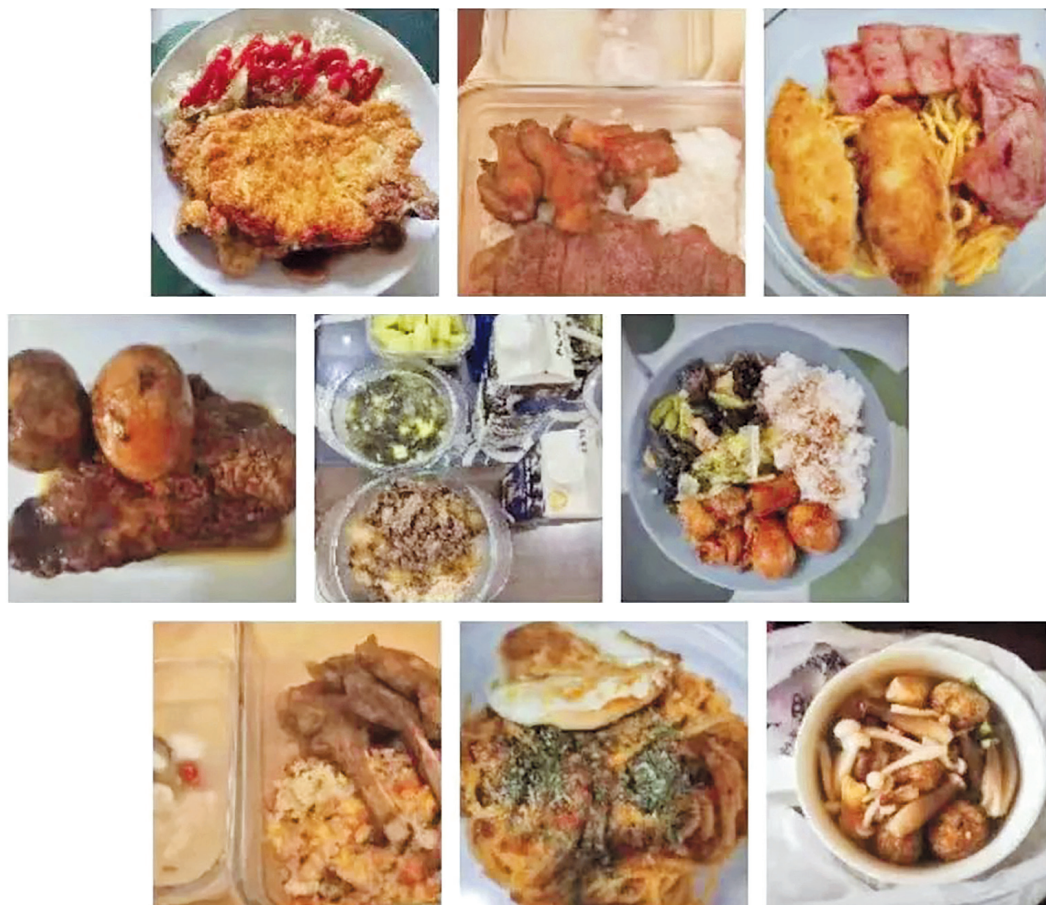




Neighbor Shi Lan asks that an extra piece of cake be sent to the isolated boy on the birthday of her mother. — All photos by Ti Gong



Some of the meals prepared by the warm-hearted neighbors, including deep-fried pork chops and steak.

work, would take care of the boy's meals on a given day.

In this way, a new WeChat group, named "Fraternity and Care Among Neighbors," was set up consisting of the seven caring neighbors, who became his default "aunties," and Youyou's "lockdown family."

The first meal Youyou received was spaghetti with mushroom and ketchup, prepared by Shi.

Sheng, who first noticed Youyou, used to be a busy employee whose meals at home were prepared by her parents. To take better care of Youyou, she learned to cook by herself. In providing a proper meal for the boy, the seven aunties in the WeChat group paid particular attention to providing a balanced meal consisting of both vegetables and meat, and steamed rice always went with a soup. They also sought Youyou's input, subsequently preparing steak, hamburger and pizza and providing drinks and snacks for him.

As these food providers also doubled as volunteers perpetually engaged in distributing supplies for residents, assisting with nucleic acid testing protocols, collecting antigen test kits, or standing guard, they were really super busy individuals. "Some of us also served as *tuanzhang* (group-buying leaders), thus sometimes we would

juggle distribution of supplies with teleconferencing," Shi said. In spite of this, they took the greatest care of Youyou's daily meals.

Once they wanted to prepare a hamburger for Youyou, but they had run out of flour. The group took immediate action by arranging for flour to be sent by the fastest delivery available.

Nor were these seven aunties the only people solicitous of Youyou's welfare. Some residents not in the group sent in meat and eggs at times. April 8 happened to be Shi's mother's birthday, so she also asked that a piece of cake be sent to the boy.

When the nurse mother posted the images of her son's meals in her WeChat Moments, they drew a plethora of "likes" and comments. The mom believed the boy was having better meals than those from his parents, adding that when they returned home they would thank these good neighbors one by one.

"As medical professionals, in this special time, we are duty-bound to rush to the frontline in the anti-pandemic fight. Although our son has been known for his independence, as a mother, I am still somewhat concerned for his condition. But the generous help from our neighbors

really takes the burden off my mind," the mother observed. She added that in times of fatigue at work, she felt truly motivated and inspired when she learned from the WeChat group how the neighbors were engaged in heated discussion over how to better feed her son.

Thanks to the WeChat group, the neighbors could maintain regular communication with Youyou's family. So when nucleic acid testing was required, Youyou would be put on the fast track.

When supplies arrived, Youyou's mother would be alerted. When the boy needed a haircut, a neighbor stepped up to do the job. Youyou's mother was truly moved: "My son has been in good hands. With perseverance, we are sure to win the fight against the pandemic."

Not long ago, Youyou's grandma arrived to accompany the boy, and thereafter the feeding group came to an end.

During this period the boy's parents, applying their professional expertise, also helped provide medical care or medicines for residents in need of such assistance.

As neighbor Shi wrote in her WeChat: "The kindness deeply rooted within us, by warming others, also warms ourselves."



The chat history shows neighbors engaged in heated discussion over how to better feed Youyou.

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