

# The Red Feather News, Singapore

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## *From the Editor:*

Everybody wants to be gainfully employed but how many really likes working on a job. We announce our holiday cheerfully, but when the break is over, we use an emoticon at the end of a mournful statement like this: Back to work... :(

The trouble is we forget ourselves and lost touch of our feelings in the business of work. We tend to stop believing in what we do and just go through the motions of getting a job done. Stressed and tired, we forced ourselves to go on only to find that it is no longer a joy to work. We become slaves to our job.

No humans like being forced to do something. We find joy in doing something when we find ourselves wanting to do it rather than having to do it. The good news is we can control our feelings by training our minds to think in the right direction. To con the phrase, "It's all in the mind." The difference between 'having to' and 'wanting to' is this: the first disconnects our feelings from our action while the later has all our passion to fuel our actions and spur us toward the end. With that, no other motivation is needed. The reward is joy and satisfaction even before the job is done.

I believe everybody started out with passion upon confirmation of a job. Some may be lucky to find jobs they like and enjoy doing. Not so for countless others including, and especially, the physically challenged. They must overcome many hurdles to get employment in the open market and to stay employed. Being gainfully employed means a lot more to them and is something unachievable without sheer determination and a strong desire for work.

Work is something nobody likes to do and yet when it is accomplished it gives so much satisfaction that we know we must work some more.

From the editor,

who is back to work... :)

## *My First Job Experience Outside the Home*

It was my first time having a real job outside the Home. Many thoughts ran through my mind: the need to adjust my sleeping habit and my bath time, to have presentable working clothes and to know how to travel by public transport etc. Prior to my working day, an orientation to the work place was arranged by the Social Worker and Occupational Therapist.

My working hours was from 9a.m. to 3p.m. I was taught how to assemble paper bags. I did 250 pieces on the first day and 430 on the second day. However my employer was not satisfied and told me she expected me to do more. That evening, I lost my way and came back at 6p.m.

The next two days I still could not meet the expectation. I fell on the way back and felt sick the next day. The Social Worker asked if I would like to continue to work. After much consideration, I decided to stop.

Despite just having a few days of working experience, I learned to travel alone and meet people outside. Should there be a new job favorable to my ability, I would take it up and do my best to keep it. I would be back on my feet and will not give up so easily.

~Pang Lan Mui

[Editor's note: Lan Mui started working again on 17.10.2010 in a McDonald's fast food branch in Serangoon Central.]

*"Do not be afraid to fail.  
The best way you're really going to learn is by failing....."*

*"Despite our desire to stay in our comfort zones,  
I think if you go out there and fail, you'll find that it  
actually prepares you for the next things ahead."  
- Facebook co-founder Eduardo Saverin*

*"What exercise is to the body,  
employment is to the mind and morals."  
- Henry David Thoreau*

*"The object of living is work, experience, and happiness.  
There is joy in work.  
All that money can do is buy us someone else's work in  
exchange for our own.  
There is no happiness except in the realization that we  
have accomplished something."  
- Henry Ford*

## *Editorial Board*

Editor : Ms. Elizabeth Tan

Members : Mr. Stephen Sng, Mr. Chan Yu Leong

Layout : Mr. Neo Ah Her

# Voices unheard

Though Abraham Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs is well-known, there are some segments of society which are still deprived of attaining the basic needs as propounded by Maslow. Beginning with basic needs such as food, housing and employment to higher level of needs attainment such as love, friendship as well as personal achievements, Abraham Maslow's theory on the hierarchy of needs do not seem to apply on physically challenged people like myself. Up to this point this article was written, I had problems in both gaining lawful employment and maintaining my position as a staff in a company.

All said and done, I found that one of the main obstacles for me and other physically challenged people from obtaining and maintaining lawful employment is due to our physical problems. It is a sad fact that other than having to live with my condition for the rest of my life, I am struggling to convince potential employers that my physical condition is not an obstacle for me to fulfill my role as an employee. Furthermore, my desire to upgrade my education during a time where I had physical problem to the current continuing desire in applying for jobs in my current state proves that I am a person who has the will and tenacity to live on just like any other people in this world. Unfortunately, most employers do not look at the situation in the same way.

Among the things employers are concerned in employing physically challenged individuals like me are the high hospitalisation and medical expenses, frequency of medical appointments, transportation costs and meeting the expectation of the organisation that I would eventually worked in. Admittedly, these issues outlines above are relevant since profits, productivity and performance are the main yardsticks of most organisations that do not carry the status as institutions of public character. On this note, I would like to state my understanding of their concerns.

However, what baffles me up to this day is though I am physically challenged, I have the desire and tenacity to live like any other ordinary person. I do not want to burden my family or the sheltered home that I am staying in by just taking assistance without contributing to the economy as a whole. Though my contribution is limited, it is still much better for me to work and fend for my own medical expenses rather than be fully dependent on my family and, social as well as government institutions to support my physically challenged condition.

This is where the problem lies. What I have done for myself in terms of educational improvement, work and independent living and what the employers think of my situation and the limitations that have been imposed on me are in conflicting positions. Can there be a middle path between these two concerns?

I used to work for the People Association (PA) Singapore, a marketing company and a social body. I was entasked by these organisations to fulfill administration, public relations and accounts management duties. However, as my physical condition was deteriorating and I needed more time for therapy sessions, I left my last job with a social body. As time went by, the routine therapy and meal sessions are making me economically unproductive. I take more than I give. I am therefore adamant to be an asset to society again. Henceforth, currently as the record stands, I have applied for many jobs position but only was shortlisted for interviews at four jobs to date.

Since I have a degree in business administration, I applied for jobs relevant to my educational qualifications such as payroll accounts executive, finance executive, finance manager and executive chairman in various social and government bodies to name a few. In fact I have also tried lowering my expectations by applying for a lower level position but I was told to be over qualified for those position and all these organisations cite my physically challenging condition as the main obstacle for me to fulfill my role in their organisations. In addition, I have to compete with those able bodied job seeker for all the positions that I have applied for. I have to accede that there are lesser jobs for me to do which do not require much travelling and coordination.

However, I feel sad and disappointed that these jobs offered to me do not match up to my educational qualification. Though I am physically challenged, I am mentally capable just like any other healthy ordinary individual. Thus, I can fulfill any desk bound thinking job that is line with my educational qualification. This dilemma, disappointment and distress in me have been bugging me for a number of years since I look forward to live an ordinary life and hope to be treated as one. If what I am searching for in terms employment matches up with my physically ..... (Continue on last page.)

## **Newsflash!**

- 08.08.10 -- Sponsored National Day Dinner by Silveray Pte Ltd.
- 10.08.10 -- Performances by children from The Talented People Company.
- 10.08.10 -- Visit by Mr. Shashi Jayakumar (Director of Elderly Policy, MCYS) & Staff.
- 19.08.10 -- Visit by AWWA School.
- 21.08.10 -- Visit by by Jacobs Engineering Singapore Pte Ltd.
- 27.08.10 -- Visit by by National Environment Agency.
- 28.08.10 -- Food And Shopping Talk by Silveray Pte Ltd.
- 07.09.10 -- Outing to Singapore Flyer by Olympus Singapore Pte Ltd.
- 11.09.10 -- Visit by Jacobs Engineering Singapore Pte Ltd.
- 18.09.10 -- Singapore Cheshire Home's Founder Day with Performances and buffet dinner.
- 21.09.10 -- Mooncake festival celebration by Ms. Christina Tan & Friends.
- 25.09.10 -- Buffet Vegetarian Lunch and distribution of Red Packets by MahaBodhi Monastery.
- 07.10.10 -- Visit by Spastic Association.
- 09.10.10 -- Arts And Shopping Talk by Silveray Pte Ltd.
- 12.10.10 -- Visit by Wuhan Cheshire Home.
- 16.10.10 -- Visit by MSIG Insurance (Singapore) Pte Ltd.
- 16.10.10 -- Visit by Jacobs Engineering Singapore Pte Ltd.
- 22.10.10 -- Outing to Sentosa Underwater World by Barclays Capital Services Limited.
- 24.10.10 -- Visit by Lions Club of Singapore Fullerton.
- 28.10.10 -- Visit by Bethany Home.
- 30.10.10 -- Performance by The Singapore Elvis and Country Group.
- 02.11.10 -- Visit by CHIJ, Our Lady of Good Counsel.
- 13.11.10 -- Food And Shopping Talk by Silveray Pte Ltd.
- 13.11.10 -- Visit by Delphi Automotive Systems Singapore Pte Ltd.
- 14.11.10 -- Visit by Veronica and Friends.
- 15.11.10 -- Visit by MCYS for SHARE programme.
- 16.11.10 -- Visit by Jurong Health Services.
- 20.11.10 -- Gala Charity Dinner at Suntec Convention Centre by Mahabodhi Monastery.
- 24.11.10 -- Visit by St. Joseph's Institution Junior (Staff).
- 26.11.10 -- Handicraft sale at MSIG Insurance (Singapore) Pte Ltd.
- 04.12.10 -- Visit by Tan Tock Seng Hospital (Nurses INC/ Nursing Pride).
- 10.12.10 -- Visit by Megachem Limited.
- 11.12.10 -- Food And Shopping Talk by Silveray Pte Ltd.
- 11.12.10 -- Residents' Home Christmas Party.
- 12.12.10 -- Visit by Sowers Group.
- 13.12.10 -- Visit by MSIG Holdings (Asia) Pte Ltd.
- 15.12.10 -- Christmas celebration by GBAD/ Air Force Training Centre.
- 17.12.10 -- Christmas wish list gifts presentation by Kaplan Singapore.
- 17.12.10 -- Christmas Dinner at Grand Hyatt Hotel organised by D'Perception Singapore Pte Ltd.
- 18.12.10 -- Entertainment by WOW Group.
- 31.12.10 -- Countdown at Serangoon Swing organised by Serangoon C.C. and The Serangoon MC.
- 21.01.11 -- Visit by Hong Kong delegates from Tung Wah Group.
- 22.01.11 -- Buffet lunch given by SIM Mandarin Toastmasters Club.
- 28.01.11 -- Chinese New Party by AETI (Air Force Training Centre).
- 30.01.11 -- Visit by Lee Wei Song School of Music.
- 01.02.11 -- Visit by A&J Creative Danceworld.
- 08.02.11 -- Lion Dance Performances sponsored by The Emerald Hill Group.
- 10.02.11 -- Community Chest and Tote Board MOU-signing Ceremony at NCSS.
- 12.02.11 -- Sponsored Chinese New Dinner for 10 residents by Silveray Pte Ltd.
- 22.02.11 -- Performances by Ms. Christina Tan and Friends.
- 23.02.11 -- Shamisen Performances by Mr. Baisho Matsumoto.
- 25.02.11 -- Magic Show & Face Changing Mask performance organized by Sonangol Asia Ltd.
- 25.02.11 -- Steamboat Dinner with the Council of Governors.
- 12.03.11 -- Food Talk at Pu Tien Seafood Restaurant Pte. Ltd. by New Woman.
- 14.03.11 -- A visit by Horikawa High School, Japan.
- 01.04.11 -- Visit by National Council of Social Service (Service Development Division).
- 02.04.11 -- Visit by Rivervale Community Centre, Women's Executive Committee.
- 09.04.11 -- Food Talk at Pu Tien Seafood Restaurant Pte. Ltd. by New Woman.
- 17.04.11 -- Visit by Sowers Group.
- 17.04.11 -- Entertainment and Vegetarian buffet dinner by MahaBodhi Monastery with special guest: Mrs. Goh Chok Tong.

..... challenged condition as well as my educational qualification yet fulfilling the pillars of productivity, performance and profits of any organisation, I will be an asset to the country economically and socially.

One of the main principles of Singapore social identity is every Singaporean matters. Implicit in this statement is the emphasis on the founding governing principle of the country whereby people are the only natural resource that Singapore has and therefore must be fully utilised. Additionally, we believe that welfare must be matched with productivity and therefore any form of social assistance and handout given must be matched with equal or higher contribution to the economic development of the country.

We are currently witnessing countries like Greece suffering economically because of high consumption and low productivity levels. The same thing can happen to Singapore if people in this globalised modern city-state - young and old, healthy and physically challenged, majority or minority, are not contributing to the social and economic progress of the country no matter how small it may be. People like myself is the only natural resource that Singapore has and must therefore be fully engaged rather than left to therapy and meal sessions in nursing home, or given menial tasks that do not fully use our mental capacity as well as creativity. As aforementioned, though I am physically challenged, I am mentally healthy and capable of giving my best to this country which I call home.

~Ahmad Hisham Abdul Rahim

- 21.04.11 -- Visit by Millennia Institute.
- 24.04.11 -- Visit by Buddhist Fellowship Youth.
- 30.04.11 -- Visit by Bethany Church Singapore.
- 30.04.11 -- Visit by Covenant Evangelical Free Church.
- 02.05.11 -- Visit by MP Mrs. Lim Hwee Hua of Aljunied GRC.
- 14.05.11 -- Visit by C.E.D.A.R. Tree Volunteer Society.
- 15.05.11 -- Lunch outing at Lam Noodle House by Harvesters.
- 15.05.11 -- Visit by The Serangoon Community Centre, Women's Executive Committee.
- 19.05.11 -- Project Deliver Me & Story Telling by National Library Board.
- 20.05.11 -- Birthday lunch buffet by Mrs. Chan Chooi Ling, Chairman, Council of Governors.
- 22.05.11 -- Food Talk by Realm of Tranquility.
- 22.05.11 -- Lunch by Society of St. Vincent De Paul, Conference of St. Anne.
- 28.05.11 -- Visit by Families-In-Christ.

**The farewells:**

We bade farewell to a few staff who had resigned. They are Muslim Cook, Rengan Vasaky (left on 31.08.2010), House Keeper, Annie Poh (21.09.2010), Exec-Social Service, Melissa Leong (03.11.2010), N.A.s, Leonel Almacen (31.01.2011) and Shayama (07.04.2011) and H.A., Sanjeewa (31.03.2011) and Erma (06.05.2011).

Residents Goh Bee Hong and Augustine Tay were discharged from the Home on 10.01.2011 and 13.01.2011 respectively.

**In memoriam:**

3 residents had passed on since August last year. The late Resident Michael Lim Lye Kew passed away in T.T.S.H. on 09.08.2010 and the late Resident Sunny Sun Yuen Sing passed away in S.G.H. on 31.10.2010. The late Resident Ang Boon Yew passed away recently on 20.05.2011 in T.T.S.H.

**New staff and residents:**

We have a new Muslim Cook, Ong Ah Mui (joined on 18.10.2010) and House Keeper, Agnes Chia (22.11.2010). Exec-Social Service, Vania Teo was with us from 07.02.2011 to 06.05.2011. There are 4 new N.A.s. Mark Anthony (26.02.2011), Ajantha (19.04.2011), Shashini (29.04.2011) and Moe Moe (11.05.2011).

Since August last year, the Home took in 5 new residents. Tiew Tsui Ling, 48 and Neo Hock Heng, 47 (admitted on 03.08.2010), Yow Yew Kwee, 46 (09.12.2010), Lui Peng Sun, 52 (10.12.2010), Tony Zhu Hai Sing, 50 (25.02.2011) and Lee Hui Shan, 26 (22.03.2011)

\* N.A. = Nursing Aide, H.A. = Healthcare Assistant.