

# Grandma taught me how to care: Minister

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## Amella Teng

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Taking care of family through thick and thin is something that his grandmother taught him, Minister for Social and Family Development Chan Chun Sing told students yesterday.

"It doesn't matter what we have... but we will try to provide for each other as a family," he shared, adding that he was "fortunate" to live in a three-room flat with five family members.

Society cannot lose sight of

these values even as it grows wealthier, he emphasised.

"Whether I can take care of my mother or not depends less on how much I'm earning than on how much I honour and treasure her," he told the 150 students from seven secondary schools at a symposium at the Singapore Management University (SMU).

"How we treat our elders sets an example of how our children will treat us," he said, adding that the Pioneer Generation Package announced by Prime Minister Lee

Hsien Loong a week ago was intended to honour the elders who have contributed to the country.

The service learning symposium, which is in its second year, was guided by 30 university student leaders, including 17 from SMU. It serves as a platform for young people to discuss ideas about community work.

Mr Chan urged the students to see community work not just as an opportunity to serve others, but also to help them achieve.

"We seem to be very concerned

about doing things for them because they're elderly, they're vulnerable, they're weak," he said.

But a better approach would be to "enable them to achieve", which will instil in them a sense of pride and ownership of their lives.

"Appreciate any person in society for what they can do, much more than what they cannot do," he added, referring to people with disabilities.

The event was organised by SMU's Centre for Social Responsibility and a social enterprise called

Positive Intentions that provides coaching and training for people.

The students also brainstormed ways to help people in the community, like the elderly, youth and people with disabilities.

Swiss Cottage Secondary student Nurul Amirah, 15, was part of a discussion group which suggested that able-bodied people should experience what it is like to live with disabilities so that they can empathise better. "For instance, we could blindfold them," she said.

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