

# The Red Feather News, Singapore

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

*From the Editor:*

Early in October this year, in Kobe, Japan, there was a gathering of delegates from the Cheshire Homes of nine different countries. It was the 11<sup>th</sup> Biennial General Meeting of the East Asia & Pacific Regional Council (EAPacRC). This year, after a break of many years, a resident representative from Singapore attended the event.

This wasn't the first time residents of The Singapore Cheshire Home went abroad on an overseas trip for such gatherings. The Home had, in the past, sent resident representatives to attend conferences and grand functions of the Cheshire family in the U.K., Rome, Philippines and Hong Kong. Back in history, in the last millennium, a resident had always attended the international conference held every four years by the, then, Leonard Cheshire Foundation, now renamed to Leonard Cheshire Disability. Imagine hundreds of delegates, many on wheelchairs, coming together as one big family. After all, even back then, there were more than 320 Homes and service providers in 51 different countries.

With a good and very caring caregiver none other than our Chief Nursing Officer, Sister Jacques, I was a witness to such a gathering in London, U.K. in 1994. Some unforgettable memories I have of that trip includes an overwhelming feeling of being part of a bigger family, the warm hospitality of our hosts and the dedication and kindness of the staff and volunteers at the event. The help that I received from Sister Jacques and volunteer, Patricia Morison, was invaluable, comforting and reassuring. They never made me feel that I was ever an inconvenience. Though, at first, apprehensive about travelling and fearful of the inconveniences involved, I relaxed under their care.

My two weeks' stay at Douglas House (our twinned Cheshire Home) in Brixham, Devon, after the conference ended in London, was something I appreciated and felt very fortunate to have had the experience of. Although far from many amenities, the residents lived in peaceful contentment.

Staff and residents were like brothers and sisters to one another; eating, playing, resting, interacting and pulling each other's legs in a respectful manner. The residents organised their own group outings every week with the support of the staff who accompanied them on bus trips that sometimes took hours to get to their destinations. The bus they had was equipped with tables for dining and a back area for resting. Lunch consisting of sandwiches and pies were prepared by the Home's cook and sometimes had to be eaten en-route. I was invited along for such trips and felt they were truly family outings.

The staff at Douglas House were well trained to handle every resident's particular needs. I witnessed how communicative they were in many situations. Although they had not met me prior to my being there, the caregivers were quick to understand my needs and took such good care of me that I felt completely at home. Dressed in their personal attire, they worked with such gentleness, passion and joy that it was difficult to tell if they were staff or volunteers; they enjoyed whatever they did, even work! I was very impressed and felt a different person for having experienced the goodness of the Cheshire spirit.

In the articles shared by three of our staff and the resident who all experienced this same spirit at the 11<sup>th</sup> BGM (EAPacRC), may you journey with the writers to share in the pride and joy we feel being part of the Cheshire family.

Yours always,

*Elizabeth Tan*

## ***LORD CHESHIRE'S SPIRIT ENLIVENED IN JAPAN TRIP***

Joining Singapore Cheshire Home way back in May 2010 was a new road for me in my career path. Without knowing the history and beginnings of the Home, I embarked on this job with the basic intention of doing my task plainly and simply as an occupational therapist, which is to provide rehabilitation regimen to bridge the resident's residual abilities to possible capabilities.

Moving on to my second year in the Home, I have learnt not only of the history of Group Captain Lord Cheshire's works and its global effects, but that our Singapore Cheshire Home alone had plenty of tales to tell. I gathered these from Mrs. Chan's occasional reminiscence of the past, as well as from the longer staying residents themselves who have shared some good old memories.

Being in the Singapore Cheshire Home makes me comfortable in the sense that I don't feel like I'm working here. Instead, it feels like I am in a house with family members helping one another to achieve the one goal of staying active and savouring the good quality of life that our Home provides to everyone, whether staff or residents. This made me realise I am in a unique state of situation, a feeling I did not have when I was working in other organisations. There is a certain connection between individuals, be it staff or residents, where respect and concern is shown and felt. .... *Continue on page 3.*

### **Editorial Board**

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**11<sup>th</sup> BGM of EAPacRC (of Cheshire Homes)**  
**What's Been Keeping Us Busy**  
by Chua Mui Leng

*Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2012...*

Our plane touched down at Japan's Kansai Airport around 9:00 p.m. on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> October. We were warmly greeted by our friendly hosts from the Japan Cheshire Home. The weather outside was chilly. We quickly boarded their van that was waiting to take us to our hotel. We were hungry, tired and yet very excited!

Our hotel is located within "Shiawase no Mura" (Village of Happiness KOBE), a village designed specially for the senior and the disabled that included many recreational facilities. Another group of friendly representatives from the Japan Cheshire Home greeted us at the hotel after our two hours' journey.

Check-in was smooth, and after filling our stomachs with cup noodles (this was Japan after all!), we had a good bath. It was past midnight by then. We looked forward to the BGM to be held the following morning at 9:00 a.m.



*Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2012...*

The morning buffet breakfast at the hotel offered us a wide spread of Japanese cuisine. The weather was wonderful when we strolled out towards our meeting place. Cool air and warm sunshine greeted us.



The BGM began with a welcome speech by Mr. Minoru Kataoka, Chairman of Board Members, Japanese Cheshire Home, followed by the official opening speech by Mr. Ho Soo Foo, Chairman of the EAPacRC, who is also a member of Singapore Cheshire Home's Board of Governors. Altogether there were nine countries participating in this 11<sup>th</sup> BGM, namely, Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Singapore and the UK. The theme for Cheshire Home EAPacRC 11<sup>th</sup> BGM is "The Cheshire Spirit - Service With A Smile".

In the afternoon, we attended a symposium with Cheshire Homes service users and caregivers from each country. Our resident, Pang Lee Lee, shared her personal experiences in our Home, which were very touching. Our Occupational Therapist, Vincent, shared the daily activities and interesting programmes of our Home. We proudly showcased an array of handicrafts done by our residents. This was well received by other Cheshire Homes' members.

In the evening, a warm welcome dinner was held at the ANA Crowne Plaza Kobe Hotel. We were entertained by graceful Japanese ladies playing traditional musical instruments. We enjoyed ourselves very much that night, and we took the opportunity to go around shaking hands and meeting everyone.



*Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2012...*

We went to the Integrated Research Centre of Kobe University to attend a social firm seminar conducted by Mr. Nozomu Miyajima from "Kyodogakusha" (a social firm). Mr. Miyajima explained the concept of his dairy farm, how he started it and how job opportunities were created for the disabled at his farm.

We had lunch at Kacho-En, which means Flower Park in English. We were stunned by the beautiful and brilliant hues of the overhanging flowers and plants inside the park. Everybody happily busied themselves taking snap shots to add to their memories of the trip.

..... Continue on page 3.

..... Continue from page 2 "11<sup>th</sup> BGM of EAPacRC (of Cheshire Homes)"

That evening, we visited Hanshin Cheshire Home and had dinner there. We were greeted by their cheerful musical and instrumental team made up of residents, staff and volunteers of the Home. We toured the Home and exchanged souvenirs. Then, each country presented a song and dance item during the dinner. We proudly presented our National Day theme song "Love at First Light".

After this, some country representatives left. We stayed on and continued with the Study Tour, a lineup of programmes planned for us for the next four days...



*Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2012...*

We had lunch at Shiso Cheshire Home and dinner at Harima Cheshire Home. The Homes were tucked away from the busy city. The serenity and the nature surrounding the Homes are conducive to the happiness and well-being of the residents and staff. In Shiso Home, the residents run their very own bakery shop. We tasted their handmade buns and burgers and these were delicious.

*Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2012 onwards...*

During our study tour, we went to RIKEN Advanced Institute for Computational Science campus in Kobe to see the K computer, the world's largest and fastest computer. We also visited Kobe Rehabilitation and Training Centre for the disabled. The rehabilitation and training provided by the centre were comprehensive and impressive and an eye opener for all of us. It certainly added to our whole learning experience which will no doubt be brought back and shared at the Singapore Cheshire Home.

Amid our busy schedule, we managed to squeeze in a little bit of shopping time. On our last day, the 18<sup>th</sup> Oct, we had a memorable farewell dinner at Hanshin Cheshire Home and saw the most beautiful sunset we had ever seen. We left for Singapore and arrived back safe and sound on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

..... Continue from page 1 "LORD CHESHIRE'S SPIRIT ENLIVENED IN JAPAN TRIP".

This uncommon camaraderie that exists in the Singapore Cheshire Home intrigues me. I finally understood it when we had the trip to Japan. I saw a lot of very dedicated hearts in the council members of every country and in the accompanying caregivers and staff. Aside from them, Japan Cheshire Homes also convinced me of how we naturally work when we follow the principles of Group Captain Lord Cheshire.

Meaning, every individual who knew of and understood our late Founder and his deeds, will be inspired and motivated to serve our clientele unconditionally. We have the likes of Sister Jacques and a lot of longer serving council members who gave their dedicated service throughout their lives. These people demonstrate the will power Group Captain Lord Cheshire manifested in his time.

It struck me more when I had a very meaningful conversation with two young General Managers from the Sabah Cheshire Home and Papua New Guinea Cheshire Home. For them, they have a hard time running their home due to the lack of resources but with perseverance and with "dedication" - the supposedly famous word among the Cheshire family - they have managed to make ends meet.

Group Captain Lord Cheshire's legacy is unending in its inspiration. I am convinced that it will continue to flourish even more, not containing itself to the hundreds of existing Homes now, but extending out to thousands of Homes in the future.

Vincent Anquillano  
Occupational Therapist

# A Memorable Experience

contributed by A.N. Michelle Tugade & Resident Pang Lee Lee  
written by A.N. Michelle Tugade

It took me a while to compose myself when I was informed of my appointment. I was to be a caregiver for Pang Lee Lee, a resident representative, selected to attend the BGM in Kobe, Japan. We would be in Japan for six days. We felt very fortunate to be chosen as part of the delegates from The Singapore Cheshire Home.

After a long anticipation and with all preparations made, we finally took flight on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October and reached Osaka, Kansai Airport just past 9 p.m., Japan time, which is an hour ahead of Singapore's.

We stayed at Shiawase-no-Mura, in Kobe, which is near the mountainous area. It is very peaceful there. It was autumn and the weather was cold. We had to put on jackets and scarves whenever we went out. I was happy to experience an autumn season for the first time in my life.

We found that the Japanese are, in general, courteous, friendly, hospitable and respectful. During our experiences of the flight, the airport, the hotel and during our visits to the Cheshire Homes in Japan, the Japanese people always greeted us with a smile and a gentle bow. This impressed us very much though there were communication barriers between us.

We experienced the difficulty of communication in a funny incident that happened on the night we arrived. We were given a disabled friendly room, specially designed to give the disabled ease of access. We wanted to take a bath and panicked when we could not find the bathroom in our room. We approached the staff downstairs and were informed that every room in the hotel is equipped with a bathroom. Finally, we approached Vincent, our occupational therapist, for help. He came to our room to check and pushed open the sliding door of a "cabinet". Surprise! We looked into the "cabinet" and found the bathroom! The sliding door of the bathroom looked just like a door of a cabinet. How silly of us for not having checked it out!

Another incident highlighted the language barrier we faced; every time I asked for warm water for Lee Lee, I was always given ice-cold water instead! This incident was repeated during our visits to the three Cheshire Homes in Japan and other places we'd been. I had to get the interpreter to help us translate when our server came back with a glass of ice-cold water trying to please us for the umpteenth time. Ultimately, we memorised the word for "warm water" but unfortunately, we were unable to get the correct pronunciation and had to depend on the interpreters to help us.

There are a lot of scenic places in Kobe. Among all the places we visited, our favourite site was the Kobe Kachoen. The place was undoubtedly beautiful and breathtaking with huge bunches of blooming flowers hanging above us. It gave us the impression of living in fairyland.

Personally, I've learnt a lot on this trip. It was an eye opener for both Lee Lee and me. We had the opportunity to mingle with people of different nationalities and shared stories of how our lives have been touched living and working in the different Homes founded by Group Captain Lord Leonard Cheshire. We realised the important role Cheshire Homes have in the lives of not only the physically disabled but also the intellectually disabled. In Shiso Home, one of the Japan Cheshire Homes, I was surprised to learn that the residents ran an in-house bakery. This helped in building up their confidence, gave them a sense of ownership, entrepreneurship and ultimately a sense of belonging.

I have learnt from my experiences with Lee Lee in Japan that the role I have in being a part of the Cheshire family is an important one. As a caregiver and a nurse, I contribute to the well-being of the residents by attending to their physical and psychological needs.

In conclusion, Lee Lee and I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the people who made it possible for both of us to attend this special event. In particular, we would like to thank Japan Cheshire Homes for sponsoring the trip. This trip made us proud to be a part of the Cheshire family.

Thank you all very much!!



*Some pictures taken during our wonderful Japan trip...*



At Kacho-En (flower park).



First day at Shiawase No-Mura (Village of Happiness) where the BGM was held.



Don't we look good in our *happi* coats given by the organisers.



Attending the Social Firm Seminar by Mr. Nozomu Miyajima at Kobe University.



At Shiso Cheshire Home for the intellectually disabled.



Helping Lee Lee with putting on her gloves as the weather got colder.



Shopping! So many things to buy, so little time to see.



Having lunch at Takarazuka Komuno (a social firm institution).



An electronic operated bathtub at Hanshin Cheshire Home.



A half Chinese, half Japanese resident of Harima Cheshire



Pang Lee Lee and A.N. Michelle posed with Hanshin Cheshire Home residents.



The Singapore Cheshire Home exchanging souvenir with Harima Cheshire Home.

## **Newsflash!**

- 17.07.12 - Muslim buffet Lunch given by Mr. Ahmad Bin Ismail and family.
- 20.07.12 - Visit by Mr. Emmanuel L. Penson, President of Leonard Cheshire Disability Philippines Foundation, Inc (LCDPFI).
- 01.08.12 - Buffet lunch in appreciation for all staff by the Home.
- 02.08.12 - Visit by The Spastic Children's Association of Singapore.
- 02.08.12 - Birthday celebration and performances by Mdm. Christina Tan and Friends.
- 06.08.12 - Interaction and performances by ITE Bishan/IOG.
- 18.08.12 - Outing to the Singapore Flyer by The Lodge St. George No. 1152 EC.
- 25.08.12 - Outing to the Singapore Flyer with buffet lunch at Grand Park City Hall by D'perception Singapore Pte. Ltd.
- 26.08.12 - Buffet dinner sponsored by Lodge St. Patrick.
- 07.09.12 - Interaction and performances by RSVP Singapore - The Organisation of Senior Volunteers.
- 15.09.12 - Interaction and performances by Chinmaya Mission.
- 20.09.12 - Outing to the Gardens by the Bay by United World College.
- 22.09.12 - The Singapore Cheshire Home's Founder Day.
- 29.09.12 - Interaction, bingo, performances and tea by Royal Caribbean Cruises (Asia) Pte. Ltd.
- 06.10.12 - 'Food And Shopping Talk' by Carnation.
- 06.10.12 - Interaction, bingo and performances by SRI5000.
- 13.10.12 - Karaoke and buffet lunch organised by SIM Mandarin Toastmasters Club.
- 21.10.12 - Buffet dinner given by Mdm. Sng Ewe Moy and family.
- 27.10.12 - Interaction and buffet lunch by YouthsCARE - Yio Chu Kang Youth Executive Committee.
- 29.10.12 - Interaction, performances and tea given by CHIJ-Our Lady of Good Counsel.
- 07.11.12 - Outing to Marina Barrage for kite flying activities by AFTC - AETI.
- 18.11.12 - Outing to Grandparents' Day event hosted by The Serangoon Community Centre.
- 20.11.12 - Interaction, bingo, games and packet lunch given by staff of St. Joseph Institution Junior.
- 23.11.12 - Visit and briefings by M.S.F. and N.C.S.S. on 'Standard of Care' and 'Board of Visit'.
- 24.11.12 - Outing to the Gardens by the Bay by WOW Group.
- 02.12.12 - Buffet lunch sponsored by Mdm. Nancy Teh.
- 08.12.12 - Outing to the Gardens by the Bay by Handicap Welfare Association.
- 08.12.12 - Christmas programme, bingo and tea by WOW Group.
- 09.12.12 - Christmas programme by The Sowers Group.
- 09.12.12 - Performances and buffet dinner given by Dr. Yvonne Soong and Family.
- 15.12.12 - Resident's Christmas Party.
- 16.12.12 - Christmas programme and buffet dinner organised and given by Mr. Alvin Tan and Friends.
- 16.12.12 - Outing to a Christmas party hosted by The Serangoon Community Centre.
- 18.12.12 - Christmas carolling by Victory Life Christian School.
- 19.12.12 - Visit to Changi Airport with dinner at Astons Specialities by Fairchild Semiconductor Pte. Ltd.

### **The farewells:**

We bade farewell to 5 staff who had left us. Kitchen Helper, Nancy Quek (left on 08.07.2012), T.A.s, Khaing Yu Htet (05.07.2012) and Saw Aung Myo Oo (22.09.2012), and N.A.s, Ni Lar Win (20.06.2012) and Ajantha (13.09.2012).

Resident Glen Tan Kai Rong was discharged from the Home on 30.09.2012.

### **In memoriam:**

Sadly, we lost 2 residents who passed away within a month of each other. The late Resident Lee Ah Keo passed away unexpectedly on 10.10.2012 after being admitted to hospital and the late Resident Margaret Quek Swee Hong passed away peacefully on 01.11.2012 in the Home as she had wished after knowing she had cancer.

### **New staff and residents:**

We welcome 5 new staff from June to October. Kitchen Helper, Ng Yiang Hui (joined on 09.07.2012), T.A.s, Kristine June (24.07.2012) and Ye Htet Hein (17.10.2012), and N.A.s, Iresha (14.06.2012) and Lahiru (18.10.2012).

We welcome 3 new residents into the Home - Ng Siew Lian, 44 (came on 18.10.2012), Leong Fook Keong, 48 (29.10.2012) and Khong Jia Wei, 24 (21.11.2012).

\* A.N. = Assistant Nurse, T.A. = Therapy Aide, N.A. = Nursing Aide, K.H. = Kitchen Helper.