



Life Storeys

LIFE IN THE HEARTLANDS



A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE OF HDB LIVING

HDB Community Week returns with a brand new format

CONTENTS

ISSUE 30 Aug/Sep 2021

Dear Readers,

We hope you are keeping well as Singapore begins its journey towards living with COVID-19 as endemic.

In this issue, we bring you highlights from HDB Community Week 2021, which has returned after a year's hiatus to celebrate the community spirit in our heartlands. Find out what took place during the virtual event in **Talk of the Town**.

We headed west to discover popular dining and shopping spots in Bukit Panjang, as well as interesting landmarks worth making a trip for. Follow our journey in **Around the Block**.

While the pandemic has increased our time spent at home, it does not have to stop us from staying fit and active. In collaboration with SingHealth Community Hospitals, we share some simple exercises that you can try at home in **Our Life Stories**. Also featured in this section is local DJ-host Joakim Gomez, who talks about his growth since his *Singapore Idol* days and his love for Bishan.

We pay homage to Singapore's hawker culture, which was added to the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity last year, by visiting five hawker centres across the island. Check out our recommendations in **Livin' It Up**. Whether you are applying for a new flat or buying a resale flat, learn about the Enhanced CPF Housing Grant to help you secure your first home. In the same section, we show you how to maximise storage space via fuss-free and affordable ways.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of *Life Storeys*.



The Editorial Team

TALK OF THE TOWN

- 01 Keeping the
Community Spirit Alive



AROUND THE BLOCK

- 04 An Unexpected
Green Paradise
- 06 Shiok! Spots in
Bukit Panjang



OUR LIFE STORIES

- 08 Stay Home and
Stay Active
- 10 Rising by Lifting Others

LIVIN' IT UP

- 12 Paying Homage To
Hawker Culture
- 14 Things to Know
About the Enhanced
CPF Housing Grant
- 16 Storage Hacks for
Your Home



EDITORIAL ADVISERS

Eileen Neo, Shivvonne Wong,
Jeremy Choy, Peh Yang Yu, Keegan Lim

PUBLISHING AGENT

ThinkFarm Pte Ltd

Managing Director

Christopher Tay

Editor

Dang Hui Ling

Head, Creative

Sean Lee

Art Director

Lee Lily

Contributors

Fiona Chen, Josephine Pang, Vernon
Wong, SingHealth Community Hospitals

Head, Client Relationship

Jessie Kek



Life Storeys is a quarterly community publication by the Housing & Development Board, bringing you stories and happenings from your neighbourhood. Join us in creating a gracious and harmonious living environment for all! You can also access the electronic version at <http://hdb.gov.sg/lifestoreys> or scan the QR code below.



Copyright ©2021

Housing & Development Board
All rights reserved. No part of
this material may be reproduced
or transmitted in any form or
by any means.



This publication is printed on FSC™-certified paper. The paper choice and printing methods are green and environmentally friendly, leaving behind a smaller carbon footprint.

Printed by KHL Printing Co Pte Ltd

KEEPING THE *Community Spirit* ALIVE

THE NINTH EDITION OF HDB COMMUNITY WEEK RETURNS TO CELEBRATE COMMUNITY SPIRIT IN THE HEARTLANDS!



Traditionally held in locations such as community plazas and town squares, HDB Community Week 2021, themed “LIFE in the Heartlands”, went virtual for the first time on 24 July 2021.

Launched via a live-stream event on HDB’s Facebook page and on the Zoom platform, this year’s focus was on the foundation that Community Week is built upon — volunteers, partners and participants — and the importance of strengthening community ties.

The event featured an awards ceremony, where the spotlight was shone on partners of the HDB Community Art Project (CAP), Friends of Our Heartlands (FOH) network volunteers, as well as winners of the Lively Places Challenge (LPC) 2020. Video

clips of various milestones of HDB Community Week, such as brainstorm sessions and community engagement activities carried out by the LPC teams to bring their projects to fruition, were also shown.

Speaking at the live-stream event, guest of honour Mr Desmond Lee, Minister for National Development and Minister-in-charge of Social Services Integration, emphasised the importance of strong community ties, especially during trying times. Mr Lee announced that HDB will set aside another \$1.5 million for the Lively Places Fund to further the efforts of ground-up initiatives championing bonding in the heartlands.

“Strong communities are very important for our social well-being, especially during challenging times

like this pandemic, and our HDB heartlands are where some of our strongest community bonds are forged,” he said.

Making bonding fun

Although the 2020 edition of the LPC was held back by a year, this did not dampen the enthusiasm of the 650 participants who initiated 60 projects across eight HDB towns, including Bishan, Sengkang, Tampines and Yishun. Out of these 60 projects, 36 were brought to life.

The teams were judged based on their ability to engage residents and stakeholders, their project’s sustainability and benefits for the community, and overall impact. The winning teams were each awarded cash prizes of \$2,500 and \$2,000 in the building and non-building categories respectively.



(From left) Mr Desmond Lee, Minister for National Development and Minister-in-charge of Social Services Integration; Mr Tan Meng Dui, Chief Executive Officer of HDB; Mr Sun Yu-li, master artist and curator of the HDB Community Art Project

Here is a look at what some of the Lively Places Challenge winning teams brought to their neighbourhoods:

5G Community Green Hub

With a vision of a vibrant and green neighbourhood, the team, which comprises Bishan East Zone 1 Residents' Committee (RC) members and resident volunteers, has a grand plan to build five thematic gardens within their precinct by the end of 2021. So far, three have already been created — a mural garden, a courtyard beautified by floral vines, and a vertical edible garden.



Pets Park @ Segar Gardens

Following up on residents' reports of bad smells and stains from pets' excretions at common areas, a team of six from the Zhenghua-Segar RC turned an open lawn into a pets park. Pet owners can now bring the animals here for their daily exercise, thus keeping the common areas a pleasant environment for other residents.



Kampong Kakis

The team from Toa Payoh Central Zone 6 Residents' Network brought the *kampung* spirit to their estate by setting up a four-in-one community incubator space, which hosts an indoor hydroponics system, food vending machines, an art gallery, and space for social gatherings — great for fostering community bonding!



Love Thy Neighbour

Last year's Christmas was especially joyful for Bishan residents who participated in a void deck celebration, which had physical and virtual elements. With safe distancing measures in place, the live-streamed event saw residents taking part in art and craft workshops, and online quiz games.



#ShareMoreWasteLess Free Market

Teaming up with the Choa Chu Kang Zone 6 RC, sharing platform Sharetings, who were behind the #ShareMoreWasteLess Free Market, organised an event whereby residents in need could collect pre-loved items, such as soft toys and household appliances contributed by more than 100 households, for free. The initiative was so well-received that plans are underway to hold more of such events, and Sharetings has launched an app to help facilitate such exchanges of pre-loved items.



Taste of Toa Payoh

A team of two lecturers and seven students from ITE College Central decided that the best way to bond residents in Toa Payoh was through Singaporeans' passion for food. With the help of Toa Payoh South Community Centre, nine senior residents came forward to conduct cooking demonstrations for 12 dishes, such as *nasi goreng* and *mua chee*. They even penned the recipes, which were collated into desktop calendars and distributed to Toa Payoh residents. The cooking videos, which were uploaded onto the YouTube channel "Taste of Toa Payoh", were a huge hit!



Artistic vision

Curated by renowned local artist Sun Yu-li and themed “Our HDB, Our Home, Together We Paint Our Future!”, the CAP features artworks submitted by more than 3,000 participants from all walks of life, and of all ages.

Their contributions, painted on totems, canvases and art cards (digital and physical), centred around what they hoped to see in the future of heartland life. These were then put together to form a beautiful digital installation.

Some of the physical submissions are being displayed at the premises of the participating organisations, while the entire virtual installation can be viewed at the HDB Community Week 2021 online exhibition (www.hdb.gov.sg/communityweek).

During the HDB Community Week 2021 virtual event, awards of appreciation were given to CAP partners — namely Mr Henry Ang, Director of Corporate Social Responsibility, Nippon Paint; Mr Dexter Sim, an art teacher at Westwood Secondary School; Ms Ku Geok Boon, Chief Executive Officer, SG Enable; Mr Tok Hock Soon, Director, North East CDD, People’s Association; and Mr Toh Kok Wee, Teck Ghee Committee Club Management Committee — for their contributions.

Connecting communities

The efforts and contributions of HDB’s FOH network were recognised during the online awards ceremony, where six outstanding volunteers were accorded special honours. Two of them received the Gold Award and the other four, the Silver Award.

Launched in 2017, the FOH network has drawn close to 12,000 volunteers, who actively promote cohesion among neighbours and residents, as well as gracious and responsible living in the heartlands.

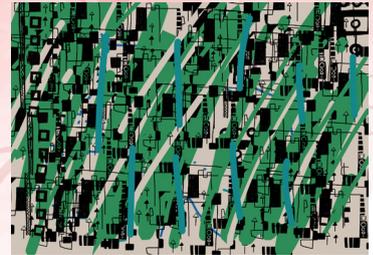
A voting contest was held on Facebook, with the following five artworks winning the honour of being the CAP’s most popular artworks:



Elouise Lim McDonald’s (School of the Arts, Singapore) idea of a smart and sustainable future is an intensive integration of native flora into HDB blocks to create a “city in nature”. This involves renewable energy generated through natural sources, such as solar, wind, and hydropower. The vast greenery also serves to absorb carbon dioxide, bringing about a healthier and more comfortable place to live in.



Thng Shalyn drew inspiration from nature, such as the sun and plants, to conceptualise a sustainable neighbourhood. The light bulbs with strings mimic helium balloons containing people’s ideas about incorporating sustainable smart living as a part of their lives, which are interconnected in various aspects.



Muhamad Irfan (Nanyang Polytechnic) envisions future HDB towns to be “complex circuit boards”, where many small but important components come together to form a large connected town.



Carrisée Choo’s (Fairfield Methodist School (Primary)) artwork features a pond with different species of fish that contribute to a larger aquaponic farm. It doubles as a tourist attraction with a huge bridge over it, and beautified by flowering vines and luxuriant trees.



Shania’s (Teck Ghee Primary School) artwork was inspired by the pretty flowers and trees around her HDB flat.

Being an FOH volunteer enables me to meaningfully engage youths and adults to promote eco-friendly living.

– MDM TAN HA ENG,
FRIENDS OF OUR
HEARTLANDS
NETWORK
VOLUNTEER,
GOLD AWARD
RECIPIENT



One of the Gold Award recipients is Mdm Tan Ha Eng, who has been volunteering as an HDB eco-guide for more than eight years, leading trails around Punggol Town. Her passion has also seen her contributing towards the creation of an Eco Trails e-resource kit to help Singaporeans organise self-guided eco trails.

Scan the QR code for more information on HDB Community Week 2021:





AN UNEXPECTED *Green Paradise*

BUKIT PANJANG MAY BE A RELATIVELY YOUNG ESTATE, BUT IT HAS NO LACK OF GREEN SPACES AND HISTORICAL AREAS TO VISIT.

Did you know that Bukit Panjang means “long hill” in Malay? Like many other housing estates, it used to consist of rural settlements and farmland, which made way for public housing in the 1980s.

Located in the west of Singapore, Bukit Panjang is very much a heartland estate, but one that is bordered by verdant areas such as Zhenghua Nature Park and Chestnut Nature Park.

Nature lovers may be pleasantly surprised to find that they can easily spend the whole day in Bukit Panjang. Here are some places to check out.

Chestnut Nature Park Next to Dairy Farm Road

The largest nature park in Singapore at 81 hectares (which is the size of about 113 football fields), Chestnut Nature Park is situated between Bukit Panjang Road and Dairy Farm Road, beside the Central Catchment Nature Reserve.

The park is divided into two areas: Chestnut Nature Park (South) and Chestnut Nature Park (North). Fans of the great outdoors will appreciate the hiking trails with varying levels of difficulty, from steeper and rockier terrain for the experienced hiker, to novice-friendly ones with gentler slopes.

There is also a mountain bike trail at Chestnut Nature Park. If you do not own a bicycle, you can rent one from the bicycle rental shop located near the car park.

“I really enjoy hiking here even though Bukit Timah Nature Reserve is nearby because the route is very well-thought-out.”

– MR DAN SIRRS, 35, TEACHER



Bukit Panjang Butterfly Garden

Next to Block 213 Petir Road

Set up in 2013 and run by volunteers, the Bukit Panjang Butterfly Garden was created to encourage residents to head outdoors and experience nature. Although small, the garden is filled with nectaring and butterfly host plants, and arranged so that it mimics a natural habitat, with pockets of undisturbed space for wildlife to seek shelter in.



More than 60 species of butterflies and moths have been spotted in the garden, including the rare Blue Pansy butterfly.

Pang Sua Pond

Near Senja LRT station

Singapore's second-largest man-made floating wetlands system after the Sengkang Floating Wetland, Pang Sua Pond was a stormwater collection pond when it was first built in the 1990s. After undergoing a makeover, it was officially unveiled in 2017 by PUB as part of its Active, Beautiful, Clean Waters (ABC Waters) Programme, and the pride and joy of Bukit Panjang residents.



The main highlight of Pang Sua Pond is a 480-metre timber boardwalk that is suspended at a height of up to seven metres, allowing panoramic views from above the water. There are also viewing decks dotting the pond, which are great for selfies!

“I have lived in Bukit Panjang for several years and Pang Sua Pond has always been the part of the estate that I love the most.



– MS JASMINE WANG, 34, MARKETING EXECUTIVE



Fuyong Estate

Near Hillview MRT station

An almost-forgotten enclave overshadowed by the hustle and bustle of the Rail Mall nearby, Fuyong Estate has a storied history. Developed by entrepreneur and philanthropist Lee Kong Chian in the 1950s as a low-cost public housing estate, it was named after his home town of Furong in Fujian, China. It counts several prominent Singaporeans as residents or former residents, including the late S. R. Nathan, the sixth president of Singapore.

While it is not a real *kampung* like Kampong Lorong Buangkok, you can still experience some of that old-school ambience at Fuyong Estate. Located just a short walk from the photogenic truss bridge that is part of the Rail Corridor, the neighbourhood is home to retro-looking single-storey houses and pavements overrun by potted plants — offering a semblance of the past!

Bukit Panjang LRT

The first Light Rapid Transit (LRT) line to be built in Singapore, the Bukit Panjang LRT line commenced operations in 1999, and serves residents in Bukit Panjang and Choa Chu Kang.

The LRT may be a convenient way of getting around, but unbeknownst to non-residents, there is a surprise photo opportunity at Bukit Panjang station if you take the train. As it departs the platform, the scene from the train windows opens up to unobstructed views of Bukit Panjang estate. It almost looks like a scene from a sci-fi film, with towering residential buildings and train tracks meandering between them.

Time your visit for sunset — the scenery takes on a dusty orange hue, looking like a scene out of *Mad Max*!



Shook! SPOTS IN BUKIT PANJANG

FROM BEAUTY TREATMENTS TO HUNGER PANGS, THE NEEDS OF BUKIT PANJANG RESIDENTS ARE WELL TAKEN CARE OF WITH THE VARIETY OF SHOPS IN THE ESTATE.

Bukit Panjang may not be as old an estate as some others in Singapore, but residents of all ages are certainly well supplied with all sorts of stores. There is even a shop that specialises in stationery and photocopying services — a rare find in today's digital age!

Located next to Fajar LRT station, Fajar Shopping Centre plays an important role in the estate, with its many shops providing necessities, such as food and groceries, to those living nearby.

Here are some stores to check out if you are in Bukit Panjang:

Fong Wang Chia Household Utensils and Hardware Shop
Block 445, #01-554, Fajar Road,
Fajar Shopping Centre,
Singapore 670445



Fong Wang Chia Household Utensils and Hardware Shop is like the brick-and-mortar version of Amazon, the e-commerce giant, but for home needs. The small but well-stocked shop is filled with items that meet virtually every household need — from screwdriver sets to toilet bowl seats.

If you can't seem to hunt down that one specific item you are looking for in the store's maze of goods, simply speak to the amicable shopkeeper and he will happily bring it to you.

“There was once when I urgently needed a replacement part for my doorknob, and I could not find it despite extensive googling. To my surprise, Fong Wang Chia actually stocked it — very impressive!

— JANE TAN, 64, HOUSEWIFE



Fajar Stationery & Copying Centre

Block 445, #02-524, Fajar Road, Fajar Shopping Centre, Singapore 670445

Fajar Stationery & Copying Centre is the stuff of dreams for many schoolchildren and stationery aficionados, with its shelves of fancy pens, colourful erasers and fluorescent highlighters. Despite rapid advancements in technology, this shop is still relevant to the residents of Bukit Panjang, going by how it enjoys a steady stream of customers even on a weekday afternoon. While the sale of stationery remains its bread and butter, the store's printing and photocopying services are surprisingly in demand, thanks to students requiring copies of lecture notes.



Peking Departmental & Optical Store

Block 445, #01-532, Fajar Road, Fajar Shopping Centre, Singapore 670445

With products that cater to both young and ageing eyes, Peking Optical & Contact Lens is one of the most popular optical shops in Bukit Panjang. Because of this, it is not uncommon to see multiple generations of a family inside the store, purchasing their prescriptive lenses or getting their eye tests done.

“ I live next to Hillion Mall (beside Bukit Panjang MRT station), where there are several optical shops, but I prefer coming here to get new spectacles and for my daughter to get her annual eye checks done, as all the staff are very friendly!



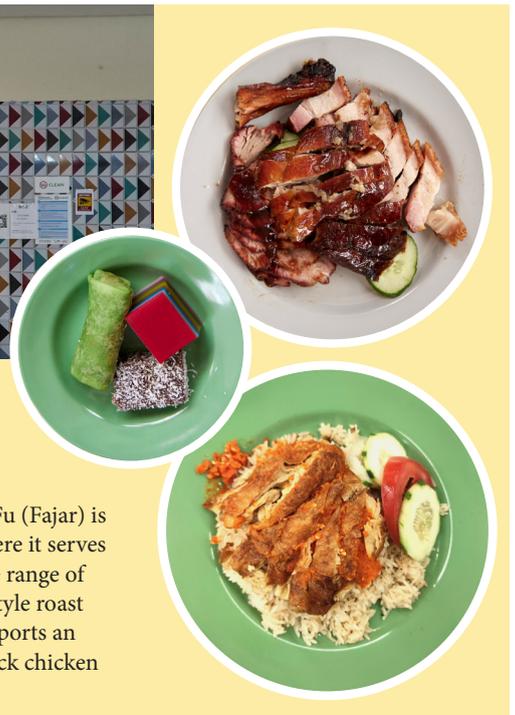
– MELVIN ZHANG, 34, LOGISTICS CONSULTANT



Wu Fu (Fajar) Pte Ltd

Blk 445, #01-538, Fajar Road, Fajar Shopping Centre, Singapore 670445

Wu Fu is one of several coffee shops under a franchise, with the other outlets in locations such as Woodlands and Kallang. Wu Fu (Fajar) is prominently situated in the heart of Fajar Shopping Centre, where it serves as the mall’s main eatery. There are 11 stalls here offering a wide range of cuisines, including *nasi padang*, Western food and Cantonese-style roast meats. You might want to give the vegetarian stall a try, too! It sports an extensive menu that not only includes crowd favourites like mock chicken rice, but also *Nyonya kueh* and *otak-otak*.



The Beauty Bar

Block 524A, #02-06, Jelapang Road, Singapore 671524

Nestled in Greenridge Shopping Centre, The Beauty Bar provides beauty and wellness treatments such as manicures and pedicures, as well as teeth whitening and eyelash extensions. They are particularly known for their hair removal services, which adopt the use of Super Hair Removal (SHR) technology for a painless experience and more lasting effects.



STAY Home AND STAY Active

SPENDING TIME INDOORS DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU HAVE TO STOP EXERCISING. IN FACT, A GOOD WORKOUT CAN HELP RELIEVE CABIN FEVER AND MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER!

Ever since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been encouraged to stay home to help curb the spread of the virus. However, spending long hours indoors can lead you to adopt a sedentary lifestyle.

According to the World Health Organization, adults should engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity, or an equivalent mix of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity, each week.

There are many benefits to regular exercise, especially for the elderly. These include a lower risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension, improvement in balance and coordination, increased energy levels, and maintenance of a healthy weight. In addition, exercising can reduce stress and anxiety, which contributes to mental well-being. Exercising regularly also helps delay the onset of frailty, a condition often associated with ageing.

Mr Jason Lai Chung-Chun, Senior Physiotherapist at Sengkang Community Hospital (one of the three hospitals managed by SingHealth Community Hospitals), shares six simple exercises that can be done at home with just a chair or wall. These are not only suitable for seniors, but are also great break-time workouts for people working from home.

To improve balance and strengthen legs

Exercise 1



- 1 Sit up straight and cross your arms, resting your hands on opposite shoulders.



- 2 Stand up fully without hand support for 10 seconds before sitting down.

Exercise 2



- 1 Hold on to a stable chair and raise your left leg at 90 degrees.



- 2 Put your left leg down and raise your right leg. Alternate and repeat 8 to 10 times.

**Repeat all the exercises 5 to 8 times to complete one set. Seniors are recommended to do two to three sets a day. For exercises that require a chair, use a stable one with armrests.*

THINGS TO TAKE NOTE OF WHEN EXERCISING AT HOME

- Warm up before exercising and cool down after it to reduce the risk of injury
- Wear loose and comfortable clothes
- For beginners, start slow and gradually increase the intensity and frequency of your workouts
- Listen to your body and do not overexert yourself
- If you experience any discomfort or pain before or during the exercise, you should stop the activity, and consult a therapist or doctor

6 EXERCISES* TO TRY AT HOME

To strengthen upper limbs

Exercise 1



- 1 Sit up straight with your feet on the ground and hold on to the armrests.
- 2 Use your arms to push your body up, keeping your elbows straight, and hold for 5 seconds.

Exercise 2



- 1 Put your palms on a wall at 90 degrees and at shoulder width apart.
- 2 Lean your body forward without bending your hip and knee.
- 3 Push your body back up.

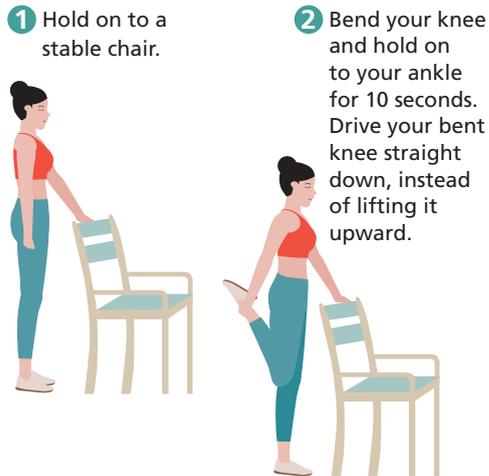
To improve flexibility

Exercise 1



- 1 Sit with one leg stretched out and the other leg bent.
- 2 Bend your body forward and use both arms to touch the ankle of your straightened leg.
- 3 Hold for 10 seconds.

Exercise 2



- 1 Hold on to a stable chair.
- 2 Bend your knee and hold on to your ankle for 10 seconds. Drive your bent knee straight down, instead of lifting it upward.

COMMON HOUSEHOLD ITEMS AS EXERCISE EQUIPMENT

Besides a stable chair with armrests, these items serve as effective and eco-friendly alternatives to aid you during your home workout:

1. Water bottles

Fill up water bottles to use as weights.

2. Towels

If you do not have an elastic band, try a towel. You can loop them around your feet or hold them shoulder-width apart for a better stretch. Rolled-up towels are also a good substitute for yoga mats, providing cushioning for your knees while absorbing perspiration.

3. Books

Thicker books can be stacked to replace yoga blocks.

4. Boxes

These are useful for inclined planks, or step-up and step-down exercises. Ensure that the boxes are sturdy and can withstand your weight safely.





JOAKIM GOMEZ, 987FM RADIO PRODUCER-PRESENTER, HAS COME A LONG WAY SINCE HIS SINGAPORE IDOL DAYS.

RISING BY LIFTING OTHERS

“I enjoy running along the Park Connector Network... I have run all the way from Mediacorp (at One North) back home! I love Bishan so much that I do not see myself living anywhere else.

Being able to do what he does now — radio, television and hosting — is a childhood dream come true for Joakim Gomez, but it hasn't been all smooth sailing.

His first opportunity came in 2006, when he took part in the second season of *Singapore Idol* at the age of 18. Despite harsh criticism from netizens, he made it to the Top 5. After completing

National Service, Joakim ventured full-time into the entertainment industry, taking on roles in dramas and joining 987FM as a radio producer-presenter. Now 33 years old, he has the honour of having hosted eight National Day Parades, including this year's.

Speaking to *Life Storeys*, Joakim shares how he handles the responsibility that comes with fame, and his love for his neighbourhood — so much so that he calls himself a “Bishan ambassador”.

What have you been up to?

It has been a quiet year but things are picking up again, and I am very happy about it. I just finished filming two Channel 5 shows titled *Mind Blown!* and *The Green Plan*. There will be a number of 987FM Facebook live events happening in September — lots to look forward to!

How long have you been in showbiz?

Officially, 15 years. When I took part in *Singapore Idol*, I just wanted to get noticed in the industry because for Channel 5, opportunities like these were few and far between. I never expected to get into the Top 5. The comments that came my way affected me mentally; it broke my self-esteem, which wasn't high to begin with. For a couple of years after that, I was trying to figure myself out again and to find my niche. Everything got better after I joined 987FM in 2014 — something I am very thankful for and do not take for granted.

How has being a public figure changed you?

I learnt to deal with detractors more professionally. With social media being so prevalent, public figures have to be extra cautious about what we say and how we behave. While it has made me a more careful person, I am only human and may have missteps sometimes, and I hope people can understand that.

You recently started two passion projects. Tell us more about them.

The first one is about music production in Singapore. I am working with my station to create podcasts and videos that feature the growing community of local music producers, such as Evan Low and Jasmine Sokko. I want to give them the spotlight and show people that there is a future in pursuing music, if you are genuine and serious about your craft.

As for the second project, I am self-funding and self-producing it as a small way of giving back to society. Given the platform and following that I have, I hope to address certain societal issues, as well as raise awareness of the different faiths and



cultures in Singapore. It is still a work-in-progress because I need to make sure that everything I present is factual and nothing too contentious.

How long have you lived in Bishan?

I have lived here for 26 years, so I know this place like the back of my hand. My mum and I used to live in a block opposite Kuo Chuan Presbyterian Secondary School, before we moved to a three-room flat a few blocks down the road. Bishan is conveniently located with so many amenities and lots of good food, such as Ming Kee Chicken Rice, just a short walk away. The MRT station is across the street from my block!

What do you like most about your estate?

I enjoy running along the Park Connector Network. This shelter (main image) marks the start and end point of my runs. If I head to the right, I can go to MacRitchie Reservoir; if I head left, I go towards Bishan Park. I have run all the way from Mediacorp (at One North) back home! I love Bishan so much that I do not see myself living anywhere else. If you have secured yourself a unit at the new Build-To-Order (BTO) projects in this area, congratulations!

How is your relationship with your neighbours?

They have seen me grow up. Whenever I meet the auntie who lives next to me, she says, "So big boy already *ah*," and asks when will I be on TV again. My neighbours are all very friendly. Some of them recognise me, and we smile and wave at each other. When my Indian neighbours cook *briyani* and curry, I wish I could have a plate of it because it smells so good!

What advice do you have for those who are keen to join the industry?

With platforms like TikTok and Instagram, anybody can do what you do. How are you different? What do you stand for? Are you ready for the challenges and tribulations that come with the job? As much as I enjoy and love my job, there is sacrifice involved. But don't forget to have fun and don't be afraid to laugh at yourself. I used to take myself too seriously, and I lost the joy of it. Now that I am older and a bit more mature, I know how to manage my emotions better.

STAY TUNED!

Catch Joakim Gomez on 987FM's *The Shock Circuit* every Monday to Friday, from 4pm to 8pm.



PAYING HOMAGE TO

Hawker Culture

KNOWN FOR ITS WIDE ARRAY OF OFFERINGS, HAWKER CENTRES ARE THE GO-TO FOR DELICIOUS LOCAL FARE WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK.

Hawker food is a quintessential representation of local flavours, with our hawkers having fed generations of Singaporeans over the decades. So impactful are these local delicacies that they have gone on to inspire new interpretations both in Singapore and overseas.

In 2020, Singapore's hawker culture was officially added to the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, marking our country's second entry to any UNESCO list. Here, we feature five hawker centres in HDB estates across the island.

Old Airport Road Food Centre 51 Old Airport Road, Singapore 390051

With over 40 years of history, Old Airport Road Food Centre is known for its range of stalls and quality of food. Located near Dakota MRT station, this food haven is easily accessible by residents around the area and visitors from other estates.

Some of its most popular stalls include **Nam Sing Hokkien Fried Mee**



(#01-32), which has been serving this iconic dish since the 1960s. Unlike most places that use yellow noodles and thick *bee hoon* (rice vermicelli), Nam Sing's version is cooked with thin *bee hoon*, which soak up the savoury broth they are stir-fried in. Instead of the usual *sambal belacan* (spicy shrimp paste), the dish is complemented with cut chillies — a family tradition retained by the stall owners.

Another must-try is **Wang Wang Crispy Curry Puff** (#01-126). Handmade and deep-fried daily at the stall, the curry chicken puffs boast a buttery pastry skin, with generous fillings of potato and diced chicken chunks. Crispy on the outside, creamy



and flavourful inside, these puffs strike a wonderful balance between texture and taste. The stall also sells sardine puffs, black pepper chicken puffs, and yam paste puffs.

Ghim Moh Market & Food Centre 20 Ghim Moh Road, Singapore 270020

A hidden gem in the south-west, Ghim Moh Market & Food Centre may be an unfamiliar name to people living on the other side of Singapore. However, it is home to many sumptuous food options, which have garnered their own following.

Often spotted with a queue, **Heavens** (#01-26) offers freshly made *putu mayam* (steamed rice flour noodles), *thosai* (thin, savoury pancake) and



appam (crepe-like pancake). At the stall, *appam* is made from fermented rice flour and fresh milk, and cooked on a griddle that was specially sourced from India. Due to the griddle's curved shape, the excess batter sinks to the bottom, giving the *appam* thin, crispy edges and a fluffy centre. The

pancake is served with red sugar and grated coconut, but you can also add on cheese, egg or butter — or even better, order an all-in-one!

Good *satay bee hoon* is an increasingly rare find.

Lao Chao Zhou's (#01-18) classic rendition — rice vermicelli laden with cockles, pork liver, lean pork slices, *tau pok* (fried beancurd puff), *kang kong* (water spinach) in rich, nutty peanut sauce — hits all the right notes and is worth the trip!



Serangoon Garden Market & Food Centre

49A Serangoon Garden Way, Singapore 555945

Chomp Chomp Food Centre may be more broadly publicised, but residents of north-eastern Singapore would know that the neighbouring Serangoon Garden Market & Food Centre is a great place for a wholesome breakfast.



Churning out more than 20 different types of breads every day, **Serangoon Garden Bakery & Confectionery** (#01-45) is famous for its old-school bakes like luncheon meat buns and *hae bee hiam* (spicy dried shrimp) buns. For a taste of nostalgia, why not get some delicious butter cake?

At **Aliff Nasi Lemak** (#01-27), basmati rice is used in place of regular jasmine rice. To best savour the distinct taste of coconut milk and pandan, we recommend sampling the fluffy rice on its own before trying

other items on your plate. From fried chicken wings and *ikan bilis* (dried anchovies) to *tempeh* (Indonesian soybean cake) and more, take your pick from a wide selection of dishes to accompany the rice.



Tiong Bahru Market & Food Centre

30 Seng Poh Road, Singapore 168898

Before Tiong Bahru became an enclave of hipster cafes, it was already known to be a treasure trove of local delights. Following its renovation in 2017, the food centre is now much airier and spacious, with over 80 stalls to choose from.



A household name in Singapore today, **Jian Bo Shui Kueh** (#02-05) has its origins at Tiong Bahru Market & Food Centre. Although the crowd favourite is undeniably the freshly steamed *chee kueh* (rice cake) topped with heaps of *chye poh* (preserved radish) and chilli, other items such as yam cake and *chee cheong fun* (rice noodle roll) also make for a hearty treat!



While classic Malay dishes like *ayam penyet* (smashed fried chicken), *tauhu goreng* (deep-fried

beancurd in spicy peanut sauce), *mee siam* (spicy rice vermicelli) are popular at **Ali Corner** (#02-17), it is their *mee bakso* (noodle soup with meatballs) that steals the show. The bowl of yellow noodles and rice vermicelli is soaked in piquant broth, and topped with flavoursome beef meatballs, lettuce, carrots, bean sprouts and fried shallots. A touch of the stall's dark chilli sauce adds a spicy layer to this delectable dish.

Berseh Food Centre

166 Jalan Besar, Singapore 208877

Although often overlooked compared to more renowned hawker centres, Berseh Food Centre is well loved among foodies looking to try less commonly found dishes.



Handmade with a recipe that has been passed down from generation to generation, the UFO-shaped fried snacks from **Fu Zhou Poh Hwa Oyster Cake** (#02-34) have stayed consistently tasty and comforting through the years. The standard oyster cake comes with prawn, while the special oyster cake has peanuts and *ikan bilis* atop the crunchy crust. Each oyster cake is packed with generous fillings that remain moist even after deep-frying.



Operating for over 30 years now, **Fu He Turtle Soup & Delights** (#02-40/47) is one of the oldest tenants at Berseh Food Centre. Besides being famous for exotic items like turtle soup and crocodile meat, the stall is also popular for its variety of claypot dishes and herbal soups.

Things to Know About the ENHANCED CPF HOUSING GRANT

**WHETHER YOU ARE APPLYING FOR A FLAT FROM HDB
OR BUYING A RESALE FLAT ON THE OPEN MARKET,
THE ENHANCED CPF HOUSING GRANT (EHG) CAN HELP YOU
FINANCE YOUR FLAT PURCHASE, THUS PROVIDING FIRST-TIME
HOME BUYERS WITH MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS.**

How to qualify for EHG?

▶ Monthly household income for

FIRST-TIMER FAMILIES

Should not exceed **\$9,000**

▶ Must be aged 35 and above for

FIRST-TIMER SINGLES

Monthly income should not exceed **\$4,500**

▶ In both cases

THE BUYER (OR SPOUSE/FIANCE(E), FOR FAMILIES)

Must have worked continuously for **12 months**
prior to the flat application and still be working at the point of flat application

Is the EHG applicable only for certain flat types?

First-timer families

For purchase of resale flats, applicants must be buying a 2-room or bigger flat.

First-timer singles

▶ Buying a 2-room Flexi flat from HDB

Under the Single Singapore Citizen Scheme or Joint Singles Scheme, first-timer singles are only eligible to buy 2-room Flexi flats in non-mature estates.

▶ Buying a Resale Flat

The EHG is applicable to singles buying a 2-room to 5-room flat under the Single Singapore Citizen Scheme, or 2-room and bigger flat under other schemes.



How much housing grants can I get?

The grant amount you will receive depends on your average gross monthly household income.

FLATS FROM HDB

FIRST-TIMER FAMILIES

Can enjoy an EHG of up to
\$80,000

FIRST-TIMER SINGLES

Can enjoy an EHG (Singles) of up to
\$40,000

RESALE FLATS

FIRST-TIMER FAMILIES

Can receive up to **\$160,000** in housing grants

FAMILY GRANT

Up to **\$50,000**
+

EHG

Up to **\$80,000**
+

PROXIMITY HOUSING GRANT

Up to **\$30,000**

Applicants who qualify for the Family Grant may also benefit from the EHG of up to \$80,000.

FIRST-TIMER SINGLES

Can receive up to **\$80,000** in housing grants

SINGLES GRANT

Up to **\$25,000**
+

EHG

Up to **\$40,000**
+

PROXIMITY HOUSING GRANT

Up to **\$15,000**

Applicants who qualify for the Singles Grant may also benefit from the EHG for Singles of up to \$40,000.

To enjoy the full EHG amount for the respective household income levels, the flat being purchased must have sufficient lease to cover the youngest buyer up to the age of 95. Otherwise, the amount will be pro-rated. This condition also applies to balance flats that are purchased from HDB.



For more information on buying a flat, visit HDB's website: www.hdb.gov.sg/residential/buying-a-flat



Storage Hacks

FOR YOUR HOME

CHECK OUT HOW YOU CAN MAXIMISE SPACE IN YOUR HDB FLAT WITHOUT HAVING TO RENOVATE OR EMPTY YOUR WALLET FOR NEW FURNITURE.

While there are many things to appreciate about our country, space is undeniably a scarce resource in Singapore.

Now that we are spending more time at home than ever, making good use of space in your flat is especially important, so that your living environment does not become too cramped for comfort.

Here are some tips for maximising storage space through fuss-free, low-cost additions:



Build a vertical garden

Don't let space constraints stop you from nurturing your green thumb. There are many ways to display potted plants without breeding clutter — placing them on wall shelves, plant ladders or racks, or even hanging them from the ceiling, will take up less floor space. A vertical garden not only beautifies your home, but also allows your plants to receive more sunlight!

Install a bicycle tower rack

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, there has been a cycling boom in Singapore, with significant increase in sales of bicycles and accessories such as helmets reported in the news. However, when not in use, bicycles can be troublesome to store.

If you worry about standing your bicycle in the corridor or keeping it at a public bicycle rack overnight, why not install a tower rack at home? This will keep your ride dry on rainy days and safe at night, and add an industrial look to your interior design.

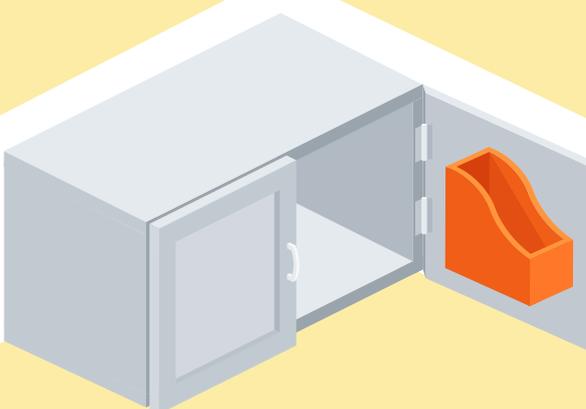




Use a monitor stand

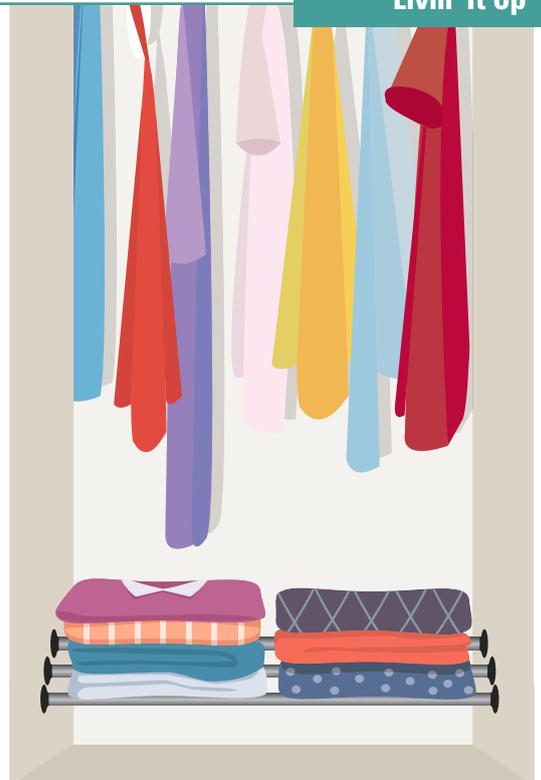
With work-from-home remaining as the default for now, an ergonomic workspace at home has become essential to stay productive. For a neater desk and to improve your sitting posture, you should consider getting a monitor stand for your laptop or desktop.

Many monitor stands come with slots and/or drawers to store stationery and other work necessities. Some are even designed to let you tuck away your keyboard and mouse when they are not in use. Raising your monitor screen can also help reduce neck strain and backache from prolonged use of the computer.



Attach baskets to cabinets

You can fully utilise the space inside cabinets through various means. To store miscellaneous household items or bathroom tools like your hairdryer, fit over-the-door baskets or magazine holders onto the back of cabinet doors. Remember to measure the space between the doors and the inner shelves to confirm that the doors can close fully.



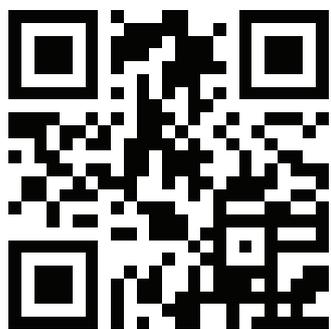
Maximise benefits of the tension rod

Tension rods are affordable and readily available at homeware stores. The installation process is easy and reversible, with no drilling involved. If your wardrobe has a tall compartment (for long clothes) that has an underutilised bottom portion, simply attach a tension rod to create an additional rack. This is especially useful for those who have lots of T-shirts, and for storing children's clothes.

Beyond the bedroom, you can add a tension rod to the sink base cabinet to hang spray bottles and washcloths, freeing up floor space in the cabinet for other supplies. Strategically placing tension rods inside kitchen drawers can also help organise your cooking tools. For example, attaching several rods vertically lets you store your chopping boards and trays upright, so you can more quickly locate and retrieve the items you need.



Take Our Readers' Quiz



Answer some questions and stand to win shopping vouchers! Log on to <http://hdb.gov.sg/lifestoreys> for the questions and submit your answers.