



HOMELESS HEARTS
OF SINGAPORE

Annual Report FY2021

Building a City of Refuge: A Sustainable Whole-Of-Society Approach

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About Us

Our Vision

We envision Homeless Hearts to serve as a platform to inspire fellow volunteers to start their own grounds-up initiatives to serve and befriend any homeless in their own local neighbourhoods, so that one day every homeless person in every neighbourhood in every age group and every background will find full community support to help them reintegrate back into full community again.

Our Mission

To make Singapore a City of Refuge and support (via community, infrastructure, and policies) for the displaced and isolated in our nation.

To help the homeless re-integrate into community via community-building, temporary aid, advocacy, and local partnerships.

Overview of Charity

Unique Registration Number (UEN): 201839495C

Auditor: Teo Yifang Yvonne [ISCA CPA Singapore (ID: 829311)]

Bankers: DBS Bank

Lawyers (where applicable): N/A

Other advisers (where applicable): N/A

Homeless Hearts (Ltd.) (“Homeless Hearts of Singapore / HHOS”) was founded in July 2014 by Abraham Yeo and Mervin Lee. HHOS was officially registered as a charity under the Charities Act (Chapter 37) on 1 Nov 2019.

Since its founding in 2014, ground-up initiative Homeless Hearts of Singapore (HHOS) has increased its impact. From a lean four-man team serving homeless persons in two locations in central Singapore, HHOS has expanded to about 25 regular volunteers, serving about 30 homeless persons across four locations in the city centre.

With the advent of MSF’s Partners Engaging and Empowering Rough Sleepers (PEERS) Network in July 2019, HHOS was able to link up with several more fellow partners on the ground and work closer with them. This collaboration has been going on ever since then, especially during this critical period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our key strategies are:

- i. **advocating** to the public and private sectors in Singapore regarding the importance of homeless / stateless through talks and walks, and,
- ii. **befriending** the homeless relationally and journeying with them as they navigate the support systems, and,
- iii. **collaborating** with fellow community partners to help bring holistic care directly to where the homeless are
- iv. **demonstrating** models and examples of relational befriending for those interested in starting their own initiatives

Welcome Message from our Chairman

2020 was the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. We've finished our second year now, and one thing that we witnessed the year before was how COVID-19 exposed the social inequalities in our nation and community. But we also witnessed how many of us arose to meet the challenge for such a time as this.

Now, in 2021, we've seen the various initiatives and responses become more and more organised, and there's been many conversations about how to 'reset' and renew traditional social welfare approaches that seemed to work in the past, but turned out to be unsustainable, especially in 2020, and even still now.

We have witnessed how our nation's tendency of outsourcing community care to the "professionals" such as trained social workers, government ministries, and so on proved to be woefully inadequate.

Only a whole-of-society approach involving every level of society would be feasible, capable, and self-sustaining enough to organically grow a culture of care for one another.

But things are changing slowly, but surely.

Building A City of Refuge: A Sustainable Whole-Of-Society Approach

In November 2021, a trio of researchers from the Institute of Policy Studies, National University of Singapore highlighted the need¹ to go beyond merely giving the homeless a place to stay. This passage in particular from their article resonates with our own hearts:

As a society, we must change our mindset and move from a symptomatic approach to homelessness. We cannot reduce social inclusion to mere one-off efforts that end only in shelter or housing provision.

Instead, we must recognise that exiting homelessness, especially for those who have lived on the streets for years, is a lifelong journey.

¹ [Helping the homeless beyond putting a roof over their heads | The Straits Times](#)

If we truly perceive this arduous journey to be worth taking with the homeless, we cannot demand to reap what we sow based on a timeline we arbitrarily impose.

Housing, whether temporary or permanent, does not always keep people off the streets. Fostering a community where homeless people can feel at home, included and supported does. That is why a *whole-of-society* approach is crucial. [emphasis mine]

Indeed, this is why the first thing that we teach our volunteers is that people don't become homeless initially because they run out of resources, but because they run out of relationships. This is why we believe so strongly in building a whole-of-society / a city-of-refuge ecosystem via partnering and helping supporting other groups and partners in what they do, and especially in educating the younger generations in what they can step up to do *and* be.

Therefore, we're delighted to share with you that among our own youth volunteers, a couple of them are social work graduates this year who have presented their final-year theses on homelessness. Their volunteer experiences and genuine friendships with our homeless friends played in their choice of homelessness as their research topic, and their quality of their work attest to their dedication and heart for the homeless community, including homeless youths.

The Importance of Outreaching to Youths and Families

In 2021, we noticed there was an increasing trend of families facing homelessness and even being evicted due to inability to pay their rent, which had been steadily increasing every month. Furthermore, the transitional shelters and S3Ps were hitting capacity due to the long backlog of HDB flats being delayed. And some religious groups were closing their S3Ps to return back to their normal services, thereby exacerbating the shortage of S3Ps.

On a more personal note, my wife and I have also been hosting a single young mum and her toddler since March this year. We also took in a terminally-ill friend this year to spend his last moments in our home, so that he could spend his final moments not in a cold hospital bed but in a warm home with love.

Given that homeless families with young children are one of the most vulnerable groups of people, we knew we had to step up in terms of providing greater support to homeless families. Furthermore, if local families were facing these kinds of crises, what about stateless people / vulnerable transnational families?

Here, for a whole-of-society change to be truly sustainable, it has to last beyond a generation. And that requires a mindset change in how we approach helping - instead of mere bandaid approaches, we need to go to the root issues that strain and break up vulnerable families.

So in December this year, we and our partners in Open Home Network (OHN) sent out a call to the public to open up their places to help homeless families and individuals who were unable to afford increasing rents *and* surging hostel/hotel fees due to the opening of Vaccinated Travel Lanes (VTLs) coinciding with the Christmas season. We are thankful for the support from friends and supporters. Here, we saw the power of rallying fellow community partners to come together to encourage and support not only the homeless but also the host families hosting them. Our partners, who include OHN and Project Providence, do such amazing work with so much grace and wisdom. We are so grateful for them and for YOU too as you continue to support us in this long-term work. Thank you and God bless.

Welcome home,
Abraham Yeo



Leadership Structure

Co-Founders

Abraham Yeo & Mervin Judah Lee

Board Appointment

Name	Current charity board appointment	Date of appointment
Abraham Yeo	Chairman	21 Nov 2018
Spencer Mok	Director/ Treasurer / Head of Backend SOP team	21 Nov 2018
Peter Yuen	Director	21 Nov 2018
Claire Ban	Director	21 Nov 2018

Core Team Members

Name	Roles	Date of appointment
Abraham Yeo	Overseer and Head of #CityofRefuge Project	21 Nov 2018
Spencer Mok	Treasurer and Head of Backend SOP team	Treasurer: 21 Nov 2018 Head of Backend SOP: 29 Oct 2020
Derek Lim	Head of outreach & case management	1 Jan 2019
Peng Cheng Yu	Head of Healthcare	1 Jan 2019
Bernice Ng	Backend SOP coreteam member	29 Oct 2020
Chang En Qi	Backend SOP coreteam member	29 Oct 2020

Highlights of the Year

Finance Overview

HOMELESS HEARTS (LTD.)

(Company Registration No.: 201839495C)

DETAILED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

	2021 S\$	2020 S\$
Income		
Donation	88,692	97,889
Other income		
Bank interest income	13	11
Bank rebate	—	52
Other income	—	3,100
	<u>13</u>	<u>3,163</u>
Charitable activities		
Card and vouchers	(555)	(666)
Accommodation expenses	(27,756)	(10,447)
Personal item	(692)	(1,444)
Food and drinks	(10,517)	(5,945)
Medical expenses	(69)	(547)
Transport expenses	(36)	(861)
Electronics expenses	(59)	(599)
Celebrations	(649)	(1,286)
Long term housing	(4,118)	(11,190)
Commission fee	—	(1,524)
	<u>(44,451)</u>	<u>(34,509)</u>
Other items of expense		
Accounting service fee	(4,990)	(4,990)
External audit fee	(4,360)	(7,848)
Bank charges	(343)	(229)
Subscriptions fee	(882)	(342)
Transport claims	(135)	—
Wages and salaries	—	(500)
Office staff expenses	—	(4)
Entertainment fee	—	(55)
Government fee - IRAS	—	(138)
	<u>(10,710)</u>	<u>(14,106)</u>
Surplus before tax	<u>33,544</u>	<u>52,437</u>

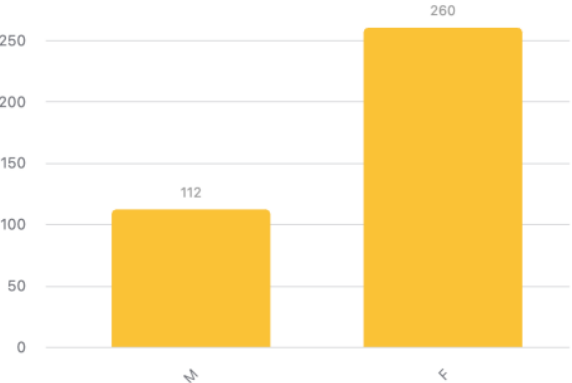
Source: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RiAE7QiWw9RWir7zvnXhe29h1OrC65dK/view?usp=drive_link (Appendix A)

Volunteer Sign-ups for 2021

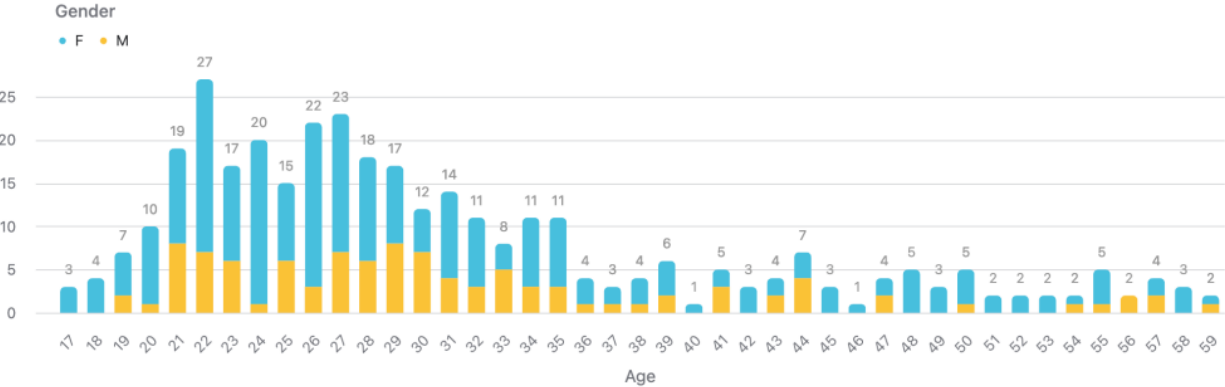
No. of volunteer signups

372

Sign-ups by gender

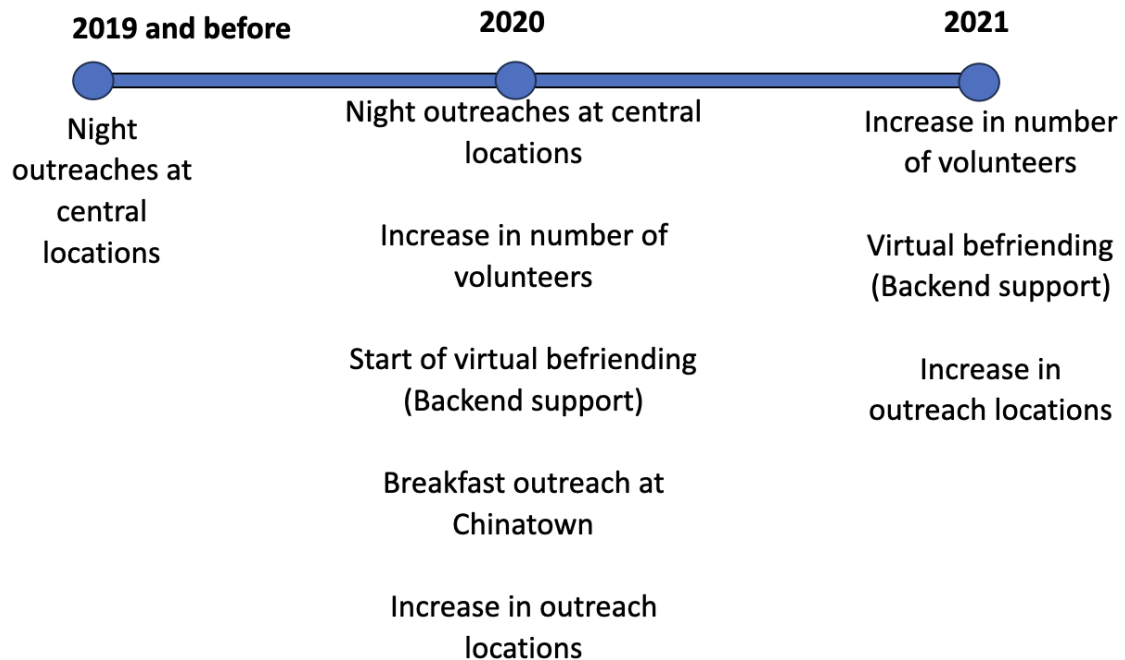


Gender distribution by age



Our Community Outreach

Overview of Activities



1. Twice / thrice a week regular street outreaches to 17 zones in Singapore:

- i. Chinatown
- ii. Harbourfront
- iii. Tampines
- iv. Yishun
- v. Woodlands
- vi. Hougang
- vii. Redhill/Tiong Bahru
- viii. Clementi
- ix. Jurong East
- x. Mountbatten
- xi. Paya Lebar/Eunos
- xii. Bedok
- xiii. Aljunied
- xiv. Changi Airport
- xv. Changi Village/Pasir Ris

-
- xvi. Bras Basah/Bugis/Lavender/Marina
 - xvii. Bukit Panjang
 - 2. Hostel sponsorships in collaboration with social workers
 - 3. Virtual befriendings via chat groups to provide relational support and guidance
 - 4. Birthday celebrations and friendship meals
 - 5. Help ex-homeless friends move into their new flats
 - 6. Give talks to educate students / organisations on homeless outreaches
 - 7. Advocate to the public and government regarding homeless issues

Special Events

1. (11 Jan) The Big Move: Buangkok Crescent to Spooner Road

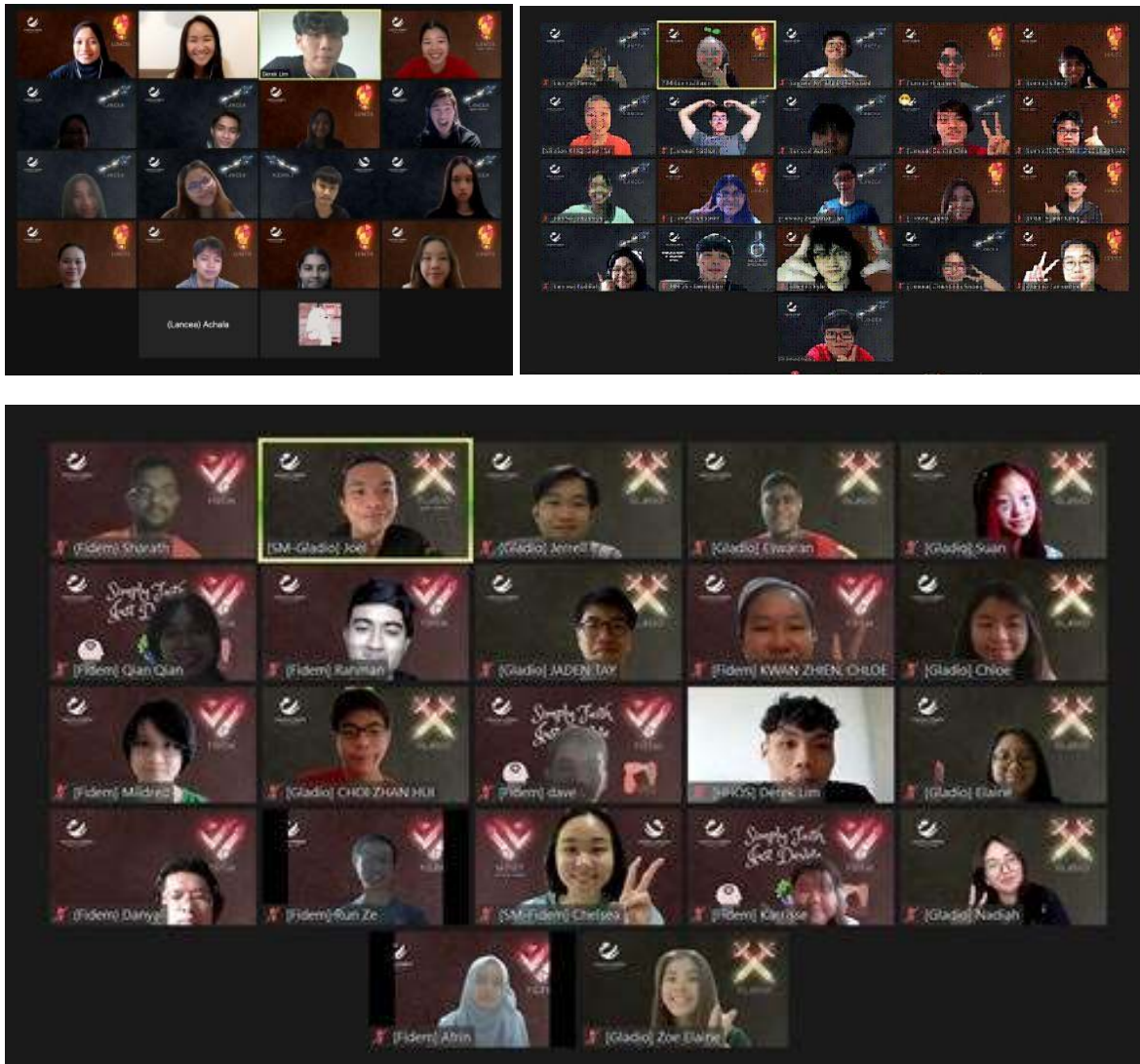
Our volunteers helped in the logistical and facilitation of the shift of the shelter residents from Buangkok Crescent to Spooner Road.

2. (13 May) Hari Raya Distribution

Our volunteers distributed pizzas and Hari Raya goodies to our homeless friends at Harbourfront.

Public Education

1. (15 June, 21 Sep, 5 Oct) [HHOS x Youth Corps Singapore] Mission X (Poly): Interviews with Resource Specialists (aka HHOS volunteers)



Feedback for 15 Jun:

Again, we received positive feedback from our squad mentors and agents who have sat in for your sharing. Agents appreciated the opportunity to connect with a sector professional to find out more about what's happening on the ground as well as the behind-the-scenes work that couldn't be found online! [...] Grateful for the continued support and partnerships! We'll catch-up with you soon!

Feedback for 21 Sep:

The Agents have shared that they gained new knowledge and had better awareness of the cause, and this further supported them in the ideation stage where as part of the camp programme they would need to plan a volunteering event as a squad based on their findings. (Project ideas: <https://go.gov.sg/missionx-sep-quest>)

2. (7 May) Group speaker at Civil Service College's 40th Foundation Course (FC) on "Engaging External Perspectives"

Feedback:

Dear Abraham,

On behalf of the Civil Service College, we would like to thank you for taking time to speak with the participants of the 40th Foundation Course (FC) on "Engaging External Perspectives" on 7 May 2021.

The class appreciated your candid sharing, especially where you shared your personal stories and anecdotes on the challenges faced in addressing issues related to homelessness. Some of their key takeaways include the importance of looking at the issue of homelessness through various lenses, rather than seeing it as an isolated problem to solve. For example, the end goal of solving homelessness is not just about giving rough sleepers a permanent place to stay, but involves their reintegration into the community, and empowering them. Participants better understood the role that civil society organisations (such as Homeless Hearts of Singapore) play, and reflected on the importance of establishing trust when serving the community.

3. (19 Jul) [Civil Service College x MSF PEERS] Public Service Week Learning Festival



4. (23 Jul) Panel speaker for BGST's talk by Dr Christine Pohl on "Making Room, Extending Christian Hospitality to our Neighbours."
5. (8 Oct) Speakers at New Hope Community Services (NHCS) on Rethinking Homelessness
6. (29-30 Oct) HHOS & Project Providence teams sharing on N5 Conference: Financial Well-Being for the Lost, the Least and the Last.
7. (5 Nov) HHOS sharing with Boys' Brigade Company for BB Cares

MSF PEERS Network

HHOS continued to work closely with the PEERS Network in forming more collaborations and providing more holistic support for homeless individuals. (For this, HHOS was awarded the MSF Community Cares Award on 27 January 2021.)

Media Mentions / Interviews

1. (9 Jul) [Homeless in Singapore: Rough Sleepers Do Exist and Here's 5 Organisations You Can Approach to Help Them \(yahoo.com\)](#)

Homeless in Singapore: Rough Sleepers Do Exist and Here's 5 Organisations You Can Approach to Help Them



PropertyGuru

9 July 2021 • 10-min read



Homeless in Singapore: Rough Sleepers Do Exist and Here's 5 Organisations You Can Approach to Help Them

If you ask, "Are there homeless people in Singapore?" some may say no. Homelessness in

TRENDING

1. 4 Singapore Blue-Chip Stocks I Will Buy with S\$40,000
2. Here's How Dividend Investing Can Provide You with a Secure Retirement Income
3. 4 Singapore Stocks That Conducted Acquisitions to Grow Their Business
4. Sumitomo Life nears deal for \$3 billion Singaporean insurer
5. 4 Attractive US Growth Stocks That Also Pay You a Dividend

2. (16 Jul) Our co-founder sharing about sustainable advocacy: [How are Singapore's advocates and activists sustaining themselves? | TheHomeGround Asia](#)

How are Singapore's advocates and activists sustaining themselves?

- As changemakers, advocates and activists often act as a voice for vulnerable communities by speaking out about their unmet needs and the myriad of barriers they face.
- But pushing for change comes at a cost. While some integrate changemaking into their careers, others are doing this of their own volition, often in an unpaid capacity.
- Activism and advocacy efforts can also strain one's mental and emotional resources.
- TheHomeGround Asia speaks to three changemakers to find out more about the challenges they face, how advocates and activists can find support and sustenance, and their hopes for the future of changemaking in Singapore.



Maisie Leong

16 Jul 2021 • 8 mins read



3. (4 Aug) [A Heart for the Homeless: Derek Lim sheds light on homelessness in Singapore | Social Space \(socialspacemag.org\)](#)



Homeless Hearts of Singapore (HHOS) is a volunteer, non-profit organisation that is part of the Partners Engaging and Empowering Rough Sleepers (PEERS) network under the [Ministry of Social and Family Development](#) (MSF). Their mission is to befriend rough sleepers and homeless persons and offer them the community support they need to reintegrate into society. In this article, **HUANG RUNCHEN** speaks with Mr Derek Lim, the Volunteer Head of HHOS, about his experience working in this organisation, their origins and their plans moving forward.

4. (27 Aug) [Heart For The Homeless – eNSman \(safra.sg\)](#)

SUBSCRIBE

#PEOPLE

Heart For The Homeless

Singapore Silent Heroes awardee Derek Lim works in the shadows to help homeless individuals blighted by circumstances gain a better footing in life.

BY CARA YAP 27 AUGUST 2021

TOP READS

Free & Affordable Spots For A New Year's Eve Fireworks Date To Ring In 2024

Three Chairpersons. One

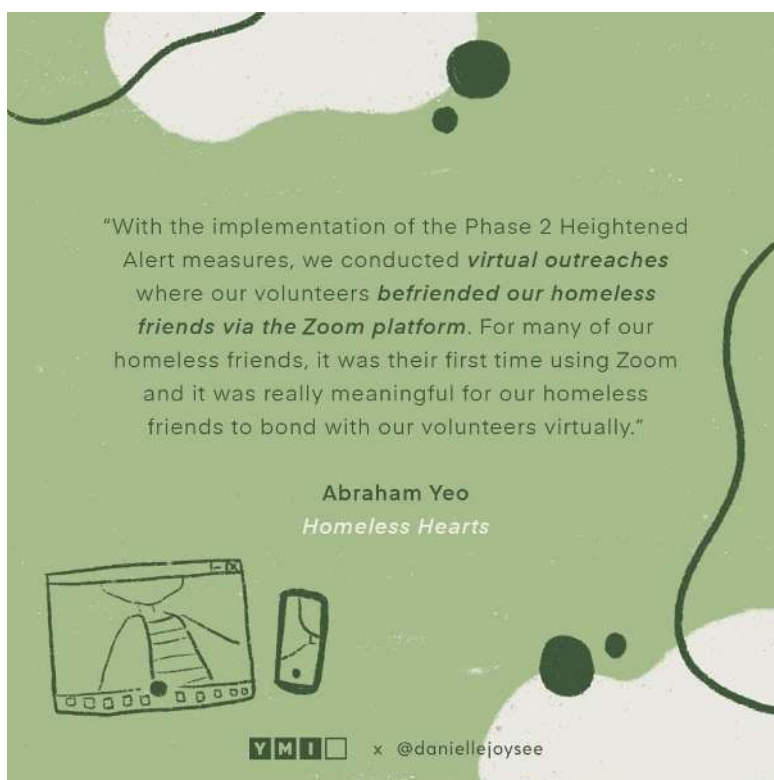
Derek Lim is familiar with the pains of being the proverbial wallflower. As a reserved adolescent, he was bullied by schoolmates for not fitting in, which caused him to further withdraw from people.

That changed when he jolted himself out of his comfort zone to embark on a slew of volunteering stints that led him to charity outreach organisation [Homeless Hearts of Singapore](#). Started by media technologist

5. (17 Sep) Loving & hosting a terminally-ill stateless and homeless friend: [God is in the byways: A homeless tissue seller finds “church” in the streets of Holland Village — Salt&Light \(saltandlight.sg\)](#)



6. (24 Sep) HHOS's virtual outreaches during lockdown: [Don't Put Your Love on Lockdown — YMI](#)



Source: [Don't Put Your Love on Lockdown - YMI](#)

Research & Advocacy

- Two of our youth volunteers presented their FYP theses this year on how the homeless handled the COVID-19 lockdown, and also how homeless youths handled their situations.

([Selected Undergraduate Honours Theses of Social Work Students 2021: Part I – Social Service Research Centre \(nus.edu.sg\)](#))

The screenshot shows the Social Service Research Centre (SSRC) website. The header includes the NUS logo and navigation links like FASS Home, Email, Canvas, Library, Staff, and Where to Get Help. Below the header is a navigation bar with links such as Home, About SSR, People, Research Projects, Research Capability Building, Events, Publications, Giving, Careers, and Contact Us. The main banner reads 'Selected Undergraduate Honours Theses of Social Work Students 2021: Part I'. Below this, there is a section for the 'SSR SEMINAR SERIES' featuring a 'REGISTER NOW' button and details for a seminar on Friday, 30 July, 4:00-5:15 PM. The seminar is moderated by Denise Liu and features speakers: Isaac Teo, Cheong Kai Kian, Clementine Cheong, and Cheong Ming Fang. The venue is listed as Online (Zoom).

- (Clara Soh) [PRECARIITY IN THE SEARCH FOR STABILITY: HOW YOUTHS ENTER INTO AND NEGOTIATE THEIR HOMELESSNESS IN SINGAPORE | ScholarBank@NUS](#)
 - (Cheong Ming Fang) [COPING DURING COVID-19: THE CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCIES OF SINGAPORE'S HOMELESS POPULATION DURING THE PANDEMIC | ScholarBank@NUS](#)
- HHOS was also invited by Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) through Dr. Harry Tan Chin Kwan in an email on 18 May to be a gatekeeper in support of IPS' research on homelessness:

*I am writing to invite Homeless Hearts of Singapore (HHOS) to participate in an Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) research study on long-term homelessness as a **gatekeeper**. This is a 3-year government-funded study, focused on developing an in-depth understanding of the complex needs and forms of social exclusion experienced by long-term homeless people.*

The roles of a gatekeeper are essentially to facilitate access/recruitment of the participants (i.e. the homeless clients that Homeless Hearts of Singapore works with) and to ensure accountability from the researchers in terms of how they conduct the study in the field.

3. In December, alarmed by the impending lack of safe and affordable accommodations for homeless families, our co-founder Abraham wrote a public appeal ([A Call To the SG Churches To Help Homeless Families This Christmas – Homeless Hearts of Singapore](#)) on 18 Dec to ask churches in Singapore to open up their spaces to help host homeless families. This public appeal was picked up by Thir.st on 19 Dec ([An urgent appeal to help homeless families this Christmas \(thirst.sg\)](#))

DO GOOD / 19 DECEMBER 2021

An urgent appeal to help homeless families this Christmas

Words by THIR.ST

Photos by SHARON TAY ON UNSPLASH

With less than a week to go before Christmas, many of us might be busy sorting out party plans. But for some families in Singapore, there are anxieties over basic needs, such as where they can find a place to stay this season.

Weighed down by this burden, Abraham Yeo, co-founder of [Homeless Hearts of Singapore](#) (HHOS) has [written an appeal](#) to ask churches, families and accommodation providers to consider opening up their premises this Christmas on an emergency basis to help shelter at least one homeless family.

The Year Ahead

Our Plans & Commitments

- Upgrade #CityOfRefuge web app and gain further funding for it
 - Analyse collected data on the factors behind homelessness to determine if rising rental costs are indeed causing a rise in homelessness
- Form more collaborations with partners e.g. school groups, religious groups, corporates, etc.
 - Continue working with PEERS Network to mobilise and encourage more institutions / religious groups / individuals to open up their spaces to be S3Ps / volunteer hosts
- Exploring different types of volunteering e.g. daytime volunteering
- Discover more resources for our homeless friends e.g. food, etc.
- Raise awareness of the different types and profiles of homelessness