



CAL e-Newsletter May – June 2020

Dear Readers,

The past few months has seen a halt to many plans and activities, but we are pleased to share that we have been able to continue to touch many lives.

Firstly, our online C2C programmes have been very successful. We are in the season of harvest as many classes have graduated in June. Participants were very appreciative: a couple shared that they were lost and did not know what to do when their daughter was diagnosed with OCD. Now, they are no longer fearful and have learnt better ways of communicating with her. Another caregiver shared that the whole family is now more at peace since they learned to apply empathetic listening. Many shared that they have learnt a lot from the facilitators and are grateful for the sharing within the classes. They realised they are not alone and were happy to have befriended others in the class who are facing the same or even worse situations. You can read more about our online classes in the news post below.

Apart from the online C2C classes, the circuit breaker period drove us to reach out to caregivers who have connected with us in the past, and to check in with them to find out how they are coping. CAL staff have also received a lot of calls during the COVID-19 period and have been very busy providing emotional support, information and referrals to caregivers who are faced with challenging situations at home as they care for their loved ones.

Before COVID-19 struck, we had been compiling our annual report and preparing for the audit of our financial statements. We are pleased to announce that our annual report is ready, and a PDF copy is available for you to access [here](#). 2019 has been a season of growth for CAL. Do check out

the Annual Report on our growth story, especially the new programmes and services for our beneficiaries. COVID-19 did not impede our growth.

CAL has also been working on reaching out to youth, as many young people in Singapore are caregivers or caregivers-to-be who need support as well. We have found that these youth have specific needs that may require programmes specially curated for them to be effective. As such, we are working directly with Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) to improve mental health literacy for young people. For instance, CAL is collaborating with Singapore Institute of Management (SIM) to raise mental health awareness under the student-led iCARE initiative. The intention is to create a programme featuring videos, caregiver stories and Q&A sessions that will help students to learn more about depression. We are also partnering SMU, SUSS and Republic Polytechnic. However, what is really exciting is that we have curated a new C2C programme for Young Caregivers. A group of 5 CAL staff co-created the programme with support from a group of student volunteers under the Youth Corps Leaders Programme (YCLP). Project Mind over Matter is a 6-week course for students enrolled in IHLs. It is targeted at: (1) youths who are primary or secondary caregivers to family/friends; (2) youths interested in helping peers facing mental health conditions; and (3) youths that desire to learn more about mental health issues. The 6 weeks online course was launched on 20 June 2020, and is fully subscribed with 30 participants.

This period has been particularly difficult for many caregivers. We have encountered frequent stories of crisis, relapse, physical abuse and even self-harm. It is a worrying trend. Our response had been a campaign called [Climb for Mental Wellness](#), which is a call to wrap around caregivers, by standing in solidarity with them through gathering 2,500 participants to achieve 250 million steps together in a virtual climb to Everest Base Camp (EBC).

We know community is a vital, because many caregivers have had their lives changed when they realised that there is a community to support them. Running this campaign enables us to call on everyone in Singapore, whether caregiver or non-caregiver, to be a part of this community that advocates for mental wellness. We have had a heartening response: 1750 participants have accumulated more than 125 million steps so far, and 79% of these participants are not caregivers themselves! Thus, the campaign shows that many non-caregivers are keen to support the cause of mental health and caregiving.

It's not too late to take part. It takes 85,301 steps to cover the 65 km to reach Everest Base Camp. With two more weeks to go, that distance can be covered with 6,000 steps a day! (In comparison, the National Steps Challenge calls on participants to hit 10,000 steps a day) Even if you clock in only a few steps, we welcome you to [sign up](#) for the campaign. By adding your name to this cause, you too would be playing a part to advocate for the needs of caregivers. We hope to see you at EBC!

Caregivers Alliance Limited
3 July 2020



Join C2C



Volunteer



Contact

CAREGIVER STORIES



Leaving Fear Behind

Sarah is a caregiver who recently graduated from the C2C programme. Her daughter Grace suffers from schizophrenia, a condition which caused her family a lot of distress as it led to her making threatening remarks about harming them. Seeking help at IMH made a big difference for Grace, and it was also there that Sarah came into contact with CAL. Learning from the experiences of other caregivers at her C2C class allowed Sarah to feel more relieved and confident about handling the situation.

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Project Mind over Matter: Interviews with Caregivers

Project Mind over Matter is a community service initiative under the Youth Corps Leaders Programme (YCLP), in collaboration with CAL. The project team recently interviewed youth caregivers who previously attended CAL's courses. Snippets of the interviews are featured on their Instagram page as part of a series which aims to raise awareness about the challenges and experiences of youth caregivers, and the full transcripts can be found on CAL's website.

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



Virtual Celebrations for Caregivers at Online C2C Graduations

We have been running C2C classes online, both for classes which were suspended due to COVID-19 and for new classes. This new mode of conducting lessons was to ensure caregivers can continue to benefit from the lessons even though they are physically unable to meet. Many of participants at online classes have now completed the course, and their graduation ceremonies have also been held virtually!

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UPCOMING EVENTS



Climb for Mental Wellness campaign!

We are more than halfway to the target of gathering **2,500 participants** to achieve **250 million** steps together, but need *your help* to reach our target. Join this campaign that calls on EVERYONE to keep fit together as a way of showing solidarity with caregivers, while raising awareness of mental health and caregiving. Support this movement by registering and clocking in your steps from any daily exercise that you do!

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Zoom with the #YOLO2020 Team CAL on 11 July 2020

As part of the Climb for Mental Wellness campaign, the #YOLO2020 team have been hosting online sessions to share their motivations for hiking to Everest Base Camp as advocates



for mental health. The aim is also for campaign participants to get to know each other through icebreakers and other fun activities. The final session on 11 July 2020 is your last chance to get to know the team members better, and be inspired by other participants who are climbing together for mental wellness!

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