

Making room for more inclusivity

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LEARNING OUTCOME

This lesson activity has been designed to help you practise the following:

- ◆ Character and citizenship education (LO7) – Care for others and contribute actively to the progress of our community and nation.

A new four-storey extension will be built in Lengkok Bahru, to add to the existing Enabling Village – a one-stop hub for people with disabilities.

SG Enable, which manages the space, is driving a \$10m fund-raising campaign for the project, slated to begin work by this year and be completed in 2024.

SG Enable chief executive Ku Geok Boon said the extension will allow the agency to extend its reach and develop more inclusive business models that embrace people with disabilities as integral members of the workforce.

She told The Straits Times that the new space will focus on developing the artistic talents of people with disabilities, while strengthening their independent living skills and addressing the well-being of caregivers and their loved ones.

The space will house an art gallery to showcase the works of people with disabilities as well as studios offering artists-in-residence programmes. SG Enable will also partner more organisations for creative and arts programmes.

SG Enable also hopes to hone the skills of artists and craftsmen with disabilities, and offer more jobs in art creations, design and artisanal craftsmanship, said Ms Ku.

The extension will have studios outfitted with smart home technology, where training workshops can be held on independent living skills such as travelling, grocery shopping and cooking, in collaboration with social service agencies, tech firms and volunteers.

It will also cater to the many caregivers who neglect their own well-being in caring for their children with special needs or find it challenging to have time for themselves.

The extension will address this need through activities such as plays for children, music making or mindfulness programmes, to allow caregivers to take some time off for themselves.

Ms Jacqueline Ang, 45, who has 19-year-old twin daughters with autism, said they visit Enabling Village every two weeks to attend classes at Tech Able, an integrated assistive technology space.

There, her daughters learn how to use augmentative and alternative communication



FairPrice staff trying out a trolley customised for wheelchair-users at the FairPrice Enabling Village supermarket in Lengkok Bahru. Enabling Village is Singapore's first community space dedicated to integrating people with disabilities into society. PHOTO: NTUC FAIRPRICE

methods, including devices and tools that replace or support regular speech.

They also go to the FairPrice supermarket at the village afterwards to practise the skills they have learnt in a real-world setting.

"The Enabling Village is a cosy place to take my daughters as the place looks very tranquil when we visit and the environment is calmer," said Ms Ang. "It feels more welcoming to people with disabilities than other public places."

She hopes to see more courses from charities ART:DIS and YMCA being offered in the extension, to help hone her daughters' creativity skills, as well as a space for performances that they can attend on weekends.

Adapted from "Enabling Village extension to be built in Lengkok Bahru; fund raising for \$10m under way" by Goh Yan Han, STQ, Sept 12, 2022