

# ignite

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## Hey Youth Corps



By Ong Kah Kuang

I hope that you are keeping well. A few of our physical and blended programmes were affected by the tightening of safe management measures in May and June. However, with the previous experiences that we have gained, I am glad that we were able to quickly pivot our programmes online. Kudos to the Aspirant project teams and the Clusters for adapting quickly to the tightened measures. Hopefully we can resume our physical sessions and open The Red Box soon.

For us to be able to resume more physical settings and have bigger gatherings in Singapore, we need more people to be vaccinated. I am glad that you are now eligible for the COVID-19 vaccination and a number of you have done it. I've had my vaccination done almost 2 months ago (umm, yes I am not young anymore!). The process was smooth and I only had body ache and fever after my second jab, which lasted for a day. My children who were your age hardly had any side effects. Thus, I encourage you to go for your vaccination if you have yet to do so. Vaccination helps to protect us against serious symptoms should we catch the virus. More importantly, it protects our loved ones as well. In the context of volunteering, it also protects the clients we serve, such as the seniors and persons with special needs. Don't wait liao, go and make your booking now!

We have also just completed our inaugural survey for our volunteers. Thank you to those who responded. I am heartened to know that more than 60% of you (students and working adults) have volunteered in the last 12 months, be it with Youth Corps or other organisations. Kudos to you and keep it up! Your feedback is valuable to us. We will incorporate them into the programming for the next phase of development for Youth Corps.

Stay safe and hope to see you around The Red Box soon!

# A Path Well Travelled:

## Afzal's Journey as a Youth Corps Leader

By **Wong Shao Yi**



J oan Didion once wrote, “Life changes in the instant. The ordinary instant.” Some of life’s most significant decisions are made on the spur of the moment. It is only later that we realise their importance with the benefit of hindsight. For Afzal, one such moment happened in a train station. Waiting for the train that would take him back to Pulau Tekong, the then-NS man contemplated what direction his life would take after two years of national service. His eyes drifted to the crimson poster adjacent to the train doors. “Want to make a difference? Be a Youth Corps volunteer.” The message had the serendipitous timing of a fortune cookie. So Afzal took out his phone and signed up, beginning a volunteering journey with Youth Corps, and then to join the Youth Corps Leaders Programme soon after.

The Youth Corps journey hasn’t always been smooth sailing. Early into the Youth Corps Leaders Programme, Afzal – self-proclaimed former control freak – was intimidated by the notion of working with unfamiliar faces. How could he be sure he could trust them? What if they didn’t work well together? When things went awry, he had to resist the desire to jump in and complete the task entirely on his own. It took a while for Afzal to learn that effective collaboration relies on a reciprocal exchange between team members. In his constant attempts to shoulder entire projects, he had unwittingly ignored the chance to learn from a wider, more diverse pool of ideas. A leader, he realised, is meant to empower, not to be in power. As a leader, he not only had to give, but to open himself to the experiences and wisdom of his team. This epiphany catalysed a crucial exercise in personal growth. Afzal began to let go of his preconceptions of leadership and teamwork.

Though he had entered the programme as an individual who shied away from new team dynamics, he soon embraced his role in the larger, vibrant volunteering community. Along the way, he also forged many meaningful connections. In particular, he cites his teammate, Esther, and his mentor, Kevin, as some of his most important role models in his leadership journey.

A lot has changed in the year since the fateful evening in the train station. Having completed the Youth Corps Leaders Programme, Afzal is taking his commitment to volunteerism even further. He changed his university course to social work, a decision grounded in personal conviction. Reflecting on his journey so far, Afzal now believes that his “accidental” venture into Youth Corps was never truly an accident. He took a leap of faith, which set him on a path of conscious self-improvement and unflagging service to the community. Reflecting on his volunteering journey with the wider Youth Corps Community thus far, Afzal said, “We chose to follow our hearts. We chose to make a difference, and that made all the difference.”

Sign up today at <https://go.gov.sg/yclp-c26-ignite> From 1 July 2021 onwards.



# Qai's Life as a Youth Corps Intern

By Wong Shao Yi



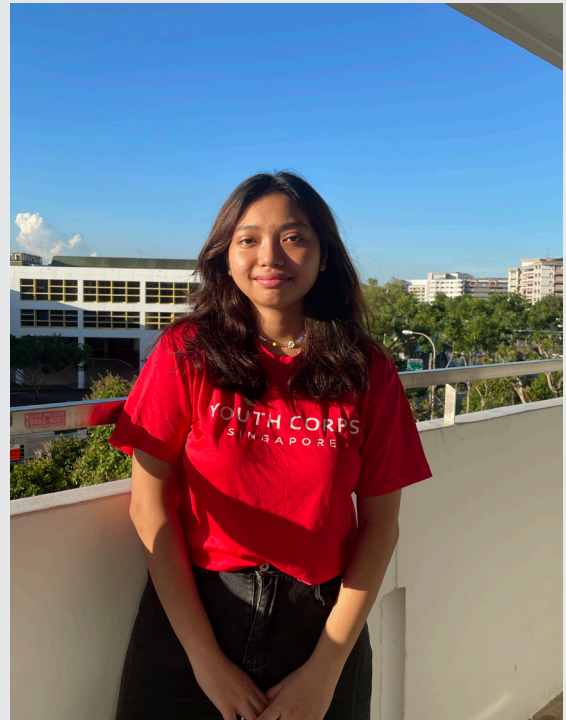
The first thing you notice about Qai is her manner. Warm and open, she shares her love for hiking and her all-time favourite show, Grey's Anatomy. Conversing with Qai is a pleasure, and we ease right into the interview.

I open with the all-important question: why the Youth Corps internship? The second year Mass Comms student at Ngee Ann Polytechnic explains that she saw a chance to use her talents and skills in media to do good. "In school, my modules ... [exposed me] to different areas of the media industry such as designing, writing articles, filming and more. I believe that [such] skills... are quite transferable to my role as a Marcomms intern because we work with helping to generate publicity through our content on social media." Keen to deepen her knowledge of the social sector, she also took on the internship to widen her perspective of the volunteering scene.

Over the last few months, Qai's involvement in different projects has spurred her personal development. She is enthusiastic as she recalls one of her best memories, attending a Mental Health First-Aid training course. "At the course, not only did I learn things that can help me in my line of work, but that I can also apply in real-life situations." To Qai, it is innovative, engaging programmes like these that increase awareness and understanding of issues like mental health, equipping volunteers with the skills required to provide better mental wellness support to the wider community.

Her time with Youth Corps has also allowed her to tap into and enhance areas of personal strength—her flair for design and the written word. An adept user of Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop, Qai was placed at the forefront of up-and-coming Youth Corps initiatives such as the newsletter revamp and content creation for a recent healthcare worker social media campaign. The work might sometimes be challenging. Yet as with any task, Qai firmly believes that stepping outside her comfort zone has only helped her improve. "Previously, I always felt that designing wasn't my strongest suit as I always had a creative block when it comes to designing... The experience that I've had so far has definitely given me more confidence in my abilities."

It becomes clear to me that a huge part of Qai's enthusiasm for the internship stems from her love for Youth Corps' people. The organisation culture of shared learning has encouraged her to take ownership of the learning process.



She does not hesitate to ask her supervisor for opportunities to increase her exposure to new skills. More importantly, she is herself an active contributor to Youth Corps' pool of knowledge. "Although I'm just an intern, I feel that my ideas are always valued and that I always have the opportunity to give my input and feedback." Indeed, the Youth Corps office space—warmly lit, strewn with shared workspaces and built around an ethos of flexible seating—is the physical manifestation of the inclusive, dynamic work culture that Qai so enjoys.

As our interview draws to a close, I ask Qai if she has any advice for youth about joining the Youth Corps internship. Her response is characteristically punchy, encouraging and hopeful: "Just give it a shot! Youth Corps has a lot of internship opportunities for different areas/sectors so you can really try your hand at anything you want! Whether you want to gain experience in your field of study or try something new, there's a plethora of options for you to choose from so there's really no harm in trying! As long as you keep an open mind towards learning, you'll be sure to have a very memorable internship experience."

Interested in interning with us? Sign up at  
<https://go.gov.sg/ycsinternship>





# Introducing Youth Corps newest affiliates...

## Project Indigo 2021

### Who We Are

We are a SOTA (School of the Arts) CAS (creativity, action, service) project that aims to champion greater equity in education through supporting the IPC CampusImpact

### Our Mission

Guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 and working with CampusImpact, we aim to increase access to subsidized learning opportunities for children and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, ultimately helping to enhance their learning ability. Additionally, we champion greater educational equity and promote the arts as an important tenet of holistic education.

### What We Do

Our project is broadly organised under two arms--outreach and fundraising. Our arts and academic outreach committees provide tutoring and workshops to our beneficiaries. Simultaneously, our sales and events fundraising arm helps merchandise sales and the organisation of concerts. Adapting flexibly to restrictions on physical gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we executed our online concert, Reminisce, in July 2020. The concert featured a variety of performing talents. Merchandise sales with affordable prices were also conducted smoothly.

### Who We Are

We are a group of passionate volunteers from different agencies united by our love for music. We aim to bring joy to our beneficiaries through live music and singing. Formed in 2004 under the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) by a handful of individuals, our community has since grown to include over 300 volunteers. Now, we want to hear from you! What is your most memorable Youth Corps story?

## Volunteer Guitar Connection

### Our Mission

We use music to uplift and empower the less privileged. We believe no one should be deprived of the joy of music regardless of their background or circumstances.

### What We Do

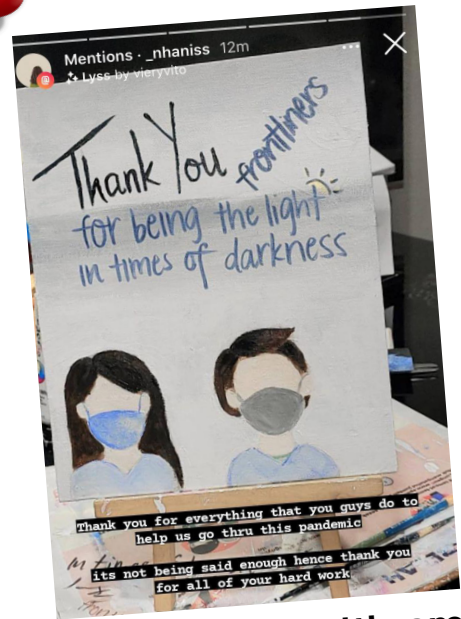
Over the years, we have organised different programmes to share our love for music with the community. Through our Guitar Buddy Program (GBP), we befriend children from disadvantaged backgrounds, teaching them to play the guitar. In the process, we hope to help them build their confidence. Our Regular Volunteering Programs (RVP) allow us to reach out to residents in nursing homes and community hospitals. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19 to volunteering efforts, we have successfully pivoted to virtual volunteering. Our first virtual volunteering session at St Luke's Hospital took place in 2020!

# Our Past Events



## Mission X (Poly)

Empowering youths to lead a positive change in the community!



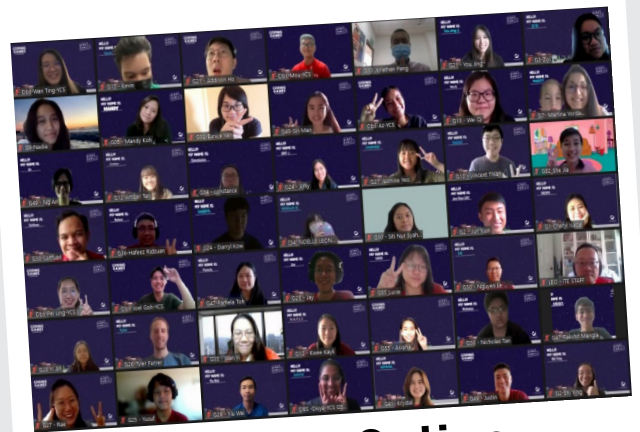
## Appreciating Healthcare Workers

Showcasing our heartfelt gratitude to our healthcare workers!



## Learning Journey with Migrant Workers

Hearing from our migrant brothers and learning more about the migrant worker landscape!



## KidsFun Online

Creating a fun and enriching space for the children to play and learn!

## Connect With Us!



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[www.youthcorps.gov.sg](http://www.youthcorps.gov.sg)



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