

DON'T TRASH IT, JUST PASS IT ON

One person's excess could be another's treasure. A 10-year-old programme helps bring the two together

text DENIS JANSEN photo DAN ONG, VICTOR CHICK

THREE MATTRESSES, ALONG WITH TWO SINGLE BED FRAMES, are now the proud possessions of Mr Mohamad Shawal Hassan and family.

"The younger children love to bounce on them," says the 38-year-old building technician, who is himself pleased that they did not cost him any money. He has pushed the two beds together to form one big one and his six children take turns to share it.

Mr Shawal is one of nearly 6,000 beneficiaries of a scheme called Pass It On, a means of distributing second-hand but still useable household items to those who need them.

The programme, organised by the Central Singapore Community Development Council (CDC), has been running for 10 years now. Since April this year, The Helping Hand, a halfway house, has assisted in transporting the items, made available by voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs), to their new homes.

This is how the scheme works: A donor posts an item he is willing to give away on the Pass it On website, which VWOs check for items their clients need. If a VWO finds a match, it contacts the person giving the item and arranges for its collection and its delivery to the recipient. VWOs also post their clients' requests on a



"wish list", which often gets responses rather quickly.

The items donated range from furniture and decorative pieces to electrical appliances like TVs and computers. If an item is what a beneficiary needs, he can collect it from the donor himself or, in the case of something large, have it delivered or arrange to get it transported himself.

Mr Shawal's family have been receiving social assistance from the Persatuan Pemuda Islam Singapura (PPIS) for about a year. They told their counsellor that the family needed beds. Within two weeks they managed to get them.

01 Mr Mohamad Shawal Hassan, 38, and family.

"It's important not to feel ashamed to ask for help," says Mr Shawal. "I'm grateful this scheme enables the CDC and PPIS to provide us with things that can still be used. Now I'm hoping other items like a sofa and fridge will soon be available."

RECYCLING HELP

Pass It On was launched by the CDC to assist VWOs provide the needy within their care with used household items in good condition. This helps reduce wastage and encourages people to contribute towards the care of the less fortunate.

"The idea was mooted by a VWO and was launched in 2001 by Central Singapore CDC with just a few

welfare organisations, mainly the Family Service Centres (FSC)," said Mr Victor Tang, who supervises the programme.

The 70-year-old, who is the CDC's oldest employee, joined it a decade ago, specifically to help develop the scheme. "I felt I still had a lot to offer after retiring, and I wanted to learn new things too, so I applied for the job," said the former marketing manager.

Initially, this involved maintaining the website, and coordinating with the VWOs.

"We're very lucky to get help from others. When I'm in a better position, I'll do my part for others."


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the one stop donation site that allows you to pass on your unwanted items to people who need them.

imagine,
your donated items can
make someone's life *as beautiful.*
just by passing on your used items!

The item* you so easily dispose of, can bring a thousand smiles to the needy!

Small refrigerators, table fans, televisions, single size mattresses, chairs, rice cookers, washing machines and thermo flasks are some of the items needed by those staying at one room flats or those under the care of voluntary welfare organisations.

Many of them are on public assistance. **Pass On** your unused household items, which are still in good working condition to us!

* Household appliances, furniture, etc in working condition.

Just 2 easy steps to donate your items!

1. **Click Here to Donate!**
2. **Our Staff will contact you shortly.**

VWO Login

User ID:

Password:

Login

If you are a registered VWO,  login here to access the Tools for managing and matching the donated items in our database.

02

Now, about 280 VWOs carry information about the programme on their own websites. Over the past decade, close to 6,000 items have been passed on to grateful recipients.

Ms Angeline Wong, a programme executive at the Queenstown FSC, which has been involved in the scheme since 2004, noted: "Generally the donors know of the scheme through word of mouth. Many of the items are donated when people move, and most have been almost new."

Ms Daisy Choo of aLife Ltd, a pregnancy and counselling centre, recounted how, about four months ago, a needy family under her care moved into their new home in Hougang - without a stick of furniture.

"At about the same time, another family, who was also moving, told us we could have anything we wanted from their flat! It was perfect timing."

In his time, Mr Tang has heard of some worthwhile items changing hands. "Once the delivery team told me that a family received a 'top-quality sitting room set' from a well-to-do home. There was also this kind soul who went out and bought an LCD television for a needy old lady."

He added: "There've been a few times when

recipients called me to offer their thanks to the CDC and the VWOs, saying how pleased they are for what they've received. This is always very satisfying.

"But I also get calls from would-be donors who are put off by the fact that donated items have to be in good working condition. I think they just want to save themselves the trouble of getting rid of their useless stuff."

THE PARTNER

The Helping Hand got involved as the CDC was looking for an organisation to help out as the programme grew. "We asked them to come in when we learnt they're running a furniture business with repair facilities and that they had 10 lorries for their home removal service."

Since it came on board in April 2011, it has collected and delivered an average of about 10 items a month. "We expect deliveries to rise when more senior citizens' groups and FSCs learn of the service," said Mr Tang.

The Helping Hand is a Christian faith-based rehabilitation VWO under the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports. It runs a six-month residential programme for former prison inmates designed to develop their work ethic as well as their



spiritual, social and physical wellbeing.

"Being involved gives our own residents the opportunity to perform a community service," said its chief executive officer, Mr Chia Shih Sheung. "We help our ex-offenders not to re-offend, and this is a form of work therapy for them. Plus, they get to pay back to society."

And paying back to the community, rather than just the giver, is what the scheme is all about. Says Mr Shawal: "We're very lucky to get help from others. When I'm in a better position, I'll do my part for others too." ❖

Anyone can donate to Pass It On. Items must be in good working condition and still useable. Go to www.passiton.org.sg to learn how you can participate in the scheme. You will also find a list there of VWOs through which you can pass your donations on, as well as one stating what is required.

02 The Pass it On website.

03 Moving experts, The Helping Hand, at work.

别扔掉，转让给别人

莫哈末·沙瓦尔·哈山和他的家人现在是三个普通大小的床褥和两个单人床床架的主人。

38岁的沙瓦尔是个建筑技术人员，他很满意地说：“我们家的小孩很喜欢在上面弹跳。”毕竟，他不需要掏一分钱，就得到这些东西。

沙瓦尔是“转让给他人”计划下的其中一名受惠者。迄今已经有6千多人在计划下，获得一些别人不要，却还可以使用的家具或电器如电视、电脑等。

这个由中区社区发展理事会（社理会）实行的计划已经步入了第10个年头。志愿福利团体援手之家从去年4月起成为其合作伙伴，帮忙把各个志愿福利团体收集到的用品载送到有需要的人们家里。

这个计划是按配对的机制进行。一个志愿福利团体从捐赠者获取不需要的用品，然后再和受惠者列出的“心愿单”对上。

沙瓦尔一家人从一年前开始就接受新加坡回教女青年协会的援助。他们告诉辅导员家里需要一些床。两个星期内，他们就如愿以偿了。

沙瓦尔说：“重要的是，我们不应该为开口寻求援助而感到羞耻。我很感激这个计划让社理会和新加坡回教女青年协会能为我们提供还可以使用的物品。”

社理会设立“转让给他人”计划是为了帮助志愿福利团体为属下有需要帮助的居民提供一些还可以继续使用的旧家具、电器。计划旨在鼓励人们对这些用品的再使用，避免浪费。另外，也能鼓励社会大众关心较不幸的人士。

70岁的邓祺祥是社理会年纪最大的员工。10年前他加入社理会，专门为社理会开发这个计划。刚开始，他通过一个专门的网站来操作和志愿福利团体协调的过程。现在，有约280个志愿福利团体在各自的网站上发布有关的信息。而“转让给他人”网站就专门让公众上去捐赠物品、发布捐赠物品的清单及罗列出受惠人的心愿单。

他解释道：“当一个捐赠者将物品放到‘有货到’的栏目时，我就会在网上发布消息。志愿福利团体如果正寻求这个物品，可以直接上网‘取货’，而这个物品就立刻在清单上被删除。”志愿福利团体会负责查看物品的使用状况，并安排受惠者来领取物品。

援手之家之所以会参与计划，是因为社理会当时正在寻找一个能更积极参与计划的团体。援手之家是社会发、青年及体育部属下的志愿福利团体。它是个以基督教义为主导的中途之家。它目前每个月平均负责载送约10件物品。

援手之家的执行长谢世嵩说：“参加类似‘转让给他人’的志愿服务让我们的‘居民’有机会参与社区活动。我们帮助这些有前科的人不要重蹈覆辙，是一种工作疗法。”

这项计划倡导的是回馈社会而不是回馈捐赠者。因此沙瓦尔说：“我们很幸运能得到别人的帮助。当我的情况好转时，我会尽我的责任去帮助他人。” ❖

