

I SAY

DON'T FORGET THE OTHER MUMS

Spare a thought for the elderly ladies you meet

Subana Hall

MOTHER'S Day is fast approaching, and even if you have forgotten, it is only a matter of time before you come across one of the numerous posters at shopping malls to remind you.

Last year, I rejoiced at spending Mother's Day with my mum after so many years away from Singapore. I bought her a vegetable plant because I am into saving the Earth.

This year, I am extending my Mother's Day thoughts to a special group of women: The elderly ladies who I meet at food courts and public toilets.

I first met them at an Ang Mo Kio food court. There were about five of them, one of them with a hunched back. They were very old and looked extremely exhausted clearing the plates and cleaning the tables.

Their tired faces made me sad and uncomfortable because I could not imagine my own mum working long hours at food courts or cleaning toilets at such an age.

Something terrible happened one

day while I was eating at the same food court with my two young daughters. A young woman wearing the manager's badge started shouting at the old cleaners in Mandarin.

Although I do not understand the language, it sounded hostile. It was also fairly easy to work out that they were being told off for something. Soon after the shouting, they went off in a flurry to fetch a mop to clean the floor.

I told the manager that the way she spoke to the cleaners was not nice and that she should at least show some respect for their age.

For whatever reasons the mothers (and fathers) of Singapore end up as cleaners at food courts, it's time for us to show them some gratitude.

We don't have to do something big — just small gestures like a smile and a "thank you" would make a difference to their day.

So, this Mother's Day, I would like to extend my heartiest wishes to those elderly mums. I hope your day and life will be filled with joy and happiness. Happy Mother's Day.

Email your views to voices@mediacorp.com.sg

