

AWWASSUP!

Inside AWWA: Stories, Impact and Innovation

TECH-ING OVER

**Reaching Further
with Technology**

FOR THE WIN

**AWWA's Collaborative
Support Model Earns
National Recognition**

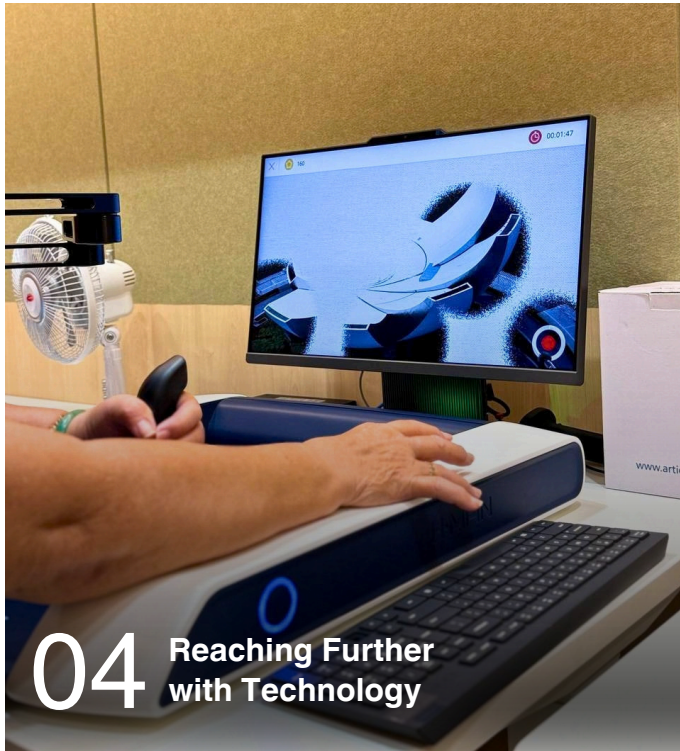
MISSION SUCCESS

**Brewing Purpose:
How Susan Stays
Active, Connected
and Giving Back at 73**



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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,

Recognition is never just about an award. At its heart, it is a reflection of the people, ideas and commitment that make meaningful impact possible.

Recently, I had the opportunity to speak on radio about technology, innovation and the role they can play in shaping the future of social services. Those conversations reinforced something I see every day across AWWA: innovation is happening at every level of our organisation. It is not confined to leadership discussions or technology teams. It happens when staff on the ground identify new ways to improve client outcomes and challenge ourselves to rethink how we can work better together.

This spirit is exemplified in one of the stories featured in this issue, where AWWA was honoured with the National Healthcare Innovation and Productivity Medal by the Centre for Healthcare Innovation for our work using the Multi-Tiered Support System for Holistic Child Development. Through this model, our educators, Allied Health Professionals and caregivers worked together using an interprofessional collaborative practice approach, helping more than 400 students across our two special education schools receive more coordinated, family-centred support.

What I find most meaningful about this achievement is that innovation does not always mean adopting the latest technology or pursuing the next big breakthrough. Sometimes, it is about bringing people together around a shared purpose, leveraging one another's strengths, and finding better ways to meet the needs of those we serve.

As technologies such as artificial intelligence continue to evolve at a rapid



J R Karthikeyan (Karthik)
Chief Executive Officer
AWWA

pace, I am excited about the possibilities they can unlock for our sector. But I am even more encouraged by the curiosity, adaptability and collaborative spirit I see across AWWA. These qualities will ensure that whatever new tools emerge, we remain focused on what matters most: empowering people and creating meaningful impact.

As AWWA continues to grow and evolve, we will do so by staying true to our purpose while remaining open to new ways of making a difference.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us, and I hope you enjoy this issue of **AWWASSUP!**



REACHING FURTHER WITH TECHNOLOGY

By Farhana Subuhan

For clients rebuilding arm strength and movement after a stroke, recovery often comes through repetition: reaching, grasping and trying again. With H-Man, Senior Occupational Therapist Foo Jia Xin is helping clients practise these movements more intensively, track their progress and translate their gains into everyday life.

For someone recovering from a stroke, everyday actions that once came naturally — reaching for a cup, opening a cupboard, getting dressed — can suddenly require tremendous effort.

Helping clients regain these abilities is part of Jia Xin's work as a Senior Occupational Therapist with AWWA's Therapy Hub. With H-Man, a portable, upper-limb arm rehabilitation robot, she combines occupational therapy with robotic, game-based training to help clients practise movements that support their everyday activities. Through interactive games on a screen, clients move a handle to reach targets, trace paths and complete tasks, strengthening control of their shoulders and elbows; an additional grasp handle trains grip strength.

For Jia Xin, one of H-Man's strengths is its ability to adapt to each client. For those with significant weakness, the robot can guide their arm through movements; as they progress,

she can gradually reduce the assistance, introduce resistance, or increase the speed and precision required — allowing clients to complete hundreds of purposeful movements within a single 30-minute session.

"Neuroplastic change after stroke is driven largely by high-dose, task-specific repetitive practice," Jia Xin explains. "H-Man allows clients to achieve substantially higher repetition counts within a standard session than they typically would in conventional therapy."

That support can be particularly meaningful early in recovery. Jia Xin recalls a client who began using H-Man about six weeks after a stroke, with very limited active movement in her affected arm. During her first session, she was able to complete an entire game with assistance from the robot and its elbow support accessory — an early success that gave her the chance to practise meaningful movements she could not yet perform independently, while showing her that progress was possible.

The game-based format also helps keep clients engaged. "What clients tell me most often is that time passes quickly. They are so focused on the game that they forget they are

doing hundreds of repetitions," Jia Xin shares. Scores and immediate feedback make progress visible, motivating some clients to beat their previous best.

But technology, Jia Xin is quick to point out, is only one part of the process. Throughout each session, she remains alongside the client, observing movement quality, providing cues and adjusting difficulty. After H-Man training, she moves on to task-specific practice — reaching into a cupboard, holding a cup steadily, getting dressed — helping clients apply their gains to daily life. H-Man also captures data on strength, movement accuracy and coordination, giving her additional information to track progress and tailor therapy to each client's goals.

"The robot provides the intensity, consistency and objective data, while I focus on the clinical reasoning, goal setting and helping clients apply those gains to meaningful everyday activities," she says.

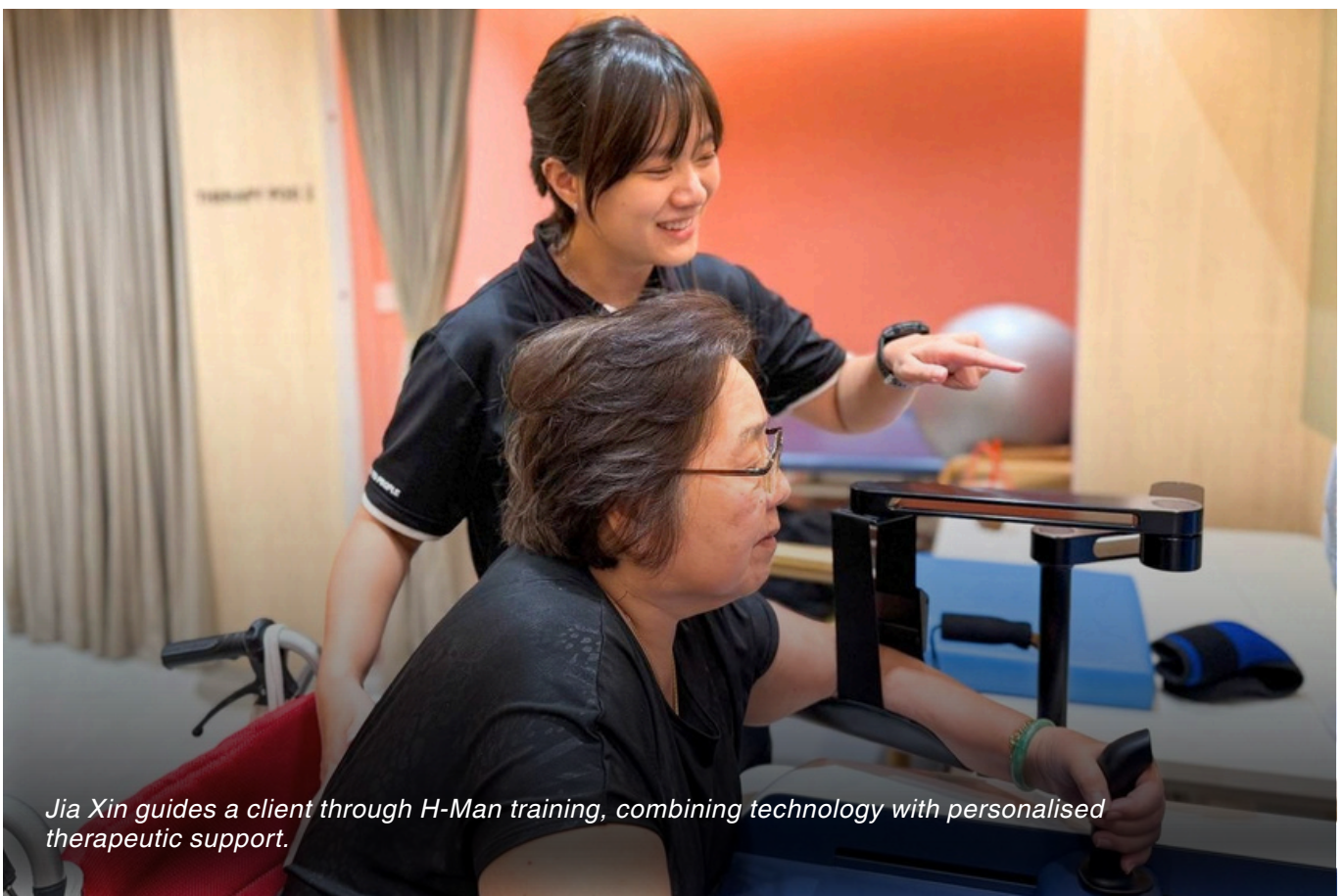
It has also challenged assumptions about older adults and technology. "You will be surprised by how quickly many of our older clients take to the technology and how



An AWWA client using the H-Man as part of her rehabilitation.

motivated they become once they start seeing their own progress," Jia Xin shares.

As rehabilitation needs continue to grow alongside Singapore's ageing population, technologies like H-Man complement AWWA's person-centred approach — enabling more intensive, personalised therapy without losing the human relationship at its core. Because ultimately, rehabilitation isn't about achieving a higher score on a screen; it's about helping clients regain the movement and confidence to return to the everyday activities that matter most.



Jia Xin guides a client through H-Man training, combining technology with personalised therapeutic support.



BREWING PURPOSE: HOW SUSAN STAYS ACTIVE, CONNECTED AND GIVING BACK AT 73

By Farhana Subuhan

At 73, Susan Cheong Yoke Ying believes there is always something new to learn. From befriending seniors in her neighbourhood to picking up new skills as a volunteer barista at Kampung AWWA, the retiree has found meaningful ways to stay active, connected and involved in her community. Today, she volunteers at the café once a week — an experience that has given her new skills, friendships and a continued sense of purpose.

How did you first become involved with Kampung AWWA?

I live in the neighbourhood, so I was very happy when Kampung AWWA opened. I first volunteered as a befriender with AWWA's Active Ageing Centre, paired with two seniors whom I would visit and check in on — once even accompanying one of them to the clinic for an eye check-up.

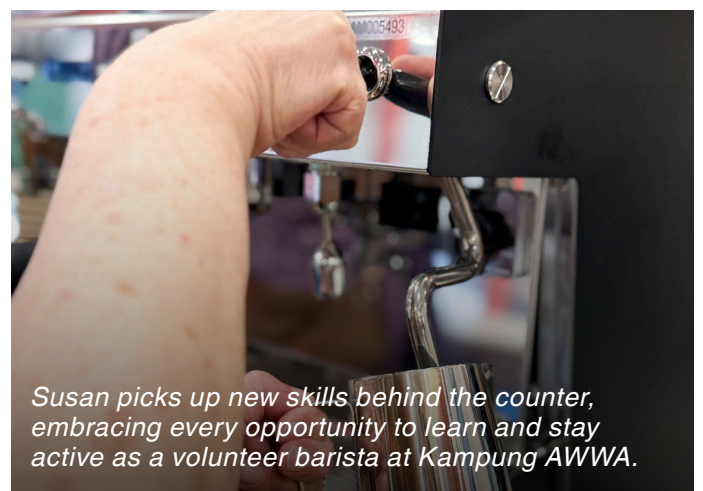
What made you decide to become a volunteer barista?

I wanted to find more opportunities to contribute and keep my mind active. I started volunteering at the café twice a month, and now I come in once a week. I like the flexibility

— if I can't make it on a certain day, I can arrange another shift — and the staff here are very kind.

What has learning to be a barista been like?

It has been enjoyable, especially because of my partner, Isa — we joke and laugh together during our shifts. There have been challenges too, like learning to operate a more complex coffee machine and the cashier system. But I believe in having a positive mindset: if I don't know something, I'll ask. The staff here are always willing to teach us, so every time I come, I learn something new.



Susan picks up new skills behind the counter, embracing every opportunity to learn and stay active as a volunteer barista at Kampung AWWA.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering here?

My shift is usually from 1pm to 4pm. I enjoy working with my partner and interacting with customers. Over time, I've also come to recognise many familiar faces around Kampung AWWA — even a quick nod to someone you recognise makes you feel connected to the community.

Has volunteering given you a greater sense of purpose?

Definitely. Although I volunteer only once a week, it gives me a sense of purpose because I know I can still contribute. Being retired doesn't mean I have to stop being involved — beyond the café, I also help

my neighbour with communal meals about four times a year, as her 'assistant' since she's the one who can really cook!

What would you say to other seniors thinking about trying something new?

Give it a try — there are many opportunities in the community, and we shouldn't limit ourselves because of our age. Through Kampung AWWA, I've also attended talks on topics like communicating with people living with dementia, which have helped me become more understanding in my interactions with others. I'd like to continue volunteering with AWWA for as long as I'm able to. It reminds me that no matter our age, we can still contribute in our own way.



Susan training her partner, Isa, in handling and managing the POS system at Kampung AWWA's Community Cafe.

AWWA'S COLLABORATIVE SUPPORT MODEL EARN'S NATIONAL RECOGNITION

By Syam Roslan

NATIONAL
HEALTHCARE
INNOVATION AND
PRODUCTIVITY
2026 MEDALS



More than 400 students across AWWA's two special education schools have benefited from a collaborative support model that brings educators, Allied Health Professionals and caregivers together to provide more coordinated, responsive and family-centred support.

Known as the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS): Integrated Tiered Supports for Holistic Child Development, the model ensures that children with diverse learning and developmental needs receive timely support tailored to their individual goals. Through a shared approach, educators, therapists and caregivers work together to identify priorities, coordinate interventions and monitor progress, helping each child receive consistent support across different environments.

The effectiveness of this collaborative approach has now earned national recognition. AWWA was awarded the Best Practice Medal (Care Redesign) at the National Healthcare Innovation and Productivity (HIP) Medals 2026 for its MTSS model. Organised by the National Healthcare Group Centre for Healthcare Innovation, the awards recognise organisations and teams that demonstrate excellence, innovation and thought leadership in improving care outcomes and service delivery.

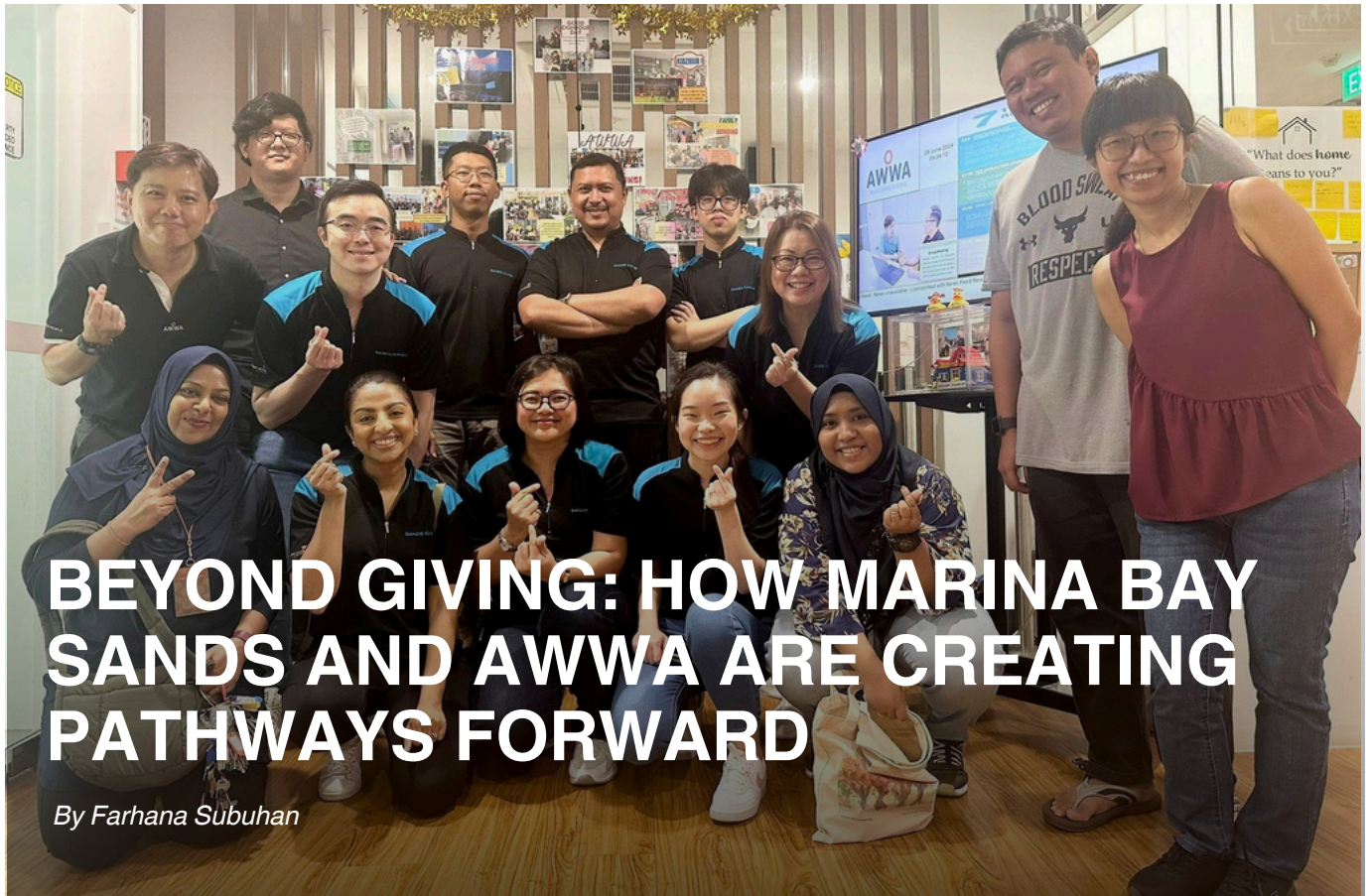
Implemented across AWWA's two special education schools, MTSS has strengthened collaboration between professionals and families, enabling more holistic support for students throughout their learning journey. By bringing together expertise from different disciplines around shared goals, the model helps ensure that support is aligned, coordinated and centred on the needs of each child.

Beyond the award itself, the achievement reflects the dedication and commitment of colleagues across multiple disciplines who work together every day to support children and families. The success of the MTSS model was made possible through strong interprofessional collaboration and a shared belief that better outcomes are achieved when educators, therapists and caregivers partner closely with one another.

This national recognition underscores AWWA's ongoing commitment to innovation and continuous improvement in service delivery. It also reaffirms our belief that meaningful impact happens when professionals, families and communities come together to help every child reach their fullest potential.



Allied health professionals, educators and other AWWA professionals come together during MTSS sessions to align on shared goals and outcomes for their clients.



BEYOND GIVING: HOW MARINA BAY SANDS AND AWWA ARE CREATING PATHWAYS FORWARD

By Farhana Subuhan

Since 2015, Marina Bay Sands has supported AWWA through monetary donations and corporate volunteering — a partnership that has grown alongside the needs of the communities we serve. This year, that support has extended to Enabled Living @ Bedok, a pilot initiative run by AWWA and supported by SG Enable that empowers persons with disabilities to live more independently within the community. Through its month-long Dine for Good fundraising campaign and the Good Bites Market at the 12th Sands for Singapore Charity Festival in August 2026, Marina Bay Sands brought together guests, Team Members and partners to support this next chapter of our work. We spoke with Nicholas Ionides, Senior Vice President of Communications and Corporate Affairs at Marina Bay Sands, about what has sustained this partnership — and why lasting impact requires more than a one-off contribution.

What has made this partnership meaningful over the years?

Supporting vulnerable communities is one of the core pillars of Sands Cares, our community engagement platform. We saw a strong resonance with AWWA's work in addressing diverse social needs, and that has continued through the years. What has made this partnership especially meaningful is that it has grown alongside the evolving needs of the community — from the Transitional Shelter service to Enabled Living @ Bedok. Through each chapter of the partnership, we've seen AWWA identify emerging needs and develop thoughtful, people-centred solutions.

Impact At a Glance



S\$400,000+
contributed by
Marina Bay
Sands to
AWWA's
Transitional
Shelter
programme
since 2018



160+
vulnerable
families from
AWWA's
Transitional
Shelters
supported with
temporary
accommodation
and social work
intervention



30-40+
Marina Bay
Sands staff
volunteer
annually to
assemble
furniture and
re-paint
AWWA's
Transitional
Shelter units

What aspects of AWWA's work or mission resonate most strongly with Marina Bay Sands?

Marina Bay Sands' contribution to Singapore extends beyond its core business of hospitality and contributing to the nation's economic and tourism landscape. Through Sands Cares, we seek to create positive social impact by strengthening resilience, expanding access to opportunities and supporting communities in meaningful and lasting ways.

AWWA's work speaks directly to these priorities. It not only responds to immediate needs, but also helps individuals and families build confidence, support networks and capabilities needed to participate more fully in society. The focus on journeying alongside people, empowering them to shape their own futures rather than relying solely on short-term intervention, closely reflects how we believe community investment creates enduring value.

Why does employee volunteering matter to Marina Bay Sands?

Volunteering allows our Team Members to connect directly with the communities they are supporting and better understand the challenges some individuals and families may face. Our Facilities team, for example, has volunteered almost annually, with 30 to 40 team members helping to create safer temporary homes for families. To us, community impact isn't defined solely by funds raised, but by the time and commitment our people bring. These experiences deepen our understanding of the communities around us, strengthen our culture of giving, and remind us that lasting impact often begins with simple human connections.

How would you like the partnership to evolve?

As community needs continue to evolve, partnerships must evolve alongside them. We hope to create more opportunities to combine AWWA's social expertise with Marina Bay Sands' unique strengths as a hospitality organisation, whether through volunteerism, fundraising, awareness building or creating opportunities for our guests and Team Members to give back. We're increasingly interested in supporting initiatives that build resilience, promote independence and help people participate more fully in society, which is why Enabled Living @ Bedok has resonated so strongly with us. It reinforces our belief that effective support creates long-term pathways towards independence and inclusion.

Marina Bay Sands' volunteers have supported us over the years in refreshing our Transitional Shelter units, helping to create a more homely and welcoming environment for families and individuals during a difficult period in their lives. Their positivity and commitment, even through the physical work involved, truly reflect the spirit of 'Sands Cares'. We are deeply encouraged by their continued support in creating hope and better outcomes for our clients.

Dennis Loh, Head Social Work
AWWA Transitional Shelter



Marina Bay Sands staff painting AWWA's Transitional Shelter units to create more welcoming spaces for families. Photo: Marina Bay Sands



HONOURING A LEGACY, WELCOMING A NEW CHAPTER: AWWA'S LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

By Syam Roslan

On 8 September 2026, AWWA entered a new chapter in its governance journey, with the leadership transition from Ms Beatrice Chen to Mr Frank Khoo as Chairman of the Board. The transition marks both a celebration of dedicated service and a reaffirmation of AWWA's commitment to strong stewardship, continuity and impact for the communities we serve.

After 11 years of service on the AWWA Board, including her tenure as Chairman, Beatrice has stepped down from the Board, leaving behind a significant legacy of leadership and advocacy. Throughout her years of service, she championed greater inclusion, meaningful participation and opportunities for persons with disabilities and their families, consistently ensuring that the voices and needs of clients remained at the heart of AWWA's work.

Beatrice's relationship with AWWA spans even longer than her Board service. Her journey began in 2008 as a volunteer, reflecting a longstanding commitment to the organisation and its mission. Over nearly two decades, she witnessed and contributed to AWWA's evolution as the social service landscape transformed, helping the organisation strengthen its capabilities, deepen partnerships and remain responsive to emerging community needs.

As Chairman from 2023, Beatrice worked closely with the Board and leadership team to guide AWWA through a period of continued growth and development. Her leadership was characterised by thoughtful governance, a strong belief in innovation and capability-building, and a steadfast focus on ensuring that AWWA remained relevant and impactful

in an increasingly complex operating environment.

A passionate advocate for persons with autism, Beatrice has also been a strong voice for more robust support and meaningful pathways beyond the school years. Her advocacy reflects a broader vision of an inclusive society where every individual is empowered to thrive with the right support and opportunities.

While retiring from the Board, Beatrice's contributions to AWWA will continue. She remains actively involved as Chairperson of AWWA's School Management Committee and as a member of the Nominations Committee, where her experience, wisdom and institutional knowledge will continue to benefit the organisation.

Succeeding Beatrice as Chairman is Mr Frank Khoo, who previously served as Deputy Chairman of the Board and Chairperson of the Community Partnership Committee. A longstanding member of the Board, Frank has played an instrumental role in strengthening AWWA's partnerships and engagement with the wider community, helping to create opportunities for collective impact and collaboration.

Frank brings with him more than 30 years of leadership experience and a deep understanding of AWWA's mission, values and strategic priorities. Having served alongside Beatrice and the Board in recent years, he assumes the Chairmanship with a strong appreciation of the organisation's heritage, strengths and aspirations.

Working closely with Professor Philip Choo, who has been appointed Vice Chairman, as well as fellow Board members and management, Frank will continue to provide strategic leadership and governance as AWWA advances its mission of strengthening inclusion, enabling participation and responding to the evolving needs of society.

As AWWA continues its mission of empowering individuals, supporting families and building a more inclusive society, the organisation expresses its deepest gratitude to Beatrice for her years of dedicated service and leadership.



Mr Frank Khoo assumed the Chairmanship of AWWA in September 2026

At the same time, it warmly welcomes Frank into his new role and looks forward to the next chapter of growth and impact under his stewardship.



SMOOTH OPERATOR: HOW IBRAHIM SUPPORTS CLIENTS IN RECLAIMING THEIR INDEPENDENCE

By Syam Roslan

As Senior Executive (Admin and Operations) for both AWWA Transitional Shelter @ Jalan Tenteram and Enabled Living @ Bedok, Ibrahim Bin Rajab keeps operations running smoothly across two very different services. But beyond the logistics lies a common purpose: supporting clients on their journey towards greater independence, whether that means helping displaced families rebuild stability or empowering persons with disabilities to live more confidently in the community.

Tell us about your role across the services you support.

I oversee the operations of at our Transitional Shelter @ Jalan Tenteram and Enabled Living @ Bedok (ELB), ensuring that residents receive the support they need in a safe and nurturing environment. While the two services support different groups of people, the goal is the same: helping our residents move towards greater independence. My role involves everything from service operations and compliance to working closely with teams to create positive experiences and meaningful outcomes for our clients.

What's the most meaningful lesson you've learned from supporting people at different life stages and backgrounds?

Never underestimate a person's capability. I've met clients at some of the most challenging

points in their lives. Yet, with the right support, many go on to achieve milestones they once thought were out of reach. One of the most meaningful moments is seeing former shelter residents return as volunteers. Some even provide buddy support to families currently staying at our shelter. Seeing them give back to others who are walking a similar path is a powerful reminder that change is possible.

What were the biggest challenges and rewards of setting up ELB?

As ELB was a new service model for our team, one of the biggest challenges was learning how to best support persons with physical disabilities, hearing loss and visual impairment while building the service from the ground up. Fortunately, we were able to tap on AWWA's deep expertise across our disability services. Many colleagues generously shared their knowledge and stepped in to guide us during



Ibrahim attends to maintenance works at a resident's unit, supporting residents' comfort and independence behind the scenes.

the early stages. The most rewarding part has been seeing our clients grow in confidence and independence. Over the past year, we've worked together to create an inclusive and supportive living environment, and it's been inspiring to see residents thrive.

How has your understanding of support and independence evolved over the years?

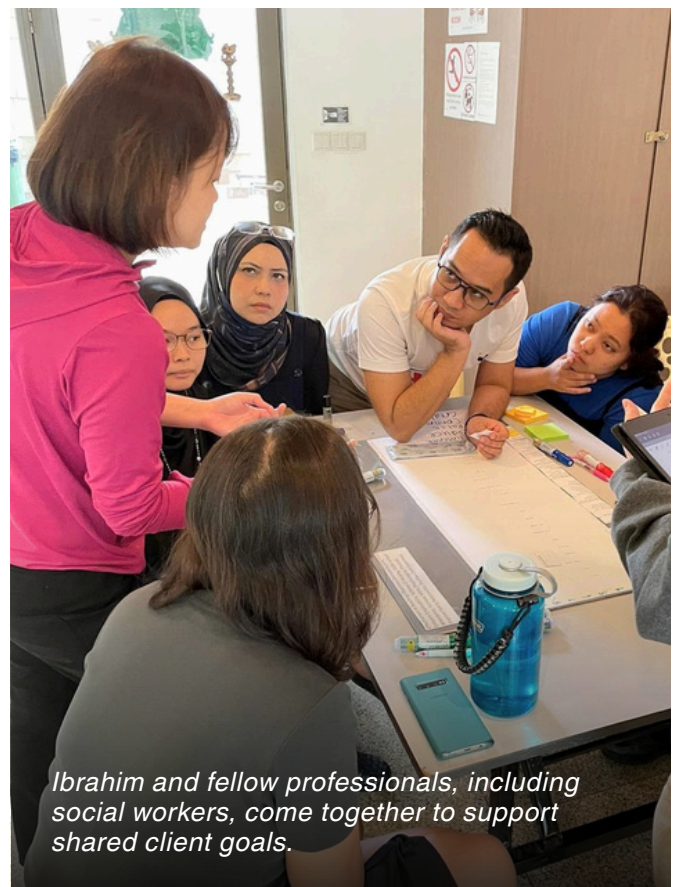
Earlier in my career, I saw support mainly as helping people complete tasks and meet their daily needs. Over time, I began asking myself: *Am I helping because it's needed, or because it's quicker and easier for me to do it?* That question changed my perspective. I've come to realise that meaningful support isn't about doing things for people. It's about empowering them to do as much as they can for themselves. Today, I see support as a partnership. My role is to encourage, create opportunities and build confidence while respecting each person's choices and autonomy. It's a mindset that has made me a more patient, empathetic and effective social service professional.

What's one thing colleagues might be surprised to learn about you?

Many people don't know that I hold a qualification in Clinical Psychology. Although I'm in an operations role, that background comes in handy. It helps me better understand emotions, behaviours and group dynamics, especially when navigating difficult situations or resolving conflicts. Whether I'm supporting clients or working with colleagues, it gives me another perspective and allows me to contribute beyond the operational aspects of my role.

What's a 'hidden gem' or a good makan spot near to your workplace?

Definitely Mat Noh & Rose Authentic Ginger Fried Chicken Rice at Whampoa Market! The queue is almost always long, but it's absolutely worth the wait. Good food and good company after a long day at work never disappoints.



Ibrahim and fellow professionals, including social workers, come together to support shared client goals.

Inspired by Ibrahim'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>