

News

Visually handicapped couples walk in MacRitchie at Valentine's Day event

Taking the path of true love

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THEIR love story began 43 years ago, in 1970, at the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH).

But it was only yesterday that Mr Lee Chai Kee, 73, and Mrs Lee Li En, 66, celebrated their first Valentine's Day, even though they've been married since 1971.

Along with other members of SAVH, the couple celebrated the special day at an event organised by the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation (TCTF), which supports several charities and schools.

It included a walk at MacRitchie Reservoir Park and a buffet lunch. About 35 people attended the event, including six couples.

Being visually handicapped didn't stop Mr Lee and his wife from enjoying the nature ramble.

"While we could not see, we could smell the fresh air and feel the wind as we walked," said Mr Lee.

But their love story wasn't always a bed of roses.

Mrs Lee revealed that she initially did not want to marry Mr Lee.

"I even told him I would find someone else for him," she said in Mandarin. "It was only after my nephew persuaded me that I agreed to marry him."

The couple, who lead a thrifty lifestyle, also went through difficult moments raising their children.

Reluctant to go into detail, Mr Lee, who made a living selling food door-to-door when he was young, said: "No matter how good or bad it was, we endured. It is all in the past now, our troubles are behind us."

The couple, who have a son and daughter, are grandparents of five.

"It saddens me that I cannot see what my grandchildren look like, but at least I can still hold them," said Mrs Lee.

Other couples such as Mr Ang Kim Hock, 55, and his partially sighted wife, Ms Daisy Keh, 53, were not new to celebrating Valentine's Day.

Married 32 years ago, they often celebrated the occasion over "zi char".

"We don't need a candle-light dinner, we just want to have some bonding time together," said Mr Ang, a



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LOVE IN THE AIR: (Left) Visually handicapped couple, Mr Lee Chai Kee and his wife, Mrs Lee Li En, took part in the walk. (Above) Mr Ang Kim Hock and his partially sighted wife, Ms Daisy Keh.

salesman.

Ms Keh, who has worked as a masseuse at SAVH for about seven years, said she had been invited by her coordinator to the event.

Free food

"Why not? There is free makan," she joked.

Ms Yap Su-Yin, 37, chief executive officer of TCTF, said the idea for the event had been sparked by an SAVH client.

On a site visit to SAVH just before Chinese New Year, the client had suggested a trip to MacRitchie Reservoir

Park.

Because Valentine's Day was around the corner, Ms Yap had felt it was an opportunity to celebrate the occasion and fulfil the client's wishes.

The theme of the event was "With LOVE, we SEE."

Participants were also treated to singing by TCTF's interns and volunteers and given red packets and T-shirts with Braille lettering.

Amid the joyful mood, Mr Lee had wise words to share.

"Don't think too much, just live life day by day. We do not know what the future will hold. Just look at things with an open mind."