

# Long-awaited Fellowship Meals With Migrant Friends

+ BY JOSHUA YONG, HOWARD LIN AND ABEL LEE

Joshua, Howard and Abel serve in the COSC Ministry.



Joshua (extreme left) and Ronny (behind Joshua) having a meal with Mahmud (extreme right) and his friends

Wesley Christian Outreach and Social Concerns (COSC) sub-ministry Migrant Ministry has been reaching out to migrant workers in two dormitories located in Kranji and Admiralty since 2018. When the pandemic happened in 2020, the dormitories were locked down and on-site English and computer classes stopped.



Ronny (extreme right) with Mahmud (2nd from right) and his friends visiting MBS

However, volunteers continued to keep in touch, sending essential items to migrant friends, and checking in with them that they are doing well.

After two-and-a-half years, some volunteers were finally able to meet with a few migrant friends. It is the ministry's prayer that through building a sense of belonging and friendship with migrant friends, and blessing them, they would experience the presence of Christ.

## Here are some *volunteers' stories*

It was a usual Sunday, but for a group of Wesleyans, myself included, there was an air of excitement as we looked forward to the appointed time of 6pm for a dinner meeting with two migrant workers from the Kranji Dormitory. After two years of social distancing, we were finally able to meet in person. It was also the first meeting between Ronny Wahyudi, Joshua Yong, Abel Lee and myself, all members of the Migrant Ministry.

The migrant workers, Momin and Mahmud, were happy to meet us, as the restrictions that had been imposed since Covid-19 were lifted and they could enjoy a meal with us. We were happy for them too, and as we tucked into the delicious nasi briyani at a restaurant, we inquired about their family, aspirations and culture.

With conversations filled with banter and laughter, we were like old friends at a social gathering, although some of us were meeting for the first time. It was indeed an enjoyable and fruitful outing.

— Lin Howard

We fellowshipped over murtabak and briyani. "I've been very fortunate during the pandemic," Momin shared. "When I was stuck in the dormitories, people made sure I had food, clothes and everything I needed." He grinned. "I even got a refrigerator! Now everyone comes to me to get cold drinks!"



Joshua (front), Ronny (behind Joshua) with Mahmud and his friends

Our second outing was an excursion to MBS. "I've been waiting to bring them out for such a long time." Ronny said wistfully, as we snapped pictures of the Singapore skyline. While Ronny and Mahmud exchanged tales of computer classes and new beginnings, I sensed the kinship that has blossomed between them. This bond



(L-R) Ronny, Joshua, Howard, Abel, Hossain and Momin

has survived the separation during the pandemic, and truly gotten the chance to bloom today.

I am privileged to be part of these outings. The Covid-19 pandemic had been hard on everyone, but through the sharings of my new friends from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Singapore, I could grasp how God has used this disaster as a way for us to share His love with our neighbours.

— Joshua Yong

The invitation to have dinner with a migrant worker (Momin) was the first direct COSC event for me. I didn't know what to expect but was glad that two veteran COSC Wesleyans, Ronnie and Howard, would be there, along with Joshua, a COSC newcomer like myself.

With Wesley starting several outreach programmes (conversational evangelism, Alpha, etc.), I was wondering how such a gathering would go and what expectations there would be. In the end, however, there wasn't any 'preaching', and no pressure on anyone (Momin or ourselves) — it was simply a meal (a great tasting one), without any motives other than to meet with Momin and his friend for a dinner after more than two long years of Covid-19 restrictions, which the migrant worker community had especially been hard hit by.

While it first appeared that we were the ones blessing Momin and his friend with dinner, it would come as no surprise in God's kingdom that, at least for me, it was





Mahmud (in foreground) and his friends with the care packs that Ronny has been sending them since 2020

a blessing in return. It wasn't shyness, for example, that Momin and his friend kept refusing our offers and recommendations for more dishes. Despite working in Singapore for several years now, they still appreciate the preciousness of food, taking great care to avoid any wastage (regardless of whoever is buying). Their countrymen not even having enough to eat on a daily basis, is ever present in their minds, and their answers to our questions about their families and home in Bangladesh gave small hints of

the very real hardships and challenges they face each day. Throughout the short time together, they continually reminded me of God's tremendous grace and blessings on Singapore, for which we are to be humbled and thankful, and the obligations we have as a response to God's grace — to be a great blessing to others around us, including the foreigner within our borders, and beyond. 🙏

— Abel Lee

*COSC volunteers were glad to finally be able to meet up with their migrant friends after two-and-a-half years.*