

Volunteers from SunCare SG guiding beneficiaries in an "ocean clean-up" game at its Children's Day event in Punggol on Oct 4. The \$1 million donation from utilities provider SP Group, which will be disbursed over three years, will go towards the charity's initiatives such as refurbishing homes and providing nutritious food for children. ST PHOTO: JASON QUAH



## SP Group donates \$1m to charity supporting kids from lower-income families

**Claudia Tan**

When their eldest son was four and showing signs of speech delay, Mr Muhammad Hafiz Sapeh, who is in his 30s, and his wife worried that the boy would struggle to keep up with his peers in school.

To help him, a social worker recommended that the couple send him for reading classes at SunCare SG every Saturday.

Now seven, Muhammad Adam Qayyum Muhammad Hafiz, is one of 200 children receiving support from SunCare SG, a charity that helps children and young people.

On weekdays, he attends You Shine, an after-school programme that includes games, arts, sports and literacy classes. Adam is also a

mentee under You Power, a mentoring programme that takes place on Saturdays. The programmes are free and open to all children who require help.

Since joining SunCare SG's programmes three years ago, Adam has become more confident in his speech and has made vast improvements in his schoolwork. He has also become more outgoing and bubbly, said his mother Nur Adilah Zuraime, who is in her 20s.

During a SunCare SG Children's Day event on Oct 4, Adam proudly told reporters of his aspiration to become a police officer one day.

Besides helping Adam with literacy, SunCare SG has also helped the family of six by providing necessities such as milk powder and diapers. It has also improved their living conditions by providing home upgrades such as a bunk bed and an air-conditioning unit.

"Three of our children have eczema, which flares up whenever the weather gets very hot," Madam Adilah said. "We tried using several fans to (alleviate their condition), but that doesn't really work."

With the provision of these items, Mr Hafiz hopes that his family's quality of life will improve.

The bunk bed allows Mr Hafiz,

who previously slept in the living room, to join his wife and children in the sole bedroom.

To assist more families such as Mr Hafiz's, utilities provider SP Group donated \$1 million to SunCare SG to support its initiatives in improving the lives of lower-income families.

The announcement was made during a Children's Day event at the Lighthouse, a pop-up run by SunCare SG at Block 211A Punggol Walk.

Deputy Prime Minister Gan Kim Yong and Senior Minister of State for National Development Sun Xueling attended the event to witness the presentation of the donation to SunCare SG.

The money, which will be disbursed over three years, will go towards the charity's initiatives such as refurbishing homes and providing nutritious food for children.

Mr David Ong, a board member of SunCare SG, said: "It could be as basic as painting, furnishing or providing them with a mattress."

The aim of these improvements is to make the homes of beneficiaries more conducive places to live in, he added.

The funds will also be used to help parents upskill, enabling

them to get better jobs to support their families.

One such beneficiary is Mr Soo De Nian, 33, who is the sole breadwinner of his family of six. His wife Eileen Ho, 34, is a homemaker who takes care of their four children, aged between one and nine.

Mr Soo is currently working as a food delivery rider. With support from SunCare SG, he is now enrolled in a course aimed at preparing him for a role in food and beverage operations.

Their eldest daughter Deborah attends the You Power and You Shine programmes and is also part of You Sparkle, the charity's community choir.

Ms Sun said: "At Lighthouse, we believe in having meaningful activities where children can come together, play, make friends and (be able) to talk to people about their feelings and regulate their emotions so they grow up strong, healthy and happy."

"So I'm very grateful today that we have SP Group joining us in this endeavour, and through their donation of \$1 million to SunCare SG, we are able to continue our programmes here."

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