

President thanks Agape Village, Caritas for 'service to community'



President Halimah Yacob poses for a photo with (from left) Mr Gordon Pinto (general manager, Agape Village), Ms Janet Ang (Caritas chairperson), Ms Teo Jin Lee (chairperson, Agape Village management council), Msgr Ambrose Vaz (Caritas board member) and Ms Bernadette Lau (Caritas executive director). Photos: VITA Images

By Christopher Khoo

Agape Village is a “good concept”, said President Halimah Yacob at the end of her visit to the Catholic Church’s integrated social service hub.

“I think sometimes our needy who need help, if they have to go to different places, it’s really quite challenging for them,” said Madam Halimah. “But when you have a one-stop centre, it’s really very good” because then they do not have to go to so many places to seek help, she said.

“So thank you very much Agape Village, and thank you very much, Caritas board, for your wonderful work, for the service to the community,” she said to thunderous applause.

Madam Halimah was speaking at the end of her first visit to Agape Village as Singapore president on Sept 22.

Agape Village, located in Toa Payoh, houses the services of 14 of the 25 Caritas-coordinated charities and organisations.

During Madam Halimah’s visit, she met with members, volunteers and beneficiaries of organisations in Agape Village as well as the other organisations under Caritas.



Ms Leonida Arconado, a Filipino domestic caregiver, shows Madam Halimah what she learnt about infant care.

At the facility for the Archdiocesan Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants & Itinerant People (ACMI), she chatted with foreign domestic workers and asked them about cooking local dishes.

At the Mamre Oaks Day Activity Centre, which serves people with intellectual disabilities, she chatted with members and decorated a coaster with some colourful beads.

At the other facilities, she also spoke with staff and volunteers and posed for photos with them, much to their delight.

An exhibition of the work of other Church organisations was also held, and the president spent time visiting each exhibit and speaking with organisation members.



Ms Mabel Thang of Mamre Oaks, which serves persons with intellectual disabilities, shows the president her cross-stitch work.

As she left, a choir made up of Mamre Oaks members sang a special farewell song for her.

Caritas chairperson Janet Ang told Catholic News she was delighted that Madam Halimah visited Agape Village so early in her presidency.

Ms Ang said she felt it was a recognition of the efforts of Agape Village and the Catholic Church's social service organisations in serving the community. She added that everyone here, "from office workers ... to volunteers", felt encouraged by the visit.

christopher.khoo@catholic.org.sg

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