

Welcoming our Little Princes and Princesses!

4 September 2017



A sea of bubbles heralded the 28 August 2017 official opening of St Joseph's Home Infant and Childcare as well as the intergenerational playground – a first for a nursing home. Sponsored by SMRT under their *Gift of Mobility* programme, the playground comes with wheelchair-friendly support features such as a wheel-lock system and grab bars to enable our nursing home residents to play with toddlers from the childcare centre.



But play is just one aspect of the intergenerational curriculum that will be developed for both children and seniors. Attention will also be paid to the development of both groups in terms of their cognitive, psycho-motor and social skills. So expect programmes that revolve around art, music, meals, outdoor events, sports and even caring for one another. The beauty of having both the infant and childcare and nursing home come under one roof is the flexibility it affords the staff to meet up regularly, plan programmes and implement them almost immediately.



Having children in the home will benefit residents who love children and or who enjoy sharing their stories with the young. Improved well-being and a greater sense of purpose are just two of the reported positive effects on seniors. Children also get to learn about the process of ageing, disability and patience from a young age, thus lessening their fear of growing older.

Says Sr Geraldine Tan, Executive Director for St Joseph's Home: "There is birth and there is death. At both ends, we all need someone to tend to us. Having an infant and childcare centre within the home reminds us of the purpose of life and of the importance of play and simplicity – two things that are often forgotten in the frenzy of our day-to-day. Such a model of care, what I call the Full Circle Care Model, is also where everyone can find a place to co-exist – the young, the older, the dying and the sick. We learn to embrace one another and live in harmony."



To those who still feel that having children in a nursing home will open them up to all sorts of illnesses, we say this belief is totally unfounded. Our residents come in with conditions that require nursing care such as a stroke, hip/leg fractures, dementia, heart ailments among others, next to none of which is infectious. Should a senior happen to have the flu, they will simply sit out of the activity. This goes the other way too. A sick child will not be allowed to interact with the senior to avoid the senior falling ill. Coming to a nursing home is thus about as 'dangerous' as going to a public area with other people.

And few public areas intentionally encourage cross generation interaction. "Many youngsters are thus not exposed to the way of life of these seniors," says Infant and Childcare Principal Frances Yap. "Meanwhile, seniors who have gone into a nursing home have little chance of interacting with children as they don't often get the chance to go out of the home due to their immobility. Specially creating an intergenerational playground amid lush greenery in a nursing home is thus a rare opportunity for both generations to come together to play, learn and just enjoy one another's company.

Registration for the Infant and Childcare Centre is now open.

For details, please [click here](#).

To register or to enquire, kindly email: childcare@stjh.org.sg or call the team at 6761 9350