

Immediate Action Kicks In

By **Vanessa Teo**
Pictures by **NTUC Club**

A four-day work week means a 6 per cent cut of his pay for 53-year-old technician, Mr Tang Weng Yew. With three children to support, his youngest daughter just beginning her education in polytechnic, Mr Tang did not know how to be more frugal than he already was.

While he was deep in worry, the National Trades Union Congress announced it had amassed \$23.2 million for its U Care Fund, raised primarily to help needy low-wage earners or workers affected by retrenchment and shorter work weeks. Mr Tang was relieved, that he could get some relief.

Under the new year-long U Care Immediate Assistance scheme, eligible workers will receive immediate assistance ranging from \$100 to \$300, depending on their employment situation.

Mr Tang, a 15-year member of the Chemical Industries Employees' Union, will receive \$70 in cash, \$50 in NTUC FairPrice Vouchers and \$80 in U Stretch Vouchers – a total of \$200 in relief.

U Stretch Vouchers are discount vouchers which can be used at seven participating NTUC Social Enterprises – NTUC Club, NTUC Eldercare, NTUC FairPrice, NTUC First Campus, NTUC Foodfare, NTUC Healthcare and NTUC



Starting It Off... Mr Tang Weng Yew (centre) joins CIEU President Rajendran s/o Govindarajoo (right) in receiving the big cheque from NTUC President John De Payva on behalf of their union.

Link. Each of these vouchers provides a \$2.50 discount for a minimum of \$5 spent, therefore helping users to maximise their hard earned dollar by a total of \$80.

"My daughter just started schooling at Ngee Ann Polytechnic, which meant sudden and higher expenses. Without the U Care assistance, I would be in a worse struggle," said Mr Tang.

Madam Chua Gek Keow, 40, a production operator, is another beneficiary of the U Care Immediate Assistance scheme and U Stretch Vouchers.

Madam Chua's husband is unemployed, and she is laid down with the responsibility of supporting him and their three daughters. Because of the downturn, Madam Chua was

also affected by the shorter work week and was starting to worry for the family's livelihood, but the \$80 U Stretch vouchers and \$120 U Care Immediate Assistance which she received has eased her mind.

"The U Care Fund has lightened my burden. The U Stretch vouchers give me a better discount value and I am able to spend less to buy more. The money from the U Care Immediate Assistance Scheme is also helpful. Every bit of help counts," said Madam Chua.

The \$23.2 million raised through the U Care Fund will continue to give its helping hand to a total of 194,000 needy members.



Stretching Your Dollar... Madam Chua Gek Keow (second from left) and her family receiving the symbolic big U Stretch Voucher from Care and Share Director Zainudin Nordin.



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