

Dear Bill,

Thank you very much for your generous offer to provide sponsorship to purchase meals for homeless men in Little India.

There are currently about 60 homeless men sleeping in front of a shophouse on Cuff Road. The men are from the Tamil Nadu district of India. Like other migrant workers, they come to Singapore to escape poverty in their home villages. Many go into debt to pay agency fees and the plane ticket. One man told us he spent S\$4k to come here. While each case is different, unfortunately most of these men were duped by unscrupulous agents. There were either no jobs waiting for them upon arrival or they were taken to work in non-approved sectors (coffeeshops, cleaning, etc.). Upon discovery by the police, the men are classified as illegal workers or over-stayers and are given a Special Pass by the government while their cases are pending. In other instances, the men are witnesses in illegal employment cases. While on a special pass, the men are not allowed to work in Singapore, except on a Temporary Job Scheme after clearance from their Investigating Officers. They say this scheme has a shortage of participating employers. Their cases can take a long time to resolve. One man told us he has been on the street for a year; another said he had been there 8 months.

Up until now, some good samaritans have provided dinners 5 nights a week. However, the men were left to scramble the rest of the time – both on the other evenings and during the day.

ONE (SINGAPORE) is collaborating with sponsors, restaurants and existing donors to ensure that the men have breakfast and dinner every day. We are still negotiating with area restaurants, but I expect your donation should be able to provide 50 breakfasts for the men.

Partner groups – like TWC2 (Transient Workers Count Too) – meanwhile are working to expedite the men's cases by liaising with relevant authorities in the Ministry of Manpower and the ICA (Immigration & Checkpoints Authority).

Thank you again for your commitment to assist these gentlemen. We will keep you updated on the logistics.

Sincerely,

Michael

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