

AWWA SSUP!

Inside AWWA: Stories, Impact and Innovation

TECH-ING OVER

**Walking New Paths
with Technology**

MISSION SUCCESS

**How AI Robots Are
Complementing
Human Care**

GETTING ONBOARD

**Partnerships That
Go the Distance:
A Reflection by
Mr Frank Khoo**





03 Walking New Paths with Technology



06

How AI Robots Are Complementing Human Care



12

Partnerships That Go the Distance: A Reflection by Mr Frank Khoo

AWWASSUP! CONTENTS

03 EH, WHAT'S UP! CEO's Message

04 TECH-ING OVER Walking New Paths with Technology

06 MISSION SUCCESS How AI Robots Are Complementing Human Care

08 FOR THE WIN! A People-First Culture: Empowering People, Sustaining Impact

10 GIVING BACK More Than a Donation: How Chevron and AWWA are Making Lasting Impact Together

12 GETTING ONBOARD Partnerships That Go the Distance: A Reflection by Mr Frank Khoo

15 OUR HIDDEN GEMS Making Space for Giving: How Angelyn Turned a Simple Idea into Community Impact

About AWWA

AWWA was founded in 1970 by a group of volunteers supporting low-income families and has since evolved into one of Singapore's largest multi-service social service agencies. AWWA's multi-professional team supports the integration and inclusion of children with developmental needs, families with complex social issues, the elderly, and persons with additional needs so that they may live out their various dreams and aspirations. AWWA is a registered charity with an Institutions of a Public Character status.

Interested to know more about AWWA? Visit our [website](#) or connect with us on our socials!



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CEO'S MESSAGE

Dear friends of AWWA,

Recently, I had a conversation with a care associate at one of our Dementia Day Care Centres that stayed with me. She shared how, when two vans arrived at the same time, one often had to wait up to 15 minutes because there wasn't another safe place to transfer clients.

Rather than accepting this as part of the routine, her team repurposed a donated ramp so they could safely use another parking space, reducing waiting time and making the experience more comfortable for our clients.

Even as technology evolves - at AWWA, many of our best ideas begin with simple, frugal innovations like this. They begin with someone caring enough to ask, "how can we make this better?"

As you read this issue, you'll meet the people behind that same spirit, staff, partners and volunteers who continue to find new ways to support our communities. Whether through technology, collaboration or everyday problem-solving, each story reflects our shared commitment to helping people live with dignity, purpose and opportunity.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.



J R Karthikeyan (Karthik)
Chief Executive Officer
AWWA

WALKING NEW PATHS WITH TECHNOLOGY

By Farhana Subuhan



For clients rebuilding strength and confidence after illness or injury, progress can begin with a single supported step. Through the use of the EksoNR exoskeleton, Principal Physiotherapist Phyo Ei Khin is helping clients practise walking more safely, regain mobility, and stay motivated throughout their recovery journey.

For many clients in rehabilitation, recovery is not always measured by dramatic milestones. Sometimes, it begins with something simpler: standing taller, taking a few more steps, or believing progress is still possible.

That is what excites Phyo Ei Khin, Principal Physiotherapist at AWWA, about the exoskeleton used in client rehabilitation.

The device, known as the EksoNR, is a wearable robotic exoskeleton designed for neuro rehabilitation. It supports clients with mobility challenges by assisting them in standing and walking with safer, more natural movement patterns, even when strength or control is limited.

For Phyo, technology like this is not about replacing therapy. It is about strengthening what therapy can achieve as part of AWWA's holistic approach to care, where rehabilitation goes beyond physical recovery to also support confidence, motivation and overall well-being.



Phyo uses the exoskeleton to tailor each rehabilitation session to the client's needs, adjusting support and intensity while enabling more personalised gait training.

“The exoskeleton allows clients to practise walking in a more intensive, repetitive and task-specific way,” she shares. “That kind of repetition is especially important in neurological rehabilitation, where the brain and body are relearning movement.”

The technology is commonly used for clients recovering from stroke, spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury and other neurological conditions. For some, it provides the extra support needed to begin walking practice safely. For others, it helps refine gait patterns, endurance and confidence.

What makes the difference especially visible is motivation. The device provides measurable feedback such as number of steps taken, walking duration and movement quality. Clients are able to see their progress over time, turning each session into something tangible and encouraging.

Phyo recalls a client who began rehabilitation years after a stroke. At first she needed significant help with mobility and had very low motivation, even short walks were exhausting.

After trying the exoskeleton, things changed. She became more engaged in therapy, could

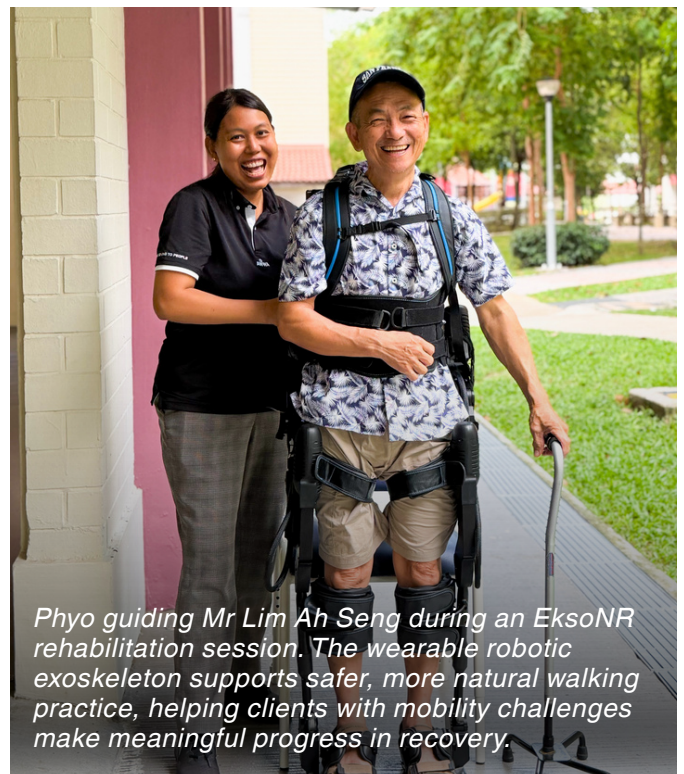
walk along the corridor with the device, and gradually built endurance. She also reported better sleep. Although her functional walking remained limited because of the severity of her condition, the improvements in mood, activity tolerance and motivation were meaningful. “It showed that rehabilitation is not only about physical outcomes. Sometimes it is also about helping someone feel hopeful again,” Phyo shared.

The technology also lets therapists tailor sessions more precisely, adjusting support, intensity and duration to each client's needs, enabling more personalised therapy while reducing the physical strain of manual gait training for therapists.

For Phyo, innovations like the exoskeleton reflect AWWA's broader approach to care: practical, person-centred and always seeking better ways to serve.

“As technology evolves, our role as physiotherapists is to combine clinical expertise with the right tools,” she says. “When used thoughtfully, it can help clients progress faster and return to meaningful participation in the community.”

Because sometimes, the future of rehabilitation begins with one supported step at a time.



Phyo guiding Mr Lim Ah Seng during an EksoNR rehabilitation session. The wearable robotic exoskeleton supports safer, more natural walking practice, helping clients with mobility challenges make meaningful progress in recovery.

HOW AI ROBOTS ARE COMPLEMENTING HUMAN CARE

By Syam Roslan

Having robots become trusted companions for seniors and children with high support needs probably wasn't on anyone's 2026 bingo card. But at AWWA, that possibility is already becoming reality, showing us that the future of care can feel surprisingly warm and full of connection.

A recent pilot study conducted by AWWA and the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS), in partnership with Temasek Foundation, explored how AI-powered social robots can complement care delivery across generations. Conducted over 12 weeks across AWWA's senior care and early intervention centres, the first-of-its-kind study in Singapore involved 171 participants, including both seniors and children with high support needs.

At the centre of the study was LOVOT, an AI social companion robot designed to respond through movement, sound and interaction. The findings showed meaningful improvements across both age groups, supporting emotional connection, engagement and participation in everyday moments.

At AWWA Senior Community Home (SCH), resident Mr Koh Kong Kuan found an unexpected duet partner in a LOVOT called KIKI. A former teacher with a love for music, he found joy in singing nursery rhymes and watching KIKI respond by turning towards him and moving closer.

For another SCH resident, Mdm Ruby Seah, LOVOT offered comfort. After years spent caring for her bedridden mother and navigating the grief that followed her



Mr Koh with KIKI, a social robot that could respond to his singing.

passing, she found warmth in KIKI's responsive and childlike presence. Through these simple interactions, she rediscovered moments of happiness and connection.

These experiences reflected broader study findings among seniors, where interactions with LOVOT were associated with improved quality of life, greater happiness, and stronger emotional well-being.



Mdm Seah found comfort through social robot KIKI as it exudes a responsive and childlike presence from their interactions.



Mdm Yoke Mei (centre) with her two sons, including Eagen (in blue)

Among children with high support needs, LOVOT supported engagement in different but equally meaningful ways. For Eagen, a young child with severe cerebral palsy, vision impairment and profound developmental delays, traditional play often came with barriers. Rather than seeing these barriers as limitations, the trial explored whether a social robot could help bridge gaps in engagement and create new pathways for interaction. During the trial, he formed a bond with a LOVOT called Aiko, showing anticipation and affection through hugs, asking for time together, and participating more actively in structured play.

Beyond heartwarming moments, care teams and caregivers also observed improvements in attention, emotional regulation, and communication. Children demonstrated stronger focus in class, increased responsiveness, and greater readiness to participate in everyday activities. And while LOVOT may have won over clients, caregivers quietly benefited too.

For Eagen's mother, Mdm Yoke Mei, caring for three children while supporting Eagen's complex needs is a daily balancing act.

Through LOVOT, she noticed that her interactions with Eagen became easier, creating more opportunities for connection and play at home. The demands of caregiving remained, but moments of relief and encouragement were a much-needed source of support.

Across both senior and early intervention settings, caregivers and professionals also reported reduced need for repeated prompting and supervision, creating more space for clients to engage independently. This reinforces the effectiveness of social robots as a complementary tool in enhancing care delivery and supporting client outcomes.

As care needs continue to evolve, AWWA will continue exploring how human-centred innovation can enhance support across more care settings and client groups. Ultimately, the future of care is not about replacing people with technology. Rather, it is about using technology to help people care better. By combining compassionate care with evidence-based innovation, we are helping shape a future where care remains deeply human, with a little help from some very lovable robots.



A PEOPLE-FIRST CULTURE: EMPOWERING PEOPLE, SUSTAINING IMPACT

By Syam Roslan

AWWA received the Excellence in Learning and Development (Bronze) award at the HR Excellence Awards 2025

As societal needs continue to evolve, so too must the organisations that serve them. At AWWA, this means investing in our people so they can grow alongside our services and programmes to create lasting impact.

Investing in people has long been a key part of AWWA's approach to organisational sustainability. By building a workplace where employees can learn continuously, develop new capabilities and feel supported in their well-being, AWWA strengthens its ability to grow a resilient workforce and develop the talent needed to meet future needs.

This commitment was recognised in 2025 through multiple national human resources (HR) awards. AWWA received the Excellence in Learning and Development (Bronze) award at the HR Excellence Awards 2025, and three honours at the 18th Singapore HR Awards: Excellence in Learning and Development, Coaching and Mentoring (Gold), Excellence in Employee Experience & Well-Being (Bronze), and the Best HR Leader Award (SME/Non-Profit), presented to AWWA's Director of HR, Ms Michelle Yeo.

These achievements build on earlier recognitions, including receiving the SkillsFuture Employer Awards (Gold) in 2024 and being named one of Singapore's Best Employers by The Straits Times from 2023 to 2025. More importantly, they affirm AWWA's long-standing efforts to strengthen a culture of learning, knowledge-sharing and employee care.

One example is AWWA Academy, AWWA's internal learning and resource platform that encourages employees to share curated lessons, practical insights and resources across teams. By making learning more accessible and collaborative, the platform supports capability-building across the organisation and helps strengthen an internal pipeline of talent for the future.

Ms Noraini Abdullah, Senior Manager in AWWA HR, was part of the team behind the launch of AWWAcademy and has been instrumental in strengthening AWWA's learning and development culture over the past decade. She believes that when employees are given opportunities to learn, contribute and grow, they do their best work.

“

Building a culture of continuous learning and support helps us develop not only capable professionals, but teams that are resilient, collaborative and equipped to meet future needs.

”

Employee wellbeing remains central to sustaining performance. Initiatives such as Flexi-Leave, lunchtime learning sessions with industry experts, complimentary pain management services called DEAR (Drop Everything and Relax) Healing by in-house physiotherapists, and mental-health support from the AWWA Care Team and external counsellors reflect our belief that people do their best work when they feel supported both professionally and personally.

By continuously investing in learning, wellbeing and growth, AWWA strengthens the employee experience and builds the capability and talent pipeline needed to serve future generations with excellence, compassion and purpose.



A DEAR Healing Hub session conducted by an AWWA in-house physiotherapist, available on a complimentary basis for all AWWA employees



AWWA received three awards at the 18th Singapore HR Awards in 2025



MORE THAN A DONATION: HOW CHEVRON AND AWWA ARE MAKING LASTING IMPACT TOGETHER

By Ummi Tasfia

Over the years, Chevron Singapore and AWWA have worked together to support children, families, seniors and persons with disabilities in the community. Since 2020, this shared commitment has taken shape through a valuable partnership built on trust, purpose and a belief that lasting impact takes time.

Chevron's contributions have helped strengthen programmes and create meaningful opportunities for the people we serve. In this conversation, Chevron Singapore Country Chairman Law Tat Win reflects on what has made the partnership endure, the impact created together, and why long-term commitment matters.

Chevron has been a long-standing partner of AWWA. What has kept this partnership meaningful and relevant to you over the years?

The Chevron Way defines who we are as a company, guides how we work with a shared purpose, how we care for people, and how we build partnerships.

Chevron's relationship with AWWA is one that demonstrates how individuals and organisations with a shared desire can serve and make a positive impact to our communities.

AWWA's work to support children, youths, and families is impactful and often a times the

impact is life-changing to the individuals involved.

Though we are separate organisations, our overarching objectives are very well aligned with AWWA, anchored in integrity and trust, and strengthened through our partnership over the years.

A portion of Chevron's support has been driven by employee-led giving efforts. What has made these initiatives meaningful for your teams, and why do you think they have sustained over time?

At Chevron Singapore, our community outreach is driven by our employees, with Chevron supporting their efforts to make a positive difference in the communities where we operate.

In 2020, during COVID, Chevron Singapore kick started our employee one-for-one donation drive. We matched every dollar donated by our employees to their chosen causes, directing the support to two organisations, including AWWA. What started as a simple gesture to support organisations close to the hearts of our employees, has since raised a total of SGD\$173,500 for AWWA over the past five years. Government matching contributions have further amplified Chevron's contribution severalfold.

Our customers are also involved in our efforts in giving back. In a month-long campaign in 2024, Chevron Singapore donated an amount equal to one month of fuel sales to AWWA. The donation supported AWWA's vans, which provide transport for children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Together, these efforts have built a shared sense of purpose among Chevron Singapore, our employees, and our customers, and shown how small actions can make a real difference.

Looking across Chevron's contributions over the years, what has stood out most to you in terms of the impact created together with AWWA?

What has stood out to me over the years is the consistency of our partnership with AWWA from the start. Over the years, Chevron Singapore has made a concerted attempt on how we support and engage with our

community. Instead of one-off contributions, we believe in developing a sustained relationship with our partners.

In turn, this enables AWWA and our other partners to plan for the long term and provide continued and consistent care and programmes for their beneficiaries and staff.

The impact from a single contribution from an individual multiplies when we work together. When I think about this – it brings a smile to my face.

How has your partnership with AWWA shaped the way Chevron approaches giving back or community engagement?

Working closely with AWWA has reinforced Chevron's belief that effective community engagement is built on strong partnerships.

Our partnership with AWWA has kept us grounded and more deeply connected to the real needs of the community.

More importantly, it has reminded us that giving back is not just about support, but about showing up with care, trust, and a long-term commitment to the people we serve.

What has stood out to you about working with AWWA as a partner in enabling these efforts?

Through the years of working with AWWA, we have built a trusting and mutually beneficial relationship that benefits our society.

What advice would you share with organisations looking to build purposeful, long-term partnerships with organisations like AWWA?

Take the time to truly understand the heart behind AWWA's programmes and the people they serve.

With that, move forward with sincerity, care, and a long-term commitment to making a difference.

When you do, you will see how a genuine partnership can touch lives in meaningful ways and create lasting value for both the community and your organisation.



PARTNERSHIPS THAT GO THE DISTANCE: A REFLECTION BY MR FRANK KHOO

By Ummi Tasfia

With a strong belief in the power of collective action, Mr Frank Khoo shares his reflections on building a more inclusive and compassionate society through meaningful collaboration, innovation and community support.

As Deputy Chairman and Chairperson of AWWA's Community Partnership Committee, he also speaks about the culture, people and shared sense of purpose that continue to shape AWWA's work and impact.

You joined AWWA's Board recently. What drew you to AWWA, and how has your perspective evolved since then?

I joined AWWA as a member of the Community Partnership Committee in April 2023. What drew me to AWWA was the clear sense of purpose I witnessed: everything was done with the beneficiaries at heart and to maximise their potential to lead dignified, independent lives. As someone new to the non-profit sector, I wanted to contribute to causes that resonate deeply with me: children, youth, and seniors. AWWA's diverse service offerings provided that opportunity.

My perspective has not only remained consistent but has been reinforced. The culture of serving with passion is evident not just among Board members but across the entire staff. This shared commitment drives AWWA to constantly seek better ways to serve its people. With services spanning childhood to adulthood, AWWA journeys alongside individuals at every stage, understanding and addressing their evolving needs.

From your perspective, what makes AWWA distinctive in the social service landscape today, and where do you see its greatest strengths?

AWWA's distinctive strength lies in its breadth and depth of services. By supporting beneficiaries across age groups and abilities, AWWA creates a unique ecosystem where knowledge and experience are shared across programs. This holistic approach allows us to anticipate needs, design solutions, and address gaps that might otherwise leave some underserved.

Unlike more specialised charities, AWWA's multi-service model provides continuity of care and empower beneficiaries to live with dignity



Frank dressed up as Mario during an activity at Kindle Garden.

and purpose. With professional expertise and compassion, AWWA helps individuals maximise their potential and access opportunities they might not otherwise have.

With your experience across large organisations, how do you think strong governance enables social service organisations like AWWA to deliver meaningful and sustainable impact?

Governance is essential. It provides the framework for accountability, transparency, and consistency. However, governance alone is not enough. What truly drives impact is culture. At AWWA, governance is complemented by a progressive, innovative culture that encourages staff to think creatively and develop better solutions.

This entrepreneurial spirit within a non-profit context sets AWWA apart. Governance ensures we stay true to our mission, while culture enables us to adapt, innovate, and deliver sustainable impact for beneficiaries.

As Chairperson of the Community Partnership Committee, how do you see partnerships strengthening AWWA's work and why are they increasingly important today?

As the saying goes, "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." Partnerships enable AWWA to leverage collective strengths, knowledge, and networks to build a more sustainable, progressive organisation.

In today's interconnected world, no single organisation can meet all needs alone. Partnerships bring diversity of thought, resources, and expertise, allowing us to co-create solutions, amplify our reach, and ensure beneficiaries receive holistic support. Whether with corporates, community groups, or individuals, partnerships are the cornerstone of resilience and long-term impact.

What has been most meaningful for you in your time with AWWA so far?

The most meaningful aspect has been witnessing how collective action can build a more inclusive and compassionate society. I have seen corporate and individual volunteers, as well as donors, moved by AWWA's mission, many going on to become ambassadors who spread awareness and inspire others. What stands out most is this ripple effect, where one act of kindness multiplies into many, and this is deeply fulfilling.

One of the most meaningful experiences for me at AWWA has been seeing the ripple effect of our work. On several occasions, I have brought friends who were curious to learn more about AWWA to visit AWWA Home and Kindle Garden. Being there and witnessing the work firsthand deeply moved them. Many returned with their own corporate colleagues or friends, volunteering their time and contributing financially to support the cause.

Seeing this quiet chain of influence unfold has been incredibly heartening. It reminds me that beyond the services we provide, AWWA is nurturing a growing community of people who genuinely believe in our mission and choose to stand with us as ambassadors for the cause.

Looking ahead, what do you see as key priorities for AWWA, and how can partners play a meaningful role in supporting these efforts?

Looking ahead, AWWA must continue to evolve, adapt, and progress. We serve multiple stakeholders: beneficiaries, donors, staff, and the wider community, and we carry responsibilities for each.

- **For donors:** We must ensure that contributions translate into tangible outcomes.
- **For staff:** We must invest in upskilling and growth, creating an environment where people are valued and motivated. As the saying goes, “Train people well enough so they can leave; treat them well enough so they don’t want to.”
- **For beneficiaries:** We must continue to innovate, ensuring services remain relevant and impactful.

Partners play a crucial role in this journey. They bring fresh perspectives and expertise, enabling us to adopt new technologies, and learn and share best practices. Community partners can amplify outreach and advocacy. Together, partners help AWWA remain agile, resilient, and future-ready.

Has your experience with AWWA changed the way you think about social service or impact? If so, how?

Yes, my experience with AWWA has profoundly shaped my perspective. I’ve come to see that social service is not about “saving the world” but about recognising that every act of kindness matters. Impact is built step by step, through the collective efforts of many.

I also better appreciate how social service ecosystem relies on all stakeholders: beneficiaries, donors, volunteers, staff, and partners, each playing a vital role. Above all, I’ve developed a deep respect for social workers, whose tireless dedication continues to make society more compassionate and inclusive.



Frank (top left) with corporate volunteers and clients of AWWA Day Activity Centre at a volunteering event.

MAKING SPACE FOR GIVING: HOW ANGELYN TURNED A SIMPLE IDEA INTO COMMUNITY IMPACT

By Farhana Subuhan

What started as an idea shared through AWWake has grown into something far bigger than expected. At AWWA's Senior Community Home, Angelyn transformed a simple concept into the Giving Space, a resident-led initiative that supports households in the community while creating meaningful roles for her clients.

Can you share a little about your role as a Social Work Associate at AWWA's Senior Community Home, and what you enjoy most about working with seniors?

I first joined Senior Community Home through a health coaching project focused on improving seniors' health habits through talks, exercise programmes and support groups. Over time, while pursuing my social work degree, I also took on casework, care plans and financial assistance matters, which eventually led me into my current role as a Social Work Associate.

What I enjoy most in the Home is seeing the strengths in our seniors that are often overlooked. Many of them have rich life experiences, resilience and a strong desire to contribute when given the chance.

What inspired you to start the Giving Space?

It began with a donor who offered us a small fridge. During a chat with my manager, Sebastian, we thought, why not turn it into something meaningful?

We knew residents in nearby rental blocks needed food support, and we wanted our



seniors to take part in something purposeful. The Giving Space became a way to do both.

For those hearing about it for the first time, what is the Giving Space?

The Giving Space is a food support initiative run with the help of our seniors from Senior Community Home and supported by donors and partners such as Yeo's, NTUC, OKI Singapore and temples in the community.

Today, it supports close to 80 households with groceries and daily essentials. Distribution takes place on the last Tuesday and Thursday of each month.

How did you bring sponsors and donors on board to support the initiative?

Much of it began with reaching out, emails, conversations and networking with organisations and long-time donors to share the Giving Space vision: support residents in need while involving our seniors in something meaningful.

Many partners responded generously with groceries, condiments, frozen food, detergent and household essentials. We also continue to engage the Social Service Office and



Around 15 seniors from the Home are currently volunteering in the initiative led by Angelyn.

neighbouring community groups to strengthen support for beneficiaries.

This showed me that when the purpose is clear, people are willing to come together to help.

Why was it important to involve seniors in running it?

From the start we wanted the Giving Space to be resident-led. Our seniors are often seen only as recipients, yet they have much to contribute.

They handle registration, packing, stock checks, expiry monitoring and deliveries for those who can't come down and some do outreach by inviting neighbours to collect support.

It gives them purpose, ownership and meaningful connection to their community.

How have residents responded?

Initially, some were unsure if they could do it. There were concerns about communication, confidence, and whether they were ready to take on the responsibilities.

But over time, many surprised even themselves. Seniors who were once quiet began stepping forward with confidence. Others who rarely participated in activities started showing up regularly, eager to contribute. Some formed friendships through

their volunteer shifts, turning shared service into genuine connection.

What began as hesitation gradually became ownership, pride, and a renewed sense of purpose.

What does this say about ground-up innovation at AWWA?

It shows that practical, ground-level ideas can create real impact when people are willing to try.

The Giving Space didn't begin with a big budget or complex plan. It began with noticing a need, believing in our seniors' abilities, and wanting them to stay connected to the community through meaningful participation. Sometimes all it takes is one small step.

What would you say to colleagues with ideas of their own?

Start small, but start! You do not need every detail figured out before taking the first step. I had doubts at first, but support came from colleagues, partners and the seniors themselves. Some of the most meaningful initiatives grow when you put an idea forward and let others build on it with you.



Mr Rai, a senior at the Home, volunteering at the Giving Space initiative.

Inspired by Angelyn's journey?

Explore career opportunities at AWWA and be part of a team making a difference across our diverse services. Visit <http://awwa.org.sg/join-us>