

THE MIGRANT TIES THAT BIND

"I want to continue staying here," Cattleya Valerie Guinto, 43, a graduate from ACMI's caregiving class shared. Despite coming from The Philippines, Cattleya found home in Singapore.

The ladies, who were all part of the 2018 Semester 2 Caregiving course at ACMI are currently undergoing a 6-week practicum at Assisi Hospice on Sundays.

Many others who graduated from ACMI's caregiving class share the same sentiment as Cattleya. They found a renewed sense of purpose in Singapore while taking up courses at ACMI and volunteering at Assisi Hospice. All of them driven with the same fire and a compassionate heart, willing to give back to the community.

Even after the end of the 6th week, many of them returned on their off-days to volunteer. "In Assisi and ACMI you can learn, outside you cannot learn and sometimes make trouble," said Angel V. Faderes, 31. After spending six years in Singapore, she found herself spending more time at the hospice and ACMI rather than exploring the picturesque landscape of Singapore.

These FDWs also receive much support from Assisi Hospice's Volunteer Management staff whom they affectionately call "Sir Alex". Similarly, the nurses and Patient Care Assistants who took them under their wing took care of them.

Through ACMI, these FDWs not only found a second home but also gained new experiences and a deeper sense of purpose in their life. At the Hospice, they assist the nurses at the wards to provide care to patients. Their assistance range from preparing meals, befriending patients, sponging, diaper changing and oral hygiene.



Even as they care for the elderly, their hearts held on to stories which inspired them to continue volunteering.

"It feels like [caring for] my mom," said Clave Elisa Castillo, 33. Having lost her parents before she could start caring for them, Castillo gave her heart to caring for the patients whom she treats like her own parents.

Clave shared an encounter she had with one of the patients. "She was alone most of the time, her son visited but infrequently," Clave said. "She would often hold her hand out and I would grasp it. Though we spoke little, I wanted her to know she was loved and not forgotten," said Clave with tears welling up in her eyes.

The call bell from the patient rang again and all the women got up promptly to check on the patient.

Certainly, these women were more than just FDWs. They are women with great compassion and generous hearts, each with their own experiences, hopes and dreams all bounded together in their love and joy of service for others.

Written by: Abigail Chua