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# Life Storeys

**LIFE IN THE HEARTLANDS**



## **CONNECTING WITH NATURE**

More sustainable, liveable and resilient homes with biophilic design

# CONTENTS

ISSUE 31 Jan 2022

## Dear Readers,

As we welcome a brand new year, we hope you are keeping safe and well.

In this issue, we cast the spotlight on biophilic design, a concept that links or integrates natural elements into the built environment. Find out how HDB's Biophilic Town Framework will improve the sustainability, liveability and resilience of next-generation HDB housing projects in **Talk of the Town**.

For the **Around the Block** section, we went on a trip to the east for the most noteworthy landmarks and shops in Marine Parade, including the originator of Singapore's renowned chilli crab dish.

Introduced to foster a more caring and inclusive society, Singapore Cares (SG Cares) is a national movement that you can be part of. Learn about SG Cares Volunteer Centres and how you can make a difference in **Our Life Stories**. Consideration and compromise are key to maintaining harmony between neighbours, but when disputes arise, it is advisable to seek help from the Community Mediation Centre to resolve conflicts amicably. Also featured in this section is Ria 897 radio presenter Azura Goh, who shares her reasons for switching career lanes from a professional violinist to a DJ and host.

Over the past two years, many of us have rediscovered ways to make stay-home life more interesting and meaningful. In **Livin' It Up**, we recommend some simple arts and crafts activities that you can try your hand at. For those who prefer heading outdoors, check out our tips for pedestrians and cyclists to ensure safety for everyone.

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



## The Editorial Team

### TALK OF THE TOWN

- 01 Connecting Residents with Nature



### AROUND THE BLOCK

- 04 A Dose of 'Vitamin Sea' and More
- 06 Marvellous Marine Parade



### OUR LIFE STORIES

- 08 No Action Too Small
- 10 Music to Your Ears
- 12 Amicable Conclusions



### LIVIN' IT UP

- 14 Get Arty-crafty
- 16 Power to the Pedal

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# Connecting Residents with Nature

**THE NEXT  
GENERATION OF HDB  
HOUSING PROJECTS  
WILL BECOME EVEN  
MORE SUSTAINABLE,  
LIVEABLE AND  
RESILIENT WITH  
BIOPHILIC DESIGN.**

Driven by its mission to build the best homes and urban living environments, HDB is continuously leveraging technological innovations to develop green and sustainable towns.





To boost these efforts, the Biophilic Town Framework was introduced in 2013 to promote a seamless union between nature, place and people.

The Biophilic Town Framework considers five key elements: soil, flora and fauna, outdoor comfort, water, and people. This guides architects in creating an optimal design that harmonises the habitat and its inhabitants.

More than just providing the built environment with greenery, the Framework incorporates a holistic assessment of how the landscape and residents can benefit from natural ecosystems. Biodiversity studies are also conducted during the planning process and before works commence, so that existing flora and fauna can continue to thrive.

The Biophilic Town Framework was first piloted in Punggol Northshore District in 2015, and subsequently adopted in the design of Bidadari's Woodleigh Neighbourhood in 2016. During this time, the Framework was refined and validated through a 3.5-year research collaboration with the National University of Singapore, the Urban Redevelopment Authority, and National Parks Board. Following the

conclusion of the study in 2018, the Framework is now being applied in all new HDB projects.

### Singapore's first biophilic district

Envisioned to be a smart and sustainable district, Punggol Northshore was developed to bridge the gap between residents and nature from the outset. Most features of the estate serve multiple functions — check them out below:

### Maintaining ecological balance and boosting biodiversity

After site analyses and field surveys were done to study the natural habitats at Punggol Northshore, green corridors were strategically planned and placed to maintain the ecological balance in the district and beyond, including Punggol Town, Coney Island, Pulau Ubin and even the Straits of Johor.

A well-preserved ecological balance is necessary for rich biodiversity — both existing and new — to flourish, offering opportunities for residents to reconnect with nature.

Selected habitat zones have been carved out to cultivate 'host plants' of existing fauna. For example, the planting of trees such as *Salix babylonica* (Weeping Willow Tree) will attract the Leopard Butterfly, which was found in the native site during field surveys. The introduction of new habitats, such as bird sanctuaries and butterfly gardens, in the area could also invite more species and bring about greater biodiversity. Additionally, the streets along Punggol Drive and Punggol Way are lined with verdant greenery to facilitate the movement of birds and butterflies.

### Nature at your doorstep

A host of greenery, such as precinct gardens, landscaped decks, common greens and sky gardens, weave through

## WHAT IS BIOPHILIC DESIGN?

Defined by American biologist Edward Osborne Wilson in 1984, biophilia is an innate desire for human beings to connect with nature. Biophilic design is a concept that links or integrates natural elements into the built environment, thereby improving the physical and mental well-being of humans.

the entire Punggol Northshore district. Residents can seek respite at the sky terraces, which boast garden swings and cocoon chairs, or visit the seafront viewing deck for spectacular views of the waterfront promenade.

### A different type of car park

Punggol Northshore's car park provides direct sheltered lift access across the entire development. Instead of conventional basement car park walls, this car park has soil-retaining walls — the GeoBarrier System — which helps to drain rainwater away from the retained earth. This ensures that slope stability is maintained, minimising slope failures. Situated along the perimeter of the basement, these landscaped retaining walls allow residents to enjoy lush sloping greenery and natural daylight even within the car park.

Above the car park is a landscaped deck that connects the residential blocks to the newly opened Northshore Plaza. It also houses outdoor recreational facilities that cater to all ages, such as a themed playground and fitness stations.

### Enhanced outdoor comfort and air quality

Wind and sunlight simulation studies were carried out to locate and design facilities that offer maximum outdoor comfort. For example, footpaths are sited along key wind channels, while playgrounds and garden trails are shielded from direct sunlight and glare.

The trees and plants in Punggol Northshore were also carefully selected to regulate air quality, wind flow and thermal comfort. For instance, *Mimusops elengi* (Tanjong Tree) have been planted at the end of wind corridors to help remove air pollutants, while *Filicium decipiens* (Fern Tree) was chosen for its ability to remove and store excess carbon from the environment.

### Reaping benefits of rain gardens

At Punggol Northshore, a district-wide network of vegetated bioswales and rain gardens helps filter out sediments and treat rainwater naturally before it flows into waterways and reservoirs. The network also regulates the rate of water flowing into drains and increases stormwater infiltration into the ground. On

top of that, the rain gardens beautify the environment and provide great habitats for birds and butterflies.

Furthermore, the addition of ecological ponds allows residents the opportunity to get closer to nature. Information panels and educational boards have also been installed at these locations to raise environmental awareness and appreciation of nature.

### High-rise greenery

These days, it is common to find rooftop gardens atop multi-storey car parks (MSCPs) in newer towns. For existing estates where such gardens are not feasible due to the weight-loading limit of rooftops, HDB invented the Prefabricated Extensive Green (PEG) Roof Tray system in 2006 as a lightweight greening solution to create self-sustaining plant communities on rooftops.

To date, the patented PEG system has been deployed at rooftops of MSCPs, as well as residential and commercial blocks across Singapore covering an area of about 12 hectares (equivalent to the size of 14 football fields). The PEG system has also been adopted by other non-HDB buildings and even overseas.

In 2014, the PEG system was further enhanced to cater to a growing interest in community gardening. Known as the PEG Hybrid System, hybrid panels were developed to increase planting depth by 150 millimetres to accommodate more plant varieties, including fruits and edible plants. These panels are stacked on top of the PEG tray to achieve the desired depth of soil.

The PEG Hybrid System has been used to successfully green the roof decks of Block 840A Yishun Street 81. The green roof now features a basic landscape with two hardy plants, *Cyanotis cristata* and *Pedilanthus tithymaloides variegatus*, and a few small plots meant to facilitate residents' community gardening activities. Under the Green Town Programme, the system will be deployed in a wider scale to intensify greenery in existing estates and promote gardening activities, providing a green and sustainable living environment for more people.



66

**Bedok Jetty is a great place to catch smaller fishes like tamban (a type of herring), which can be used as bait for a bigger catch, or deep-fried and eaten with nasi lemak. I live just an underpass away, so it's great to come here to relax and catch tamban for fun!**

– MR KEN KNAGS, 35,  
OUTDOOR ACTIVITY INSTRUCTOR



The residents of Marine Parade enjoy the luxury of being within walking distance of a beach, amenities and leisure facilities, and even seafront dining. From one of Singapore's oldest libraries to a popular underpass given a snazzy update, here are three places in Marine Parade to check out.

### East Coast Park

#### East Coast Park Service Road

Before the COVID-19 pandemic cast a pall over the globe, East Coast Park attracted seven million visitors annually, not just for a good dose of 'vitamin sea', but also for activities like cable-skiing and skateboarding.

Foodies are also fond of East Coast Park for several reasons, the biggest being the East Coast Lagoon Food Village, home to dozens of stalls serving local delicacies such as *satay* and *sambal* stingray! There are also several dining enclaves within East Coast Park, such as East Coast Seafood Centre for fresh crustaceans, and Parkland Green for beachfront cafes and restaurants.

Bedok Jetty, with its pier that stretches 250 metres into the sea, is popular among joggers, recreational fishermen

and photo enthusiasts. Come dusk, visitors are treated to spectacular views of the sun setting against the distant city skyline — definitely an Instagrammable moment!

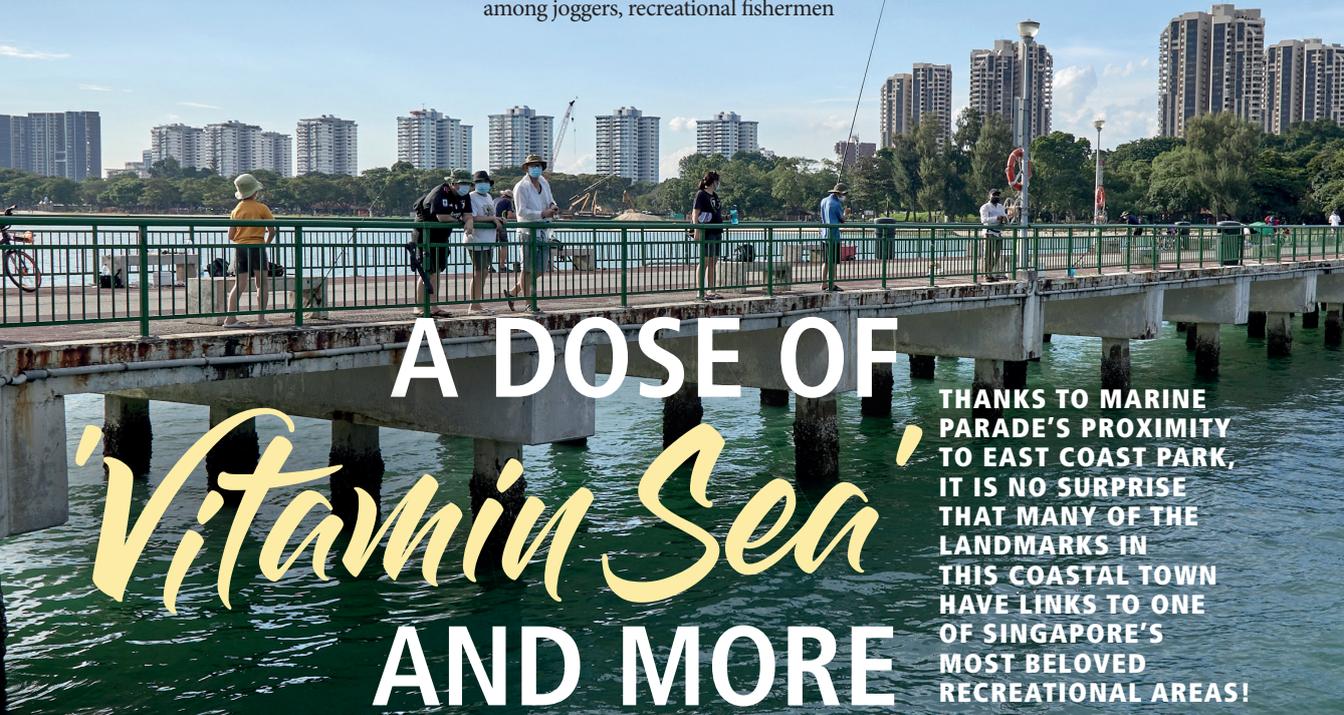
While you are at East Coast Park, a visit to the Road Safety Park may evoke a sense of nostalgia for those in your 30s or 40s. A school excursion hotspot in the '90s, this free-entry educational park features a miniature road network outfitted with traffic lights and pedestrian crossings, and even a mock petrol station!

### Marine Parade Public Library

278 Marine Parade Road,  
Singapore 449282

The second-oldest library in Singapore, the Marine Parade Public Library was opened on 10 November 1978 by Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong, who was then Senior Minister of State for Finance. Originally located at Marine Parade's town centre, the library moved to its current premises at the Marine Parade Community Complex in May 2000.

If the facade of the building, which also houses the Marine Parade



# A DOSE OF Vitamin Sea' AND MORE

THANKS TO MARINE PARADE'S PROXIMITY TO EAST COAST PARK, IT IS NO SURPRISE THAT MANY OF THE LANDMARKS IN THIS COASTAL TOWN HAVE LINKS TO ONE OF SINGAPORE'S MOST BELOVED RECREATIONAL AREAS!

Community Club, reminds you of a Picasso artwork, you are almost right! Designed by local architectural firm William Lim Associates, the building has postmodern influences. Further adding to its distinctive look is the cladding curved around the complex, which is a larger-than-life artwork called the “Texturefulness of Life” by Thai architect Surachai Yeamsiri.

The library is every bookworm’s dream come true. Spread over three storeys, it boasts features that should not be missed, including a floor dedicated to children’s books and activities.

### Bayshore Park Underpass

Like many other underpasses in Singapore, the Bayshore Park Underpass was built to serve the needs of pedestrians, with an emphasis on function. From 2013 to 2015, the highly used underpass was revamped by architecture firm GreenhillLi Pte Ltd, which transformed what was dull and utilitarian into a dynamic work of art.

The underpass was given a cheerful makeover with geometric elements and a bright yellow, futuristic-looking ‘origami’ roof, making it a joy to travel between the Bayshore area and East Coast Park. It now also incorporates inclusive features, such as barrier-free access, to cater to the needs of the wider community.

“ I used to live near the original Marine Parade Public Library, where a supermarket now stands. Libraries were not as common as they are today. I remember going there every weekend as a kid, which inculcated in me a love for reading.



– MR ALBERT TAN, 69, RETIREE



Bayshore Park Underpass



East Coast Seafood Centre



# Marvellous MARINE PARADE



**MARINE PARADE, DESPITE BEING A RELATIVELY SMALL TOWN IN TERMS OF SIZE, IS HOME TO AN INTERESTING VARIETY OF SHOPS, INCLUDING SINGAPORE'S FIRST BENGAWAN SOLO OUTLET!**

Marine Parade is best known for its proximity to East Coast Park, but there is so much more to look out for! Once the Thomson-East Coast MRT line is complete, providing a convenient route to and from Marine Parade, you will have one more reason to check out this coastal town's line-up of exciting shops and food places.

## Marine Parade Central Market and Food Centre Block 84, Marine Parade Central, Singapore 440084

Located beside Parkway Parade, this hawker centre, which closed for refurbishment in 2018 and reopened in 2019, is constantly buzzing with people who visit for its plethora of food options. Some popular stalls that are often spotted with long queues include Tip Top Western Food, Kun Ji Duck Rice, Apollo Fresh Cockle Fried Kway Teow, and D'Authentic Nasi Lemak.



## Jin Tai Mart Block 83, #01-566, Marine Parade Central, Singapore 440083

One of several Jin Tai Marts islandwide, this outlet at Marine Parade Central opened in March 2021. The chain of convenience stores is well stocked with household items such as laundry detergent and toothpaste that are sold at bargain prices, as well as milk powder, which is said to be the most affordably priced in Singapore.

66 I frequently practise yoga at East Coast Road, and what I look forward to most after an intense session is a meal at Marine Parade Central Market and Food Centre. I usually treat myself to *char kway teow* and an icy cup of sugar cane juice.



– MS AMBER LIM, 33, WORKS IN COMMUNICATIONS

## Hui Master International Geomancy Pte Ltd Block 82, #01-604, Marine Parade Central, Singapore 440082

Marine Parade Central must be a great place for business, if a famous *feng shui* master like Master Hui Jie decides to set up shop there! At Hui Master International Geomancy, you can seek advice from Master Hui Jie, who started his consultancy in 1986, on a range of topics — from the selection of auspicious dates for weddings to fortune-telling.





**Bengawan Solo**

Block 58, #01-69, Marine Terrace, Singapore 440058

Being one of Singapore's most beloved brands, Bengawan Solo needs no introduction. However, did you know that their first store (which opened in 1979) is a void deck shop in Marine Terrace, where it still thrives today?

Entering the corner unit at Block 58 reveals little of the history that transpired within — save for a framed 1981 newspaper clipping featuring Bengawan Solo's founder, Anastasia Liew, and her cake and *kueh* shop — long before it became the household name that it is today.

“To be honest, the *kueh* here is of the same high standard as the other Bengawan Solo outlets, but I frequent this shop as I'm often in the area, and the people who work there are friendly and chatty!

— MDM JOYCE POH, 52, CUSTOMER SERVICE WORKER



**Roland Restaurant**

Block 89, #06-750, Marine Parade Central, Singapore 440089

If there is one dish that Singapore can truly lay claim to, it is chilli crab! The inventor of this national dish is none other than the first owners of Roland Restaurant, which has called Marine Parade home since 1985. Now already in the good hands of its third-generation owner, the eatery still enjoys brisk business, thanks to patrons who come from far and wide for a taste of not just its famed seafood dishes, but also for its Cantonese cuisine and dim sum.

“I have lived in Marine Parade for almost 20 years, and it is always a treat to eat at Roland Restaurant. Their crabs are definitely good, but their dim sum is also a must-try!

— MDM YIP MENG FUN, 57, SALESPERSON



**50A Marine Terrace Market**

Block 50A, Marine Terrace, Singapore 441050

With 24 food stalls and 87 market stalls, 50A Marine Terrace Market serves residents around the neighbourhood with both good food and fresh produce.

More than just the usual crop of vegetables and meat, the market also boasts a stall specialising in roasted coffee beans, run by a friendly proprietor who weighs the beans on an old-school scale before they are ground and packed. The market is also home to Bee Bee Fried Carrot Cake, widely known as Olympics swimmer Joseph Schooling's favourite *chai tow kway* stall.

Right next to the market at Block 56 is Good Old Days Biscuit, a traditional biscuit shop that has walls lined with tins of goodies like gem biscuits and *piring* wafers!

# No Action TOO SMALL



These days, giving a helping hand has never been more rewarding and challenging at the same time. In the wake of COVID-19, the issues faced by those in need have intensified, while volunteers face more barriers in reaching out due to Safe Management Measures. However, for volunteers, doing their part for the community and knowing that they have gone the extra mile to contribute despite the obstacles, the sense of fulfilment is extra sweet.

Singapore Cares (SG Cares) is a national movement introduced to foster a more caring and inclusive society. The movement encourages people living in Singapore to volunteer actively, where no action is considered too small, as giving and caring come in all shapes and sizes.

## SG Cares Volunteer Centres

A key initiative under the SG Cares movement, SG Cares Volunteer Centres (SG Cares VCs) are community-based organisations that serve as hubs in their communities. Here, collaborative efforts are made to grow and coordinate volunteer supply, build volunteer management capabilities, and optimise resources.



The role of SG Cares VCs has been especially important during the COVID-19 situation, as more individuals are at risk of social isolation or have difficulties meeting their daily needs. Through the SG Cares VCs, not only has volunteer matching improved, corporate and community partners can also receive better support.

Currently, there are 14 SG Cares VCs in operation. By March 2022, all 24 towns in Singapore will have a SG Cares VC of their own.



## Giving back in a virtual world

As the proverb goes: “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.”

While COVID-19 made volunteering more challenging in many ways, the SG Cares VCs learnt to improvise and took some of their initiatives online. For example, SG Cares VC @ Boon Lay continued their partnerships with

eldercare agencies, such as SAGE Counselling Centre, to engage seniors virtually in June 2021. In collaboration with DBS, SG Cares VC @ Ang Mo Kio conducted an online resume-writing workshop for 35 youth beneficiaries in September 2021.



## SG CARES VCs BY THE NUMBERS

**\$32,000** worth of meals were funded and distributed to the seniors and less privileged individuals under the Meals on Us initiative introduced by SG Cares VC @ Jurong East in April 2020. It not only provides two free hot meals daily to those in need, but also helps sustain local hawker stalls.



**28,050** masks were distributed to beneficiaries across the island, coordinated by SG Cares VCs. For instance, SG Cares VC @ Tampines coordinated the donation and distribution of 2,000 masks to various Social Service Agencies, including Jamiyah Home for the Aged, YouthReach, and Kheng Chiu Loke Tin Kee Home.

**1,052** donations-in-kind, such as food rations and personal hygiene products, were collected through a distribution drive organised by SG Cares VC @ Yishun, which ran from May to July 2021. The items were distributed to beneficiaries from different Social Service Agencies.



**769** beneficiaries received disposable masks and hand sanitisers from SG Cares VC @ Clementi in June 2021.



**161** nominated National Kidney Foundation patients in the south-west region received a year's worth of diabetes care packs from Diabetes Singapore, in partnership with SG Cares VC @ Clementi.

**108** volunteers from more than six community partners took part in a care pack distribution exercise organised by SG Cares VC @ Bedok, which benefitted 810 residents living in rental flats in Bedok town.

**100** service users from the YMCA received food donations distributed by volunteers from BridgeAble, a pro bono philanthropy initiative, in partnership with SG Cares @ Geylang.



**40** children from low-income families received crafts and activity items encouraging parent-child bonding and meaningful engagement from ground-up group Hopefull, in partnership with SG Cares VC @ Chua Chu Kang.



You can make a difference too! Kick-start your volunteering journey with your nearest SG Cares VC today.

Find out more: [go.gov.sg/sgcaresmovement](http://go.gov.sg/sgcaresmovement)



# Music to your ears

**RIA 897 RADIO PERSONALITY AZURA GOH, WHO COULD HAVE BECOME A PROFESSIONAL VIOLINIST, HAS NO REGRETS SWITCHING LANES.**

Having started learning to play the violin at the age of six and performing as part of Singapore Malay Orchestra (also known as Orkestra Melayu Singapura) when she turned 11, Azura Goh was well on her way to playing the instrument for a living.

At the time, Azura performed classical music but later found herself yearning to play contemporary music like pop. Entering her teenage years, she began playing the violin on TV shows. It was only when she was 21 that she had an epiphany while observing a TV host. "I thought: *That's what I want to do!*" she quipped.

Since then, she has participated in events such as National Day Parade 2010, as well as Mediacorp Suria dramas and variety programmes. Three years ago, Azura seized the opportunity to join Ria 897 when it came knocking.

However, becoming a DJ also meant that she had to brush up on her Malay-speaking skills. "I was my boss's first hire in her new role. She took a chance on me and I knew I had to make it," said Azura.

'Practice makes perfect' cannot ring truer for the 27-year-old. She tried to speak Malay more often, and watched shows and listened to songs in Malay as much as possible. Her efforts paid off eventually. "Since I use it every day, it is



only natural for me to improve. But to be honest, it is still not that great. My seniors in radio are a lot smoother [in speaking Malay] than I am, but people who have known me since I was a child would tell others, 'She never used to speak like this.'"

*Life Storeys* spoke to Azura to find out the reasons behind her career decisions and her favourite parts about living in Bukit Batok.

## What have you been up to lately?

For the past few months, I have been busy with my radio show, event hosting and TV projects. I grew up with the Singapore Malay Orchestra but I haven't been able to play with them for the past few years, so I was very excited to join their 30th anniversary concert as a guest performer on 15 December last year!



## Would you have pursued a professional music career if you did not become a DJ?

I still receive requests to perform every now and then, and I try to accept them because playing the violin is still something that I love. I will never give up on it, but if I had pursued it as a full-time career, it might not have lasted very long because I would want to take on new challenges. It is sad when something you really like becomes a chore, and I didn't want things to come to that point. So, the current situation is great — I get to play the violin and do other things at the same time.

“My block is five minutes away from West Mall and the MRT station, and I can get onto the expressway in five minutes, so it is very convenient.”

## How is the Hush podcast series that you are co-hosting with 987's Germaine Tan and YES 933's Hazelle Teo coming along?

We are almost at the end of our third season. For Germaine, Hazelle and I, the podcast is really one of the best things that has come out of our careers in radio — not only because we get to explore uncommon topics, but also

how it has formed an extraordinary friendship between us. Within a year, we have gone from being acquaintances to each other's support system. We don't go a day without meeting each other, to the extent that even the security guard at Mediacorp asks, “Where are the other two?” when he sees me alone.

## How do you cope with your busy schedules?

I work almost every day, including weekends. A lot of work, such as programming, takes place behind the scenes — DJs don't just come into the studio and talk! There are days where I reach the radio station in the afternoon and leave only at 4am. Although I do feel tired sometimes, I enjoy every single aspect of my job and never have to drag myself to work. I like to take things one day at a time. Much as I work hard, I don't let it take a toll on me because then the fun is lost. As long as I am happy with what I do and I grow every day from it, work is not a burden to me.

## How long have you stayed in your current flat at Bukit Batok?

It is my parents' flat. They bought it around the time I was born but for personal reasons, we did not live here until I was 17. It has been a decade since we moved back.

## What do you like most about this estate?

My block is five minutes away from West Mall and the MRT station, and I can get onto the expressway in five minutes, so it is very convenient. Even though people say that all the



good food is in the east, there are actually many tasty options here, such as the popular *kway chap* stall at Block 155 Bukit Batok Street 11. There is also a *roti prata* shop near my house that opens till late, which we used to frequent for supper!

## How is your relationship with your neighbours?

My next-door neighbours have been living here since the time my parents bought the flat. They knew me as a baby and have watched me grow up. They often safekeep my parcels and pass them to me when I come home. In the past when we didn't stay here, they would help to keep a lookout and message my parents to alert them of urgent matters.

## How important is neighbourliness to you?

It is very important because your neighbours are the closest to you in terms of proximity. We often see neighbour disputes in the news — I think that makes living so unpleasant! You don't have to do anything extra, but your neighbours would appreciate your friendliness at least. It really does not hurt to smile and say, “Hi!”

## STAY TUNED!

Catch Azura Goh on Ria 897 every Monday to Friday, 5pm to 9pm. You can also watch Suria mini-series *Misteri Jam 12* for free on meWATCH.

# Amicable CONCLUSIONS

## WHEN IT COMES TO RESOLVING DISPUTES BETWEEN NEIGHBOURS, THE COMMUNITY MEDIATION CENTRE CAN HELP.

Working from home (WFH) has its pros and cons. In densely populated Singapore, where most residents live in flats, dealing with noise — generated from both within and outside the home — can be a major downside of WFH.

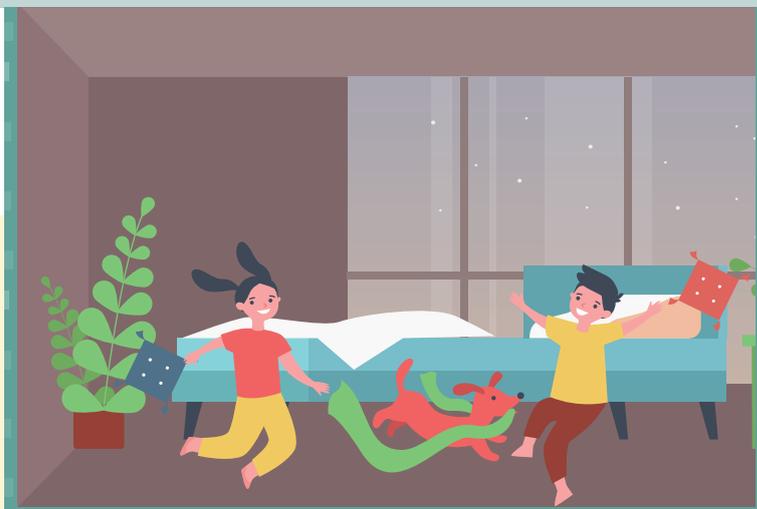
It comes as no surprise then, that noise complaints were the top source of dispute between neighbours for two years running at the Community Mediation Centre (CMC), a neutral platform where neighbours can work out disputes amicably.

Here are two cases involving disputes between neighbours that were recently resolved by the CMC.

### A peaceful resolution

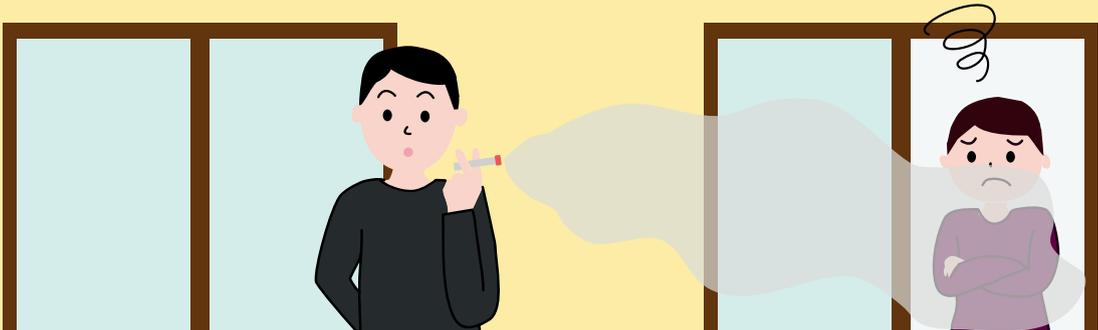
In 2020, Mdm O\* applied to the CMC to mediate a dispute with her neighbour, Mrs L, who lives in the unit above hers.

Mdm O claimed that Mrs L's flat was the source of constant noises, such as the dragging of furniture and loud stomping sounds from children running. These noises would continue until as late as 1am, which disrupted Mdm O's seven-month-old infant's sleep and caused distress to her family. The noise issue persisted despite Mdm O and her husband requesting Mrs L to keep the noise level down several times.



In the mediation session, Mrs L explained that her two children, aged six and four, were confined at home for weeks as they could not attend school or head outside to play during the Circuit Breaker period. Mrs L was also WFH, making it difficult for her to keep tabs on her children while juggling work.

Guided by the CMC mediator, both parties brainstormed for solutions. At the end of the session, both parties understood the other's situation better and agreed to contact each other should the noise levels rise to unacceptable levels in the future.



### When speaking up helps

Neighbours Mr F and Mr G had been at loggerheads for several years. Mr F was unhappy that Mr G would spray air freshener into his unit whenever he smoked at his balcony, as Mr F felt that he had the right to smoke in his own home. Annoyed by the incessant air freshener sprayed into his unit, he requested a mediation session at the CMC, which Mr G agreed to attend.

It was during the mediation session that Mr F found out Mr G had been suffering from breathing difficulties due to chest infections as a result of prolonged exposure to second-hand smoke from Mr F's unit. This was the first time Mr F had heard of this, despite them being long-time neighbours. Feeling apologetic,

Mr F said that had Mr G approached and told him about his health situation, he would have taken proactive steps to not aggravate Mr G's health issues.

Thanks to the mediation session, both men realised that lack of communication was the main cause of their disputes over the years. They agreed on where and when Mr F would smoke at home so that it would not affect Mr G, and that they would contact each other if the issue resurfaces.

More than 80% of neighbour disputes that are mediated at the CMC are successfully resolved. For more information about the CMC and to apply for mediation, visit [cmc.mlaw.gov.sg](http://cmc.mlaw.gov.sg) or call 1800 2255 529 during office hours.

*\*All names have been changed to protect the identities of the people involved.*

If you find yourself having differences with your neighbour, don't call the police immediately! Instead, try this simple five-step FOCUS process to defuse the situation:

- **F**ix it yourself constructively instead of complaining to the authorities.
- Be **O**bjective. Do not approach your neighbour when you are angry.
- **C**ommunicate your concerns in a calm and tactful manner.
- **U**nderstand and listen to the other person's viewpoint.
- **S**uggest solutions and reach a compromise together. Do not go on in a fault-finding loop.

This process helps residents approach their neighbours without having to alert the authorities. Consideration and compromise go a long way when it comes to maintaining harmony between neighbours!

However, if the FOCUS process does not work, you can apply for mediation at the CMC.

# GET Arty - crafty

**KEEP YOUR HANDS AND MINDS MEANINGFULLY ENGAGED  
WITH THESE ACTIVITIES IN THE SAFE COMFORTS OF HOME!**

With the world at our fingertips virtually, and as people have found or rediscovered ways to make stay-home life more interesting over the past two years of the pandemic, spending time indoors is no longer a bore.

After a day of work and information overload thanks to the internet, it is a good idea to go offline for a proper mental health break. One activity you can try your hand at is arts and crafts. Not only will it take your mind off daily stressors, you will also experience a sense of accomplishment after completing a passion project.

These days, craft kits are readily available online and you can have them delivered right to your doorstep. If you are picking up a new hobby or looking to hone your skills, virtual workshops are a great option.

Here are some arts and crafts activities to get you started.



## Embroidery

Embroidery has come a long way since its days as a pastime associated with long commutes and idle hands — as seen from the increasing number of young embroidery artists offering their services on Instagram. Today, the sky is the limit when it comes to what can be created with needles and threads, from human and animal portraits to nature sceneries and intricate floral pieces.

## Terrariums

Terrariums are small, enclosed environments for plants and mosses — basically a mini-greenhouse that is usually self-sustaining or requires little care, and a great source of long-term enjoyment. With their compact size, terrariums make good desk ornaments, especially helpful to alleviate eye strain from staring too long at the computer monitor.

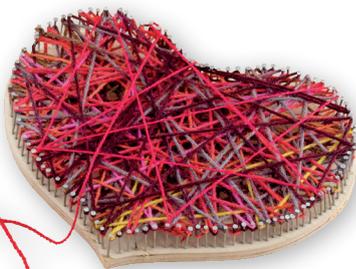
While there are plenty of online guides to assist you in creating your little piece of verdant serenity, there are also hands-on workshops available that will equip you with the right tools and know-how.



### Epoxy craft

Epoxy crafting is a great way of turning creative energy into useful items!

Epoxy resin is a clear or opaque hard plastic made by mixing an epoxy resin and hardener, and allowing the mixture to cure in a mould. Items that can be created with epoxy resin include coasters and jewellery, which can be personalised with decorations such as glitter or dried flowers. Items like clocks and cheese boards can also be beautified with resin art.



### String art

String art involves arranging materials like string or yarn between hammered nails or pins to make geometric patterns. Initially conceived as a creative way of teaching mathematical concepts, popular string art designs include parabolic shapes, letter art and even portraits! All you need to start on your string art project are a few common items that you might already own, such as push pins, a styrofoam or cork board, and coloured threads.



### Aquascaping

Building an aquascape is similar to creating a terrarium, but in an aquatic environment! Aquascaping is a form of art in which decorative features such as rocks and driftwood, as well as live plants and mosses, are arranged attractively in an aquarium. Aquascaping has boomed during the pandemic due to its visual appeal and calming effects. Better yet, you only need a tank a few centimetres wide for an aquascape to thrive. You can even add low-maintenance creatures, such as betta fish (also known as Siamese fighting fish), for some live tank action!



### Scrapbooking

A fun activity that can involve the entire family, scrapbooking allows you to document memories creatively. The typical scrapbook contains memorabilia, such as photos, movie tickets and even newspaper clippings, which you can then embellish with personal touches like stickers, ribbons and washi tapes.

# POWER TO THE *Pedal*

**CYCLING IS GAINING POPULARITY NOT JUST AS A HOBBY AMID THE PANDEMIC, BUT ALSO AS A MODE OF TRANSPORT.**



As Singapore ramps up its cycling infrastructure and amenities to become a 'car-lite' country, more people are picking up this outdoor activity. Beyond a convenient way to get around, cycling can also help you keep fit and reduce your carbon footprint.

### Cycling is good for both you and the environment

Cycling is one of the greenest modes of transportation. It does not require fuel to operate, and is a great form of exercise — cycling at a moderate speed burns almost 300 calories every 30 minutes! It tones muscles, such as the hamstrings and calves,

and improves posture and balance, among many other benefits.

### Convenience on two wheels

Currently, Singapore boasts almost 500km of cycling paths, which will be expanded to about 1,300km by 2030. These will allow cyclists to travel between towns and parks

easily, and connect them from their homes to amenities such as MRT stations and schools.

With the growing popularity of cycling, it is imperative to recognise the importance of safety while cycling — not just for yourself, but also for fellow cyclists and pedestrians. Here are some key points to note:



## SAFETY TIPS FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

### Be considerate, look out for others

To have safer journeys for everyone, we must foster a gracious path-sharing culture. Cyclists and pedestrians alike should be considerate and look out for one another. Pedestrians are encouraged to keep to the left of the footpath, be aware of your surroundings, and refrain from using electronic devices while walking. As a cyclist, keep left unless overtaking, and observe the speed limit of the paths — 10kmh on footpaths and 25kmh on cycling paths. Be mindful not to use your mobile phone while on the go! Also, if you spot a "No Riding" sign, dismount and walk your device.

### Stay visible, stay safe

Ensure that you have the front white light and rear red light of your bicycle switched on when cycling from 7pm to 7am, and



wear brightly coloured or reflective clothing. A lightweight high-visibility vest, available at most major sports retailers, may be helpful for this purpose.

### Vigilance is key

- Your eyes must be focused on the road or path at all times; do not use your electronic devices while cycling, as this may result in lapsed attention.
- Keep a safe distance from others on the paths.
- Cycle slowly or walk your bicycle when passing through crowded areas such as bus stops.

- At traffic crossings, the same golden rule applies for both cyclists and pedestrians — stop and look before crossing.

### A little graciousness goes a long way

- Tilt the front white light of your bicycle slightly downwards to prevent the glare from blinding others.
- Always keep left unless overtaking.
- Cycling paths should be used where available.
- Give way to others.

### Insure yourself

Even experienced cyclists can find themselves in accidents. This is why it is advisable to purchase third-party liability insurance policies that can cover third-party costs if you damage others' property or injure others while cycling.

*Remember, safety is everyone's responsibility, whether you are a cyclist or pedestrian!*

### DID YOU KNOW?

Since 1 September 2021, bicycles without functioning handbrakes are not allowed on Singapore's public paths and roads.



Bicycle wheeling ramps can be found in several locations in Singapore! They provide cyclists an alternative option to push their bicycles up the stairs to cross pedestrian overhead bridges, without the need to carry them.





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is how we care for each other**



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