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Staff Team Building Day

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KEEPING TO HIS PASSION

President of the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped, Tan Guan Heng, shares his life story

George Bernard Shaw once said: "It is in the hour of trial that a man finds his true profession." This best describes my life journey.

I was educated at Raffles Institution and studied Economics and History at the University of Malaya. Shortly after graduation, I became totally blind from detached retinas. I experienced a lot of frustration and bitterness but with sheer grit and determination, I resolved not to be a burden to others.

Back then, people with visual impairment were engaged in manual jobs such as weaving baskets but I wanted a career where I can use my intellectual capabilities. Unable to find gainful employment, I decided to go into business.

As a book lover, I decided to start a publishing company, G.H. Book Forum, in 1968. In the beginning, I had help from my father and sister, and later employed two staff. My business indented books for the national libraries, universities, and other institutions. In 1970, His Excellency, President S R Nathan, who was then the Honorary Secretary of the Singapore Council of Social Service (SCSS), and Mrs Hedwig Anuar, the Director of the National Library, facilitated my tenancy within SCSS's premises at Penang Lane. I ran the business until year 2000.

I love to read but I also love to write; I have three books published to date.

My Love is Blind is a semi-autobiographical story, while my second book, *Night Butterfly*, is about undergraduates involved in Singapore's anti-colonial struggle in the 1950s. The third, *100 Inspiring Rafflesians*, is a collection of biographies of Raffles alumni.

In my community service work, I have served as the Chairman of the White Cane Club, and as the President of the Singapore Association for the Blind (now known as the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped, SAVH). I was also the first member with disability to join the resource panel for the Government Parliamentary Committee for Community Development, and a member of the Advisory Council on the Disabled.

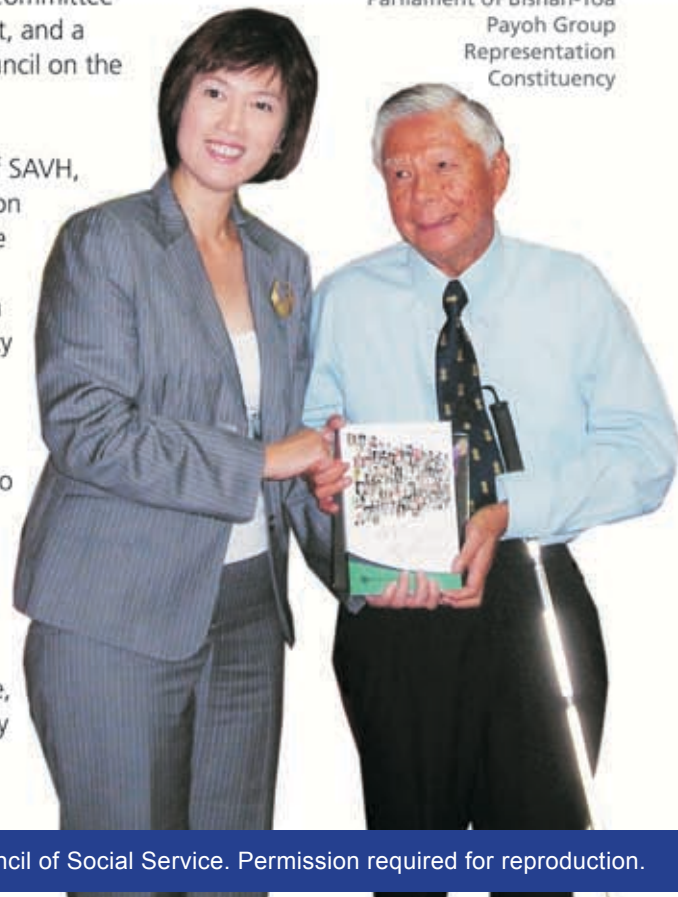
Currently, as the President of SAVH, we are pressing for concession rates for train transport to be extended to persons with disabilities. I also hope that a research institute for disability studies can be set up.

I have learnt that whatever setbacks we have, we need to accept them as life must go on. Being independent has helped me to regain self-esteem and dignity. Instead of wallowing in self-pity, I often venture out of my house, meeting up regularly with my old classmates for lunch.

Persons with disabilities have inspired me with their courage and fortitude in coming to terms with their impairments, and it has been a privilege to serve them.

As a Rafflesian, I was inculcated with the ideals and values of service to others, especially those who are disadvantaged. I do not expect awards or medals, only the satisfaction of knowing that with more education and employment opportunities, persons with disabilities can also contribute to society. They should also have a place in the sun, the Singapore sun.

Mr Tan Guan Heng, together with Mrs Josephine Teo, Assistant Secretary-General of National Trades Union Congress and Member of Parliament of Bishan-Toa Payoh Group Representation Constituency



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A Colourful “Gong Xi Fa Cai” Greeting

L’Oreal’s Chinese New Year Visit to SAVH’s Sheltered Workshop Trainees

By Rosa Yan



8 February was such a special day for the Sheltered Workshop trainees at SAVH – a day full of joy, laughter, and festive gifts! A group of senior management and staff from L’Oreal came to celebrate the Year of Tiger with our trainees.

The trainees gave their warmest applause to Mr Christopher Neo, Managing Director of L’Oreal upon his arrival to the Sheltered Workshop. Mr Neo and his staff team were welcomed by Ms Judy Lim, Executive Director of SAVH. After their speeches and exchanging Chinese New Year greetings, there came the highlight of the day – led by three of our trainees, two groups joyously sang three Chinese New Year songs to celebrate the occasion.

But that was not all for the trainees - they were excited to receive gifts from the L’Oreal team – Mandarin oranges and a big food hamper each! The trainees enjoyed meeting new friends through this visit, and the L’Oreal team members also found this interactive experience with our clients very pleasant and fruitful.

Being a community partner of SAVH since 2009, L’Oreal has provided continuous support to our visually-impaired clients by raising funds and organising ‘Touching Colours’ grooming workshops on skin care, make-up, hair care and styling. The participants enjoy learning these skills, which also helps them to be more self-confident.

SAVH Celebrates International Volunteer Day

By Jaslyn Shalini

All around the world, countless volunteers have selflessly given their time and talents to reach out to the less fortunate, caring for them and serving them in numerous ways. Despite being ordinary people, these volunteers have taken an extraordinary step by choosing to impact the lives of the underprivileged. Similarly, the dedicated volunteers of SAVH have often gone the extra mile to make a difference to the lives of SAVH’s visually-impaired clients. Therefore, in conjunction with International Volunteer Day, the volunteers of SAVH were honoured and rewarded for their valuable contributions.



Since 1985, the United Nations General Assembly has marked 5th December as International Volunteer Day. This day was specially set aside to commemorate and

honour the efforts and contributions of volunteers who are such an invaluable resource to society. The staff and clients of SAVH gathered on that very day to express their heartfelt gratitude to the volunteers who rendered their services and made the International White Cane Day Celebrations 2009 a remarkable success.

This special event included several segments ranging from an elaborate introduction of SAVH as well as a lunch gathering. The talk and tour around SAVH orientated the relatively new volunteers and informed them about SAVH's services and contributions to the visually-impaired in Singapore. It also provided them with a greater insight to possible volunteer opportunities available at SAVH, thus encouraging them to continue their journey as volunteers. This was followed by the Basic Sighted Guide Techniques that aimed to equip volunteers with the appropriate skills to effectively guide the visually-impaired as they continue to serve them. Then came the highlight of the event - the Award Ceremony, during which volunteers were presented with a certificate of appreciation and handmade touch-art tokens for "being the eyes of the blind" as said by Ms Rosie Wong, a client of SAVH. A video that compiled words of appreciation from the visually-impaired clients of SAVH and staff members was also shown to acknowledge the volunteers' warm-hearted service. Lastly, the event was brought to an end with a sumptuous lunch provided by the courtesy of Rasel Food Fusion Pte Ltd.

As the event drew to a close at 2:00 pm. All in all, the event saluted the volunteers' noble service, encouraged their continued participation in community service and intensified their enthusiasm to touch the hearts of the disadvantaged in the society.

Expressing through Words – SAVH's Story Writing Project

By Pang Siew Gek

2009 was the year where the Library embarked on a Story Writing Project. The project aimed to encourage members to express themselves through creative writing, thus expressing their plights and thoughts.

We received nine entries in the Open Category (which required a story length of between 1,500 to 3,000 words). A panel of five independent volunteers judged and selected the best four stories.

"**Silencing Blind Fury**", written by Chong Kwek Bin came in 1st, followed by Sim Kah Yong's "**How Would You Respond to What Life Throws at you**". This issue will feature these two stories.

The other two winners were Cassandra Chiu and Wesley Seah, who received consolation prizes. These stories will be featured in our next issue of InSight - so do look out for it!

We hope that organising events like this would encourage more blind people to try their hand at writing.

Silencing Blind Fury

By Chong Kwek Bin

He was what you might call an achiever in his studies, always topping his class. One day during his primary school years, he suddenly found that he could not see what was happening on stage while watching a school performance. He was diagnosed as having a genetic eye disorder, which just happened to choose that point in time to manifest itself. Even then, this did not seem to stop him from continuing to do well in school. He vaguely recalls feeling anxious during that period, but the feeling of distress did not seem to have lasted very long - and then he was back to his winning ways. Certainly, it did not stop him from excelling in his PSLE. This time, he topped his school. Perhaps it was because the deterioration was only partial, leaving much of his eyesight still intact. Perhaps the special arrangements he was given during examinations, such as enlarged exam script and extension of exam time, helped as well.

He went on to a reputable secondary school. During this time, he discovered that wearing glasses improved his vision, though, of course, never to anywhere near normal levels. Perhaps he had just developed myopia on top of his existing condition. Perhaps the traditional Chinese medicine he had been taking helped as well. He continued to do relatively well in his studies, and continued to have enlarged scripts and extra time for exams. It seemed that his remaining vision was quite sufficient for him to get by in life.

When he graduated from university, he began looking for work. Then he found that his vision was not quite sufficient after all. There were those job applications to which there was no reply, and he never knew why exactly he was not shortlisted. Then there were those where he had to go for aptitude tests, and he was painfully aware of how slowly he ploughed through each of them, and he could not ask for extra time. Then there were those which did not require an aptitude test, but a medical examination, which invariably included an eye check. Naturally, he clinched none of these positions. He began approaching various agencies and organisations specialising in job placement for the disabled.

In 2005, while attending a resume-writing workshop organised by a job placement agency for the disabled, he met a hearing impaired girl. He had been goofing around a little during the workshop, where the participants had been asked to brainstorm answers to certain questions and he had given some flamboyant responses. Apparently, the trainer and job placement officers had not been the only ones amused.

She came up behind him as he was leaving the building. While inside, his attention had been on the trainer and the job placement officers, who were the ones interacting with him during the workshop. He had noted the presence of the other participants, but had not been able to see them clearly as they had been seated in a round table fashion, with no one within his immediate vicinity. He having been so 'gung-ho' as to nonchalantly plonk himself in the seat nearest the trainer whereas the rest had not shared his disinhibition with front seats, a trait developed from years of needing to see the teacher's writing on the board.

Now that they were out in the sunshine, standing right beside each other, he could get a better look at her. She reminded him of a Japanese teen idol, the variety with two huge bushy plaits on either side of the head, with brownish hair and fair skin, and a light sprinkle of freckles. She gestured at him, but he could not make out what she was trying to say, and wondered if he could have done any better even if he had not been visually handicapped. Then she took out a book and pen and wrote something down. They spent the next half hour communicating in this manner. He spent about twenty minutes of that half hour trying to make out her writing, not that it was illegible. They exchanged e-mails and began meeting up as well. She was interested in how he got by with his visual handicap, and he asked her to teach him Sign Language.

Before he knew it, they were together.

At first, they continued to communicate by writing in a book and passing the book back and forth. Already a time-consuming process, it was extra time-consuming with his visual handicap. Hence, they had to try other means of communicating, though they continued to use this method. Over time, her handwriting became so neat that he could always read it, even when she wrote very fast. His own handwriting improved as well, though it was less of an issue for her.

They tried communicating by SMS. It felt odd, but fun, to be sending SMSes to each other even though they were standing right next to each other. The screen was bright, and the typed-out words were easier for him to read. They spent a few days doing that, until they realised they did not actually have to send out the SMSes - they just had to type it out, show it to the other, then erase to type a new message - saving on the cost of sending a SMS. Then they felt a little foolish. Nevertheless, he changed his phone subscription to a SMS-intensive package, so as to communicate when they were not physically together – he could not very well call her to chat.

Still he found this too laborious, and often he would bring his laptop with him when they went out. He was much better at typing on the computer than on his mobile phone, and he could adjust the font on the computer screen to be as big and bold as he needed. They would sit together in front of his laptop, his arms around her, his head on her shoulder and her cheek against his, both staring at the screen, taking turns to type and feeling the tensing and relaxing of the other's body that told them if the other was stifling a giggle or getting agitated, feeling sad or even trying to hide something. At home, they also used various instant messaging applications and e-mail to chat over the Internet.

Finally, he learnt Sign Language from her. In fact, they were already using Sign Language from day one – the primitive type that even 'normal' people use, a tug at the elbow, pointing, a wave, the 'ok' hand sign. He could not always tell what she was pointing at, and between a nod and a shake of the head, so they worked around his limitations. This still made up most of their interaction, even more than the book, phone and laptop. To teach him the actual language of the deaf, she would hold up her hands before his face, then let him feel the positions of her hands and she would adjust his hands to form the correct posture. She would also place her hands on his chest, his stomach or his back, while in the signing position, tickling him when the sign involved a movement of the hands. This developed into a tactile type of SignLanguage that only they understood.



Mr Chong Kwek Bin and Mr Koh Chee Wee,
Chairman of Library Sub-committee

It was like whispering in sign language – not even other deaf people would have been able to read what they were signing.

In 2006, he began trading on the stock market. Since they had met, she had found a job in a factory, while he had remained unemployed. This made him feel like a useless loafer. His mother's incessant nagging to the same tune, did not help his sense of self-esteem, either. And yet he haughtily rejected suggestions that he try for telemarketer or telephone operator, and had not the skills nor the interest to be a masseur or busker. After a few half-hearted attempts at home tutoring, he had turned to shares and equities.

Hitherto, he had only taken a recreational, perhaps academic, interest, noting the movements of the Straits Times Index in news reports on television. As the idea grew in his mind, he began to follow the market more closely and in more detail. He also applied for an internet trading account. After a few 'theoretical' experiments, he moved on to 'practical' experiments, and the results were encouraging, so he continued. Not much each time, just a couple of hundred dollars, but it was something. Better than telemarketing.

The first time he made a thousand dollars from a single transaction, he felt a sense of redemption. For the first time since graduation, he felt that here was something he could be good at, not just studying. He began to dream of making his fortune, but more than that, he began to harbour the possibility that his relationship could actually lead somewhere. He began to work towards this happy ending, becoming more engrossed in his stocks, reading up on research report and economic news. Ironically, he became so busy that he had less time to communicate with her, and took longer to reply her messages. She did not complain, and he did not let her in on his secret goal.

However, in 2007, the stock market started to decline. He underestimated the scale of the downturn, as did all the experts in the research reports and economic news interviews. Much of his money became tied up in stocks which were losing money, which he refused to sell because the losses would be too great. Money could still be made, though it was more difficult. He had to spend more effort, and was not always successful.

He had to hide his mail whenever the payment notices reflected a loss, to keep them out of the prying eyes of his mother. To his chagrin, her complaining had not stopped even when he had been highly successful in his stock trading ventures, and each time she got her hands on proof of a loss-making trade, she would step up on her criticisms. She felt that stock trading was too risky a business, and that he should go look for a real job, even if it was as a telemarketer or operator. She was also worried that all those hours of staring at the computer would damage his eyesight further.

In fact, she was right about his eyesight, though she was not fully aware of it. He had indeed realised that his eyesight had begun to deteriorate, albeit gradually. The girl, noticed it as well, and while taking greater care when leading him around unfamiliar places, she also expressed her concern. But this only added to his pressure to continue trading. He could not think of another way where he could make so much money, and he wanted to make as much as he could before his eyesight got too poor for him to continue. He became increasingly irritable and quarreled often with both women.

One day, a day after he had walked out on a particularly heated argument with the girl, he had just closed a transaction with a loss, when his mother again nagged him to get a telephone operator job. In a moment of extreme frustration, he heaved up his computer monitor and threw it on the ground, screaming in blind fury. As he did so, the extension socket to which the monitor was connected came flying after it, hitting him on the back of his head, and he fell down over his monitor as it smashed open on impact.

As he lay in hospital, eyes closed, feeling the numerous stitched-up wounds pulsing on his body, he thought about the medical bill he had just run up, the monitor he had just trashed and would have to replace, the damage to his floor that the crash must have caused, and how he had just put himself out of action for the next few days. He regretted his rash move and his lack of control over the frustration - it had only served to fuel, not release. His face contorted as he clenched his teeth and fists, until his wounds began to hurt. Then he felt a tender touch to his face, and even before he opened his eyes he knew it was her. He looked at her blurred image and she looked at him, and then he sighed and relaxed.

She came to see him every day as he recuperated, but he was not happy, watching the tired frame of this girl that he no longer felt he was able to provide for. After he returned home, he refused to meet her, but instead, she came to his house to see him. He had not the heart to chase her away, but felt more and more guilty as he watched her struggle to maintain the relationship. The conflicting feelings made him ever more irritable, and he pushed her away emotionally and even physically.

Finally, he pushed harder than he meant to, causing her to fall and twist her ankle. Shocked at what he had done, he quickly bent down at her side. As he held her in his arms, something he had not done in a long time, he felt something else beyond the tension due to her physical pain. Something fell on his arm, then rolled down, and he realised they were tears. He touched her face, and now that he was up close and could see it more clearly, he saw that it was wet, and he wondered how many times in the recent past she had been crying soundlessly after he had hurt her. Remorse washed

over him and out of his eyes, and his face was wet like hers. She put out her hand and again he felt her tender touch, and he held her tightly as they wept. That night, he accompanied her home. When her mother saw them, both of them got a tongue-lashing. He learnt that her mother, like his own, had disapproved of his current career, and had become strongly opposed to their relationship, judging him to be an unreliable get-rich-quick dreamer, a sentiment made worse by his recent irascible behaviour. He also heard about how the girl had been bullied at work. She had been enduring stress from family, work, and him, all at once, but had never said a word. In the face of her silent suffering, he could no longer find the self-righteous anger with which to indulge himself.

On 7 August 2009, they appeared at the Registrar of Marriages. Though both mothers have their misgivings, they are somewhat assured to see the children happy together, and working jointly towards paying for a wedding ceremony and dinner, which they do not plan to be a grand affair. He has since become a telephone operator, and they help out together at a blind and a deaf association regularly. Life does not have to be built on great wealth or money alone.

He has not sold his stocks, though, which are quietly recovering from the stock market bust. Perhaps one day he may still get his riches. Or perhaps he already has.

How Would You Respond to What Life Throws at You?

By Sim Kah Yong

“Miss Lim, why is your face marked with scars?”

“How did you hurt yourself?”

“Does it hurt?”

These are some of the questions that are posed to me at school by my Primary 2 pupils. They are a curious lot and I do not mind their questions. In fact, I often encourage my class to be curious about the events and people around them and to ask questions. I strongly believe that it is the way to learn and grow.

After all, I cannot blame them for being curious about my appearance as it is not an everyday occurrence to have a teacher to be both totally blind and possess an appearance of someone who has been badly hurt and left with scars on the arms and face. In fact, I feel encourage that they are honest enough to ask and then to accept me for who I am - their class teacher.

I feel both fortunate and delighted to have the opportunity to work as a teacher in a regular primary school. After all, this is what I enjoy doing and am good at. However, there are many struggles and perseverance behind my achievement.

I was born with very poor vision and on top of that, I have a form of physical deformity. There are two obvious scar marks on my face - one on my forehead and on my left cheek. There are also rough patches on both my arms.

My parents were not warned about my condition before the term and thus my birth came as a real shock to them. Prenatal care was not as advanced as compared to today. The gynecologist was not certain of the cause of my condition and could not provide any good prognosis on me for my parents. My mother could not make herself look at me, let alone take care of me in the first 3 months of my life. She went into depression and I was left to my maternal grandmother to care for me. My father, who was a taxi driver then continued to work to earn a living although he had been greatly impacted by my birth too. My parents did not have the courage to give birth again.

I give thanks to God for the strong character of my grandmother because she was the one who took care of me physically and emotionally. She also managed to get my mother to assume her motherly duties when I was 4 months old. I did not know how she did it, but she did. My mother gradually became more and more involved in my upbringing from then on. Both my mother and grandma become the main emotional support for me, even till today.

“Sue Yin, you should bring Ruth out for fresh air sometimes instead of just having her play at home,” grandma one day told my mom.

“Mom, how can I do that? We will surely attract the attention of people,” responded my mother.

“Sue Yin, it is normal that Ruth will stand out from the crowd and we have accepted her for who she is. It is about time that the rest of the people meet her and learn to accept her too,” grandma would advise.

My grandma had often taken the stand that I am different and so are all of us. She would say that there is none of us in the world who is “normal”. She would tell us that everyone is different and it will be in our interest to learn to accept who we are and grow to be better persons.

It was under the guidance and advice of my grandma that my mother learnt to love me for who I am and slowly and surely, both of them helped me to accept myself with my many strengths and weaknesses.

My mother began to bring me out to play at playgrounds and for social outings. She took these opportunities to educate people about my medical condition. I did not know anything different about myself and thus grew up just like a normal child.

“Mom, why do my friends stare at me and sometimes they told me that I look ugly,” I would say to my mother occasionally.

“Dear, they are curious about how you look because every one of us looks different and you look special to them. Ruth, you are born to have some scars on your body and some people become curious because of it,” my mother would explain to me. Gradually I accepted that I look different and people are naturally curious. Although everybody is different, their unique characteristics are not obvious and thus they do not attract the amount of attention I get.

At age five, I lost the remaining vision I had. My mother was however ready to face the challenge this time. She helped me to move around my house with my remaining senses and she made the house environment safe for me. I quickly learnt to adjust without my sight. I continued to dress myself, eat independently and so on. In short, she did not allow my blindness to hamper me from doing anything I wanted. She continued to read to me and I began to acquire a fascination for language.



Mr Koh Chee Wee and Mr Sim Kah Yong

Soon after that, I was admitted to the Singapore School for the visually Handicapped where I learned to read and write in Braille. I was very excited to meet new friends and venture into a new environment. As I could not see to move around in the new school, my mother had to accompany me. She asked for me to undergo orientation and mobility training in the school although children at age five were not taught the skills. A very short white cane had to be imported for my use. I learned quickly and was very excited to find out that I could move about easily with the cane by myself. I absorbed everything that was taught to me like a sponge. The occupational therapist came to our house and taught me to help my mother in simple household chores like folding clean laundry, setting up the dining table and washing dishes.

My mother inculcated in me the curiosity to know about the world around me. I enjoyed everything I learnt in school. Eventually, I began my university education. And of course, I chose to study English Literature.

Although I faced many challenges in my studies, I learned to deal with them creatively. My mother and grandmother taught me that it was normal to receive and give help. I made friends easily in school as I had learned to accept them as they are. I would help them in their studies and they would become my readers.

Soon, I graduated from university and enrolled myself in the National Institute of Education (NIE) training to be a teacher. NIE did not initially accept my application.

“Miss Lim, we shortlisted you for this admission interview as we are impressed by your good academic performance. You achieved a first class honours in English Literature at university despite your disability,” one of the interviewers began.

“However, we are not sure if we can accept your application to train to be a teacher in our regular schools. Even if we accept you, where can we find a school which is willing to take you in as a trainee teacher and later to employ you,” another interviewer continued.

I was ready for their reactions. I made them agree to take me in if I could find a school which will take me as a trainee teacher and later as a full-time staff after graduation from NIE. I began to write to all the regular schools in Singapore making my appeal. Finally after several weeks of hard work, I managed to persuade the principal of Kampong Glam Primary School to take me in. I assured the principal that I would leave my post if I was not found to be suitable.

So, here I am, teaching at Kampong Glam Primary School, teaching a bunch of indefatigable 8-year-old pupils. I do not wish to portray the impression that life is always smooth sailing. Reflecting back on my life, I would like to attribute the following factors which have contributed to my achievements today.

• **Supporting Family Members**

My grandmother and mother helped me to accept who I am. They supported me emotionally and taught me the values of humility, courage, self-discipline and compassion. I owe much to them.

• **Knowing Yourself**

All of us are different. This is what my grandmother often told me. It is very crucial that we begin the process of self discovery early in life. Fortunately for me, I soon found out that I like language and have the flair for English Language and Literature. Every day, I look forward to meeting my pupils to share with them the vast riches of English Language and I find that they enjoy the lessons.

• **Accepting Yourself And Others**

Because of my appearance, I receive very a fascinating welcome from people when they first meet me. If I am able to accept myself and act naturally towards them, they will gradually get use to me.

Finally, I wish to thank you readers for spending time with me. I sincerely hope that I have given you some inspiration and hope to help you after reading my story. There lay ahead of me many life challenges, but I am confident that if one faces them with the right attitudes, supported by your loved ones, and with God’s help, nothing can stop us from achieving our dreams.

STAFF TEAM BUILDING AT ADMIRALTY PARK

By Tan Siow Huee

On 6th November 2009, 21 SAVH staff attended a half-day lunch-cum-team building outing at Admiralty Park. The purpose of the outing was to foster team building among staff through interaction, while enjoying a healthy walk and hike in the park.

The park, located at a lesser known northern tip of Singapore, comprised seven hectares of urban park alongside 20 hectares of rural nature reserve featuring boardwalks and a rare mangrove habitat. This unique hybrid park provided an opportunity for staff to interact with each other, especially among the visually-impaired (VI) and new staff. The nature of the trail required staff to describe the surroundings to VI colleagues and help them along the way. As we proceeded along the walk, we stopped at various spots of interest to listen, feel and appreciate the plants, river and the history of surrounding area.



In front of pond at Admiralty Park

The event started off with a scrumptious international buffet lunch at Sakura Restaurant located within the park, followed by a two-km leisure trail. Staff were split into two groups to compete against each other on quizzes which focused on interesting facts about staff. Our new foreign colleagues were also quizzed on Singapore.

One of the highlights of the trail was a destination at the end of Admiralty Road West. There, facing the coast of Johor Bahru with a good view of the Causeway, we encountered a big family of wild monkeys. It was the first time that many of us had come face-to-face with those mischievous but adorable animals.

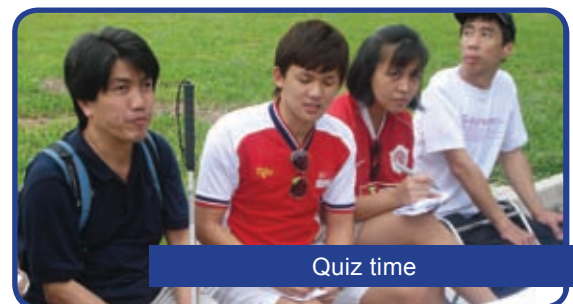


Walking in the urban park

The outing also taught us valuable lessons. We encountered two minor incidents along the way - one of our VI colleagues tipped and fell into a shallow pond, and an elderly staff developed leg cramps. Staff were quick to respond and rescue them. A few of us formed a small human chain and pulled our fallen colleague out of the pond. Our experienced staff then took him for a wash up. He was also seen by one of our colleagues who is a certified nurse, to make sure no serious injury was inflicted. For the leg cramp incident, our Therapist Assistant put their therapy and first-aid skills into practice and massaged her feet back to normal and she was able to walk again after 15 minutes.

“From our colleague’s fall, we see the seriousness and importance of mobility care and the advocacy that parks have to be blind friendly..... VIs should have their white canes at all times in public areas,” said Judy Lim, Executive Director of SAVH.

Despite the unfortunate incidents, the whole outing was educational, enjoyable and very fruitful for everyone. We will be organising similar team-building outings at least once every six months.



Quiz time

North East Special Talent Fund

North East Community Development Council (CDC) has recently launched a Special Talent Fund. The fund aims to encourage people with disabilities who have talents in arts, music, academic, sports or any other fields to apply for this fund to enhance their talents. This Fund is open to all Singapore Citizens regardless of age. Applicants should also not be in receipt of any other Government funding.

Shortlisted applicants will be required to attend an interview with an evaluation panel comprising North East CDC district councillors and/or Patrons of the Fund, and also to display their talents during the session.

Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation Scholarship for Persons with Disabilities

The Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation (APB Foundation) is pleased to award three scholarships to students with good academic results. Applicants should be currently pursuing their studies at, or have gained admission to the National University of Singapore (NUS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore Management University (SMU) or SIM University. Each student will receive an annual sum of \$11,000, and will be supported up to a maximum of four years.

Closing date: 7 May 2010

To apply or find out more about the Special Talent Fund or Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation Scholarship, please contact

Ms Tan Sock Peng (ext: 129 or email: sockpeng@savh.org.sg) or

Mr Samuel Bey (ext: 121 or email: samuel@savh.org.sg) at 62514331, Vision Rehabilitation Programme.

New Releases @ The Library

The Library has recently acquired the following new titles for your enjoyment.

Non Fiction Audio Books:

- Stop Clutter From Stealing Your Life *by Mike Nelson*
- Kitchen Confidential Adventures In The Culinary Underbelly *by Anthony Bourdain*
- Why Mars and Venus Collide *by John Grey*

Fiction Audio Books:

- A Person Of Interest *by Susan Choi*
- The Road *by Cormac McCarthy*
- A Death In Belmont *by Sebastian Junger*
- Terrorist *by John Updike*
- A Long Way Gone *by Ishmael Beah*
- The Moon And Sixpence *by W. Somerset Maugham*
- The Razor's Edge *by W. Somerset Maugham*

Braille Books:

- A Gift To My Children *by Jim Rogers*
- The Diving Bell And The Butterfly *by Jean-Dominique Bauby*
- A2Z Diet *by Adrian Yeo*
- Doing Good Well *by Willie Cheng*

What's New: APEX Basic 17 – Available Now!

The Aladdin Apex Basic is a lower priced CCTV. It incorporates an adjustable 17 inch flat panel monitor with three viewing options:

- * True colour image;
- * Positive image – black on white;
- * Negative image – white on black.

It also has auto focus with manual override.

Magnification: 4X to 40X

Dimensions: 40 cm Width x 52 cm Depth x 47 cm Height

Weight: 21.4 kg (estimated)

For more information or to purchase APEX Basic 17, please call Ms Lena Tan at 6251 4331 ext 127 (8am to 5pm)



Quick Tips For Voiceover On The iPhone

Note that voiceover is only available on the 16 and 32 GB models.

- In iTunes, register iPhone and activate Voiceover in the accessibility menu.
- Take note that the gestures are different from the normal when Voiceover is turned on. When Voiceover is on, touching the icon merely highlights it. To activate a feature, touch the icon then double-tap quickly with one finger anywhere on the screen.
- To learn the Voiceover gestures, go to:
Settings > General > Accessibility > Voiceover.
There you can learn and practice all the gestures. You can also tweak other settings. It is highly recommended that a visually-impaired does this as soon as the voice on the iPhone is turned on to maximise his/her experience.
- It is a good idea to set the triple click Home key to toggle Voiceover on and off. That way, the phone can be easily shared between the sighted and the visually-impaired.
- For persons with low vision, they would have to choose between Voiceover or Magnification. Please note that both features cannot be used simultaneously.
- Grab hold of the iPhone user guide from the Apple support website to learn how to use all the other features.



Launch of Wireless Internet @ SAVH

By Chong Kwek Bin

SAVH will be launching free wireless Internet services on its premises. This wireless Internet service is part of a new programme introduced by SAVH to promote IT literacy and competency among the visually-impaired. As such, this wireless Internet service will initially be made available to SAVH clients only.

All SAVH clients are invited to an official launch ceremony of this new service, during which there will be a talk to introduce this new programme. Wireless Internet connection will also be set up for wireless devices. Caregivers are also welcome. Refreshments will be provided.



Date: Saturday, 17 April 2010

Time: 2.30 pm

Venue: White Cane Club Building, SAVH, 47 Toa Payoh Rise, Singapore 298104

On the day of the launch, SAVH clients who are attending are requested to bring along any wireless devices that they may have, e.g. laptops, PDAs or mobile phones, for our staff and volunteers to help set up the connections.

We hope that the launch of this new service will pave the way for efforts to help the visually-impaired help themselves by raising their IT know-how and capabilities through information sharing and peer group support. Your active participation in this event is therefore very important.

Interested participants are invited to register with Mr Samuel Bey, Case Manager, via telephone: 6251 4331 or email: samuel@savh.org.sg to facilitate logistics planning. Closing date for registration is Friday, 9 April 2010.

DONATIONS

If you who wish to donate to SAVH, please make your cheque payable to “**Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped**”.

With many thanks and much appreciation!

Editorial Team:

Tan Guan Heng (Advisor), Seema Dadlani-Ramchand, Judy Lim

SAVH would like to express its appreciation to Ms Seema Dadlani-Ramchand for volunteering to take on the newsletter publication project.

Disclaimer: The opinions and views expressed in this newsletter by the writers do not necessarily reflect the official views of the SAVH. SAVH reserves the rights to edit any articles submitted for this publication.