HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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Life Storeys

LIFE IN THE HEARTLANDS

WHAMPOA PARK: FROM THE GROUND UP

A park customised to residents' needs

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ISSUE 39 Jan 2024

Dear Readers,

Happy New Year! Life Storeys wishes you good health, happiness and success in the coming year.

As you look forward to making the best of 2024, HDB continues to rejuvenate every estate through the Remaking Our Heartland programme. To date, nine towns and estates have benefitted from the programme and four more, including Queenstown, were recently added to the list. Queenstown, in fact, is the pilot site for the Health District. Read more about it in **Talk of the Town.**

Queenstown is home to several historic landmarks, but it also has modern F&B establishments to cater for residents with cosmopolitan tastes. This issue's **Around the Block** shines a spotlight on some of them.

With almost 80% of households owning air conditioners, Singapore is a 'cool' country to live in. However, an ill-functioning air conditioner can lead to noises and leaks that may cause inconvenience to neighbours. Find out how to minimise such incidences by ensuring the effective functioning of your air conditioner in **Our Life Stories**. If building a cohesive community in your neighbourhood is on your list of New Year resolutions, you'll be pleased to know we have an article in this section that offers useful pointers you can adopt to be a friendly and caring neighbour. This section also profiles Muhammad Hisham bin Bakri, a Bedok resident and baker who seeks to help the less fortunate through his bakes.

Singapore's Islandwide Cycling Network will provide residents with more options to access facilities within the neighbourhood as well as convenient access to other parts of the island. As public paths are shared by many users, both pedestrians and active mobility (AM) users need to practise graciousness in utilising these paths. Learn more about this in **Livin' It Up**. We also showcase the newly-opened Whampoa Park in this section, which was co-created with the community to meet the wants and needs of residents.

We hope you enjoy reading the first issue of *Life Storeys* for 2024!

The Editorial Team

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2022 APEX AWARDS FOR PUBLICATION EXCELLENCE

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REJUVENATING *Queenstown*

A TRANSFORMATION IS IN THE PIPELINE FOR QUEENSTOWN UNDER THE REMAKING OUR HEARTLAND (ROH) PROGRAMME. SINCE ITS LAUNCH IN 2007, ROH HAS BEEN INVIGORATING THE HEARTLANDS. TO DATE, NINE TOWNS AND ESTATES HAVE BENEFITTED FROM THIS PROGRAMME AND FOUR MORE, INCLUDING QUEENSTOWN, WERE RECENTLY ADDED TO THE LIST.

Our first satellite town, Queenstown is also the pilot site for the Health District. Today, Queenstown houses one of the oldest populations in Singapore – one in four Singaporean residents here are aged 65 and above. A collaboration between HDB, National University Health System (NUHS) and the National University of Singapore (NUS), together with other stakeholders from the public, private and people sectors, the Health District @ Queenstown aims to create integrated solutions to promote healthy longevity, enable purposeful longevity, promote intergenerational bonding and enable a community of all ages. HDB's ROH programme contributes to these objectives through a comprehensive rejuvenation of the built environment in Queenstown.

Upgrades for active lifestyles

Residents in existing precincts across Queenstown can look forward to senior-centric/fitness features progressively in the next two to three years. These include:

- An Active Health Fitness Trail linking up various fitness corners within Mei Ling precinct, that will be piloted in partnership with SportSG. Exercise programmes and activities will also be introduced by SportSG to help residents in their health and wellness journey.
- First ActiveSG Gym to be housed within a new housing development, at the Queensway Canopy Build-to-Order project which was launched in 2022.

- Wayfinding features such as distinctive signage on blocks, wayfinding lines guiding people to common areas such as lift lobbies will be designed in future public housing developments such as Queensway Canopy, to better support seniors with dementia and residents in finding their way around the neighbourhood.

Greening for wellness

Working with NParks and other agencies, HDB has planned enhancements to bring greenery and spaces for community gardening nearer to residents, such as:

- New parks designed with themed facilities, sheltered seating and play elements.
- Nature-themed concepts such as wellness landscapes that incorporate therapeutic gardens. Designed using science-based principles, these outdoor gardens will be located within selected housing precincts and parks to encourage visitors to interact with nature and promote mental relaxation. For example, the proposed therapeutic garden at the existing HDB precinct at Commonwealth Heights in Queenstown is projected to be completed by end of 2026, and will feature therapeutic spaces for contemplative activities, as well as sensory planting (plants with different scents, textures and colours).
- Upgrades to existing neighbourhood parks and green spaces, including having more recreational facilities, play elements, and thematic exercise equipment.

Senior-friendly areas for healthier communities

More facilities and features will also be in place to foster more inclusive social spaces that better meet the community's needs. For instance:

- Enhancements to existing Neighbourhood Centres such as sheltered seating areas with pleasant landscaping, new fitness equipment and bicycle parking facilities.
- Improved pavements and wider centre dividers to allow seniors to cross the road in two stages, making moving around easier and safer. Barrier-free ramps will also be implemented to help residents navigate steep terrain.

Preserving memories and heritage for future generations

Over the course of some 70 years, Queenstown has seen a great deal of change and development to keep pace with residents' evolving needs and aspirations. Through it all, it has retained much of its unique charm and character. In the same vein, ROH development aims to retain key heritage elements that residents cherish. To celebrate the rich history of Queenstown, residents will have the opportunity to co-create wall murals to capture the town's milestone moments. These murals will evoke cherished memories and also help residents with dementia navigate the neighbourhood independently.

A JOURNEY Back in Time

GOOD MEMORIES ARE TREASURES, AND QUEENSTOWN BOASTS GEMS A-PLENTY. HERE ARE THREE SPOTS THAT HAVE WON THE HEARTS OF MANY.

As Singapore's first satellite town, Queenstown is rich in history. Those who grew up in the estate hold cherished memories of heritage buildings that formed the backdrop of countless family photos, legendary hawker stalls that drew crowds from all over Singapore, iconic cinemas where people gathered to watch Taiwanese films and other movies, and much more.

While the estate has undergone massive transformation over the years, several of its distinctive landmarks continue to thrive as gathering places.

Queenstown Public Library

53 Margaret Drive, Singapore 149297

When it opened in 1970, Queenstown Public Library was Singapore's first full-time branch library. It supplemented the National Library's existing mobile library services, which had been bringing books to Singapore readers since 1960. Designed in Modernist style, the two-storey building featured bow-tie arches and utilised many glass panels to allow natural light into the reading rooms.

Those who grew up in Queenstown will fondly remember the children's books area on the ground floor as well as the weekend storytelling sessions. With the installation of air-conditioning in 1978, the building became a sanctuary, providing visitors respite from the heat. The building was gazetted for conservation in 2013, which means its exterior façade must be maintained.

Queenstown Public Library

Ridout Tea Garden

580 Queensway, Singapore 149066

Before it became the setting for probably the most picturesque McDonald's in Singapore, Ridout Tea Garden was known as the Queenstown Japanese Garden. Built in 1970 as Singapore's first Japanese-themed community garden, it housed shops that sold goods ranging from furniture to electronic items. It even hosted photography competitions organised by the Queenstown Community Centre.

In 1978, a fire destroyed the garden and all the shops, except for an electronic goods store. When HDB rebuilt the garden in 1980, the building that previously held this store — which had moved out by then — was converted into a single-storey teahouse with a double-slope roof and wooden and plexiglass sliding doors. The building overlooked a pond as well as landscaped gardens, footpaths and bridges. This rebuilt Japanese-themed garden was named Ridout Tea Garden. While Ridout Tea Garden has been updated with modern amenities over the years, many of its original features remain, including the pond and its associated bridges.

Ridout Tea Garden

Ghim Moh Market and Food Centre

20 Ghim Moh Road, Singapore 270020

Many Singaporeans argue that the estate they grew up in offers the best iteration of our local culinary delights. While this can be a fun debate, given that Ghim Moh Market and Food Centre hosts stalls mentioned in the Michelin Guide, residents of Queenstown may have a point.

The hawker centre, which started operations along with the neighbouring wet market in 1972, has seen brisk business over the years. Some of its tenants have plied their trade there for decades. Possibly the most famous of its stalls is Ghim Moh Chwee Kueh, which has a Michelin Plate* to its name. Known for *chwee kueh* or steamed rice cakes hand-made the traditional way, this stall has wowed fans for generations with its soft rice cakes topped with savoury fried dried radish and mildly spicy sambal.

Additionally, another stall in the hawker centre has won a place on the 2023 Michelin Bib Gourmand Singapore list: Chuan Kee Boneless Braised Duck, which specialises in Teochew-style braised duck.

* *A Michelin Plate is given to restaurants that have neither been awarded a star nor a Bib Gourmand but are recognised for having very good food.*

Chuan Kee Boneless Braised Duck

FIT FOR A Queen

FOOD LOVERS VISITING QUEENSTOWN WILL BE PLEASANTLY SURPRISED TO FIND THAT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD HAS SOME TRENDY EATS TO SATISFY EVEN THE MOST DISCERNING TASTE BUDS.

Queenstown may be one of our oldest towns but it's no fuddy-duddy. Tucked among blocks of HDB flats both old and new are swanky cafes, patisseries and even gourmet grocers. A reflection of the changing demographic of this historic precinct, these stores cater to the tastes of the younger, more cosmopolitan families and couples in the area.

PHOTOS: TIONG HOE SPECIALTY COFFEE

Tiong Hoe Specialty Coffee

170 Stirling Road, #01-1133, Singapore 140170

Tiong Hoe Specialty Coffee has eight outlets around Singapore and counting but its flagship is located in Queenstown. This is where the company's founder Mr Tan Tiong Hoe ran his coffee trading business when he started about 50 years ago. In 2014, Mr Tan's office was converted into a café by his son Jacob and co-founder Juliana. The café is cosy and bright, with coffee-making paraphernalia lining its shelves. It sells speciality-grade coffee, and the promise of a good cup of Joe attracts droves of Queenstown residents as well as the lunchtime crowd from offices in nearby Bukit Merah. Aiming to be a one-stop shop for all things coffee, the company also conducts coffee appreciation workshops for both the public and corporates.

"I live in the same block and drop in almost every day. They have multiple choices from various countries and there's a different coffee featured every day. My favourite is the Brazil coffee, which has an exceptionally rich taste."

– MR C K THENG, 51, WORKS IN THE SEMICONDUCTOR INDUSTRY

Meatkrafters

19 Ghim Moh Road, #01-247, Singapore 270019

Residents in Ghim Moh planning a barbecue or a meal for a special occasion need not go scrambling from shop to shop looking for their favourite cuts of meat. Meatkrafters – a one-stop gourmet butchery grocer – stocks premium and distinctive meat cuts, carefully sourced and personally taste-tested by founders husband-and-wife duo Kris Tan and Jessie Toh and Head Butcher Tay.

For beef lovers, Kris recommends the MB4+ Picanha ("it's very similar to sirloin") as well as the Argentina ribeyes. "We also have a new selection of chicken, lamb, beef and pork skewers," he reveals. The health-conscious will be chuffed to know the butchery offers hormone-and-antibiotic-free French Poulet Chicken. To complement the meats, the butchery stocks its own range of house-branded soups and bread, as well as cheese, seasoning and spices. And, what's a feast without wine? Meatkrafters offers an array of affordable and rare vintages carefully sourced by Kris, an avid wine enthusiast. For added convenience, the butchery also has self-checkout refrigerators that are available 24/7 onsite.

PHOTO: MEATKRAFTERS

The Homme Baker

38 Margaret Drive, #01-08, Singapore 141038

The Homme Baker is located within the revamped Margaret Market, formerly the Commonwealth Avenue Wet Market and Food Centre. The bakery started out as a home-based online business before founder-pastry chef Pond Lim and co-founder Johnson Ong expanded with a physical shop at their current location in July 2023.

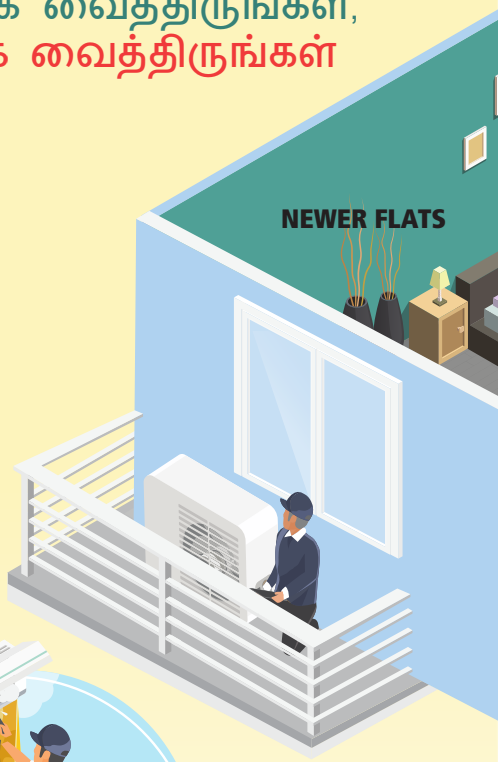
When we popped by, two ladies were perched at the counter enjoying afternoon tea with cake while Pond, who had his culinary training in Bangkok, was decorating one of his creations. All the cakes here are Instagram-worthy. The bakery's signature confection is the T&J, which is styled to look like Swiss cheese and comes in six different flavours. The original, a cheesecake encased in white chocolate caramel, is both creamy and treacly. You'll also find fruit-based gateau such as pineapple upside-down cake and festive treats like Christmas rum fruit cake and Mandarin orange cake for Chinese New Year. But the most popular option is the "Be Proud & Gorgeous" chocolate bundt cake. Made with quality dark chocolate, it was covered in a decadent chocolate sauce topped with fruits and a cookie for crunch – so delectable we couldn't get enough of it!

KEEP COOL, *Keep Safe*

安心享清凉 JAGA KESEJUKAN, JAGA KESELAMATAN குளிர்ச்சியாக வைத்திருங்கள், பாதுகாப்பாக வைத்திருங்கள்

WITH ALMOST 80% OF HOUSEHOLDS OWNING AIR CONDITIONERS, SINGAPORE IS CERTAINLY A 'COOL' COUNTRY TO LIVE IN! HOWEVER, MAINTAINING A COMFORTABLE TEMPERATURE TAKES EFFORT. HERE ARE TIPS ON KEEPING YOUR AIR CONDITIONER FUNCTIONING AT ITS BEST.

Air conditioners (or aircon) have become a ubiquitous part of life in Singapore, helping us to cope with the year-round heat and humidity. As with most electrical appliances, it is important to maintain your aircon regularly to keep it in tip-top shape. Ensuring the aircon is working at its best would also reduce incidences of noise and water leaking on neighbours and show consideration for them.



SEEK PROFESSIONAL SERVICING FOR YOUR AIRCON AND AIRCON COMPRESSORS REGULARLY

定期为您的冷气机和冷气压缩机寻求专业维修服务

DAPATKAN KHIDMAT SENGGARA PROFESIONAL UNTUK ALAT HAWA DINGIN DAN PEMAMPAT HAWA DINGIN ANDA SECARA TETAP

உங்கள் குளிர்சாதனம் மற்றும் குளிர்சாதன அழுத்திக்கு (கம்ப்ரெஸ்சர்) நிபுணத்துவ பராமரிப்பு மற்றும் பழுதுபார்ப்பு சேவையை தவறாமல் நாடுங்கள்

Regular maintenance is essential for optimal performance and longevity of aircons; it is recommended to clean the aircon's filters and coil fins at home regularly. Additionally, seeking professional servicing regularly is advisable. During these servicing appointments, various components, including the filter and water tray, are inspected and cleaned.

While preventive measures are essential, aircon remains susceptible to leaks stemming from the buildup of condensation water, often due to factors like dirt accumulation on the coils or improper condensate discharge. These leaks present potential problems such as growth of mould or mildew. Additionally, they can cause inconvenience to neighbours, resulting in issues such as dampness on your neighbour's ceiling, walls or floors.

Faulty aircon compressors located outside the house can also result in dripping water if not properly maintained. These leaks may drip onto the aircon compressors of lower-floor neighbours, resulting in noise disturbances, and passers-by may also encounter dripping water. If there are any signs of condensation or leaks, it is recommended to engage the services of a qualified aircon technician for thorough checks.

GET YOUR AIRCON COMPRESSOR STRUCTURAL SUPPORTING SYSTEM INSPECTED BY A TRAINED AIR-CONDITIONING UNIT INSTALLER TO ENSURE ITS STURDINESS

聘雇受过训练的冷气安装人员检查冷气压缩机支架，确保它稳固

DAPATKAN PEKERJA PEMASANG UNIT HAWA DINGIN YANG TERLATIH UNTUK MEMERIKSA SISTEM SOKONGAN STRUKTUR KOMPRESOR ALAT HAWA DINGIN ANDA DEMI MEMASTIKAN KEKUKUHANNYA

உங்கள் குளிர்சாதன அழுத்தியின் (கம்ப்ரெஸ்சர்) கட்டமைப்புத் தாங்கமைவை ஒரு பயிற்சிபெற்ற குளிர்சாதனம் நிறுவுபவரைக்கொண்டு ஆய்வுசெய்து, அது உறுதியாக இருப்பதை உறுதிப்படுத்திக்கொள்ளுங்கள்

In older flats, aircon compressors typically have a structural support system such as stainless steel brackets, whereas newer flats have purpose-built ledges for them. The sturdiness and safety of these structural support systems should be checked regularly, as they are exposed to the elements.

Have a good maintenance regime by carrying out visual checks for signs of wear and tear, corrosion, or rust regularly, say every six months. You may also check with the aircon technician if there is a need to replace the structural support system during the regular servicing of your aircon system. Engage an air-conditioning unit installer trained by the Building and Construction Authority to replace or repair the structural support system, if required. Neglecting this maintenance could lead to the structural support system collapsing, potentially causing injury or even death to passers-by. Moreover, if an air conditioning unit's structural support system falls due to a lack of maintenance, the homeowner could face a maximum fine of $10,000 and/or a jail term of up to one year under the Building Maintenance and Strata Management Act (BMSMA).

GIVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR A HEADS-UP IF YOU SPOT WATER DRIPPING FROM THEIR AIRCON COMPRESSOR!

若发现邻居家的冷气压缩机滴水，请提醒他们！

BERITAHU JIRAN ANDA JIKA ANDA MELIHAT AIR MENITIS DARIPADA KOMPRESOR ALAT HAWA DINGIN MEREKA!

உங்கள் அண்டைவீட்டாரின் குளிர்சாதன அழுத்தியில் (கம்ப்ரெஸ்சர்) இருந்து நீர் சொட்டுவதைக் கண்டால், அவருக்குத் தெரிவியுங்கள்!

It's easy to overlook aircon compressors, as they are often out of sight. If you notice water dripping from your neighbour's aircon compressor, do give them a heads-up! Fixing the issue not only prevents water from dripping which may cause inconvenience to the neighbours, but is also a kind gesture, alerting your neighbour to a problem they may have missed.

DID YOU KNOW?

According to NEA, setting the aircon to 25°C is the best temperature to save energy and manage your electricity bills – you can save about $13 a year* for every degree raised!

* Based on electricity cost of $0.299 per kWh of electricity, assuming a single-split 2-tick, 2.6kW cooling capacity air conditioner and/or a 50W standing fan where relevant.

CONSIDERATE NEIGHBOURS, *Happy Community*

IT IS THE TIME OF THE YEAR TO MAKE NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS — LET BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOUR BE A PRIORITY ON YOUR LIST!

As we welcome the year 2024, it's time to leave the past behind and begin anew with a clean slate. If making strides towards becoming a considerate neighbour and an active community member is part of your New Year resolutions, here are tips to promote neighbourliness and enhance the overall living experience for everyone.

Danger from above

To ensure you are not inadvertently responsible for potential killer litter, keep your items away from open windows and ledges. Make sure bamboo poles are properly secured in holders, and use them only for hanging laundry. Loose windows and air conditioner compressor can also be hazardous; regularly inspect and secure them to prevent accidents.

That's not rain!

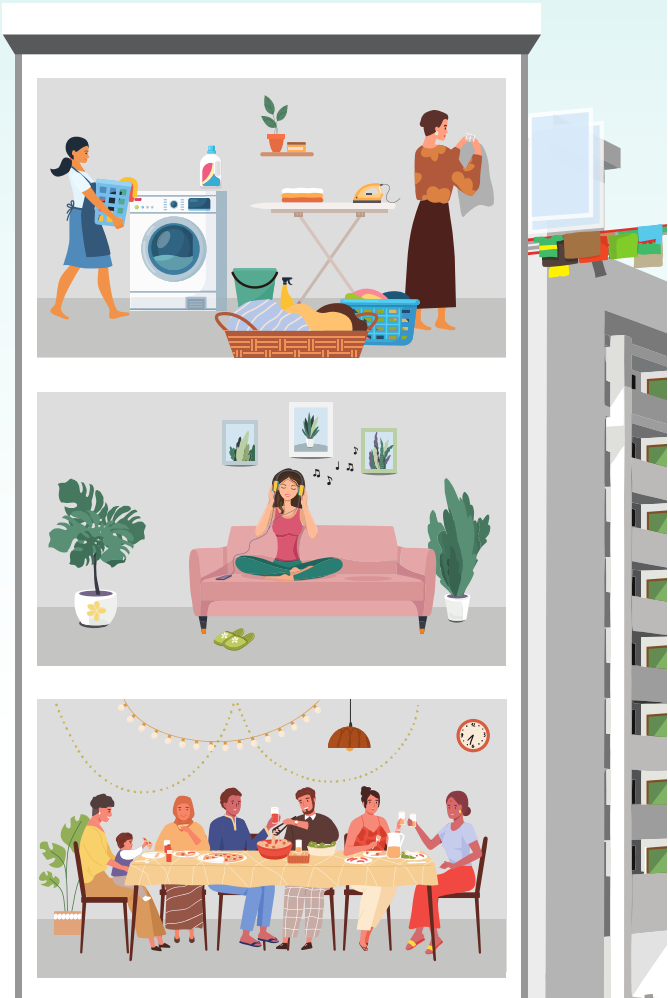
Prevent water from wet laundry from dripping onto neighbours' laundry, or pedestrians, by wringing out excess water before hanging these out to dry. This simple act can make a big difference in maintaining a pleasant environment for all.

Keep the peace

Home is a sanctuary for rest, so keep noise levels to a minimum, especially when your closest neighbours are just a wall away. Besides keeping electronic devices at low volumes, other methods of reducing noise pollution include installing rubber stoppers on furniture and avoiding noisy activities between 10.30pm and 7am.

Kampung spirit

To be a good neighbour, begin by getting to know yours — all it takes is a simple greeting to spark a conversation. Some other ideas to foster friendships are inviting your neighbours over for festive meals, or sharing home-made treats with them. Don't forget to extend a helping hand when the need arises too; for instance, holding the lift doors open when you see a neighbour approaching.



Odorous issues

Blocked refuse chutes due to improper waste disposal not only create unpleasant odours but also attract pests. To prevent chute blockages, securely tie rubbish bags and ensure the bags are smaller than the hopper opening. Additionally, do not throw large, long, semi-bulky or flammable items in the chute.

Respect for shared spaces

Common areas like void decks and lifts are spaces for everyone. Being considerate while using them can help promote a more congenial environment for all.

In addition, do not leave your rubbish or bulky items in common areas. Contact the Town Council if you have any bulky items to dispose of.

Community engagement

There are many ways of being part of the community, such as by taking part in sports and cultural activities — your local community centre is a good place to start! If you want to take your role in the community to the next level, consider volunteering at a grassroots organisation.

Being a considerate neighbour takes some effort. It entails being kind and respectful, and watching out for one another. By doing so, we can foster healthy connections and cultivate a more pleasant community.

THE SWEETNESS OF Giving

HIPSTER BAKES IS A BAKERY WITH A DIFFERENCE. ITS OWNER, MUHAMMAD HISHAM BIN BAKRI, HAS A HEART FOR THOSE IN NEED AND RAISES FUNDS FOR THEM THROUGH HIS BAKES.

Stepping into Hipster Bakes, you are greeted by jars of edible cookie dough, a variety of cakes, cookies and tarts as well as local snacks like crispy prawn rolls. Also on display are pastel-hued mini cakes that bear the words "Cakes 4 Hope" on the box. These have been created to raise funds for cancer sufferers.

Founder and owner of Hipster Bakes Muhammad Hisham bin Bakri has been supporting the needy via baking since the bakery's early years when he, banding together with four friends, raised funds for Muhammadiyah Welfare Home and the Cat Welfare Society. A cancer survivor himself, Hisham knows well the travails of cancer patients and is keen to do his bit to ease their suffering. Of his personal situation, he admits it "was a bit of a shock to find out I had cancer, especially as I have no family history, but you just have to keep going," he says stoically.

The soft-spoken 41-year-old was a graphic designer with an advertising agency before he decided to become a full-time baker. Together with his sister, he opened his first outlet in Siglap Centre in 2015. Today, they work out of a space in a condominium along Upper East

> I love that you can combine ingredients and play around with flavours and different textures. I enjoy feeding people and making them happy. It's like being a part of someone's happy occasion, especially if I'm doing wedding cakes; I try to integrate the couple's personality and what they like, even down to the colours.

Coast Road and sell their baked goods via Shopee, their website, food delivery platforms as well as Instagram: @hipsterbakes.

Why did you decide to raise funds for cancer patients?

I decided to collect funds for cancer patients and their caregivers because I know cancer treatment is not cheap. We are selling our mini cakes for $20, with 10% of the proceeds going into the fund.

How have you spread the message about this initiative?

I have been doing so through a cancer support group I am a part of, friends and Instagram.

Tell us about how you started baking.

When I was in secondary school, my mum and grandmother used to take orders for cookies and I would pitch in to help them in the kitchen. But moustache-shaped cookies were the first thing I baked on my own. It was a random thing — one day, I was looking through some cookie cutter websites and thought the moustache one looked cute. I baked some and sent them to friends, and they spread the word. People started buying them as gifts and engagement presents. I still do them upon order. From cookies, I went on to bake cupcakes, then cakes and breads.

The pretty 'Cakes 4 Hope' mini cakes

What are your signature cakes and pastries?

I bake traditional pastries like pineapple tarts and do a modern twist on *kuih makmur* (a leaf-shaped pastry with a sweet peanut filling) as well as fusion flavours. My signature cake is the *ondeh-ondeh* cake while my signature bake is cinnamon rolls.

What keeps you baking?

I love that you can combine ingredients and play around with flavours and different textures. I enjoy feeding people and making them happy. It's like being a part of someone's happy occasion, especially if I'm doing wedding cakes; I try to integrate the couple's personality and what they like, even down to the colours. It puts a smile on people's faces — that's what I enjoy the most.

Where do you live and what do you like about your neighbourhood?

I live in the Bedok Reservoir area. It is very accessible — only a 20- to 25-minute bus ride to Orchard Road — and is relatively quiet. There are also amenities like convenience stores and a Malay-Muslim bakery near my block.

What is your favourite spot in your neighbourhood?

The reservoir itself, which is a few bus stops away from my flat. It's a tranquil and relaxing space where I spend Sunday afternoons.

What is your relationship like with your neighbours?

We know the neighbours on our floor and help them out where needed. But we also have interactions with neighbours in nearby blocks, who are just a phone call away. Recently, when my grandmother passed away, they came to help us out. So in a way, there is a *kampung* spirit.

Better Path Connectivity for a GREENER SINGAPORE

BY 2030, SINGAPORE'S ISLANDWIDE CYCLING NETWORK WILL CONNECT RESIDENTS TO THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD'S AMENITIES AND FACILITIES, AND PROVIDE EASY ACCESS TO OTHER PARTS OF THE ISLAND BY WALKING OR CYCLING.

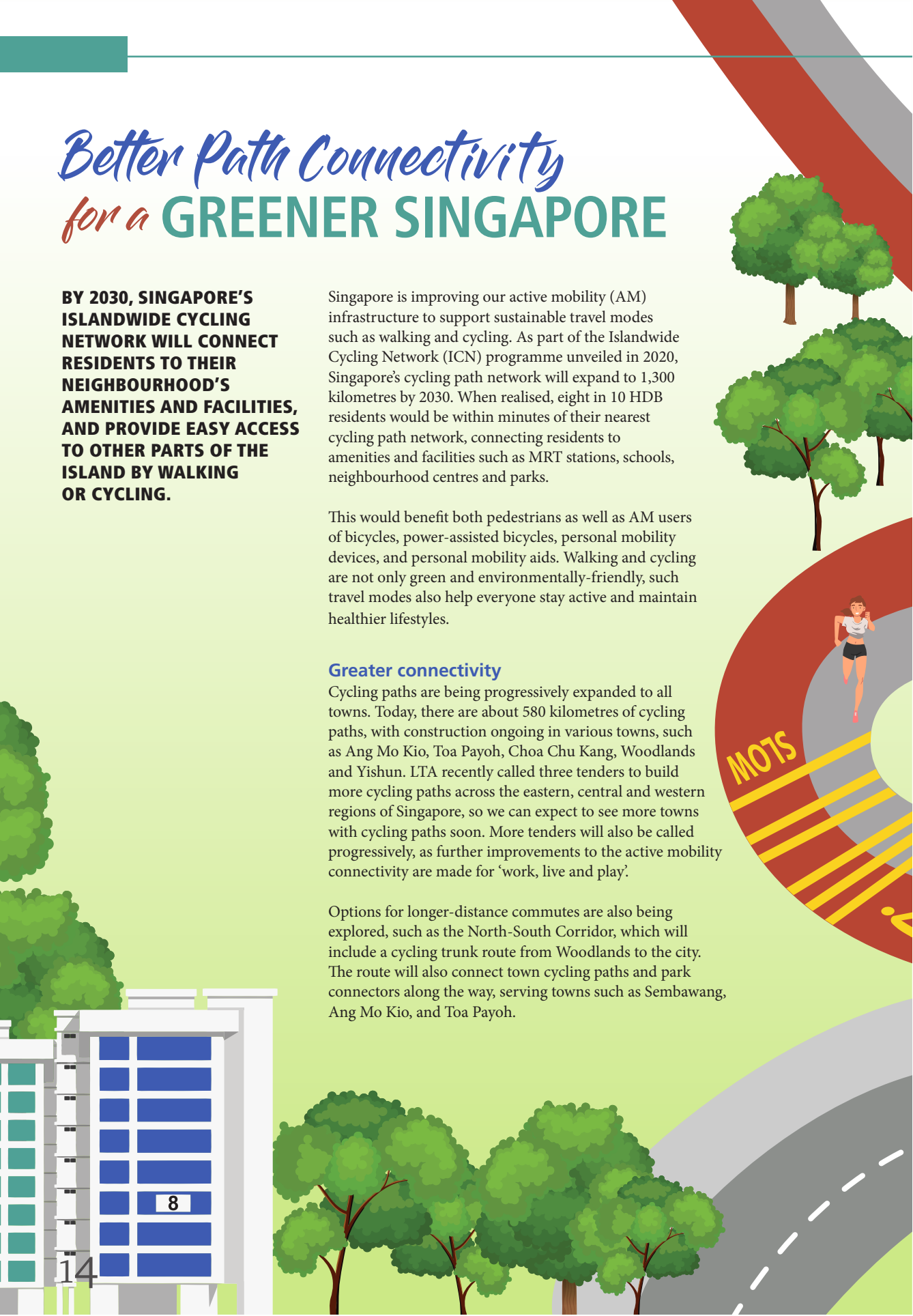
Singapore is improving our active mobility (AM) infrastructure to support sustainable travel modes such as walking and cycling. As part of the Islandwide Cycling Network (ICN) programme unveiled in 2020, Singapore's cycling path network will expand to 1,300 kilometres by 2030. When realised, eight in 10 HDB residents would be within minutes of their nearest cycling path network, connecting residents to amenities and facilities such as MRT stations, schools, neighbourhood centres and parks.

This would benefit both pedestrians as well as AM users of bicycles, power-assisted bicycles, personal mobility devices, and personal mobility aids. Walking and cycling are not only green and environmentally-friendly, such travel modes also help everyone stay active and maintain healthier lifestyles.

Greater connectivity

Cycling paths are being progressively expanded to all towns. Today, there are about 580 kilometres of cycling paths, with construction ongoing in various towns, such as Ang Mo Kio, Toa Payoh, Choa Chu Kang, Woodlands and Yishun. LTA recently called three tenders to build more cycling paths across the eastern, central and western regions of Singapore, so we can expect to see more towns with cycling paths soon. More tenders will also be called progressively, as further improvements to the active mobility connectivity are made for 'work, live and play'.

Options for longer-distance commutes are also being explored, such as the North-South Corridor, which will include a cycling trunk route from Woodlands to the city. The route will also connect town cycling paths and park connectors along the way, serving towns such as Sembawang, Ang Mo Kio, and Toa Payoh.



SHARING OUR PATHS GRACIOUSLY

Our paths are shared by pedestrians and active mobility (AM) users, both young and old. Follow these simple steps for safe and enjoyable shared journeys for everyone!

Stay on your path

Pedestrians should use footpaths when they have a choice between travelling on a footpath or a cycling path. Similarly, AM users should use cycling paths and bicycle crossings when available.

Go slow and give way

Look out for other path users. When moving in crowded areas such as bus stops, especially around children and the elderly, slow down and be prepared to stop, or dismount and walk alongside your device.

Keep left

AM users and pedestrians should keep left, unless when overtaking others.

Children enjoying the swings at the playground.

CO-CREATING *Whampoa Park* WITH RESIDENTS

RECENTLY OPENED IN NOVEMBER, WHAMPOA PARK WAS CO-CREATED WITH THE COMMUNITY TO MEET THE WANTS AND NEEDS OF RESIDENTS.

Bounded by Whampoa Community Club, St Michael's Bus Terminal, Whampoa Park was officially opened on 25 November 2023 by Mr Heng Chee How, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Defence, and Grassroots Adviser for Whampoa. He shared that the former field was "full of potholes, boulders and the occasional snake" and "Today, it has become a space where residents could take their walks, exercise, take part in activity and even bring their pets".

What is unique about the park's development process was that Whampoa residents were involved in giving suggestions and co-developing the design proposals through online surveys and ideation workshops. HDB initiated the design engagement for Whampoa Park in 2021, and roped in volunteers to run the ideation workshops.

One such person was Mr Wong Jia Liang, 38, a UX researcher. He shared that volunteers were not required to be experienced in landscaping or architecture as their role was to synthesise and build consensus on residents' ideas. "I met my assigned group of Whampoa residents over Zoom, and used tools like a digital white board to facilitate discussions. I also helped to distil group members' inputs and concretise them into actionable feedback," he shared.

More than 100 residents who took part in the Whampoa Park engagement were present at the official opening to join Mr Heng to plant trees, partake in guided tours and launch Whampoa's very first pets' park. Mrs Valerie Tan, 36, was there for the tree planting activity with her husband and three children. "I supported the design proposal for the park because I felt that the park would give my kids a safe space to play and we really enjoyed the tree planting activity as it's not every day you get to plant a tree in urban Singapore," said the long-time resident.

Mr Ravi Gadamsetti and his wife, Theja, were also eager to take part in the tree-planting session. "It's a good

initiative," said Mr Gadamsetti. "When I received the invitation, I immediately acknowledged my intent to participate." Although the couple were disappointed there was no dedicated space for yoga, they understood that not every wish could be fulfilled, and were happy to have — right across from their block — a beautifully landscaped path for their daily walk.

"It's very well done," exclaimed an impressed Mdm Karen Tan, 69, after a tour of the park. "All the facilities here are very well thought out, so both seniors and kids will enjoy them very much." When asked which facility she would use, she replied, "I'll take my morning walks in the park and spend time enjoying the Therapeutic Garden."

Letting her dog try out the Pets Park was Mdm Catherina Phee, 58, who has been living in Whampoa for 30 years. She was glad to see the park finally come to fruition. "There used to be just a few big rocks in the middle of the field," she recalled. "Around 2017 or 2018, after heavy rain, the whole place would be flooded up to the ankles." She was delighted that the park has a gated area for pets. She pointed out, though, that a water point would be useful. "This is so that the pets can get a drink, and also get cleaned up if they get muddy."

Judging from the many positive comments, Whampoa Park is set to become a popular spot for residents, thanks to strong community participation in the design engagement process.

Residents test their mettle at the adult fitness station.

Mr Heng Chee How launches Whampoa's very first pets' park.

KEY FEATURES OF THE NEW PARK

Pets Park: This is a first within Whampoa, and was mooted by many Whampoa residents in the ideation exercise.

Adult Fitness Station: For people who are fit and adventurous, this section consists of *Ninja Warrior*-style exercise equipment.

Elderly Fitness Station: The exercise machines are laid out in sequence such that going through them is like going through a fitness trail that aids our seniors in working out different parts of their body.

Playground: There are two sections, one catering to children between two and five years old, and the other for those aged five to 12 years old. Some innovative installations include a parent-child swing where parents can take the swing with their younger kids, and an arc see-saw, where the fulcrum is above rather than below.

Therapeutic Garden: To make this space tranquil, earth mounds are strategically located to minimise noise from the surroundings while a combination of lush greenery and natural boulders create a rustic atmosphere.

Rain Gardens: There are 12 rain gardens around the park laid with specific soil mix to help purify rain water before it enters the nearby Sungei Whampoa.

Jogging track: A portion of the 400-metre jogging path is built on raised ground to minimise disturbance to the tree protection zones, thereby preserving the trees which provide shade for park users.

Paths: The jogging track is of a different colour and material from the walking path. As joggers enter the walking path, the different floor treatment will signal a shared space where they should slow down and keep a lookout for others.

Viewing Deck: Built over a rain garden, this is probably the best spot to view the entire park.

Wellness Benches: Scattered throughout the park, these durable hardwood benches come with attachments to exercise the arms or legs (e.g. bike pedals).

Lawn: This flexible space can be easily converted into a space for disc golf, picnics and movie screenings.

Place your bamboo poles properly!

Dry only your laundry here. Keep other items away and do not hang or place things horizontally across the laundry poles and rack. Otherwise, someone could get badly hurt!

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HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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