



Annual Report 2016-17

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General Information

The Humanitarian Organisation for Migration Economics [“H.O.M.E.”] was set up in September 2004. It was registered as a society (0236/2004 WEL) on 6 September 2004 and became a Charity with the status of an Institution of Public Character. HOME’s website address is home.org.sg.

Society Registration No. 0236/2004 WEL

Effective date of IPC : 1 August 2005

Registered address : 304 Orchard Road #06-22 Lucky Plaza, Singapore 238863

Management Committee: The Management Committee for the financial year ending March 2016.

President: Natalia Goh Suk-Lin
Head of Credit Cards & Unsecured Lending,
Standard Chartered Bank

Vice President: Lim Pei Ling June
Managing Director, Eden Law Corporation

Treasurer: Henry Lai Hoe Keat
Lecturer, Institute of Technical Education

Secretary: Cristina Santos
Senior Pharmacy, IMH, National Healthcare Group

Member: Neil Arora
Senior Managing Director, Macquarie Group

Member: Bianca Saori Kawanami Stringuini
Head, Diversity & Inclusion Asia Pacific, JP Morgan

Member: Charlotte Hsu
Partner, Price Water House Coopers

Member: Linda Ma'arof
Purchasing & Marketing Manager, Kaizen Offshore
& Marine Solutions

External Auditor: P.G. Wee and Partners

Honorary Auditors: Aaron David Ferguson, and Genevieve Ding

Action, Activities, and Achievements

Programs and Services

Transient workers from various countries are living and working in Singapore as construction laborers, shipyard crew, caretakers, cleaners, and more. Frighteningly often, these migrant workers find themselves victims of human rights violations; many suffer abuse, overwork, withholding of salary, poor living conditions, or human trafficking. Facing repatriation, or even incarceration, they turn to HOME for help.

Help Lines & Assistance

H.O.M.E. runs Help Line services for men and women migrant workers in distress. The Help Lines are managed by our staff and volunteers.

We assist our clients to report offences to the relevant authorities. Our clients are mainly domestic, construction, shipyard and service sector migrant workers, and consist of both men and women.

FDW Help Desk

Our Help Desk is a drop-in centre for **foreign domestic workers (FDWs)** who are in need of support and assistance.

Our FDW help desks are located at Lucky Plaza and Peninsula Plaza, which operate six days a week from 10 am to 6 pm. We also have a help desk for FDWs open at our Grandlink office on Sundays only.

In total, our FDW help desks attend to approximately **20** enquiries from female clients per week.

Non-Domestic Worker Help Desk

Our Help Desk for **other migrant workers** is located at Grandlink and operates from Monday to Friday from 9:30 am to 6 pm. It attended to **937** walk-in clients for the period under review. These are



Excerpt from HOMENews November 2016 Issue:

A spirited lady in her 40s, Rosalina Cui made quite an impression when she spoke to me about her 12 years in Singapore as a domestic worker.

Currently a resident at the HOME shelter, Rosalina had wasted no time in devoting herself to activities she found worthwhile. Not only is she a runner at the women's shelter, she also acts as a translator at HOME's Lucky Plaza office and as an administrator at the HOME dental clinic on Sundays.

At the clinic, Rosalina took pride in coordinating schedules, sterilising equipment and organising files. "I like to stay active!" she said smiling.

(Continued on next page)

Staying active is Rosalina's strategy to keep herself (and the people around her) happy. In addition, she tries to be a source of emotional support for the younger women at the shelter. She is known affectionately as "nai nai" (grandmother) and "mommy" to other residents who see her as a mother figure; likewise, she sees them as her children in a home away from home.

Rosalina has two children of her own – a 23-year-old daughter who is a nurse and a 21-year-old son who has recently graduated from college. As a mother, it's been difficult being far away from them, but the one thing that keeps her going is knowing that her children are healthy and have been educated with her financial support.

It was not surprising that Rosalina ended the interview on a characteristically positive note, giving me a gem of an advice to remember for years to come: "While you still have breath, you still have hope!"

~ Giulia Pulvirenti, a HOME volunteer

workers who are mainly from China, Bangladesh, and India. They work in the construction, shipyard and services sector.

Case Work

HOME Help Desk staff and volunteers work with the relevant authorities to process the workers' cases for resolution and ensure fair and just decisions.

Our case workers conduct mediations with employment agencies, employers, government officials, the Police and other community groups to assist the men and women who need our help. Volunteers act as runners to assist the worker in retrieving their possessions, which may include their passport, from the agency or employer's home if necessary. We also write letters of appeal and have face to face consultations with stakeholders and policy makers to create awareness for the greater protection of migrant workers.

Shelter

Providing shelter for foreign domestic workers who have experienced abuse and suffered from other forms of human rights violations is an essential service HOME provides, since we run one of the largest shelters for foreign domestic workers in Singapore.

For the period under review, we provided shelter housing for **865** women, including those who are victims of human trafficking and forced labour. These figures recorded only new admissions each month and did not include those who continued to stay or 'rollover' for as long as their cases were pending resolution.

H.O.M.E.'s shelter services, which are conducted entirely by volunteers, include recovery and rehabilitation programmes for residents. Besides in house activities to restore the dignity of our men and women migrant residents, we had the benefit of community partners and schools which organised excursions and activities for our beneficiaries such as



Bryan Lee's journey began three years ago, when he joined a group of volunteers to visit HDB bin centres to learn more about the plight of Bangladeshi cleaners.

Delving deeper into their situation, Bryan found that they often worked past midnight, getting only four to five hours of rest before the next workday begins. For their hours of labour, they are paid a monthly wage of S\$500 to 700 a month, much of which went towards repaying exorbitant agent fees (more than S\$10,000 in some cases).

Bryan then ran the Standard Chartered Marathon to raise funds in support of the cleaners who work so hard.

English, computer, cooking, baking and handicraft classes.

It was noted that our FDW shelter turnover was very high this year. This is a sign of good work by case workers, as the support of volunteers has allowed cases to be settled faster and migrant workers to leave the shelter sooner. Typically 7 to 12 new cases arise every week so efficient case work is crucial.

The HOME Shelter underwent renovations this year. New kitchen equipment was installed which included stoves and other cooking appliances, and repairs were made to the living spaces. As a result of these renovations, our shelter capacity was increased to a maximum of 60 residents. These renovations are crucial to the safety and comfort of the workers living in our shelter.

HOME Academy

Continuing education and empowerment through skill development has always been an integral part of H.O.M.E.'s service to the migrant community. Open to all foreign domestic workers, the HOME Academy offers various courses such as English, financial literacy, caregiving, cooking, martial arts, computer, sewing, and more. This is largely made possible by the support of UWC-Tampines and British Council.

Participants are given the chance to showcase their skills and hear feedback in various ways throughout their courses. Presentations of their work, such as baking showcases, are frequently held to give students a chance to show off all that they have learned. Upon graduation from the program, participants receive a yearbook and attend a celebration to commemorate their accomplishments.

HOME Academy is run entirely by HOME's domestic worker volunteers. Our instructors are volunteers from the migrant worker and non-migrant worker community. More than 50 volunteers are involved in HOME Academy. A partnership has begun this year

with the British Council, in organizing Training for Trainers Workshops for skills of Academy’s teachers.

This year, we registered approximately 1,700 participants in HOME Academy programming—800 participants per 6-month session.

Social Media Outreach

HOME’s Facebook outreach receives an average of 10 enquiries a week from migrant workers who need assistance for their employment related difficulties.

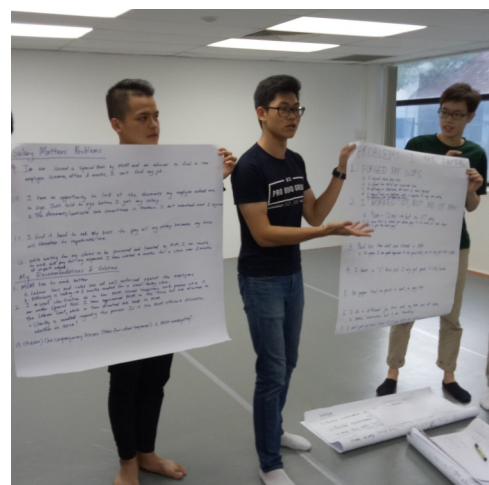
As of this document’s publishing, the HOME Singapore Facebook page has more than **14, 000 ‘likes’** and there are approximately **23,000 members** on HOME’s private Facebook page “Gabriela” for women migrant workers. It has an average of **7 posts a week** from women migrant workers discussing issues affecting them or sharing news on migration and migrant worker related issues.

Legal Aid

Our Legal Help Desk team, which is supported by a panel of pro bono lawyers, rendered legal services in representation and litigation. Our pro bono lawyers also provided legal advice to our clients on issues relating to salary arrears, family law, contractual law, assisted them to enforce court orders, defended them in court and ensured there was due process in matters of criminal and civil law.

One of the highlights of our legal aid program this year was **the case of Chinese worker, Liu Huaixi**. His case established that IPA should not be easily displaced as the starting point for determining wages, even in the face of the worker's long-term acquiescence to less. This may help to address unequal bargaining power between workers and employers in future cases.

Access to justice for migrant workers can only be achieved when legal redress is readily available to them. Seeking the assistance of lawyers can be very



Law students from NUS ran a pro bono legal aid workshop for Indian and Bangladeshi migrant workers. The workers shared stories with the students, such as their non-payment of wages, unfair deduction of wages, and excessive agency fees. They also talked about unfair dismissals from work that occur, like when employers repatriate workers’ friends when they come forward as witnesses to work injuries.

costly for low wage migrant workers. Therefore, HOME's pro bono lawyers have been an invaluable asset to the pursuit of justice for the migrant population. There were **39 workers** who benefitted from the work of the legal aid team during the period under review.

Research and Advocacy

Media Mentions & Contributions

For the period under review, HOME had approximately **20 media mentions and contributions**. This figure includes mainstream local and overseas media, in print, online and TV platforms. It also includes statements and letters submitted by HOME.

United Nations Report

In collaboration with Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2), we submitted a report to the United Nations Committee on the Convention for the protection of migrant workers and members of their families, critiquing the Bangladesh government's policies and practices in the protection of their nationals going abroad.

Anti-Trafficking Work

This year, HOME facilitated a workshop on the identification processes for trafficking cases. This workshop for HOME's case workers and volunteer lawyers was facilitated by Philip Thorpe, who had worked with the UK government advising them on anti-TIP activities.

The workshop focused on international regulations on trafficking and how they translate into processes for interviews and documentation of trafficking cases. HOME has also been making documenting and submitting trafficking related to Ministry of Manpower's Inter Agency Taskforce.



Xiao Yan (name changed) toiled in a Chinese restaurant for 13 hours a day, 20 days back to back, taking short breaks only for meals. Back home in northern China, she earned respect as a chef but her experience here couldn't be more different. Her boss verbally abused her and her colleagues, and deducted money from their salary for mistakes.

Xiao Yan was operating a noodle making machine when her right hand was trapped in the roller, severely injuring her ligaments, tendons, and bones. The SCDF

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Regional Work

HOME participated in meetings with civil society groups in ASEAN and the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs to advocate for better regional protection of migrants including trafficking and forced labour. In particular, we have been involved in advocating for a binding instrument for the 2007 ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers.

Position Paper: Wage Theft

HOME released a report in 2016 on how male migrant workers are cheated of their wages titled: *Wage Theft and Exploitation Among Singapore's Migrant Workers*.

Wage theft is widespread and commonplace in Singapore, particularly among low-wage migrant workers. By wage theft, we mean the multiple ways migrant workers are denied their legally or contractually-promised wages, most commonly the non-payment and underpayment of wages, especially overtime wages. Other exploitative wage practices include wage discrimination, whereby different nationalities of workers are paid different rates of pay for equivalent work, and wage manipulation, in which payment systems are deliberately obtuse and confusing, making salary claims needlessly onerous. Deceptive recruitment practices, including contract substitution, add to migrant workers' wage woes and greatly complicate attempts to seek remedial justice. There are also signs of chronic wage depression: in the early 1990s, Bangladeshi construction workers were earning S\$17–S\$19 a day. Some 25 years later, in 2017, they are still earning the same day rates (HOME has also seen workers being paid S\$16 a day).

The full research paper is available on our website, under Resources.

Ongoing Projects

HOME is currently working on two research projects funded by the ASEAN CSR Network (<http://>

was summoned, and she was sent to the hospital for skin grafts that took skin tissue from her thigh. "When the accident happened, I was in great shock and couldn't think much," said Xiao Yan. After learning about the accident, her boss immediately located her mobile phone and kept it from her for a week. He tried to cancel her work permit and persuaded her to return to China. "The machine was supposed to have a safety cover over it, but nothing was done about it. I did not dare raise this to the boss as I was afraid of his bad temper," said Xiao Yan.

Cooking for other people was one of her joys in life, and also her only means of earning a living. With her injured hand now at five per cent functionality, she fears she will not be able to work as a chef again.

When Xiao Yan first sought assistance at HOME, she was helpless and unaware of her rights as a worker. With guidance and assurance from case workers, she now feels more empowered and confident about her right to claim what she deserves after this traumatic accident.

~ Gerald Bok



The Photovoice Project and Exhibition was designed to empower migrant workers in Singapore to share their perspectives.

Through photography, the workers were able to express themselves and help others understand what it is like to be a transient worker. They were also able to walk away with newfound photography skills.



www.asean-csr-network.org/). The first is a large-scale research project on the working conditions of Chinese construction workers in Singapore. Over 400 Chinese construction workers were surveyed, and the data analysis is currently being completed. Focus groups will also be conducted to complement the quantitative data.

The second project looks into the wellbeing of Bangladeshi conservancy workers (CW), who clean our public housing estates. Migrant conservancy workers are an understudied group, but preliminary research shows that they are subject to long working hours, a lack of rest days, and low, depressed wages, which is compounded by the extremely high recruitment fees many pay for their jobs in Singapore. This paper seeks to give an overview of Bangladeshi CWs' working conditions as well as examine some of the supply chain issues related to the outsourcing of conservancy services in housing estates. Both reports are scheduled to be completed by the end of July 2017.

Community Events

Google Workshop

In April 2016, Google conducted a workshop on how to optimise the use of your mobile phone for about 30 shelter residents. Google has been donating to HOME (\$10,000 and above) annually since 2015.

Big Heroes

Big Heroes, an event organiser that matches corporations' CSR departments with charities, invited our shelter residents for events hosted by companies such as Qlik, Commerzbank, and more. At the event, Big Heroes encouraged corporations to either donate supermarket vouchers or pass the hat around for HOME.

International Migrants Day

Our International Migrants Day celebration in December had a fantastic turnout of approximately 200. In honour of the festivities, HOME held a BBQ



Above: Two photos from migrant participant Rana that were displayed in the Photovoice showcase.

Below: A photo from participant Rahman, who is a migrant worker that has suffered a work injury.



at East Coast Beach that featured dancing and games, as well as goodie bags sponsored by Uber.

Photovoice Exhibition

HOME partnered with urban studies researcher, Yeo Su-Jan from NUS and contemporary visual artist and professional photographer, Geraldine Kang on a Photovoice project, in which 7 Bangladeshi workers took part. The project *Topophilia and Topophobia: A Tale of Two Cities*, sought to unveil the emotive complexities experienced by the participants, not just workers but also as users of the city. The participants were mentored on aspects of photography in order to empower them to tell stories through the unique lens of migrant worker lives.

The Photovoice project lasted 4 sessions in August over the course of 3 weeks, and was held at the Substation from 8 – 30 September 2016. A panel discussion was held on the 25 September 2016. Panelists included researcher Stephanie Chok, Jevon Ng from HOME, and Associate Prof Nicholas Harrigan from SMU.

Photovoice was intended to help migrant voices be 'heard' through photos, to humanize workers, to show that they have a stake in this city as much as locals do, and also to raise awareness of migrant worker's issues through the panel discussion and dialogue with the public. This project was sponsored by Fujifilm who provided the cameras, the Kyt Studio, LUSH, and HOME.

Migrant Awareness Week

HOME also participated in Migrant Awareness Week organized by Students for Migrants at the National University of Singapore (NUS). This was also in partnership with Photovoice SG, who provided the cameras for the photo showcase. Six migrant workers participated in the project titled 'Life in a day of a migrant'. Migrant workers shared their lives through photos of their day at work and the places

"HOME has, since 2004, championed the rights of migrant workers in Singapore and provided them with direct services, including welfare assistance and skills and empowerment training."

*~ Constance Singam,
chair of TWC3*



"It was a very proud moment for HOME," said Sheena Kanwar, executive director of HOME, on the award received in August this year at the Singapore Advocacy Awards.

The ceremony was held at the Singapore Management University. The award was given out by civil activist group The Working Committee 3 (TWC3) to celebrate civil society organisations and individuals whose initiatives have had a positive impact on areas such as integration, diversity, solidarity, tolerance and awareness in Singapore.

where they stay live, or go for leisure. Their pictures were accompanied with a short introduction of the photographer.

Chinese New Year Party

HOME partnered with Singapore non-profit HealthServe to celebrate Chinese New Year with Chinese migrant workers who were unable to return home due to their salary and injury claims. Medical student interns organized games, there was a lucky draw, lots of food, and all workers were given a red packet to offer them well-wishes for their claims and for the year to come.

The party was held at Coronation Baptist Church, who hosted the event. About 50 migrant workers were present.

Legal Workshop

NUS Law students of the Students for Migrants NUS Pro Bono group conducted a legal workshop for Bangladeshi and Indian Migrant workers.

They spent some time listening to the workers, and responded to their sharing with legal advice. Workers also shared about the difficulty in waiting while undergoing Labour Court sessions, the difficulty in looking for a new employers when given the chance to switch employers, and the discrimination they face even at MOM.

It was also a beneficial learning experience for the students, as they were able to hear directly from the workers about their working conditions and experiences.

The Students helped to compile the main problems workers shared and also asked workers for their proposed solutions. Problems and potential solutions were compiled and proposed for Workplace Injury (7 main points) , Salary Matters (7 main points)and Criminal Law matters (3 main points).

Outing to the S.E.A Aquarium

TSMP Law LLC partnered with HOME and TWC2 to organize an outing to the S.E.A Aquarium at Sentosa, here in Singapore.

Nearly 100 workers attended the outing. Everyone enjoyed themselves thoroughly, and it was a short respite from the lengthy wait of their salary or injury claims.

Awards

This year, HOME was the recipient of the Singapore Advocacy Award's **Civil Society Advocate Organisation of the Year**, presented by TWC3. The award criteria seeks an organisation that is a source of inspiration for people to make their community a better place. In the context of their resources, abilities, and available time, this organisation must have made an impact in civil society.

HOME is incredibly proud to be an honouree of the Singapore Advocacy Awards, and thankful to all who support our work in the migrant community.

Fundraising Campaigns

Run for HOME

In May 2016, Rupa of the "Rupa Runs for HOME" campaign completed the Sundown marathon, having raised over \$3000 in her Run for HOME.

Bryan, another volunteer, ran the Standard Chartered Marathon as a Run for HOME in the name of supporting Bangladeshi cleaners. The total amount raised was more than \$10,000.

Neljean Hermitanio & Nancy Calusa also took part in a Run for HOME in the Standard Chartered Marathon. Both domestic workers themselves, Neljean and Nancy raised funds to support our organisation's work. Together they raised more than \$3000 for HOME.



Each of our "Run for HOME" campaigns was a great success. These types of campaigns not only raise funds for our organization, but also provide migrant issues with much-needed public exposure here in S'pore. Thank you Rupa, Bryan, Neljean, Nancy, and more!



Financial Overview



Thanks to your donations, HOME can continue to provide migrant workers in Singapore with support, legal help, shelter, and most of all—hope. Pictured: a donation from Nancy's employer's book group. Thank you!



Your generous contributions have gone on to fund projects such as research and outreach activities in support of Bangladeshi cleaners. Pictured: Standard Chartered Marathon runners who collected \$10,000 for Bangladeshi cleaners through our Run for HOME campaign.

Funding and Donations

HOME relies on donations in order to provide services and support to the migrant worker community. We receive donations from religious groups, other social organisations, corporations, individuals and foundations. Many of H.O.M.E.'s programmes are funded by income generated from fund raising events and appeals to corporate donors, individuals and benefactors.

The Care & Share Fund was a significant contributor to HOME this year. Care & Share is a national fund-raising and volunteerism movement led by Community Chest for the social service sector, in celebration of SG50. As a beneficiary of this grant, HOME was able to fund our shelter repairs and renovations, giving FDWs a safe and comfortable place to call home.

HOME deeply thanks all of our funders and donors, both corporate and foundations, for their dedication to justice, welfare, and empowerment for migrant workers. A big thank-you goes to:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Asia Brokers Asset Managers | St Patrick Society of Singapore |
| Charity (Singapore) | Singapore American School Ltd |
| Asean CSR Network Ltd | Stiftung Open Society Institute |
| Bridgeable | The Food Bank Singapore |
| Chen Su Lan Trust | Touch Community Services Ltd |
| Gardens by the Bay | TSMP Law Corporation |
| Google | UN Slavery Trust Fund |
| Inter FCStone Ltd | USES Pte Ltd |
| Leap Foundation | |

....and the many other corporations and individuals who have donated to support our work at HOME.

Finances

During 2016-17, operating Expenses for HOME totalled up to \$1.39 million and the total amount of donations raised and income from programmes added up to \$2.04 million.

There was an Increase in HOME's cash and cash equivalents for the third year from \$1.2 million in 2015 to \$2.4 million in 2016 to \$3.2 million in 2017.

For the fully audited financial statement for the year ending March 2017, please refer to the HOME 2016-17 Financial Report document.



Photo: Donor Oliver Zemans

Presents are a treat and a big deal to most children. **Oliver Zemans** earned our gratitude when he decided to channel the gifts meant for his Bar Mitzvah (a Jewish coming-of-age celebration for boys who turn 13) to HOME. Oliver shares why HOME's mission resonates with him.

Why did you decide to channel your gifts meant for the Bar Mitzvah to HOME?

I chose HOME because I care very much for my helper, Teresita, who has taken care of me since I was born. It really upsets me to hear stories of foreign workers who have been abused and mistreated by their

employers. No human being should be made to feel less important than another.

What is your hope and wish for migrant workers in Singapore?

My hope and wish is for each of them to live in safe, happy conditions where they are paid fairly and treated with respect.

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Administration

Board Membership

President - Natalia Goh
 Vice President - June Lim
 Treasurer - Henry Lai
 Secretary - Cristina Santos
 Member - Neil Arora

Member - Vincent Phang
 Member - Bianca Stringuini
 Member - Charlotte Hsu
 Member - Linda Ma'arof
 Member - Christianto

Staff Members

HOME's staff team consists of a small number of passionate individuals. Each is driven to further HOME's goals of welfare, justice, and empowerment for migrant workers. Together, they work to ensure that HOME can provide migrant workers with essential services and lead the organization's push for migrant rights on a domestic and global stage.

In July 2016, HOME brought on Sheena Kanwar as our new Executive Director. Sheena previously was a senior manager at the Association of Women for Action and Research (Aware). Jolovan Wham, HOME's prior Executive Director, has remained on-staff in a consultant role.



Staff members left to right: Jolovan Wham (Consultant), Jevon Ng (Social Work Executive), Jacqueline Tan (Communications/Public Relations Executive), Sisi Sukiato (Deputy Director and Director of Education and Programmes), Dominica Fitri Masniari (former Finance Manager), Sheena Kanwar (Executive Director), Luke Tan (Operations Manager)

Volunteers

HOME relies on volunteers in order to provide the depth of services we offer to the migrant worker community. As we have only a handful of staff members, the majority of our programs could not exist without the efforts of volunteers.

The HOME Academy is supported by volunteers who run courses in vocational skills for lifelong employability and livelihood development. Volunteers also serve at our offices, resource centre and shelters in administration, case documentation, research, interviews, para-counselling and the teaching of craft, dance, art and other activities for shelter residents. We held four orientation meetings to engage prospective and current volunteers on HOME's initiatives and activities.

HOME has more than **250 active volunteers** coming from all walks of life. Both local Singaporeans and expats frequently donate their time to assist HOME in our various activities.

Many volunteers are actually foreign domestic workers themselves who are currently living in the shelter or accessing HOME's services. FDWs act as leaders within our Shelter, Help Desk volunteers who assist in processing cases, and much more.

HOME is proud to provide migrant workers with this opportunity to help their friends and peers in the migrant community. Migrant worker volunteers often find themselves both inspired and empowered in these roles, qualities which are part of HOME's long-term vision for workers.

"I've been volunteering for 6 months now and I've never regretted taking the plunge of leaving my corporate job for a break. I'm glad that an organisation like HOME exists to help advocate for the rights of migrant workers and help them by giving them a voice." ~ Erica Allarey, shelter and help desk volunteer (pictured below)



"I am also a migrant, except I have better opportunities than the workers. It's my 'give back' time, to speak for the voiceless and help the helpless. They are my brothers and sisters." ~ Ivan Ng, volunteer at non-domestic workers help desk