

# The Red Feather News, Singapore

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## *From the Editor:*

It feels good to know we have helped others. In the same way, people feel good when they know they have helped us and made our day. Thus, it is a gracious thing to accept help and to show our appreciation for it. One thing we can all do to show our appreciation is to smile with all sincerity and say "Thank you" whenever someone does something good for us.

That was exactly what we did when we went out selling flags as volunteers. This year, to celebrate their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Community Chest of Singapore held a flag day to raise funds. It was their first flag day in two decades. Some of our residents were selected to go as volunteers. They were happy to be given a chance to help and they found the event to be meaningful although they encountered some unpleasant situations.

Unpleasant situations are not uncommon in a flag day fundraising campaign. In Singapore, almost every Saturday is a flag day for one charitable organization or another. Some of us have been helping to sell flags for the Handicaps Welfare Association every year. We found that if we just sit quietly and wait, most people walked past us nonchalantly. But if we call out to people, many who would have disregarded us would then stop to make a contribution. I felt, then, that people were avoiding and ignoring us. I commented this to a friend and he gave me a new perspective; most people are too preoccupied with their own thoughts to take notice of us, all they needed is a prompt to stop them in their tracks and start taking notice.

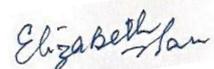
Yet, it is a wonder that people don't get tired of giving. Most Saturdays, if you happen to be out and about in Singapore, you would encounter students holding out donation tins asking for donations. Most likely, you had encountered one student holding out a can towards you for every 20 steps you take outside any train station. It can be quite annoying to be sure. We used to do that as a team in the past and thought it was a good strategy because it worked.

One of us sit out in front calling out to potential donors, another of us sit just a few paces away. The logic was that people kept walking and slowed down only a little when you called out to them. By the time they were about to pass the second person with a donation can, they would have gotten out their wallet to make a donation. If they would not make any donation, we would smile anyway. We left them a good impression and some remembered and came back purposely to make a contribution after their errands were run. One advantage we had that the students had not was that people are more likely to help when they see us in wheelchairs doing what we can to help ourselves or others.

In my many years of helping to sell flags, I had met many kind and thoughtful people. Our volunteer friends who helped us out sometimes refused to let us pay for our lunch even when we assured them that we had been given allowances. Strangers surprised us by their thoughtful gestures too. They bought buns and drinks and offered them to us when we least expected it. In my latest encounter, a man bought and gave each of us two bottles of mineral water and a pack of Fisherman's sweet towards the end of the donation drive.

At the end of the day, it is not how much we received that made our day. It is the attitude in us and the gratitude we have for the kindness shown towards us in big and small ways. We are especially grateful to some organizations, volunteers and friends who sponsored and brought us out to new, interesting and exciting places. We all came back with big smiles on our faces. One thing I have learnt is this: when you have a smile plastered on your face for a whole day, as on flag days, you can't help but smile your way into dreamland. Oh, how good that feels. ☺

Yours,



## First Experience of HWA Flag Day

Every time The Handicaps Welfare Association (HWA) has its flag day, a number of our residents who are also members of the association lend their helping hands. This year, for the first time, I volunteered to help in the annual fundraising event which fell on 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2013.

I was to be stationed at Bishan Junction 8, from 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. I took a bus to get there and rushed to find the person-in-charge. I was 15 minutes late. I saw some volunteers with donation cans already helping out. They briefed me on what I needed to do and showed me where I could position myself. I placed my donation can to the left side of my motorised wheelchair and used my left hand to hold the stickers. There was a shortage of volunteers and I wondered if I could manage on my own. I was nervous. My uncontrollable movement and spasms made things difficult for me. Besides that, I had difficulty handling the stickers. But it was too late to back out, I told myself to try my best.

I drove myself in the shopping mall feeling like a "beggar". People started putting money into my donation can. Some little kids were curious to see me in my physical condition on my motorised wheelchair. The parents of most kids taught them not to be afraid of the disabled by encouraging their young to come near and put in the coins themselves. I thanked all the donors and asked them to help themselves with the stickers. The donors understood my difficulty. Most of them said they didn't need the stickers and wouldn't take any.

By 12 noon, I was feeling a bit tired, so I took a 20 minute break for lunch. After lunch, I collected another tin from the person-in-charge. This time, I felt the courage and the need to go to a more crowded area. I stationed myself between the MRT station and the bus-stop. I was right. There were many people going in and out of the MRT station and alighting at the bus-stop. When they saw me with the donation can, they came forward and donated generously. I gave them my big Cheshire smile and thanked them heartily.

At the end of the day, I was tired from having to control my right leg from kicking out involuntarily. Some of the donors noticed my tiredness and commented on it! Despite feeling tired, I had a great experience. Being able to help HWA meant so much to me. A few cents made a big amount when everyone donated.

After having this experience, I began to understand and appreciate the efforts put in by all who volunteered and worked hard for the annual Flag Day. I decided that as long as I am fit and healthy, I will continue to volunteer for HWA's Flag Day.

~ Noraini Adnan (A member of The Handicaps Welfare Association)

*Never think you need to apologize for asking someone to give to a worthy objective, any more than as though you were giving him an opportunity to participate in high-grade investment. The duty of giving is as much his as the duty of asking yours. Whether or not he should give to that particular enterprise, and if so, how much, it is for him alone to decide.*

*-John D. Rockefeller*

## Community Chest Orange Day

It was Community Chest Orange Day on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> of July 2013. I was amongst the few selected to take part in this fundraising event organised by ComChest. We wore orange Tee-shirts for the event.

The weather was fine that day. My buddy, Jia Wei, and I were to be stationed at Ang Mo Kio Hub. We were accompanied by our General Manager, Ms. Florence Chow and Mui Leng, along with two Home volunteers assigned to help each of us.

It was our first time participating in this meaningful event. We set off from the Home with our donation tins around 9 a.m. Throughout the journey, Jia Wei and me were talking excitedly about what to expect. Upon our arrival, we were greeted by the ComChest General Manager, Ms. Ng Ling Ling and NCSS manager, Ms. Chew. We took group pictures with them. After that, I parted with Jia Wei to choose a good spot for my mission of selling flags.

I saw many people milling around the McDonald's and decided to station myself in that area thinking that would be a perfect place with many donors. I waited and realized, to my dismay, that the crowd of people were too busy buying McDonald's takeaway. Some of them ignored me and some rushed away when I approached them with the donation cans.

With the help of my volunteers who willingly wheeled me around, I relocated myself at the walkway next. Again I felt a sense of rejection. More often than not, people ignored me. Some excused themselves saying that they have forgotten to bring their purses out with them, and some simply said they had no time. However, I also experienced the generosity of many Singaporeans who were willing to donate. There are people who put money into my tin twice! For that, I was surprised and grateful at the same time. At the end of my duty, my tin felt heavy with donations.

The theme of this year's event was "Community Helping Community". Through my participation of fundraising on this day, I had experienced and was touched by the generosity, warmth and loving nature of Singaporeans. It made me happy and proud for being a Singaporean too. I will look forward to help out with such meaningful events in the near future.

~ Chan Yu Leong

## We 'Like' OSIM and What OSIM Did

Osim International Limited began a drive on 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2013 to get 10,000 'Likes' on their Osim Sg Facebook page. The company pledged to donate a dollar to The Singapore Cheshire Home for every new 'Like' they got.

On 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2013, Osim International Limited sponsored an outing and lunch at Marina Bay Sands. We went to the Singapore ArtScience Museum to see the exhibition 'Mummy: Secrets of the Tomb'. Before we began our tour of the "tomb site", we were pleasantly surprised to have Dennis Chew from FM radio station 'Love 97.2' joined us. It was his birthday that day.

After a word from the organizer, we went in to watch a 3D documentary on how mummies were preserved. Through high tech scanning and computer animation, we were able to visualize in 3D the mummy in one coffin and to see how this preserved man must have looked like and what his occupation might have been when he was alive.

Time was limited. After a quick tour of the exhibition, we proceeded to the Rise Restaurant at Marina Bay Sands across the road to have our Bento set lunch. Our lunch boxes contained fish, salad, prickles and a piece of cake. The staff from Osim International Limited surprised Dennis with a huge birthday cake which was later cut and given out to everyone.

After lunch, we went up to the Marina Bay Sands SkyPark observation deck at level 57 to have a bird's eye view of the surrounding part of Singapore. There and then, Osim International Limited made a presentation of a \$10,000 cheque to The Singapore Cheshire Home. We had a group photograph taken before we lined up in a long queue waiting for the elevators to take us down.

In the short time that they had, Osim International Limited didn't garner enough 'Likes' on its Facebook page. Nevertheless, the company went ahead with its donation to the Home.

We would like to thank the organization for their generosity in making the donation as well as giving us a most pleasant and enjoyable time at Marina Bay Sands. Thank you, Osim International Limited! ~Tiew Tsui Ling

## A Trip to Sentosa SEA Aquarium

A big group of volunteers gathered at our Home at 9 a.m. on 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2013. They are friends of our regular volunteers Clara, Sam and Marc. They had come to take us to the S.E.A. Aquarium at Sentosa.

The volunteers were given a briefing by Clara and assigned to take care of us. The 32 residents were divided into three groups to board onto three buses with a 'senior' volunteer in charge. It was our first time going to the S.E.A. Aquarium, so we were all very excited!

When we reached our destination, we waited at the gift shop for our volunteers. Some took the opportunity to go shopping for souvenirs. Jerome, my volunteer, wheeled me out of the shop into the main attraction as the place was very crowded.

It was a big place but dimly lit. We went into a glass enclosed tunnel through which we could see many big fish swimming. Past the tunnel, there are many other glassed enclosures displaying the various types of sea creatures and their habitats. I was amazed to see the different types of sharks, a weird kind of sea horse and huge Alaskan king crabs. The fish seemed so carefree, swimming about in their own underwater world. We came to the section where the jellyfish are kept. The displays were back lit by ever-changing coloured lights which made the jellyfish glow in red, blue, and green hues. We spent two hours exploring and admiring the S.E.A. Aquarium. In spite of the crowd, I was lucky to be able to see all the displays. Jerome was very kind and patient to wheel me through the whole place. The place was well equipped with toilets and ramps for the disabled. We took pictures of ourselves sitting in front of the beautiful glassed enclosures.

After two hours of exploration, we were hungry. We had lunch at the Malaysian Food Street. It was not an easy job buying lunch for 32 residents in wheelchairs and double the number of volunteers with us. Thanks to the efficiency of the volunteers who organized everything and the help willingly given by the management of Malaysian Food Street, our food arrived quickly, piping hot and delicious. I had a plate of 'char kuay teow' with scallops and a drink of iced Ribena. After lunch, we all gathered to have a group photo taken before we boarded the buses to take us back to Cheshire Home. I never thought there were so many things to learn about the fish in the sea.

We truly enjoyed ourselves and would like to thank all the volunteers who generously contributed to take us out on this wonderful trip. And to Clara, Sam and Marc, a big "Thank you" for organizing this! ~ Chan Yu Leong

*We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean.  
But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop. ~ Mother Teresa*

*The best things in life are the people you love,  
the places you have seen,  
and the memories you have made along the way.*

## **Newsflash!**

- 16.07.13 - 'Orange Day' by ComChest Singapore.  
27.07.13 - Performance & Games by Xinghua Primary School.  
31.07.13 - 'Project Deliver Me' by National Library Board.  
01.08.13 - Nurses' Day Celebration by Chen Su Lan Methodist Children's Home.  
15.08.13 - Outing to Marina ArtScience Museum by OSIM International Limited.  
17.08.13 - Bowling Outing by Rolls Royce Singapore Pte. Ltd.  
21.08.13 - Teacher's Day Celebration by The Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA).  
31.08.13 - Interaction & Bingo Games by Deeper Life Christian Centre.  
03.09.13 - Mooncake Festival Celebration by Hougang Secondary School.  
07.09.13 - Visit & Interaction by Redwood Pte. Ltd.  
11.09.13 - Performance and Singing by Mr Baisho Matsumoto, Master of Shamisen, Embassy of Japan.  
18.09.13 - Interaction & Snack Distribution by Sadhu Vaswani Centre.  
19.09.13 - Indoor Games by R.S.V.P. Singapore & Singtel Pte. Ltd.  
28.09.13 - Fruit Fiesta, Performance & Bingo Game by 1-Day-Trip-Outing Group.  
10.10.13 - Interaction & Sponsor of tea by Monfort Secondary School.  
17.10.13 - Cleaning of Home by A.F.T.C. - A.E.T.I.  
24.10.13 - Outing to Universal Studios Singapore by Temasek Holdings Pte. Ltd.  
26.10.13 - Bingo at Teck Ghee Garden by N.T.U., R.S.P.P.C. students.  
09.11.13 - Outing to S.E.A. Aquarium by Claire, Marc, Sam & Friends.  
10.11.13 - Sponsor of Indian Buffet Lunch by Resident Subramaniam's brother, Mr. Kandasamy.  
13.11.13 - Outing to Airforce Museum by A.F.T.C. - A.E.T.I.  
14.11.13 - Japan Ambassador's Wife Visit & Handicraft by Ladies from the Embassy of Japan.  
15.11.13 - 'Chari Tree' @ Marina Bay by ComChest Singapore.  
20.11.13 - Sponsor of tea by Ms. Helene Tan.  
23.11.13 - Karaoke & Bingo Session by Bodhi Lian She.  
01.12.13 - Performance & Sponsor of vegetarian lunch by Mr Chew Fah, TiZhiGui.  
01.12.13 - Performance & Sponsor of buffet dinner by Dr. Yvonne Soong.  
07.12.13 - Bingo & Sponsor of tea by Church of St. Francis Xavier.  
14.12.13 - Outing to Singapore Flyer by Comfort Delgro Pte. Ltd.  
14.12.13 - Residents' Christmas Celebration by Singapore Cheshire Home.  
21.12.13 - Band Performance by James Chew & Friends.  
28.12.13 - Outdoor Bingo @ Teck Ghee Park by N.T.U., R.S.P.P.C. students.

## **Comings and goings:**

- We warmly welcome three new staff. Mr. Jason Chee, Executive for Volunteer & Programme Management (E|VPM), started work on 28.10.2013. Mr. James Chew was our previous (E|VPM) for a short while from 01.07.2013 to 13.09.2013.
- Former N.A., Brixnelle Jervy was appointed 'Nurse Assistant' and transferred to the clinic on 12.08.2013.
- Male Nursing Aide (N.A.) Chamal started work on 18.06.2013. Chamal arrived two weeks after his sister, N.A. Manohari Ruwanmali, started working here. It was a pleasant surprise as they had not expected to end up working together.

We shall never know all the good that a simple smile can do.

~ Mother Teresa

Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.

~Theodore Roosevelt

## **Editorial Board**

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