

The Red Feather News, Singapore

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The Editor, The Red Feather News, The Singapore Cheshire Home, 159 Serangoon Garden Way, Singapore 556056

From the Editor:

In the last couple of months, we have seen an increase in the number of residents. There are also a few additional staff being employed to take care of the increased workload. For those of you who have not come to visit for a long time, there are many new faces for you to meet.

Being new in a place can sometimes be a traumatic experience. All of us had been there and came out of it feeling snug, and perhaps, even smug about it. We sometimes forget that a person can feel lost, lonely and homesick in a strange new place and needs a friend and some time to adjust. I still remember how I had felt being new in Cheshire Home back at the time when it was in Changi Creek. Particularly indelible in my memory was the feeling I had over my dinner on the first day.

I remember being wheeled into the big dining hall with tables lined against the wall on both sides. The staff placed me at the last table where I sat quietly and waited. Soon after, a bell rung and my dinner was set in front of me. I gazed at the clock which read 4:30p.m. At St. Andrew's Hospital where I had been staying for several years, dinner was served at 6p.m. I never expect that dinner could be as early as 4 plus in a Home. It was a huge difference for me. *Am I expected to eat at this early hour!?* I thought to myself, and I wanted to cry. I cried in a corner of my room, where I hoped nobody noticed, but someone did and tried to comfort me. Being a true introvert at that time, I had great difficulty opening up even when people tried to make friends with me. So, for a long while, I locked myself up and felt miserable.

The person who saved me from my misery was none other than my own sister, Mary. At that time, I didn't know we were sisters - that's

another long story. Mary brought me under her wings. Her way of making people feel at home was to put them to work. Her very first words to me was "Do you know how to cut paper?" to which I replied dumbly with a nod of my head. Immediately, she got someone to whisk me to the "Flower" room.

Mary's Flower room turned out to be a room designated for her crepe-paper-flower-making. Mary could make all kinds of flowers using crepe-paper. There were two other residents helping her to cut the necessary shapes out of the paper. We deliberately littered the floor with bits of paper left from our cutouts. At the end of the day, we had a beautiful carpet of paper bits in every colour. We were proud to have a room to ourselves where we relaxed even as we worked. Chips, Mary's white cat with a blue eye and a green eye, came in to check on us often. It made sure I felt at home, by curling itself up on my lap everyday.

I went abroad for a time and missed Cheshire Home while it made the move from Changi Creek to Serangoon Gardens. When I returned, I felt like I had come home to where home is - where my sister waited to acknowledge me, where friends welcomed me, and where Chips and his well fed brother, Kuna, cuddled up to purr contently day after day.

More than thirty years have gone by. Some old faces are gone. Chips, Kuna, and several other pets are gone. New faces are here. Things changed. People changed. I have changed too. But one thing remains unchanged. This is home, where I belong, for now.

Yours,

Elizabeth Tan

**"The more one does and sees and feels, the more one is able to do, and the more genuine may be one's appreciation of fundamental things like home, and love, and understanding companionship."
- Amelia Earhart**

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Working In A Social Enterprise

By Tiew Tsui Ling

Two ladies from WISE Enterprise Pte Ltd came to our Home to give a presentation of what their social enterprise is about and what it can offer us. They were looking for some suitable candidates among the Cheshire Home residents who would be able to work for them as fashion consultants. I was pleasantly surprised to find myself among the selected few.

We were interviewed for the job. During the interview, I told my prospective employers that I do not have any experience doing sales or being a fashion consultant. However, they were well aware of this and told me not to worry about it as training for the job would be provided.

We were trained in a 6-day course stretched over two weeks by Singapore Institute of Retail Studies at WDA's Lifelong Learning Institute in Paya Lebar. At the training centre, the trainer taught us the way to speak to customers and to pitch a sale. We were also taught to groom ourselves. Our job as fashion consultants requires us to put on some make-up. The day came when we had to put on the uniform provided by the company and wear our make-up. I realized I looked more presentable, and felt more confident to face the customers.

At the workplace, it is our duty to greet everyone that comes in, and strike up a conversation with the potential buyer. From time to time, I faced difficult customers who ignored me completely. They would browse through our products at their own pace, and leave without a word when they had seen enough. Some customers are friendly, and even humorous. They were willing to listen to us when we talked to them about our products. We made friends with them while recommending the bags, and were pleased to help them choose bags that suit their personality.

Besides collaborating with The Singapore Cheshire Home, WISE Enterprise also helps people from two other charities. Youths from the Muscular Dystrophy Association Singapore are employed as our product designers. They design the bags before production and get royalties when we sold the product designed by them. This helps them pay for their medical bills and other expenses. The New Charis Mission which helps ex-offenders to integrate back into society through vocational training and employment opportunities are our logistic team. They help us with delivering the goods when people buy them online. They will also help out in the setting up of our store in future road shows. I felt jubilant whenever I succeeded in closing a sale, because I know that by doing so, I am helping these two groups of people.

Our company welcomes people to help as Social Enablers by joining us as Party Hosts, Sponsors or Supporters. Social Enablers are entitled to discounts and bag credits while they help the company grow either with personal support or through networking. It is a good and clever way to keep the business going.

From time to time, our company will host a 'bag party'. It will be a busy day for me because there will be lots of customers to attend to. In such an event, Party Hosts bring their friends in, to see the bags, and to recommend them some products, in the hope that they will buy something they like, or sign up as Social Enablers themselves.

There are ups and downs in the line of sales. Since the festive season went by, the business has become slow. I started feeling moody when, for the past few months, business remained bleak. My manager told me not to worry. He reassured me that the company will have promotions for Mother's Day and other special events. I hope for more people to like our bags and come support us, so that our company can prosper and we can stay on the job.

My First Job Experience

By Noraini Adnan

Three other residents of The Singapore Cheshire Home and I started working in WISE Enterprise Pte Ltd on 11th November 2014. I had no previous experience doing sales and had never worked before. And so, I was not really sure if I would be ready for this, my first job. It was important to me that I should not despair and give up easily. With all MRT stations fitted with lifts and wheelchair accessible buses available, transport is no longer a major issue for the disabled. It is only the raining days that will be a concern for us. Still, I have confidence that I can handle such situations and I am sure that it will not be a problem for me. I must try my very best and make things work.

We were given a 6-day retail course at WDA's Institute at Paya Lebar. We learned personal grooming and how to sell our products. Through role playing, we learned the many ways of talking to our customers. We serve best when we understand what a customer is looking for. For this job, we are able to mark up our commission by having our own customers.

We had a very nice and kind trainer named Michelle. We were spoilt by her. She brought goodies (sweets and chocolates) to class everyday, and left it on our table for each of us during our break time. She even baked a lovely durian cake for all of us, to mark the last day of our course, as she promised she would. Michelle, and our superiors at WISE, understood our condition and limitation. As most of us cannot write, instead of a written examination, we were to role play and pass the test of verbal communication at the end of the course. I got very excited over it and came to class early one day to practise with a colleague. We surprised Michelle, who heard us as she walked into the classroom.

On the day of the final test, we took turns in role playing the nasty customer to find out how good we were at tackling difficult situations. It took us the whole morning, but we had lots of fun! We ended up having lunch in the classroom because of the time constrain. Upon the completion of the course, we received a certificate, presented by the Founder and Director of WISE, Kathy Soon, and had our group picture taken. Faith Toh, a good friend and colleague of Kathy, and a supporter of WISE from the start, was so happy for us that she gave us a lunch treat.

After the basic course in retail, there were more things for us to learn and remember. We need to know everything about the leather goods we are selling, the names of the different handbags, and their prices. We also need to know what WISE is all about and who the designers of the bags are. I felt more confident after getting to know the team of youths from the Muscular Dystrophy Association Singapore who are the designers of our products. Despite being worse off than I am in their physical condition, they are able and good at using a computer software to come up with beautiful designs.

WISE Enterprise was officially launched on 2nd January 2015. Our G.M, Florence, Vincent and Mui Leng were among the invited guests for our soft launch. There was a showcase of our products, and we were ready, willing and able, to exercise our newly acquired skills of salesmanship on our invited guests. On 11th April 2015, we said goodbye to Faith, who decided to go back to work for NCSS. We were sad to see her go. Faith is a wonderful friend to all of us and we have fond memories of the time we spent together with her at WISE Enterprise.

I have been with WISE Enterprise Pte Ltd for six months now. I have encountered many kinds of people. Most of them are kind and friendly. We try our best in team work. I am grateful to Kathy, our Director, Ernest, our General Manager, as well as to Faith for putting in so much effort in order for us to become Fashion Consultants of WISE Enterprise Pte Ltd. May WISE Enterprise grow and prosper way into the future.

Newsflash!

- 01.01.15 - Lunch sponsored by Sri Ragavendra Group.
- 05.01.15 - Dinner sponsored by Nalayani Palanisamy & Family.
- 12.01.15 - Dinner sponsored by Mr. Arron Inbaraj.
- 15.01.15 - Cleaning of Home Compound by A.E.T.I. (G.B.A.D.)
- 17.01.15 - Movie Mania & Lunch by Lodge St. George.
- 24.01.15 - Visit by A*STAR & Comchest with Bingo & Distribution of Care & Share Bags.
- 24.01.15 - Dinner, angbaos and goodie bags sponsored by Ms. Regina Wong.
- 25.01.15 - CNY Celebration & Buffet Dinner sponsored by Lodge St. Patrick & Lion Of Erin Lodge.
- 28.01.15 - Performance & Interaction by Jonathan & Friends.
- 28.01.15 - Food Talk by Mr. & Mrs. Johnson.
- 31.01.15 - Karaoke & Buffet Lunch by SIM Toastmasters Club & Good Luck Kitchen.
- 31.01.15 - Outing to Gardens by the Bay by T.T.S.H. Pharmacy Department.
- 06.02.15 - CNY Celebration & Tea Break by Ang Mo Kio Police Division (FAVE).
- 07.02.15 - Outing to Chinatown by N.T.U. R.S.P.P.C.
- 08.02.15 - Bingo & Interaction by Cheshire Pals.
- 13.02.15 - CNY Celebration & Tea Break by Temasek International.
- 14.02.15 - Performance & Games by Bedok Reservoir Punggol G.R.C.
- 16.02.15 - Visit by Discovery Network & Comchest with Bingo, Interaction & Distribution of Goodie Bags.
- 17.02.15 - Performance & Games by Xinmin Secondary School (N.P.C.C.).
- 19.02.15 - Buffet Lunch sponsored by Ms. Clarnice Toh, Family & Friends.
- 20.02.15 - Buffet Dinner sponsored by Mr. & Mrs. Tham Chien Ping.
- 21.02.15 - Performance by Mr. James Chew & Friends.
- 26.02.15 - Food Talk by Mr. & Mrs. Johnson.
- 27.02.15 - CNY Steamboat Dinner by The Singapore Cheshire Home.
- 28.02.15 - Singing & Donation of Items by A.I.A.-S.P. Lead Group.
- 28.02.15 - CNY Celebration & Buffet Dinner sponsored by Mr. Tan Heng Huay & Friends.
- 01.03.15 - Buffet Lunch sponsored by KBS Motorsport Pte Ltd.
- 02.03.15 - "Lo Hei" Buffet Lunch sponsored by Ms. Florence Chow, G.M., The Singapore Cheshire Home.
- 03.03.15 - Lion Dance Performance sponsored by Engine Room Pte Ltd.
- 05.03.15 - Performance & Music Movement by Our Music Studio.
- 07.03.15 - Outing to Chong Boon Market by N.T.U. R.S.P.P.C.
- 08.03.15 - Bingo & Tea Break sponsored by the Sowers Group.
- 10.03.15 - Performance, Lucky Draw & Tea Break sponsored by Ms. Christina Tan & Friends (Joyous Volunteers).
- 12.03.15 - Outing to Marina Barrage by A.E.T.I.
- 13.03.15 - Hougang Secondary School Anniversary Dinner.
- 14.03.15 - Performance, Bingo & Lunch sponsored by Deeper Life Christian Centre.
- 16.03.15 - Dinner sponsored by Mr. Arron Inbaraj.
- 19.03.15 - Cleaning of Home Compound by A.E.T.I.
- 20.03.15 - Performance, Handicraft & Games by A.J.C. P.D.G. 31/14.
- 20.03.15 - Interaction with Buffet Dinner sponsored by Microsoft Operations Pte Ltd.
- 21.03.15 - Movie Mania & Lunch by Lodge St George.
- 22.03.15 - Bingo & Tea Break sponsored by The Harvester Group.
- 25.03.15 - Food Talk by Mr. & Mrs. Johnson.
- 28.03.15 - Performance by Mr. Koon Liang & Family.
- 08.04.15 - Dinner sponsored by Mr. Rumi & Family.
- 17.04.15 - Lunch sponsored by Mr. Simon Tay.
- 18.04.15 - Lunch sponsored by Ms. Nan
- 19.04.15 - Lunch sponsored by Mr. James Seah.
- 29.04.15 - Food Talk by Mr. & Mrs. Johnson.
- 02.05.15 - Dinner sponsored by Mrs. Vivien Loh, Family and Friends.
- 17.05.15 - NSRCC Charity Golf 2015 Handicraft sale and Gala Dinner at Kranji.
- 20.05.15 - Handicraft sale at Panasonic Singapore.
- 20.05.15 - Cleaning of Home Compound by A.E.T.I. (G.B.A.D.)
- 24.05.15 - Invitation to P.B.U.H. Lunch Reception by Mr. Ahmad Bin Ismail.
- 24.05.15 - Packet Lunch sponsored by Mr. Kumar from Suriya Care House.
- 27.05.15 - Cleaning, Games & Interaction by Delphi Automotive Systems Singapore Pte Ltd.
- 02.06.15 - Cleaning of Home Compound by A.E.T.I. (G.B.A.D.)
- 06.06.15 - Performance, Games & Cleaning by Sodexo Singapore Pte Ltd.
- 09.06.15 - Performance, Lucky Draw & Tea Break sponsored by Ms. Christina Tan & Friends (Joyous Volunteers).
- 17.06.15 - Visit to the Home by Japanese Association (Women's Committee).
- 20.06.15 - Movie Mania & Lunch by Lodge St. George.
- 22.06.15 - Performance by Shamisen Master Mr. Baisho Matsumoto & Friends.
- 24.06.15 - Food Talk by Mr. & Mrs. Johnson.

(continue from page 3...)

The farewells:

We bade farewell to four staff who had left the Home. They are: Enrolled Nurse Michelle Songcuan Tugade (left on 02.02.15), Nursing Aide Nang Moe Moe Thwe (22.04.15), Therapy Aide Phe Byar Htoo (26.04.15), Healthcare Assistant Aung Thein Tun (30.04.15) and Nursing Aide Ruwanmali (20.05.15).

New staff:

We welcome four new staff who have joined the Home recently. They are Healthcare Assistant Htoo Eain Kyaw (started work on 12.05.15), and Female Nursing Aides Mya Mya Than (28.04.15), Ashwini (14.05.15), and Nelsa (21.05.15).

New residents:

Four new residents have been added to the Home: Huang Lizhen (came on 25.02.15), Nurul Ain Binte Manap (10.03.15), Danny Lee Meng Foong (01.04.15) and Tan Keng Soon (23.04.15).

My Stay in Cheshire Home

by Huang Lizhen

I came to The Singapore Cheshire Home on 25th February 2015. It was past lunch time when I came, but there were some food left for me. While I was having lunch, Elizabeth came forward to say hello and became the first friend I made in the Home. With time, I am experiencing life in Cheshire Home and have made more friends.

I enjoyed attending the activities here. It was the Chinese New Year period when I came. There were many Chinese New Year celebrations going on during that period. We had lots of fun watching the many nice performances, like singing and dancing. We had two lion dance performances, which is what I like the most. Many kind wishers gave us angbaos. To top it off, there was also a steamboat dinner; an occasion to gather all of us and have everyone sitting down to enjoy a meal together.

I was hoping to get a job. I was happy to hear that a trainer was coming to teach some residents who were interested in learning and getting a job using Photoshop. I told Social Worker, Hian Guan, that I wanted to take part in it. I attended the four days of training by trainer Mr. Richard Lua. A few weeks after the short course, I got news from Hian Guan that I was one of the few residents who will be employed by the company, Grocermart. I am very happy that what I had hoped and planned for had come true, which is getting a job and earning some income.

I learned to play the violin in my CCA in Secondary School. I developed a great interest in it, but due to poor health, I stopped going to my practices in Secondary 2. When Mrs. Chan and Mrs. Ng, Chairman and Co-Chairman of the Council of Governors, learned of my interest, they did all they can to help me. Mrs. Chan got a violin for me through her friend, while Mrs. Ng found me a volunteer violin teacher. Thanks to both of them, I am able to learn and play the violin. I am happy with pursuing my interest again.

I get to attend the Handicraft session here. Doing handicraft is another hobby of mine. I learned to do my first handicraft many years back while staying in the hospital. A friend of mine from the Lupus Association Singapore taught me to make a butterfly keychain. I find it beautiful and had fun making it. From then on, I gradually picked up the skill of making keychain with beads. I enjoyed doing it and felt accomplished each time I completed a keychain all by myself. It also helped me to pass my time. With an on-going handicraft session here, I get to learn more handicrafts, like rolling Towel dogs and sewing sock dolls. I like the sock dolls because they are cute, and fun to make. With time, I hope to learn more new things and to make new handicrafts.

One of the good things about staying here is that, I am surrounded by friends and am never alone. There are nursing staff on duty to attend to me if I am not feeling well. The nursing sisters will be keeping track of my condition, and if necessary, they will send me to the hospital. My sisters do not have to worry about me being alone at home all the time. They know that here, I am in good hands, and that, if there is any problem with me, they will be informed by the nursing sisters taking care of me.

My wish is that days here will be happier with friends around me and activities to keep me occupied. I also hope to get to go out more often and live a full and enjoyable life.

New Place To Be, New Friends To Make

By Nurul Ain

I was staying in St. Andrew Community Hospital before I came to this Home. My social worker helped me to apply for admission here. I joined The Singapore Cheshire Home on 10th March 2015. I have wanted to come here so that I can be more independent.

Here, in this Home, there is a nice scenery of a beautiful garden where I can relax mentally. There are regular scheduled sessions of physiotherapy and occupational therapy to help me achieve my goals. One of my goals is to gain back my strength so that I can walk on my own again, and for that, I will have to do my exercises.

I have made some new friends since coming here. The first person I met is Noraini. We have become good friends. She is a helpful person, and she guides me whenever I needed some guidance. My two roommates, Tsui Ling and Lizhen, are also very friendly. We got along very well with each other. I hope in time to come, I will know more of the residents and staff here.