

Making a Difference

We support ground-up initiatives that uplift vulnerable communities, fill crucial social needs and gaps, and drive social change.



Madam Tan Guat Choo, 97, and dog owner Paula Lim guiding Tobi, a West Highland White Terrier, to complete an obstacle course

For two months last year, Madam Tan Guat Choo spent her mornings bonding with dogs such as a Cavapoo, a Golden Retriever, and a Singapore Special.

The 97-year-old great-grandmother guided the dogs, alongside their owners, to complete obstacle courses. Madam Tan, who sat on a wheelchair pushed by her helper, held on to one leash and the owners held on to the other leash as the dogs hopped over poles and jumped through hoops.

Madam Tan was among 16 seniors who took part in *Canine Partners*, a programme that aimed to improve the well-being of the participants as they interacted with the dogs over curated activities.

The programme was run by social enterprise Animal-Assisted Interactions Singapore (AAISG) and supported by Temasek Foundation’s OSCAR Fund. Seven one-hour sessions were held at an active ageing centre run by non-profit organisation Care Corner in Toa Payoh.

“*Some seniors initially may not want to share about their personal lives. However, as they ask us questions about our dogs, some of the seniors open up. The dogs provide a gateway for us to understand the seniors better.*”

– Adele Lau, Founder, AAISG

Improving Well-being of Seniors

AAISG founder Adele Lau said the dogs help her, her staff, and around 40 members, who are dog owners, to connect better with the seniors.

Before taking part in *Canine Partners*, the members go through a 10-week training programme, conducted by AAISG.

Member Paula Lim, retiree, 65, took part in *Canine Partners* to share the joy that her dog, Tobi, has brought to her and her family.

“Tobi is friendly and likes being around seniors. I also have an auntie who is bedridden and she always smiles when she sees Tobi,” said Paula who has worked with AAISG since 2022.

Care Corner Assistant Programme Executive Glynis Lee has seen the positive impact that taking part in *Canine Partners* has made on the seniors.

“Some of the seniors may have difficulty moving around. But as they play fetch or go for walks with the dogs, they regain their confidence as they feel they are accomplishing something,” she said.

Building Bonds

Adele hopes that more seniors in Singapore can benefit from animal-assisted interactions.

“The presence of dogs creates a unique and special connection that cannot be replicated through conversation alone,” she added.

Madam Tan said she enjoyed bonding with the dogs and is grateful to *Canine Partners’* members for dedicating their time and effort.



Madam Tan bonded with Tobi over activities organised by Animal-Assisted Interactions Singapore

“*I looked forward to seeing the dogs. Playing with them brought back happy memories of the dogs that my family had when I was growing up. They made my worries go away.*”

– Madam Tan Guat Choo, participant of *Canine Partners*