



Gabriel Lee

# Project C.A.R.E. 2009

## Caring and Reaching Out to the Elderly

Rise & Shine! CDAC Volunteers fetched Lion Befrienders' elderly from several pick-up points.



Dr Ong Seh Hong & volunteers shopped with the elderly who were provided with \$30 NTUC vouchers each.



On 27 September 2009, I waited at Jalan Bukit Merah to meet the group of senior citizens we were going to do grocery shopping and also to have lunch with. Organized for the third time by CDAC and the Lions Befrienders' Service Association, Project C.A.R.E. aims to encourage youths to volunteer their service in caring for and helping needy elderly citizens. Approximately 300 of us would go grocery shopping with 250 senior citizens at Jurong Point's NTUC Fairprice XTRA and then have lunch with them at SAFRA Jurong's Joy Garden Restaurant. I was partnered with Madam Tam, a wheelchair-bound senior citizen.

We had a unique way of communicating with one another: I speak Mandarin and no dialect while Madam Tam speaks Cantonese but understands Mandarin. As such, whenever Madam Tam said something, I would repeat whatever I thought she said in Mandarin and she would either nod or shake her head. I would then either continue to engage her or try again. It must have been very tiring for her to converse with me.

Using the \$30 NTUC vouchers each of the elderly citizens had for their grocery shopping trip, Madam Tam and I concentrated on getting food items that can be kept for awhile. At the end of 30 minutes, we ended up with canned food items, like sardines, and chilled food items, like processed cheese slices. We then proceeded to the Joy Garden Restaurant at SAFRA Jurong to have lunch and to watch an event slide show and dance item.. At the lunch reception, Senior Minister of State for National

Heading to NTUC Fairprice Xtra @Jurong Point with anticipation & leaving with a look of pure contentment.



Lunch at SAFRA Jurong Joy Garden Restaurant.



During the event, the GOH, Ms Grace Fu, announced the success of the Rice Donation Drive - a collaboration with 95.8FM & Lion Befrienders.



Development and Education, Ms Grace Fu, announced that CDAC had collected 87,000kg of rice for 4,000 needy families from its month-long rice donation drive.

After lunch, I sent Madam Tam back to her one-room flat in Jalan Bukit Merah and helped her unpack her groceries. Watching her as she helped herself out of her wheelchair and then dragged herself on a stool from one end of the living room to the other, I thought about the other infirm senior citizens we had accompanied earlier and felt glad that, at the very least, they would not have to worry about shopping for groceries for another week.

When asked about his thoughts on Project C.A.R.E., Mr Alwyn Chia, a Manager at the Lions Befrienders' Service Association, said that it would "allow younger volunteers to spend time interacting with seniors directly and promote intergenerational bonding and the intrinsic values of volunteerism."

Not forgetting a line up of entertaining & fun programmes specially for the elderly.



Project C.A.R.E ended on a happy note (^\_^) Cheers!

