covid-19 heightened measures, but were still joyfully occupied with the many activities that were lined up. In the first week, the girls dolled up for a photoshoot! Everyone took the chance to wear their best outfits and put on makeup. Photos from the shoot were used for the incentives board up on the corridor of level 1. The incentives board tracks their behaviour and rewards.



The Girls also took time to decorate their respective activity rooms in Zone 1 and 2. They spent time writing affirmations for each other, pasted it on the walls, and put up additional posters, motivational quotes, and drawings. At the end of the activity, awards were given out for the most colourful, positive and creative decorations!



During the lazy afternoons after lunch, the Girls pampered themselves with facial mask sheets to cool down in the hot June weather!



The Zone 1 Girls all dolled up with new makeup skills they have picked up from a session with volunteers!



Honey Cornflakes

Cooking is something close to the Girls' hearts because it reminds some of them of home. During the MasterChef challenge, the Girls cooked up a storm in the kitchen, working together to make Korean army stew, honey cornflakes and cake! Through preparing the ingredients, they bonded over their individual tasks with laughter and good cheer.



Oreo Cheesecake



Girls preparing ingredients for the army stew (photo below)



Hockey in progress!



Enjoying our hearty treat!



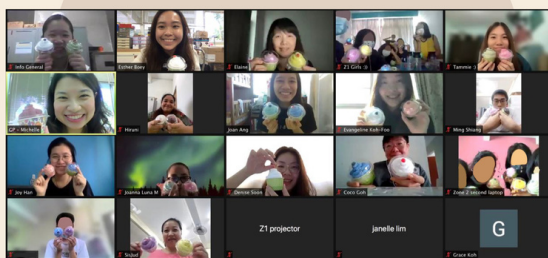
Warming up!



One of highlights was the hockey sessions conducted by the Singapore Hockey Federation. On Tuesdays and Thursdays mornings, the Girls laced up their sports shoes, spent the rest of the morning learning hockey drills and played mini-games. At the end of the 6 training sessions, the coaches even treated the Girls and Staff to a meal of McDonalds!

WEDNESDAY

23 JUNE 2021



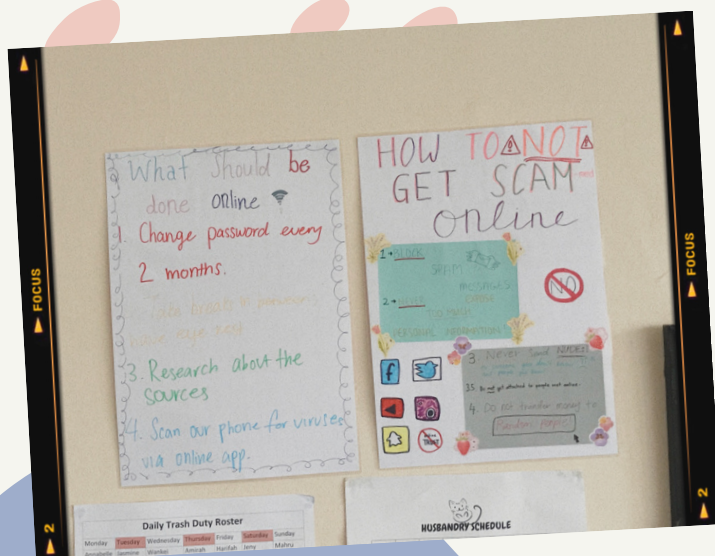
Another interesting session was getting one of our volunteers, Joan, to teach the entire GP Family how to make towel cupcakes through folding and rolling different coloured square towels, and fitting them into cupcake holders! Everyone was given different coloured towels like brown, pink and white to symbolise chocolate, strawberry and vanilla cupcakes! It was a morning of excitement as GP Staff and Girls participated in the activity together over Zoom.

FRIDAY

25 JUNE 2021



On the last Friday night of the holidays, we enjoyed a lovely outdoor barbecue organised by Ms Natalie Teng and her students from Hwa Chong Institution. The Girls were entertained by a series of water games before sunset, before starting their own fires and cooking their dinner. Under the setting sky, everyone savoured their dinner and each other's company!



In the third week of the holidays, the Girls participated in a Cyber Wellness camp organised by the Caseworkers. This was the first time GP designed a structured programme to cater to the Girls' learning about how to relate and carry themselves online. They also learnt how to be responsible online citizens while keeping themselves safe. Through open conversations, the Girls discovered more about their cyber identities, and how to draw boundaries within various online spaces.

COMING HOME AGAIN

TESTIMONY OF OUR EX-RESIDENT



Inhabiting safe places for most Singaporeans are a given. We rise and sleep in a conducive environment to thrive and mature into each different season. But this is a luxury that most girls at GP could only dream of previously.


The underbelly of Singapore has many untold stories, including the journeys of various girls who have passed through the doors of GP.

Some residents stay for years on end, while others, shy of a few months. Yet in each girl's experience, GP is honoured to be the portal towards finding wholeness and security for vulnerable teens who have had to grow up faster than they should.

We welcomed Ella (renamed for confidentiality) into our home in March this year, and in a short span of three months, we have gladly returned her to her grandparents' home. It was, however, an arduous and somewhat messy journey of helping Ella find her place with family, school and friends.

At fourteen years of age, she has faced multiple transitions in her family life and disruptions in caregiving. She previously faced repeated physical, emotional and verbal abuse by her biological mother and stepfather, and had been living with her grandmother since 2019. When relations between her mother and grandmother were further estranged, Ella was caught in the middle of their rift and MSF assessed that it was better to place her in a Voluntary Children's Home (VCH) such as GP.

Upon Ella's admission, GP worked closely and regularly with her Child Protection Officer (CPO) as well as her school teachers and counsellor to ensure that she would be supported even during her time in school.



Her school teachers were proud to share that she was flourishing in Tchoukball, her CCA sport, and managed consistent class participation and attendance despite the change in environment. But this did not mean Ella's transition was a bed of roses.

On a particular Friday, a classmate in school perceived Ella's stay at GP as unnecessary suffering, and she was being 'attention-seeking' by being placed there. Ella returned home that day crying upon reaching the gate.

This is not an isolated case of misunderstanding for our residents. Many of our girls have also been looked at in different light because of their living situation and are often misconstrued as delinquents who are taken out of their biological homes due to mischief. Through our work of raising awareness about these youths who fall through the cracks, we hope to dispel such misconceptions about our residents. Such notions and stereotypes placed on our residents are the last things they need in their attempt in recovery and discovering their identity.

During the course of the same day, Ella's mother contacted her via text, which escalated her emotions. Her experience with her classmate only fuelled greater anger toward her biological mother, and whom she already had a difficult time forgiving. With the help of other girls and staff at GP, Ella managed to calm down and by the next morning, she assured her counsellor that she was feeling much better.

One of the long term goals that GP charted was for Ella to feel safe in her grandmother's house, and to slowly improve her strained relationship with her mother by allowing communication via text.

Her grandmother and other family members living in her grandmother's house were permitted to come for weekend visits. Ella was visibly expectant for such visits, and each time they came, she was showered with care, food and clothes.

Through the twice a week counselling sessions that Ella went through, she learnt how to better regulate her emotions and reach out for help whenever she needs to. She also learnt how to identify various circles of support at home and school, as well as her counsellors.

In May, the court ruled that Ella's grandmother would assume the primary caregiver role for the teen, while maintaining access with her mother. She was then discharged after GP deemed that she was mature enough to process her emotions and verbalise her needs.

Although Ella's stay was short, she forged deep and lasting friendships with the other girls at GP, and found a refuge within our pink walls. We are truly happy that Ella is able to find a safe and nurturing abode with her grandmother, and confident that she will work towards restoring her relationship with her mother.

DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS

A BIG THANK YOU



It takes a village to raise a child, caring for our Girls will not be possible without the help of various individuals, volunteers and organisations. We have been immeasurably blessed by the people who have come alongside our Home to hold fundraisers, sponsor our needs and even hold activities for the Girls and Staff. Others, who have generously donated in ways they have (some anonymously too) deeply touched us as well.

From holding baking classes, having outdoor barbecues together, teaching embroidery, sponsoring our basic needs like toothpaste, shampoo, snacks, glasses, shoes, school supplies, electrical appliances, apparel, make-up, and even our haircuts - These things have greatly helped us to offset costs that we would have otherwise had to bear, and our Girls have expressed their gratitude as well.

More importantly, our Home, Staff and Girls, have forged bonds with the people who have entered our midst to befriend us, and to support in whatever ways possible. As we slowly open up our Home to volunteers with the lifting of Covid-19 measures in the future, we look forward to receiving old and new faces at 6A Mattar Road!

CAMPAIGNS

SPONSOR-A-GIRL

A campaign to provide for the physical & emotional needs of our Girls.

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 basic needs of our Girls, which includes **meals, school allowance, daily necessities, 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.

BUILD OUR HOME, BUILD THEIR LIVES

A campaign to create a safer Home for our GP Family.

The last time thorough maintenance works were done on the Gladiolus Place building was 2013. Since then, many parts of our facility have **fallen into disarray**. There are areas of the Home are now out of bounds to both Girls and Staff due to **safety issues**.

Urgent repair and replacement works are needed to be done across the Home as Girls spend time in our home away from home here, and Staff spend extensive time caring for the Girls.

ALOHA

A campaign to say hello and goodbye

The Aloha campaign was created to **welcome new residents** into their home away from home. This campaign will fund **Orientation Packages**, consisting of a welcome Dinner and gifts to welcome their admission.

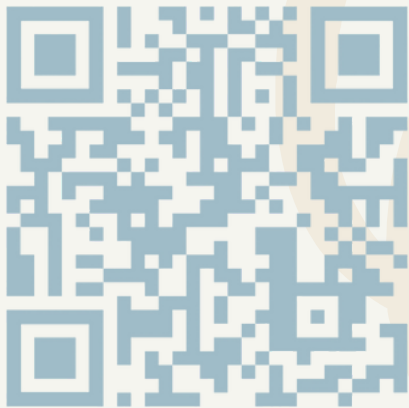
Funds will also be channeled into **Discharge Packages**, which comprises of a farewell Dinner, gifts and notes to celebrate residents who have journeyed well, and are ready to be reintegrated back with their families.

ABOUT US



Gladiolus Place is a Christian residential refuge for teenage girls. Here, we strive to develop each resident holistically, in body, mind, soul and spirit, in a safe and loving family environment.

Our therapeutic interventions are specifically designed for this purpose, in the core areas of academic, vocational, physical and character development. We envision for each girl, under our care and nurturing, to bloom like the Gladiolus flower, clothed in strength and honour, empowered to be women of dignity and confidence, so that they may live their lives to the fullest, as intended by Christ.



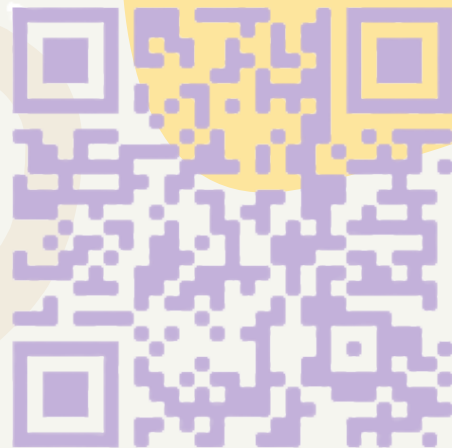
DONATE

Scan this QR code to donate via credit/debit card, giving.sg, bank transfer/GIRO, or PayNow.

If you wish to make a donation via cheque, please write your cheque in favour of "**PCS - Gladiolus Place**", and mail it to **6A Mattar Road Singapore 387715**.

Please do indicate your name and NRIC number as these are required for tax exemption from IRAS. All outright donations will be entitled to a tax deduction of 2.5 times the amount received.

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



VOLUNTEER

Scan this QR code to find out ways you can **volunteer** with us!

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

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

CONTACT US



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*Every Girl Loved.
Every Life Transformed.*

JANUARY - JUNE 2021