



The Red Feather News, Singapore

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From the Editor:

There is an age old and frequently used Chinese proverb that goes: A man is never too old to learn. This proverb immediately pops into the mind when the topic set is on lifelong learning.

People are inclined to think that we only learn when we go to school. But lifelong learning is not just about obtaining a good education at school. Though this is important and fundamental to setting a good basic foundation for future intellectual development, it is not the sole portal to learning and gaining knowledge. Besides, the process of learning does not stop at academic level.

There is no lack of opportunity to upgrade ourselves through various computer courses and workshops organized by different organizations. The government encouraged the spirit of continuing education by way of setting up a Continuing Education and Training (CET) plan. One who never gives up on attaining knowledge is one who never gives up on himself. Despite his disability, Resident Hisham took the initiative to enrol himself in a course alongside able-bodied people so as to learn something useful. He is currently attending one of the courses under the CET programme. I shall leave it to Hisham to tell you what the CET plan is about in his article.

Hisham is driven to learn new things so as to cope and adapt to his disability. Learning to cope and to adapt is itself a form of lifelong learning because nothing stays the same for very long. Life forces us to learn. In order to survive, we have to keep learning. *Life, itself, is a school.* We learn through experiences and through mistakes we made in our lives. Sometimes, we even have to *learn* to unlearn to adapt and cope and be a better and stronger person and to mould ourselves into a better character. Lifelong learning encompass character moulding. We also learn by taking risks and venturing out on a limb. And we can learn from people around us. We can do this just by being observant and doing a little reflecting on what we see and hear. I have a lot to learn from one resident, Tony Zhu.

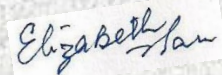
Tony recently took the initiative to attend "Enabling Community coLAB 2014", a platform that campaigns for social innovation; he took on the challenge of creating something useful for all POWs (Person-on-wheelchair). Tony doesn't have the answers to everything, but he is confident and he has ideas and he knows how to look for solutions. And so he often dives into his ideas and learns the answers along the way. Tony has taught me that we do not have to have all the answers in order to take on any challenges.

It is imperative that we learn from other people, since it is impossible for any one person to experience everything about life in one lifetime. There is no one man who can truthfully claim to have learned all things by himself. Everything we can learn - from the media, books, research on the internet, and through various courses - are put together by people who had been there and done that.

Learning something new everyday guarantees satisfaction and builds up confidence. The world offers itself as a treasure trove of knowledge to anyone who thirsts to know and seeks to learn. As long as we are open to learning, there will be things to learn all our lives. This is why we call it "Lifelong Learning". And lifelong learning applies to everybody, regardless of age, occupation, financial status, academic achievement and social standing.

"Get over the idea that only children should spend their time in study," said Henry L. Doherty. "Be a student so long as you still have something to learn, and this will mean all your life.

Yours,



All of the top achievers I know are life-long learners ...

Looking for new skills, insights, and ideas.

If they're not learning, they're not growing ...

Not moving toward excellence.

~ Denis Waitley

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Back to School and Learning Something New

By Ahmad Hisham

Life was becoming rather meaningless for me with routine work, day in and day out. I was looking to further my studies and reflecting on what I can do with my life in my condition. Steve Jobs said, "We don't get a chance to do that many things, and every one should be really excellent. Because this is our life. Life is brief, and then you die, you know? And we've all chosen to do this with our lives. So it better be damn good. It better be worth it."

My appreciation goes to Mr. Lim Hian Guan, our Social Worker, for his continuous encouragement and guidance on the choice of courses and giving me an insight on the different career path each choice would lead after graduation. I have to bear in mind that due to my heavy medical commitment, I am unable to be successful in gaining a full time employment. I did some research and came across a course, 'WSQ Diploma in Adult and Continuing Education', by Nanyang Polytechnic. Upon completion of this course, I would be an Adult Educator whose role is to be a facilitator, a course and curriculum planner and an assessor.

After reading up the course content and corresponding with the program manager, I was duly interested. Hence, I submitted my application, and even prepared a backup plan by inquiring on a similar course offered by the Institute of Technical Education in case my polytechnic application was rejected. My application was accepted and I was thankful for the opportunity to further my studies under the Continuing Education and Training (CET) Masterplan.

The CET Masterplan is a comprehensive plan to prepare the Singapore workforce for the future and maintain a competitive advantage for Singapore. The objective is to enhance the quality and productivity of different industry workers by helping them to acquire industry-relevant skills and to stay ahead of industry developments. It is also for people to embrace the fundamentals of a lifelong learning system, that would help them find their niches and seize new opportunities in growing industries, as they upgrade themselves to remain relevant and employable. In short, CET enables the working professionals, managers, executives, and technicians, (PMETs), as well as rank-and-file workers to remain employable with new and better skills. The CET Masterplan prepares the Singapore workforce and industry for two important shifts:

- The workforce of the future – nearly 50% of our resident workforce will have at least a diploma qualification by 2020, compared to 36% in 2007.
- Emerging and growth industries – to equip Singaporeans with the skills for job opportunities in new growth industries, whether they are preparing for new jobs, switching careers, or acquiring new skills.

Just based on the above mentioned educational system, there would be a big impact on the practice of a trainer or Adult Educator. Then, there are other influencing factors as well.

Statistics showed that professionals, associate professionals and technicians have a relatively younger age profile with only 13% and 18% of their resident workforce aged 50 and over. In contrast, lower-skilled occupations have a higher concentration of older workers.

It was reflected that there was a higher concentration of non-PMET jobs in various industries. In 2010, there were at least four out of ten wage-earners who were aged 50 & above in these sectors: administrative & support services (45%), accommodation & food services (43%), and transportation & storage (40%). On the other hand, there are only 12% of employed residents in information & communications and 15% in financial & insurance who were aged 50 and over. The median age of employed residents in these two industries was 36 years, compared to the overall median age of 41 years.

These statistics served to impel me to further my study so as to be an Adult Educator in due course. And so, here I am, currently, at Nanyang Polytechnic, starting a new journey in pursue of the role I want to play. It was, for me, a journey into a very different field and industry. I was in business administration prior to my disability. I had pursued and took on other engagements since then; from being an accounting personnel to being a designer in the web and digital media industries.

..... Continue on page 3.



..... Continue from page 2 (Back to School and Learning Something New).

7th June 2013 marked the first day I went back to school after one and a half decade. I felt like someone in a state of daze on that first day. Fortunately, Mr. David Wong, our instructor for the first Module on Reflective Practices, managed to create a lively atmosphere with his jokes in an otherwise tensed and hostile class.

I have been away from an academic education for more than a decade. Hence, I was unable to absorb and retain most of the things that were taught and maintained. I had to keep referring to my guidebook in order to catch up on the lesson. Flipping the pages was a challenge to me due to the spasticity of my fine motor movement. I thank God that the classmate sitting next to me was helpful. He helped me in flipping the pages and jotting down whatever relevant points there is in my book. I used a voice recorder to help me with my revision and try my best to follow the lesson. I hope the theories and approaches that I will come across will be beneficial to me in my life.

On that first day back to school, we were taught the four important points to embrace as an adult educator. An adult educator has to: 1) cover depth and breadth, 2) be a reflective practitioner, 3) be learner centric, and 4) be committed to self and professional development.

Upon attending the first lesson, the word 'Reflection' lingered in my mind. As we began to understand how, why and when we engage in a reflection, it dawned on me that all of us do a reflection on ourselves whether we realize it or not. We reflect on the actions that we do, the decisions that we made and the words that are said. I will, first, develop a reflective practice for every of my action and decision-making. What, after all, is the object of education? It is to train the body in health, vigor and grace, so that it may express the emotions in beauty and the mind with accuracy and strength.

In spite of the difficulties and inconveniences pose to my studies by my physical condition, they are alleviated by my classmates who are very helpful and supportive in spurring me towards completing the course. I am blessed to have classmates like them and am grateful to them. If God permits, and notwithstanding the pain and suffering I have due to my health condition, I would try my level best not to be deterred, but to surge forward towards the completion of this course and be an Adult Educator. With all the complications I am going through, I may not know how long I can live, but each day that is well spent is enough to bring a smile on my face. Knowing I can attain something good and the strength and will to persevere has brought meaning to my life.

My job at Duly Florist & Enterprise Co.

By Ivan Lin

I started working at Duly Florist & Enterprise Co. on the 8th of July 2013 as a Sales Executive. Although I have worked in other services before, it is my first time working in a flower and gift shop. There are things I need to learn, and so I have.

When I first started out, I was given the task to go through the newspaper first thing at work to see if there is any opportunity for us to provide our services. If such an opportunity arises, I would first check if the company is in our listing. If it is not listed, I would then fax my name card over, and follow up with a call to the company to try and promote our products and services.

However, if the identified company is in our listing, I would then need to check if we have a soft copy in our database, and that it has all the necessary information such as the fax number and the key contacts in it. If we do not have the soft copy, I would have to create one and key in all the relevant information. Then I would fax out the required forms with the necessary particulars for secured orders. After all that has been done, I need to key in all the details into the SQL Server. This is a software that we use to keep our data.

As time goes by, I learn more things and take on more responsibilities. For example, after delivering our products, our driver would take photos to show that it had been delivered. Then I have to record down the client's name, location and the time of the delivery when the photo was taken. I have also to keep a lookout and cut out clippings of the cases we did that appeared in the newspaper and file them in their relevant files. If I can not find a relevant file, I have to create a new file in the SQL server for that particular case.

I have also learnt to do some accounting work. For example, for every order made, I would have to put aside two sets of invoices and delivery orders; one for filing and the other for mailing out. I have to check for overdue invoices, fax them out for payment, stamp on these invoices with "faxed" and "overdue" and then pass them on to the account department to take note and follow up.

All in all, I feel that I have learned a lot of things after working in this company for almost a year. My boss and colleagues have helped me a lot during my learning phase and they have given me a chance to learn more things with each passing day. My colleagues and I have also learned from one another as we share our knowledge and skills. I have learned a lot through working outside. I know that this is not all there is. There will be more for me to learn as time goes on.



My Experience and Participation in Enabling Community coLAB 2014

by Tony Zhu



I had participated in the inaugural Enabling Community coLAB 2014. Held between April - May 2014, the event was launched by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and SG Enable to encourage ideas that can improve the lives of people with disabilities.

Our team, "GoEasy", was one of five winning teams to be awarded \$20,000 seed funding to jump start our idea of developing an app for people with physical disabilities to get information about the accessibility of a place.

As a wheelchair user, I face various challenges in areas of accommodation, medication, transportation, daily meals, just to name a few. However, I managed to overcome them, thanks to the help and support from The Singapore Cheshire Home, friends, and the community.

When I heard about the inaugural Enabling Community coLAB from our Social Worker, Mr. Lim Hian Guan, I knew it was my calling to contribute back to the community.

I once experienced what would have been a two minute journey for an able-bodied person, which took me about thirty minutes as a wheelchair user. To address this problem, our team decided to come up with this app to help wheelchair users look up details of venues before leaving their homes. The app will help to decide which locations are more suited to their needs so they can avoid unpleasant surprises upon arrival. Equipped with our app, wheelchair users will be able to make informed decisions, be prepared and feel confident before leaving their home.

Our app is similar to "Trip Advisor" as it is open for users to provide feedback and rate venues based on accessibility. Through the app we provide our customers with a rich pool of reliable accessibility data at their fingertips. It covers a range of venue types; from cinemas to restaurants to supermarkets and more.

Enabling Community coLAB 2014 is a social innovation competition organised by the Ministry of Social and Family Development and SG Enable. It was amazing to form a team and to win the top prize of \$20,000! We learned a lot and enjoyed the working experience with teammates from different backgrounds. All of us were driven by passion and even though we did not have clear roles initially, we learned as we worked together to drive the team towards achieving the results.



My aspiration is to help each other to enjoy life and also make it easier for people who are physically challenged to lead a more fulfilling life. Singapore is becoming an aging society; sooner or later, many of us may become wheelchair users at some point of our life. Making Singapore more wheelchair friendly will benefit the nation for many generations to come.

Winning the award is just the start of the long, tedious but joyful journey. I am proud to be a part of this team. We are not sure whether we will succeed, but we will try our best to make it happen. Let's build a world where we can All Go Easy!



Newsflash!

- 01.01.14 - New Year Day lunch sponsored by Sri Ragavendra Group.
- 10.01.14 - Outing to Chinatown organized by N.T.U. R.S.P.P.C.
- 11.01.14 - Performance, interaction and birthday celebration by Ci Yuan Community Club.
- 12.01.14 - Singing and interaction by the Toastmasters Club.
- 25.01.14 - Performance and Bingo games by Deeper Life Christian Centre.
- 25.01.14 - Interaction and Bingo games by Central Christian Church.
- 31.01.14 - Buffet lunch for all staff and residents sponsored by Mrs. Tan, family and friends.
- 03.02.14 - Lion dance performance and lunch sponsored by Mahabodhi Monastery.
- 05.02.14 - Lion dance performance sponsored by Ehgine Room Pte. Ltd.
- 07.02.14 - Carnival games and high tea sponsored by Temasek International Pte. Ltd.
- 08.02.14 - Outing to R.S.A.F. Open House organized by A.E.T.I.
- 08.02.14 - Band, Lion dance performance and dinner sponsored by Mr. Heng Huay and Friends.
- 09.02.14 - Buffet lunch for all staff and residents sponsored by Soroptimist International Garden City.
- 10.02.14 - CNY 'Lo Hei' lunch for all residents and staff organized by the Home.
- 15.02.14 - Outing to National Museum Singapore organized by N.T.U. R.S.P.P.C.
- 17.02.14 - CNY steamboat dinner for all residents and staff organized by the Home.
- 01.03.14 - Games and interaction organized by N.T.U. R.S.P.P.C.
- 06.03.14 - Performance, games and interaction by Temasek Secondary School.
- 10.03.14 - Shamisen performance by Mr. Matsumoto and friends.
- 11.03.14 - Buffet lunch for all staff and residents sponsored by the late resident, Goh Mui Sek's Family.
- 14.03.14 - Invitation to Hougang Secondary School Anniversary dinner by Hougang Secondary School.
- 15.03.14 - Outdoor games at Teck Ghee park by Xin Min Secondary School.
- 15.03.14 - Home-cooked dinner for all staff and residents given by Ms. Asha (Resident Viki's sister).
- 21.03.14 - Packet lunch for all staff and residents sponsored by Mr. Simon.
- 29.03.14 - Scavenger hunt at Teck Ghee park organized by N.T.U. R.S.P.P.C.
- 05.04.14 - Games and interaction organized by N.T.U. R.S.P.P.C.
- 05.04.14 - Performance and Bingo games by Cedar's Girls School.
- 05.04.14 - Buffet dinner sponsored by Mr. Rumi, family and friends.
- 09.04.14 - Outing to MaxBrenner Café sponsored by MaxBrenner Café.
- 09.04.14 - KFC and pizza for dinner for all residents and staff sponsored by Ms. Shelia Lim..
- 16.04.14 - Pre-Easter service and singing by Pastor Paul Thian and Geylang Methodist church.
- 23.04.14 - Tea break sponsored by Ms. Poonam.
- 25.04.14 - Performance by CHIJ St. Nicholas Girls' School.
- 02.05.14 - Outing to Tampines Giant organized by Hong Wen Secondary School.
- 03.05.14 - Outing to AJC Funfair organized by Anderson Junior College.
- 11.05.14 - Games and sponsor of tea by The Sowers Group
- 17.05.14 - Games and interaction by Jurong West Secondary School.
- 21.05.14 - Visit to the Home by the Women's Committee of the Japanese Association.
- 23.05.14 - Packet lunch for all residents and staff sponsored by Mr. Simon Tay.
- 25.05.14 - Invitation to PHUB Lunch Reception by Mr. Ahmad Bin Ismail.
- 26.05.14 - Performance and interaction by Hougang Secondary School.
- 27.05.14 - Performance and interaction by Hougang Secondary School.
- 31.05.14 - Birthday celebration and tea given by Mr. Anupunam & Family.
- 02.06.14 - Performance and interaction by Queensway Secondary School.
- 02.06.14 - Invitation to rehearsal of play, "Bugsy Malone" by St. Joseph Institution International.
- 11.06.14 - Folk song group performance by St. Joseph Institution International.
- 23.06.14 - Shamisen performance by Mr. Matsumoto and friends.
- 25.06.14 - Visit and donation of items by Delphi Automotive System (S) Pte. Ltd.
- 28.06.14 - Outing to Chong Boon Market organized by N.T.U. R.S.P.P.C.

New staff and old:

We extend a warm welcome to three new staff. N.A.s Aung Naing Oo and Nyi Nyi Lwin joined the Home on 18.03.2014 and 19.03.2014 respectively. T.A. Jorie Ann joined us on 27.06.2014. She came to replace T.A. Claridad Roane Untalan who resigned on 02.07.2014.

* N.A. = Nursing Aide, T.A. = Therapy Aide.

..... Continue on page 6.

A Course on Social Media Marketing and Business

There was a Social Media Marketing and Business course organised by the Handicaps Welfare Association (HWA). The 3-day course was conducted on the 11th and 18th of March and the 1st of April. I came to know about this course through our Home's Social Worker, Lim Hian Guan, and decided to attend the course together with another resident, Tony.

I have always taken the HWA transport whenever I go to HWA for events. This time, I went there by taking the public transport. It was as simple as taking a direct bus from the Ang Mo Kio bus interchange. Yet, I lost my way by dropping off at the wrong bus-stop. I called HWA and a staff guided me to the right bus-stop. I was fifteen minutes late but was glad I reached my destination safe and sound.

There were about ten of us attending the course. Our course instructor, David Lam, was a very young but experienced instructor, who was very understanding towards our disability. He began the course by speaking about Facebook and Twitter as part of a social media we are all familiar with. We were given a team project to work on whereby we have to think of a company and a product and write an advertisement about it. As I sat beside Tony, we partnered each other to do the project. The instructor was impressed by what we did.

The second part of the lesson was on blogging. As I am slow at my typing, Tony was a great help to me. The instructor helped me to arrange the pictures on my blog. It was my first time setting up a blog. Towards the end of the day, with the help of Tony and our instructor, I managed to do it and felt happy about it.

Our last part of the course focused more on the business aspect. Through my cousin who runs his own business, I know a little bit about doing business, but I was bored with this session because I am not very interested in this subject. There was a lot to write and type. As I was not able to write and type fast enough, I just try to remember what was taught. We learned a lot through the course. At the end of the day, we had a group picture taken with David Lam.

Computer and modern technology allows and enables us to do business and all other kinds of things even in the comfort of our home. Unlike previous times, when we did not even have the internet to send an urgent message, now, we are all connected by computers and the internet and it felt like a small world we are living in.

In the modern hi-tech world of today, there is nothing to stop us from picking up new skills. Age is much less a concern if we are keen to learn. It is good to keep our brain active. I strongly encourage other disabled people like me to always keep learning and to upgrade themselves, for living a more independent life.

~ Noraini Bte Adnan



Quotes on learning

Solon on learning:
I grow old learning something new everyday.

It is not hard to learn more.
What is hard is to unlearn when you discover yourself wrong.
~ Martin H. Fischer

Always walk through life as if you have something new to learn and you will.
~ Vernon Howard

Each day learn something new, and just as important, relearn something old.
~ Robert Brault

All the world is a laboratory to the inquiring mind.
~ Martin H. Fischer

I am always ready to learn although I do not always like being taught.
~ Winston Churchill

The purpose of learning is growth, and our minds, unlike our bodies, can continue growing as we continue to live.
~ Mortimer Adler

Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty.
~ Henry Ford

I find four great classes of students:
The dumb who stay dumb. The dumb who become wise.
The wise who go dumb. The wise who remain wise.
~ Martin H. Fischer

..... Continue from page 5 ([Newsflash!](#)).

New residents:

With the completion of the renovation and extension of the Home, we are able to take in 20 more residents. We warmly welcome five new residents in our midst. They are Mr. Chua Beng Hui (admitted to the Home on 28.05.2014), Mr. Chia Beng Huat (29.05.2014), Miss May Lee Sor Goh (30.05.2014), Mr. Joseph Chia Teck Seng (18.06.2014) and Mr. P. Selvan (23.06.2014).