

Non-profit group Bless launched by NUS students to help direct aid to the needy

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SINGAPORE - Tapping on the power of social media, a group of 45 undergraduates and recent graduates from the National University of Singapore (NUS) have started a non-profit organisation to help coordinate, mobilise and direct aid to the needy.

Called Bringing Love to Every Single Soul (Bless), it was launched on Saturday at NUS. Bless, which serves underprivileged children and the elderly, has five programmes.

They include a reading programme under void decks which allows volunteers from the neighbourhood to read to children living in the estate, a system where residents in the community look out for their elderly neighbours who are living alone and an online portal where people can sponsor gifts to needy children.

Bless was founded by Miss Francesca Wah, 23, who is now studying to be a teacher at the National Institute of Education. Miss Wah said she was inspired to start the organisation after she realised the "power of the community".

As a social work student, she wanted to reach out to 120 underprivileged children on Children's Day last year and appealed to friends for funds. In just two days, she gathered enough money for more than double the initial target number of children, she said.

"A lot of people were willing and ready to contribute. I wanted to be that someone to coordinate and mobilise resources so I set up Bless," she said.