



•handicaps digest

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Jan - Mar 2010

BUNGE Spreads *Cheer*
at Year-end Party!

See page 18





Touch a Life!

Call us at
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email: hwa@hwa.org.sg

We are looking for people who are able to commit several hours
a month with the disabled.

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Jan-Mar 2010

The Handicaps Welfare Association was founded to encourage and foster the ideals of self-help and mutual assistance among the disabled and to promote their welfare. All the members of the Executive Committee are persons with disabilities.

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Director's Foreword

Dear Readers,

Let me start by wishing all of you a happy, healthy and loving 2010. May all your wishes for 2010 come true.

It has been a challenging 2 months for me since joining HWA. I am still trying to get acquainted with members of HWA, volunteers, donors and colleagues.

Conversations with HWA members have provided me with a better insight into what are some of the needs of our members, their aspirations and expectations. We will try our best to address these. Please provide your feedback.

The year end gathering for members held on 13 December 2009 was the first major opportunity for me to meet many other members and volunteers. I was impressed with the dedication displayed by the volunteers from 'BUNGE'. They were not only enthusiastic but also volunteered with a deep sense

of empathy and care. Thank you BUNGE. We hope to have the pleasure and opportunity to work with your organisation for our future philanthropy projects.

There are quite a few new members in our fund raising team. Together we hope to bring vigor and excitement to our new activities in social services, fund raising, social integration etc. Our team is working on a few interesting events such as 'All cash donation draw 2010', 'Marathon Car Wash', 'Wheel, Walk or Jog 2010' etc. Our 'All cash donation draw 2010' tickets will be out soon. We hope that you could save some money for these tickets. Please lend us a hand in these activities. HWA needs support from donors, volunteers and members. We certainly need your help.

Michael Tan
Executive Director

执行理事长前言

亲爱的会员，志愿者，捐助者和所有的读者，

首先请允许我祝愿大家过一个愉快，健康，充满爱的2010年。祝你2010年所有的愿望成真。

加盟HWA的2个月对我来说是非常有挑战性的。现在我仍然努力去熟识HWA的会员们，志愿者们，捐助者们以及同事们。

与HWA会员的谈话为我对会员们的需要，愿望和期望提供了更深入的了解。我们会尽力解决这些问题。请提供您的宝贵反馈。

2009年12月13号举行的会员年底聚会为我提供了第一个重大的机会，让我见到了很多其他会员们和志愿者们。BUNGE志愿者们展现的奉献精神给我留下了深刻的印象。他们不但热情，而且带着一种同情和深切关怀的心情来做志愿工作。谢谢你，BUNGE。我们希望

有机会为我们今后的慈善项目，荣幸地再次与您合作。有不少新成员加入了我们的资金筹集队伍中。共同地，我们希望把活力和精彩注入到我们的新活动中，例如社会服务方面，筹款，社交活动以及其他的新活动。我们的团队正在筹备一些有趣的活动，如“2010年捐款全现金抽奖”，“马拉松洗车活动”，“2010年行兼跑活动”，等等。我们的2010年捐款全现金抽奖的奖券票簿很快就要出炉了。我们希望您可以省下一些钱，购买这些奖券来支持我们。HWA需要捐助者们，志愿者们和会员们的支持。我们需要你们的帮助。

致以最美好的祝愿！

Michael Tan

Executive Committee 2009/2011

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Henry Mr Yong Chee Seng

Simon Mr Lim Choon Heng

Edmund Wan

New Members

HWA welcomes the following new members into its family:

Ordinary Members

- Tan Boon Teck
- Teo Hee Boo

Associate Member

- Kwee Chee Beng

Obituary

With Deepest Sympathy and Heartfelt
Condolences to the Families of:

- Cham Tshoong Kuok
- Lourdes Joseph
- Wong Fook Keong

A Staff Christmas *Pot-luck!*



Variety of food

Staff from HWA gathered on 24 December 2009 for a fun time pot luck party. At 11am, staff started bringing in their food to display on the table in the conference room. There was fried chicken, log cakes, fried bee-hoon, ice cream, roast duck, Philippine-style salad, Ice cream, curry puffs, Otah, pizza, chicken nuggets etc. Oh and not forgetting that E Ling bought Sushi. I must confess that I ate most of it.

It was a feast, better than food in a 5-star hotel. Bryan, Joyce, Talib and Sally helped by decorating the Christmas tree and laying the presents. Unfortunately the Christmas lights could not be turned on. However, we most certainly look forward to next year with brand new working lights!

Since there was quite a few new staff, it was an opportune time for all of us to get to know each other.

As Jason Tian (HWA member) was around, he was invited to join our party. He was given a present so that he could exchange the present with another. Two other young volunteers were around and were also invited to join in the party.

Grace displayed her flower decoration skills with enthusiasm by having two bouquet of were indeed well arranged.

All of us had a fantastic time sharing the food and getting to know each other better.

Finally Bryan and Joyce helped us to execute the gift-exchange. The staff truly enjoyed themselves and all of us look forward in anticipation to next year's staff Christmas.

员工圣诞大聚餐



Staff enjoying a feast!



A Christmas cheer spreads all round

HWA员工在09年12月24日欢聚一堂，进行了一次欢乐的大会餐。上午11时，员工们开始将他们的食物上摆上了会议室的桌子。有炸鸡，原木蛋糕，炒米粉，冰淇淋，烤鸭，菲律宾式沙拉，咖喱包，窝打，比萨饼，炸鸡块，等等。不要忘了还有E Ling买的寿司。我必须承认，我吃了大部分。

这是一场比5星级酒店的食物还好的盛宴。Bryan, Joyce, Talib and Sally帮忙装饰圣诞树，摆放礼物。可惜的是，圣诞灯饰不能亮。但是，我们期望明年将有全新的，会亮的圣诞灯饰！

由于有不少新的员工，这也提供了一个机会让我们所有的人相互了解。

由于Jason Tian (我们的会员) 也在场，他也受邀加入了我们的派对。他得到了一份礼物，这样他可以跟别人交换礼物。另外两名在场的年轻志愿者们也同时受到了邀请。

Grace热情地运用她的花卉装饰技巧，用两束美丽的鲜花来装饰桌子。这些花布置得真不错！

所有的人共享美食，相互了解，一起度过美好的时光。

最后，Bryan和Joyce帮忙我们交换礼物。每个人都很好地享受了这次聚会，并期待参加明年的员工圣诞大聚餐。

Christmas Light-up Dazzles Members

Christmas in Singapore is a magical time for everyone. You can sense a great build-up as early as mid-November. A magical event which no Singaporean should miss is the annual Orchard Road Christmas light-up. To help spread the Christmas joy to our physically-challenged friends of HWA, YMCA organised a trip to Orchard Road on Saturday, 21 November 2009.

Volunteers from YMCA all dressed in colorful t-shirts assembled at Orchard's hottest new shopping mall, ION Orchard. Upon our arrival, the volunteers got acquainted with our members and everyone was in high spirits. The first stop was the ION Christmas Tree. Unlike the other Christmas Trees along Orchard Road, this one had four doors which allowed visitors to step into the centre of the tree and as our members looked up they were amazed by the glittering and colourful decorations that lined around the trees all the way to the top. With such a beautiful tree in sight, our members took this opportunity to take memorable photographs with their close friends.

As they strolled along Orchard Road, they enjoyed an ice-cream and savored it along the way and enjoyed a tropical Christmas minus the snow and the cold weather. Along the way, there were performers from various ethnic groups and people from different churches producing multi-faceted, dynamic presentations including dance, music, drama and fine art. Our members were particularly mesmerised by a disabled artist playing various Christmas Carols on her violin and cheered her on.

As they proceeded on, it became rather difficult to maneuver through the crowd, as shoppers



A volunteer poses for a picture with a HWA member

were seen whizzing through with their huge shopping bags in tow. This year with the opening of three new shopping malls namely ION Orchard, Orchard Central and 313, the crowd just grew bigger. However, our members were unperturbed as they were dazzled by the bright lights, a life-sized Santa Claus, Reindeers, and cute Santarinas skipping around Orchard Road, giving out little freebies much to the delight of the orchard road visitors.

Though members were enjoying their outing, it was soon time for dinner as refreshments were served to all members at Orchard Central. It was certainly a fun outing for both our hosts and our members. When asked if she enjoyed the outing, Miss Tan a HWA member just exclaimed, "Awesome!" All too soon, it was time to head home, as the HWA vans arrived to bring them home.

圣诞节亮灯炫幻之旅

新加坡的圣诞节对所有人来说都是充满神奇色彩的。各种色彩缤纷的圣诞装饰从11月中旬就开始陆续出现，点缀狮城。而其中所有新加坡人都不会错过的盛事就是每年一度的乌节路亮灯仪式。为了让我们的残疾人士朋友也能分享这份圣诞快乐，YMCA于2009年11月21日为协会会员组织了一趟乌节路亮灯炫幻之旅。



Strolling along Orchard Road

来自YMCA的志愿人员们一身亮丽彩衣在乌节路新建的热门商场ION Orchard门前集合。会员到达后，志愿者很快与他们熟悉起来，大家兴高采烈的开始出发。第一站就是ION圣诞树。与众不同的是这棵圣诞树有四个入口可以让游客登高进入树的中心，而树上那些绚丽多彩的装饰物也耀眼夺目。会员们开心地与朋友们在树前合影留念。

会员们在志愿者的帮助下坐在轮椅上漫步乌节路，一边品尝美味的冰淇淋，一边享受这独特的没有了寒冷与风雪的圣诞节气氛。一路上，来自不同种族团体的表演者和天主，基督教徒们呈现了多才多艺，充满活力的多项表演，有舞蹈、音乐、戏剧和艺术表演。其中会员们特别喜欢一位残疾艺术家带来的小提琴演奏圣诞颂歌，不停为她鼓掌加油。

随着大家渐渐走入乌节路中心，轮椅越来越难在拥挤的人群中穿行。不时有人拖着大型购物袋从我们身边快速走过。今年随着三家新型商场ION Orchard, Orchard Central 和 313 的陆续建成，乌节路上的人潮也日渐增多。但是这并没有打扰会员们的兴致，大家还是兴高采烈地观赏绚丽的彩灯，真人大小的圣诞老人，麋鹿和可爱的Santarinas沿着乌节路向游人派发精美的圣诞小礼物。

很快晚餐时间到了，会员们恋恋不舍地告别街边美景，进入乌节购物中心享用美食。这一晚是真正的宾主尽欢。用我们的会员陈小姐的话来说就是“精彩之级！”随着协会专车的抵达，会员与志愿人员们互相道别，心满意足地踏上归途。



Members enjoying a performance



A Day of *Discovery and Fun* at Labrador Park

Written By Jason Rodrigo
Programme Executive, HWA



Date: 8 December 2009
Time: 9.30 am to 1.00 p.m.
Organised By: National Parks

A gorgeous view of the waters from the park

Saturdays – the day for youths to “chill out” at shopping malls or catch up with friends at Starbucks. But volunteers from the National Parks Board chose to spend their time with 14 HWA members exploring the beauty and tranquility of Labrador Park.



Members participating in an Origami session with the volunteers



A guided tour of the gardens

Like most nature reserves which are disabled friendly, members were given a guided tour of the park which is rich in military history. In 1843, it was formerly used by the British as a strategic defence site to protect the entrance to the harbours of Singapore. Members also learnt that Labrador Park was one of nine sites in which British forces set up their forts to defend the invasion of Singapore by the Japanese Forces. Apart from being a military site, members were also mesmerised by the rich variety of flora and fauna.

Members were delighted to learn that the reserve was home to more than 50 kinds of birds including the blue-crowned hanging parrot, the Rufus Woodpecker, Abbott's Babbler, and the Sea Eagle. As they explored the forest, members

were seen smiling and pointing at various species of butterflies hovering around plants and trees. The members were particularly mesmerised by little furry squirrels scurrying along tree tops with nuts in their mouths probably meant to feed their young.

After taking in the sights and sounds, members were treated to a well-deserved buffet lunch which consisted of various local dishes and some went for seconds. As a lunch time treat, members were also given origami lessons. Members with the help of the volunteers, carefully folded palm leaves to construct grasshoppers. It was certainly a well-spent Saturday. HWA would like to thank National Parks Board for organising this fun and enriching outing for our members.

National Parks Auction



The National Parks Board adopted HWA in the year 2008. This year, National Parks Board kindly offered to auction two of our paintings at their Staff Dinner and Dance. The charity auction was held at Swissotel Merchant Court on 15 January 2010.

Paintings were drawn by our artistic HWA members, Koh Ah Moi and Tay Bee Lian respectively. Patricia Chia, our fundraising assistant executive, represented HWA and attended the Dinner.

The auction for the "Mother Nature" painting saw the final bidders being two staffs from NParks .

The auction for "The Old Kampong" painting saw the final bidder as the CEO of NParks, Mr Ng Lang. Mr Ng , had intently gone round the tables to ask for donations from his staffs. This was most certainly a praiseworthy effort of Mr Ng.

In addition, one NParks's staff, Ms Jean Louise Lee had generously donated to HWA her prize of a Hi-Fi set (worth \$258).

Tay Bee Lian (Artist of the painting "Mother Nature") said: "I feel more confident about my artworks now. I am very thankful towards NParks." She added on: "Painting makes me forget about my worries." She commented that the money will help considerably in contributing to her living expenses.

Koh Ah Moi (Artist of the painting "The Old Kampong") said: "This is a form of encouragement. This will motivate me to create more artworks from now on." She commented that the money can be used to buy more art materials and assist her in day to day living.

HWA would like to express our outmost gratitude towards NParks for their constant support and never ending contributions to helping the disabled in our society.

Koh Ah Moi
(Artist of the painting "The Old Kampong")



Description of the Artist

Painting has always been her interest. It is inconvenient for her to go for outdoor paintings since she was infected with Poliomyelitis in year 1945. Hence, she expresses herself through paintings in the studio of HWA. Through the Charity

Donation From Thong Teck Sian Tong Lian Sin Sia Temple

Auction, she aims to continue to help raise funds for other disabled members in HWA who share the same interest as her so that they have the opportunity of painting together in the near future.

Synopsis of the Painting

A painting of Pulau Ubin – a serene and quiet place. Once she sets her eyes on it she feels very cheerful. It reminds her of her happy childhood days in the old kampong.



Tay Bee Lian

(Artist of the painting
"Mother Nature")

Description of the Artist

The artist was diagnosed with Poliomyelitis at the age of 4. Painting has always been a form of livelihood for her. She is very grateful to HWA for the chance she has been given to draw and paint. Since young, she has developed a liking for fashion design and colors.

Synopsis of Painting

The natural surrounding depicts the smell of fresh air and she loves the fresh greenery. There are many insects and animals living in the forests. Through her painting, she aims to raise public awareness of people on the responsibility to protect the nature which surrounds us.

HWA would like to express deep appreciation and thanks to Thong Teck Sian Tong Lian Sin Sia Temple for their generous donation to us.

A vegetarian lunch was held on 30 December 2009 followed by a cheque presentation to HWA represented by Mr Michael Tan, HWA. This occasion was held in conjunction with the commemoration of their 60th anniversary and the Holy Birth Date of their Patron Saint 'Yun Jie Bodhisattva'.

As any other non-profit organisation, they themselves face challenges in fund-raising. Despite this factor, we are truly grateful that they feel it is as important to help the less privileged and come forward with their contribution.

We most certainly wish them all the best and would like to convey our heartfelt thanks.



Representatives from HWA and the Temple in a cheque presentation to HWA

After The Fall

Written By Edmund Wan,
HWA Member

For many of us, slipping or falling down is just a part of life; part of growing up. Most of us have a natural reflex to break our fall, usually without getting hurt badly. However, when it comes to people with disabilities and even the elderly, a fall often ends in a disaster. In most cases, they land in hospital with broken bones, multiple cuts and bruises, and subsequently suffer the agony of having to go through therapy to walk properly again.

People with disabilities want to live no differently. They want to enjoy shopping, movies, dining. However to enjoy life, this must be done within the boundaries of their limitations. When asked, their greatest fear is falling and getting injured. Therefore, it is no surprise that many patients admitted to hospitals are people with disabilities and the fragile elderly.

I suffered polio on my left leg as an infant. As such, I walk with a limp as my left leg does not have much strength. For more than 60 years living with this disability, I still have the same fear of falling. Can we, persons with disabilities, prevent or control ourselves from falling? Can we also break the fall just like any able-bodied person? When I was young I could recover from the pain of falling very quickly. I cannot say the same as I get on in years, for recovery becomes a longer process. The secondary impact on other parts of the body also becomes more apparent.

When I was a schoolboy, falling when alighting from the bus was very common. Buses in the early 80s and the concern for a person with disabilities were not apparent. The bus drivers normally do not come to a full stop and would expect you to jump off the bus if you were the only passenger alighting. For a person with disabilities, the balancing and retaining the momentum on the ground is a huge challenge that often ends up in a fall.

I feared taking buses and sometimes would skip the bus stop if I was the only passenger to alight. I would rather have walked back home. I know it is hard to believe what I did — I walked to and from school. I was staying in Prince Charles Crescent and my school then was Keppel School at Cantonment Road. I tried not to take the bus because it hurts most when you fall. I would endure the distance, telling myself that walking was a good form of exercise for me. Looking back, I could not believe how I was able to walk all the way during my primary school days.

Often the advice given to me was to walk slowly, wear a good non-slip pair of shoes, not to run and watch your steps. It all sounded logical but yet I would still fall now and then, no matter how careful I was.

Wearing a good pair of non-slip shoes helped but how many of us could afford a pair back then? Usually, if we were lucky, we would own only one pair of shoes. This pair, we would wear over and over, even when it started to fall apart. The heel of the shoes would wear out and because we couldn't afford another pair, we would continue to use them. Such shoes can also trigger a fall.

Another factor that causes a fall are the surfaces which we step on. I fell once on a metal drain cover along the pedestrian walk. I have spoken up at some feedback sessions about using such metal drain covers. When it rains, the drain covers become very slippery and it is a potential hazard to pedestrians. I was once at a famous Super Market and slipped simply because the floor was wet — perhaps the sole of my shoes were worn out. I need to remember to walk in small steps and not to run at all times.

For many, we can break the fall with our arms or with the other leg. For persons with disabilities, the other leg is helpless in breaking the fall. I remember one most embarrassing moment in my life — I was trying to walk across a construction site that was covered with wet mud after being dug up. It was like walking on ice! I had no control at all. I fell and my entire pants were muddy. What made it worse was that I had to crawl out of my predicament. Now can you imagine me walking home with mud all over my body!

Falling and getting hurt is part and parcel of the lives of persons with disabilities, including myself. Out of most of the falls I have had, I landed either on my backside, my tailbone or sometimes on my elbow. Lately, the pain in my back became excruciating because of my numerous falls and I ended up in the Accident & Emergency (A&E) in the hospital. I was told not to carry any heavy load, as it seems that my neck is resting very close on the nerves. I was resigned due to this outcome.

How do we prevent or even minimise the pain resulting from a fall? I often wonder if there are any products available in the market to help break or cushion falls. I have many thoughts on this and I am sure that products such as this, if ever it exists, will be extremely helpful for all disabled and even the elderly. If you know of any such products, do contact me via email at wan.edmund@yahoo.com.sg.

Staff Who Care

So the saying goes: “Charity begins at home.” Staff from HWA showed their care and concern for our members by passing the donation box to each other to contribute donations to HWA.



This was a donation from the heart and it did not matter how much the contributions were. Our colleagues from Jurong Point were more than willing to participate and we passed the donation boxes to them in kind. The final amount collected was \$1,083 of which \$722 was designated to buying a phone answering machine in order to help disseminate information to our members in a timely manner. As staff of HWA contributed, it has given us more of a sense of belonging knowing we have in a small way, made an impact on the lives of our members.

来自员工的一片爱心

常言说得好：“仁爱始于家”。协会的工作人员们自发组织捐款，为会员们献上一片爱心和关怀。

这份给予来自于心底，而不需用数额大小来衡量。身在裕廊坊的职员也积极参与。最后我们一共筹得了\$1,083，其中\$722会用于购买一台自动答录机以

向会员们即时提供关于协会各项活动的最新消息。员工的这份付出，让我们更好的体会到即使只是微薄的力量，也可以在一定程度上帮助改善会员生活。

A Day in the Life of an Occupational Therapist

Written by Mr Mani Murugeswaran,
Occupational Therapist, HWA

Day....
*"Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending."
~ Maria Robinson*

Life...
*"My formula for living is quite simple. I get up in the morning and I go to bed at night. In between, I occupy myself as best I can".
~ Cary Grant*

It's been a real joy to share my experience as an occupational therapist.

I have felt always privileged to say I am a part of the rehab team . Generally speaking; there is no "typical day" for an Occupational therapist. Each day in the life of Occupational therapist is like sunrise and sun set. If I were to try and describe my typical day, it would include;

- Assessment of physical, functional, emotional, psychological, and developmental capabilities.



Mr Mani Murugeswaran providing therapy on a typical day at HWA Rehab Centre

- Planning of therapeutic programs for individuals using vocational, recreational, remedial, social and educational activities
- Selecting and designing a variety of activities that assist in affected movement or function and help individuals to regain personal care skills, such as eating and dressing.
- Monitoring the progress of individuals and assist with the coordination of an effective health team
- Home environment assessment and suggest home modification of clients to allow for better access and independence.

However, it does not end here. Working in HWA is more than just doing your typical OT duties. It involves a lot of emotion, understanding the

psychosocial needs and somehow become a trustworthy friend with your clients. At the end of the day, my clients impact my life by making me think what I have done today and what I could do tomorrow. The emotional bonding and the friendship that I cherish each day helps me to do more and motivates me to do something better for them in days to come. I have never regretted my decision in being an Occupational Therapist and working for a not-for-profit industry.

At the end of each laborious day, I still feel very relaxed and energetic especially when the patient or their families look satisfied and they improve and achieve our set goals. Yes, it makes me feel more convinced each day that I am useful to this society being an Occupational Therapist and more so, as a human being.

Touch A Life!

Have you ever thought that you can make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities?

Now you can. Join our Befriender programme to enrich the lives of our members.

What is Befriender programme?

A programme that seeks volunteers who are keen to develop friendship and rapport with a HWA member

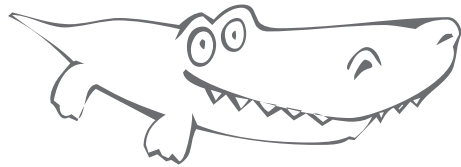
What do I have to do?

- Be able to conduct home-visits once a month
- Provide emotional support and offer a listening ear
- Encourage member to talk and think about his or her hopes for the future and plan the steps needed to get there
- Be able to submit a simple report

What are the criteria?

- Volunteers preferably need to be 20 years old and above
- A passion to help people with disabilities

For more details, please contact **Mr Jason Rodrigo** at **6254 3006**.



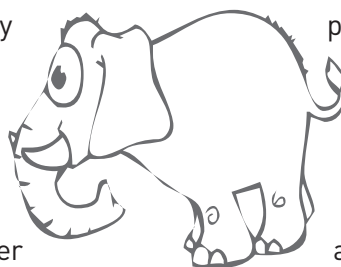
Having Fun



Did you know that the Singapore Zoo is home to more than 2,500 specimens from 315 species, 29% of which are threatened? That was what our members learnt from their visit to the Singapore Zoological Gardens on Saturday, 31 October 2009. From the minute they stepped into the Singapore Zoo, they were encompassed in an enchanted tropical rainforest that brought them into another world. With the chirping of different tunes and the swinging of monkeys from tree to tree overhead, members felt instantly welcome in this world-class garden.

Our members were impressed not only with the Zoo's approach of displaying animals in their breeding groups, but also the manner in which different species coexist together in one enclosure. This reflects the harmonious co-existence of animals residing together in the wild. One such example was the white rhinoceros co-existing with an antelope. Another was the sea lion/penguin exhibit where both species were swimming and going about their daily activities without confrontation.

As they cruised along the different exhibits, our members were particularly amazed by the



playback recording of the white rhino. At this exhibit, they learnt that the Hippopotamus was ranked as the second largest living land mammal after the elephants. Though these creatures may seem awfully bulky but they can run rather fast. An irritated white rhino may just decide to charge towards you at a speed of 50km/h. Yet despite its enormous size, it is generally not aggressive.

The day was blessed with good weather and members enjoyed not only cool weather but the warmth friendship by YMCA's volunteers as they

With Animals!



shared light conversation and interesting stories about particular habits of animals.

Perhaps the most recognised resident is the orang utan, and this is the place to enjoy fabulous eye-to eye views of these enigmatic apes. An elevated boardwalk takes guests into the treetops where they can observe their natural behaviour at close range.

As they were so engrossed by the exhibits that they soon discovered that it was lunch time and while enjoying a sumptuous meal, zoo instructors came around with various tame animals like snakes to entertain them as they enjoyed their meal. By 2.00 p.m. everyone was looking forward to the live shows.

The first one was the elephant show. The various tricks by the elephants drew much cheer and laughter from the members and it was nice to see the members laughing their hearts out and not having a care in the world during those moments! At the end of the show, the elephants

sprayed a fine spray of water towards the audience much to the delight of the members.

All too soon, it was time to leave for home. Members looked happy and extremely contented as they boarded the transport back to HWA.

Free Admission for Clients with Special Needs!



Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS), which manages Jurong Bird Park, Night Safari and Singapore Zoo, will provide free admission to clients with special needs from 1 February 2010. Accompanying minders and caregivers will enjoy a 20% discount.

For enquiries, you may contact Mr Jason Rodrigo (HWA) at 6254 3006.

BUNGE Spreads Cheer at Year-end Party!

The disabled in every society are often marginalised. In a fast-paced society with competing wants, their needs can be forgotten or overlooked. However the staff of BUNGE Agribusiness Pte Ltd have shown that they possess a warm and generous spirit by jointly organising our Year-End Party on Sunday, 13 December 2009 at the multi-purpose hall of Ulu Pandan Community Club. The event was graced by Dr Mohamed Maliki Bin Osman, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of National Development. More than 250 physically-challenged members turned up to enjoy a wide array of Christmas goodies including Turkey, Log-cake, fun and games and a chance to take home a Lucky Draw prize.

To help ring in the Christmas Cheer, Volunteers from HWA and BUNGE were dressed in red-T-shirts and wore red caps similar to that of Santa's. Everyone looked like busy little bees buzzing around helping to decorate the hall, blowing up balloons, welcoming members upon their arrival and leading them to their seats. The volunteers were eager to meet the needs of the members and offered them drinks hoping to make them feel at home. Members took this opportunity to meet old friends and catch up on the latest news.

The party commenced with a welcome message from Ms Nancy Chia, President, HWA. Ms Nancy Chia was certainly pleased with the large turn-out of members and volunteers. In her address she mentioned, "Our success is not

only measured by the amount raised to meet needs, but also the size of Singaporeans' hearts. I understand that BUNGE staff together with their family members, Singapore Polytechnic students as well as HWA Volunteers are here today to bring cheer and friendship to our members. However, we need more Singaporeans to step forward and play a part in helping those who are in need. The comprehensive provision of services and programmes that we need to help those with disabilities will only succeed if willing Singaporeans volunteer their time, energy, and come together. We also need to raise the average person's awareness of simple, but easily overlooked steps that we can take to help those who are disabled to feel more at ease in society."



Pipa performance

Mr Terry Horn, Asia Executive Committee Member of BUNGE, reiterated Nancy's message when in his welcome address he added, "As part of BUNGE's Corporate Social Responsibility to the community, I hope to continue working closely with HWA in 2010 so as to help the disabled community reintegrate successfully into society."

All too soon, it was time for lunch as volunteers helped to serve a wide array of Christmas Goodies to the members, while the members enjoyed the various performances by HWA's performing groups such as the Pipa Group and Keyboard Group playing several Christmas Carols. The event saw members clapping and singing along enthusiastically. There were also two song performances in Mandarin by two guests. The songs in mandarin appealed to both the young and old and they received several loud applauses from the audience as they were mesmerised by their singing.

As the members savored the food, they were pleasantly surprised by a special visit by none other than St Nicholas himself – Santa Claus! All dressed in his famous red suit and cheery Ho! Ho! Ho! he went around wishing them, "Merry Christmas!" He gave each member a goodie-bag which consisted of a souvenir and snacks.

Members were beaming and laughing as they felt honored shaking Santa's big, warm hand.

At exactly 2.00 p.m. Dr Mohamed Maliki Bin Osman, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of National Development, arrived and waved to the audience as he made his entrance to his designated table. In his welcome address, he acknowledged HWA's efforts in providing valuable services to enhance the lives of the disabled. He also highlighted the government's support for the physically-challenged when he said, "Our physically-challenged friends are an important and integral part of Singapore's society. We would like to continue to encourage awareness, understanding and support for our physically-challenged friends" After the formal exchange of tokens of appreciation, Dr Maliki interacted with members and helped distribute goodie bags to them and posed with each member receiving the gift. As he interacted with each member, he took several minutes to enquire about their well-being. Mr Maliki's gesture touched many of the members' hearts and soon took his leave for another appointment.

The act that drew the loudest applause was Mr Kumarino. Armed with his trusty electric guitar



Members playing table games

and deep-voice, he raised the temperature with several rock and roll hits from the 60s and 70s such as Tom Jones, Starship, Jackson 5 and the Eagles. Members clapped and sang along as many of the songs were familiar tunes and helped members reminisce the past.

Soon it was the moment the members were waiting for – The Lucky Draw. Mr Terry Horn did the honors of picking several lucky draw numbers much to the pleasure of members with the winning tickets. The atmosphere was tense as the first prize of a 32 inch LCD TV was won by Mr Patrick Ang. He gave a wide smile and shouted his winning number. It was a moment of victory for him.

With the last prize won, it was time to bid good-bye as members said their farewells to their close friends and as the crowd dispersed with only confetti, traces of wrappers, food and empty glasses were remnants of an afternoon of celebration. One member was heard saying as he boarded the transport home, "I will be back next year!"



Mr Kumarino with his spectacular performance for the audience

About BUNGE Ltd

Bunge Limited (www.bunge.com) is a leading global agribusiness and food company founded in 1818 and headquartered in White Plains, New York. Bunge's over 25,000 employees in over 30 countries enhance lives by improving the global agribusiness and food production chain. The company supplies fertilizer to farmers in South America, originates, transports and processes oilseeds, grains and other agricultural commodities worldwide, produces food products for commercial customers and consumers and supplies raw materials and services to the biofuels industry.

年终联欢会

—来自BUNGE的圣诞祝福

在各种社会环境中，残疾人士往往是被忽视的一个边缘团体，尤其是在节奏快速，功利至上的现代社会，更是常常被遗忘而忽略。然而，来自BUNGE Agribusiness Pte Ltd的工作人员们却用他们的实际行动为我们的残疾会员们奉上一片爱心与关怀。他们于2009年12月13日在Ulu Pandan民众俱乐部的多用途大厅与协会共同举办了一场精彩的年终联欢会。与会我们荣幸邀请到了国家发展部政务次长 Dr Mohamed Maliki Bin Osman。超过250位残疾会员到场一边享用了各种圣诞美食像火鸡，树桶蛋糕，一边欣赏精彩表演，同时可得到机会参与幸运抽奖。

为响应圣诞主题，来自协会和BUNGE的志愿人员们全部身穿红色T恤，头带圣诞老人的红色帽子。像群忙碌的蜜蜂一样在大厅里上下左右悬挂装饰物，扮美会场，迎接会员到来，领他们入席。志愿者们殷勤地询问会员们的需要，并及时送上饮品，令他们宾至如归。会员们也借此机会与很久不见的老朋友们互相问候，交流心情。在协会理事会会长Nancy Chia小姐的致词中，联欢会正式开始。

Nancy Chia小姐很高兴看到这么多会员和志愿人员的参与，她在致词中讲到：“协会的成功与否



Mohamed Maliki Bin Osman 博士向会员致以新年祝福。

并不是仅仅以所筹善款的多少来衡量，还要看社会大众对残疾社群的容纳度是否提高。今天来自BUNGE的工作人员和他们的家人，新加坡理工学院的学生，以及我们协会的志愿人员走到一起为会员们带来欢乐和友谊。然而，我们需要更多的新加坡人走出来加入我们，为帮助有需要的人们付出努力与爱心。为残疾人士提供专业而完善的服务和活动全部要依赖于新加坡人自愿奉献我们的时间、精力和彼此的团结合作。我们也需要向大众普及一些能够为残疾人士在日常生活及社交中提供便利的简单基本常识与方法。”

亚洲执行董事会成员Terry Horn先生也在他的致词中重申了Nancy的观点：“作为BUNGE履行企业社会责任的计划之一，我们将在2010年继续与残疾人士福利协会紧密合作，帮助残疾社群融入主体社会。

很快，午餐时间到了。会员们一边享用着志愿者呈上的各种美味的圣诞食物，一边欣赏由协会表演团带来的精彩节目表演。有琵琶演奏团的中国乐曲和键盘乐团的圣诞颂歌。一些会员们情不自禁地合着音乐哼唱起来。还有由两位客人带来的华语歌曲演唱，从回味无穷的老歌到耳熟能详的新曲，观众们的掌声与喝彩此起彼伏。

午餐进行中，一位访客的到来为会员带来惊喜——圣诞老人来了。他穿着那身著名的红色衣服，背着礼物袋出现在会场。“Ho! Ho! Ho! 圣诞快乐!”他送给每个会员一个装有纪念品和零食的礼品袋。会员们都开心的笑着与圣诞老人握手致意。

准时2点整，国家发展部政务次长Dr Mohamed Maliki Bin Osman抵达会场。他在致词中认同残疾人士福利协会在为提高残疾社群生活质量提供有价值的服务所作出的努力。他也强调政府部门一直支持这些努力：“我们的残疾朋友们是存在于新加坡整个社会中的一个重要团体。我们希望能够继续鼓励人们认识，了解并支持残疾人士。”正式交换礼物后，Dr Maliki走到座位中与会员们亲切交流，分发礼品包，并与他们合影留念。在离开会场出发去下一个地点前他还拨出几分钟的时间回答了会员们的一些咨询。他的友好与亲切深深打动了我们的心。

所有节目表演中获得最多掌声的要属会员Kumarino的一人乐团表演。他一边弹奏电吉它，一边用他浑厚的嗓音演唱了一连串60和70年代的摇滚歌手的成名曲，像Tom Jones, Starship, Jackson和5 Eagles。熟悉的乐曲唤起了会员们美好的回忆，都情不自禁的一边拍手一边合唱起来。

很快会员们期盼已久的重头戏上场了——幸运大抽奖。Terry Horn被邀请担任抽奖嘉宾，为会员抽出获奖号码。气氛渐渐紧张起来，直到头奖——32寸平面电视被抽出时，全场鼎沸，获奖的会员笑着大声喊出他手中的获奖号码，让全场人们一起见证他的幸运和满足。

终于到了说再见的时刻。会员们依依不舍地与朋友们互道珍重。会场上只有遍地的纸屑、彩带、残羹与空杯还在述说着那一场开心而难忘的圣宴。搭车处，一个会员上车前大声喊出：“明年我还会来！”

关于BUNGE Ltd

Bunge Limited (www.bunge.com) 是一间全球领先的食物与农业综合企业，1818年成立于美国纽约洲怀特普莱恩斯市。遍布30多个国家的25,000名员工共同致力于改善食物与农业综合产品生产链以提高人类生活质量。公司向南美农场供应肥料；种植，运输并加工油籽，谷物和其它全球性农业作物；向商业客户及消费者提供食物；为生物燃料工业供应原材料和服务。

Talk on Influenza A (H1N1)

By Dr Selvan

On 9 December 2009, we were fortunate to have Dr Selvan from Alexandra Hospital educating our staff and members on H1N1. There was an informative sharing session and we were left with a clearer understanding of H1N1, important knowledge for us to be aware of as an Organisation. At the end of the talk, he encouraged all those at high risk or who have contact with those at high risk to be vaccinated. As they say, "Prevention is better than cure."

The following are some of the important points to note:

Symptoms:

- Fever, particularly a fever of over 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Chills and fatigue
- Body aches
- Headache
- Occasionally vomiting and diarrhoea

Those at Risk:

- Those over 65 years of age
- Children younger than 5 years of age
- Pregnant women



Dr Selvan from Alexandra Hospital gives a presentation

- People with chronic medical conditions such as diabetes or heart disease
- Those infected with HIV
- Those suffering from asthma or other respiratory illness

Precautions:

- H1N1 vaccinations
- For those with H1N1, cover nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing
- Washing of hands with soap and water regularly
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid close contact with those who are sick

甲型流感(H1N1)讲座

— SELVAN医生主讲

在2009年12月9日，我们很幸运地请到亚历山大医院的Selvan医生来协会为我们的工作人员和会员们介绍有关H1N1病毒的知识。讲座结束后还有一个信息交流分享会，让我们更清楚地了解有关H1N1病毒的知识。了解重要的知识，对我们作为一个协会来说，是非常重要的。在讲座接近尾声的时候，他鼓励所有那些面临高风险以及那些与高危人群接触的人员接受疫苗注射。正如平时所说的，“预防胜于治疗。”

以下是一些需要注意的要点：

症状：

- 发热，特别是超过华氏100度
- 咽喉痛
- 咳嗽
- 寒战和疲劳
- 身体疼痛
- 头痛
- 偶尔呕吐和腹泻

易受感染人群：

- 年逾65岁儿童
- 未满5岁
- 孕妇
- 患有慢性疾病的人如糖尿病或心脏病
- 艾滋病病毒感染者
- 那些患有哮喘和其他呼吸系统疾病的人

预防措施：

- H1N1病毒疫苗注射
- 对于那些H1N1病毒携带者，请在咳嗽或打喷嚏时用纸巾盖住鼻子和嘴巴
- 用肥皂和水定期洗手
- 避免接触眼睛，鼻子和嘴巴
- 避免密切接触病患

A Race to Remember

Written By Jason Rodrigo
Social Integration Dept

Oita Prefecture, located on the eastern coast of Kyushu island, Japan is famous for its hot spring resorts, nature, friendly people and of course their Annual 29th OITA International Wheelchair Marathon, where physically challenged athletes from all over the world meet to break personal and world records. The event was held on 25 October 2009.



Participants lined up before the marathon

The Marathon which was established in 1981 to coincide with the International Year of Disabled Persons, the Oita International Wheelchair Marathon was intended to strengthen friendship among physically challenged people throughout the world. It also encourages hope, courage and active involvement in society. By participating in the extremely demanding sport of wheelchair marathon racing, athletes seek to expand the limits of their physical and mental strengths as they attempt to beat previous years' records. Every year, people are impressed by the determination of the wheelchair athletes to triumph over the physical limitations.

Participants could choose to compete in the half marathon of 21 km or the full marathon 42 km which was officially approved by the Japan Association of Athletics Federations. The Marathon attracted 281 athletes from 14 foreign countries and 38 prefectures of Japan competed in the event. Mr Jack Lai, a HWA member and a seasoned athlete and wheelchair marathoner with the Singapore Disability Sports Council represented Singapore under the 21 km route. Jack spent several months training for this event as the competition was very demanding and had to compete with various international marathoners such as the legendary Heinz Frei from Switzerland, Yamamoto Hiroyuki from Japan, and others from Austria, Canada and USA. In his opening address at the opening ceremony, Mr Katsusada Hirose, Governor of OITA Prefecture congratulated the athletes for their courage and determination proudly commented, "in this year's 29th competition, athletes who aim for the finish line will deeply impress, and give courage and hope to, not only people

with disabilities but all OITA citizens standing along the side lines.

The opening ceremony which was held at Galleria, Take-machi Dome Square was attended by some 1,000 OITA citizens, volunteers and corporate sponsors. After the speech, the OITA Prefectural Police Musical Band led the parade as they played the famous "marching band" along the shopping mall to Wakakusa Park where the athletes were given a resounding welcome reception.

As dawn broke on 25 October, athletes made their final preparation at the hotel lobby before they made their way to the starting point. At exactly 11.00 am, the flag down saw scores of marathoners plying down the street, with spectators cheering on the marathoners. As waves of the marathoners swept by street by street, the weather began to turn for the worse, the cold rains and icy winds threatened the marathoners as many lost control of their machines due to wet road surface and poor visibility. Many were seen struggling to stay on track as they were taken by surprise by the strong torrential rain. As Just like the struggles of daily living, these brave marathoners were determined to finish the race and continued to complete the race. Once again just like in 2008, Mr Heinz Frei, 52 of Switzerland emerged the winner for the full marathon T53/54*, Men by clocking 1:25:46. Spectators were thrilled and shouts of congratulations were heard across as other marathoners crossed the finishing line after Heinz. Mr Hiroaki Nishihara (Japan) came in first for the half marathon T53/54. Our own homebred Mr Jack Lai T53/54, Men completed the half marathon race by clocking 1:09:04. Ms Liu Wenjun (China) captured the first prize in the women's category.

In this race, everyone was a winner as they completed the race despite the bad weather.

* T53/54 is a disability classification for athletes.



Spot The Difference Contest



Win a \$20 cash prize simply by spotting 5 differences in the two sets of cartoons below, circle them and mail the completed contest form to us at:

Handicaps Digest Contest (Attn: Editor)
Handicaps Welfare Association
16 Whampoa Drive
Singapore 327725



Contributed by HWA member, Mr Ong Chin Sin

Spot The Difference Contest Form

Full Name (as in NRIC): _____

Contact Number: _____

Address: _____

Membership No.: _____

Rules and Regulations

1. Only HWA members are eligible to participate (staff, Exco members and editorial board are not eligible)
2. Entries must be submitted using the application form on this page.
3. There will be a maximum of 3 winners per contest.
4. In the event that there are more than 3 correct entries, the winners will be decided by ballot.
5. The judges' decision is final.
6. The closing date of this contest is **15 April 2010**. All completed entries should reach HWA no later than this date.
7. The correct answers as well as the winners of this contest will be announced in the next issue of Handicaps Digest.



Did you managed to spot the differences in our "Spot The Difference" contest, Oct-Dec 2009 issue?

Here are the answers, in case you are pulling your hair out searching for them:



Congratulations!

The lucky winners of the "Spot The Difference" contest, Oct - Dec 2009 issue, are:

Lim Fook Chiong
Membership no: 0176L

Kagda Sakina Abbasbhai
Membership no: 0124K

Rajinder Singh s/o Jagat Singh
Membership no: 1638R

Each winner will receive a cash prize of \$20.

Do You Have a Story to Tell?

We are calling out to all HWA members for article contributions to Digest. If your article is published in the Digest, you will receive an incentive of \$40 per article.

Here's what you have to do:

1. Write an original article* of about 800 to 1000 words, either in English or Chinese. You can choose the topic of your article. For example, you can write about your holiday or life experiences, but your article has to be original and never-before published.
2. Send your article to us by email (editor@hwa.org.sg). Please include in your subject heading, "Article Contribution".
3. Watch out for the next issue of Digest! If your article is published, we will contact you shortly for payment.

It's that easy. So start writing now!

* Your story/article should contain no false or unwarranted claims for any product or service and contain no defamatory statements. It should also not infringe the copyright or other right of any person. Published articles will become HWA's property (for both print and/or electronic media) upon payment. You will keep HWA indemnified against all claims, actions, suits, demands, losses, costs and expenses in respect of the printed matter.

你有故事要与人分享吗?

我们诚邀所有残疾人士福利协会的会员们为本刊贡献文章。如果你的文章在文摘中出版,你将收到\$40的稿费。

以下是具体步骤:

1. 写一个大约800到1000个字的文章,英文或华文都可以。你可以选择你的文章的主题。举例来说,你能写有关你的假日或者生活经验的故事,但是你的文章必须是真实的并且以前从未出版过。
2. 可以用电子邮件(editor@hwa.org.sg)发送你的文章给我们。请在邮件名称中标明“文章贡献”。
3. 留意下一期文摘的出版! 如果你的文章被刊登,我们将很快地联络你并且支付稿费。

就是那么容易。现在就开始写作吧!

* 你的故事/文章不应该包含针对任何的产品或者服务的错误的或者无根据的要求,而且没有包含破坏名誉的陈述。它也应该不破坏版权或任何人的其他权利。付款之后,出版文章版权将归残疾人士福利协会所有(印刷品及/或电子媒体)。如果违反以上规定,你必须赔偿残疾人士福利协会有关该出版物的所有主张,行动,诉讼,要求,损失、费用和开销。

In The News

CHARITIES IN SINGAPORE

Feeling the pinch

As Govt disburses extra \$8.6 million to VWOs in financial difficulty, charities debate the way forward

LEONG WEE KEAT AND ONG DAILIN
weekat@mediacorp.com.sg

SINGAPORE – As charities here start to reveal the impact of the downturn on their financial statements, one voluntary welfare organisation (VWO) that has bucked the trend of falling donations may just show the way forward.

The Handicaps Welfare Association (HWA) raised close to \$2.45 million in the financial year that ended March 31, exceeding its forecast by 30 per cent and about 17-per-cent higher than last year.

Key to HWA's success was its donation draw offering cash prizes. The draw raised a record \$378,000, surpassing the \$255,000 raised last year, and helped to offset a \$43,000 drop in takings during HWA's Flag Days.

But HWA's showing is the exception rather than the norm. In a MediaCorp study of 10 charities whose financial year ended recently, eight had donations falling from "tens of thousands" to as much as \$2.03 million, compared to a year ago.

The situation in Singapore is reflected across Asia. According to a survey by consultancy The Management Centre, not-for-profit organisations in Asia have been hardest hit, with an average income fall of 13 per cent, compared to 3 per cent worldwide.

Fund raising will get tougher, say charities here, even though the economy shows signs of recovery.

Kidney Dialysis Foundation chief ex-

ecutive Foo Pek Hong said donations fell between 25 and 30 per cent as regular donors terminated monthly contributions to "manage their cashflow situations better".

With competition heating up for a smaller donor pie, HWA president Nancy Chia believes the traditional method of "tin can" collections – even donation draws, if they become rife – might lose donor support.

The concern is donor fatigue, said Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH) president Tan Guan Heng. SAVH was badly hit by the downturn: Donations fell by \$745,000 and the VWO had to cut staff strength from 55 to 28. Said Mr Tan: "Our donations come mainly from appeals and public education programmes. We don't really have godfathers, so to speak."

HELPING HANDS GETTING INVOLVED

There is the odd, unexpected helping hand. For example, Singapore Buddhist Free Clinic received \$200,000 in May from a group of anonymous donors, said Venerable Seck Sian Tiong.

But more charities will turn to the Government, which has a \$15-million VWO contingency fund, as another source of funding.

The Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) and the National Council of Social Service has released 64 per cent of the \$10 million they oversee to about 200 VWOs, and is evaluating how best to deploy the balance, said a MCYS spokesperson. Last month, the Health Ministry also gave out \$2.2 million to 17 VWOs.

Life Community Services, with its student and children care for some 300 families, was one beneficiary. MCYS gave it \$80,000 to tide over its shortfall. Chief executive James



A SNAPSHOT OF 10 CHARITIES

- Donations fell for eight, for example, by \$121,937 (83 per cent) for Sun-Dac Centre for the Disabled and \$744,875 (57 per cent) for Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped. Most cited the economic downturn as a key factor.
- Two attributed the decline to the end of charity drives. For example, the Society

for the Physically Disabled, for which donations dropped by \$2.03 million (36 per cent), said a television charity show was staged in 2007 to raise funds, but none was held last year.

• Two charities had more donations. Besides the Handicaps Welfare Association, the Society for the Aged Sick raised \$11,798 more.

Wong is optimistic that donations will pick up after a recent charity golf tournament.

But Society for the Physically Disabled's fund raising manager Helen Tay believes the impact of a recovering economy will be felt much later. For now, the VWO is targeting individual donors. "Although we've touched base with quite a number of corporate donors this year, response hasn't been as good as we hoped," said Ms Tay.

Meanwhile, there is a need to "think out of the (fund-raising) box", said HWA's Ms Chia. "We have to go into social enterprises or more daring approaches," she said, suggesting that VWOs be allowed to run lottery outlets, like in Ireland, where the blind run a lottery. The idea is not to encourage gambling,

she stressed, but to ensure a reliable source of income for VWOs.

The Singapore Totalisator Board already donates surplus funds from the Singapore Turf Club and Singapore Pools to the charity sector. But, on this, Ms Chia said: "Isn't it better earning your own income than just holding out your hand for handouts?"

KDF's Mrs Foo, however, cautioned against changes in fund-raising approaches and advocated keeping a lid on costs.

"If sentiment is bad, if people are hurting ... no matter what kind of strategy you come up with, it's going to be difficult," she said. "We have to look very carefully at containing our cost-income ratios ... What we cannot pick up in donations, we pick up in costs."

LESS THAN GRACIOUS

Let's not be one of them

Letter from Ho Chun Wei

I RECENTLY went on a shopping trip with a friend, who is a wheelchair user, along Orchard Road.

It was the first time I was out with her to an area with such high human traffic. I soon realised that accessibility for wheelchair users is less of a concern as compared to the apparent lack of social graces in people here (not necessarily Singaporeans).

We were not expecting preferential treatment but just simple courtesy and common sense. Here is our list of "social grace-challenged shoppers":

1 The Ones Who Just Can't Wait: We were in the grocery area at the basement of Shaw House. As we approached one of the narrow aisles, many shoppers coming from the

wider aisle opposite simply walked on without breaking a stride. Some even quickened their steps just so that they could get across before us. At least two shoppers could not wait a mere second for us to go through, preferring instead to squeeze in sideways and tip-toe niftily past us.

2 The Oblivious Blockers: It was crowded inside ION Orchard and we were behind this couple. They stopped abruptly at the entrance of a restaurant and started having a discussion. We stopped clearly in their sight but the couple was oblivious. We felt invisible until people started squeezing past us, assuring us that we could actually be seen. My friend and I made our intentions known not less than three times before the man moved to make way for us to pass.

3 The Starkers: We had just gotten out of a lift in ION Orchard when we encountered people staring at us as they walked past. One woman was particularly obvious – she had her gaze fixed on us as she approached from the opposite direction, and as she walked past us, turned her head till she was on the verge of twisting her neck 180°.

4 The Road Hogs: We proceeded to a nearby open-air car park to meet my friend's dad who had come to pick her up. The both of us were just one lane from reaching his vehicle but not one driver in the car park was patient or kind enough to stop briefly to allow us to cross the road first. I had put up my hand to signal my intention to cross for what seemed like forever but not a single driver bothered to stop.

We felt invisible for the second time that day.

This whole experience got me thinking about how difficult it is for wheelchair users when they are out by themselves.

However, not all is lost as my friend and I did meet some nice people: A lady who helped my friend overcome a kerb at a traffic junction and then a slope, two men who helped an Indonesian couple carry their daughter in a pram up a flight of steps and the staff at ION Orchard who took the initiative to direct us to different parts of the mall via wheelchair accessible routes.

We can start the evolution into a more gracious society by showing a bit more empathy to people with special needs, making that extra effort to look out for them.

News



MOVE ALONG: Our reporter Benson Ang moving around in a wheelchair in a crowded shopping centre along Orchard Road.

Yes, we are not heartless

GETTING AROUND EASIER

Eight new Wheelchair Accessible Bus (WAB) services — 13, 15, 36, 52, 54, 57, 291 and 333 — will be launched on Thursday to commemorate World Disability Day. In all, SBS Transit will have 38 WAB services on the roads.

Among those who have benefitted is IT support assistant, Mr Lim Koon Heng, 43, who said: "With more WAB services, I can hop onto different buses and do sightseeing during my free time as many places become wheelchair-accessible."

SBS Transit said it is committed to rolling out more of such services.

From Toa Payoh to Orchard, undercover reporter travels in wheelchair to see if people help the disabled

REPORT: **BENSON ANG**
bang@sph.com.sg

HOW do people in Singapore treat the wheelchair-bound?

Do they try to help them if they are in need? One reader recently wrote to The New Paper about his unpleasant experience when shopping with a wheelchair-bound friend along Orchard Road.

Mr Ho Chun Wei, 30, an executive, observed that in narrow aisles and crowded passageways, people would not give way to them. In a carpark, they encountered drivers who would not stop to let them cross. And they were met with rude stares on one occasion.

So is it really difficult for wheelchair users to get around? The New Paper borrowed a wheelchair from the Society for the Physically Disabled to find out.

On 23 Dec, I bandaged my feet and came up with a story that I sprained both ankles playing soccer.

For three hours, I sat in the wheelchair and went around. I started in Toa Payoh Town Centre and took the MRT to Orchard Road.

I had a list of things to do by myself, such as shopping, buying bread, crossing a road and using an under-

pass. I wanted to see how difficult it was for the wheelchair-bound to move around, and if people would help without being asked.

As it turned out, a lot of people did.

Toa Payoh Town Centre

Most shops had an external display, which left about one metre for shoppers to walk through the walkway. I occupied half this space.

Although most people allowed me to pass, a few overtook me.

The shops were also generally a step higher than the pavement, so I couldn't enter.

Wanting to buy bread, I sat outside a cake shop hoping the shop assistants would notice me.

When they did not after three minutes, I called out to passers-by to help me. Two men ignored me, but one woman stopped to help.

She went into the shop and picked what I wanted. She took my money to the cashier inside, so I did not have to enter. She did this while carrying bags of her own groceries.

The woman was not the only kind person who helped me in the heartlands. Ms Fiona from Beaute Spring, which sells skincare products, helped in a similar way when I tried to buy some soap.

A kind man also wheeled me off the road when I was crossing at a traffic light junction when one of my wheels got stuck on the kerb.

While I didn't get any rude stares, I noticed that people would glance at me.

I guess they were trying to avoid the wheels on my chair, or they felt it was unusual to see a wheelchair-bound person shopping alone.

IN HEARTLAND



GROCERY HELP: Our reporter asking a passer-by to help him buy bread. Despite having to handle her grocery bags, she kindly obliges.

IN ORCHARD



FRIENDLY PUSH: Realising that our reporter is having difficulty going up the ramp at the Wisma-Ngee Ann City underpass, a passer-by lends a hand.

TNP PICTURES
CHOO CHWEE HUA

On the MRT

There were lifts to get to different levels in the station, but getting past the gates was a problem.

There was only one gate for wheelchair users to access the platform.

But when I tried to enter, more than 10 people on the other side were exiting from this same gate, even though they could easily have used the smaller ones.

I was not sure if they did not see a woman with a pram and me on the other side trying to get in, or if they deliberately ignored us.

The woman and I had to wait for about three minutes before we could get to the platform.

I know it is courteous for those going in to allow those who are coming out to leave first, but wasn't the big gate built for people with prams and wheelchairs in the first place?

Orchard Road

I then tried to do the unthinkable – use the underpass between Wisma Atria and Ngee Ann City in a wheelchair.

This underpass is always crowded and tends to get jammed every time a big party is held on Orchard Road. It is narrow, which means one wheelchair would occupy most of the space.

In addition, going from Wisma to Ngee Ann City, there is an uphill slope, so it would take even longer to go through.

Honestly, I wasn't sure if busy Singaporeans would be patient enough to let me get through and I was quite nervous during this part of the experiment.

To my surprise, the journey was much easier than I expected.

I realised that strangers behind me were pushing me up the slope without being asked to.

I went through the pass three times just to be sure. Every time, someone – either local or foreign – volunteered to help.

I thanked each of them profusely, and I was sure each felt happy about being there for a person in need.

My conclusion? People in Singapore are generally willing to empathise and accommodate those with disabilities.

It's just that they can be too caught up with their own lives to notice those with difficulties around them.

Unlike in Toa Payoh or on the MRT, the fact that I occupied the entire underpass in Orchard Road forced people to notice me and acknowledge that I needed help.

As a new year resolution, perhaps it is time for us to be more aware of the people around us.

If we take an effort to notice and help them, we will also be helping ourselves become better and happier people.

Monday 9 November 2009 • THE NEW PAPER •

News

Special group to manage trust fund for disabled



THE Minister of Community Development, Youth and Sports Vivian Balakrishnan yesterday launched a non-profit group that manages trust funds for the disabled.

Singaporeans with disabled relatives can set up trust accounts for them with the government-backed Special Needs Trust Company for as little as \$5,000.

They can pump in any sum they want into their trust funds and the money will be invested and held by the Public Trustee's Office.

Upon their death or if they become incapacitated, the money will be disbursed to their designated beneficiary.

PERSEVERE: Darren Chua, who graduated as a doctor but never practised because of his massive stroke. He's now embarking on a new venture with an education centre.

PHOTO: CHOD CHUEE HOA



'I refuse to be disabled'

Helpless and with half his skull lost after a severe stroke, comeback doc wants to inspire others

REPORT: NG WAN CHING
wanching@sph.com.sg

IT HAD been his lifelong dream to be a doctor.

He graduated top of his cohort in his junior college and worked hard in medical school to realise his dream.

After five years, he graduated from medical school and was ready to start housemanship as an intern.

Then a massive stroke hit him — and killed his dreams. Dr Darren Chua was just 24 years old then.

But Dr Chua, now 33, is not one to look back on life with regrets.

Today, he is forging ahead with a new venture, an education centre, to help students achieve their best.

A few months after his stroke, he had thought he could be back at work within a year.

"Later I found out it was not very realistic," he said in an interview with The New Paper.

The stroke, which hit him on 28 Apr 2000, had sent blood gushing into his brain at such a furious rate that his brain shifted position.

"It moved to the right to make room for the blood," said Dr Chua.

The pressure building up in his head could have caused irreparable brain damage. So

doctors removed a part of his skull to relieve the pressure.

It made him look like Robocop, in the movie about a super-human cyborg who had part of his skull removed too, he said.

"Friends who visited said the same thing, when they noticed that one quarter of my head was missing," he said with a laugh.

His missing skull was put back on his head only six months later.

By then, he knew he was not going to get back to work any time soon.

The right side of his body was affected by the stroke.

Difficulties

It took him a long time to learn to walk again.

He has learnt to write with his left hand as his right hand is still feeling "right" as a result of the stroke.

He had already taken his medical degree, from National University of Singapore, when he had the stroke.

"Hence, in a way, I have obtained what I wanted," he said.

But he could not practise as a doctor as he had not undergone the one-year housemanship which was supposed to start a few days later.

On the day of his stroke, he had been home alone in the afternoon.

DONOR FATIGUE

Giving is getting harder

Letter from Kwan Jin Yao

"FEELING the pinch" (Oct 5) reveals the challenging times and circumstances that local charities and non-profit organisations face.

Fund-raising confidence is at an all-time low — people no longer give because they are tired of solicitation.

Furthermore, with the accessibility of the Internet and the proliferation of globalisation, it is increasingly difficult for different causes and groups to compete for the limited bandwidth of individuals.

From illness research to environmental awareness to philanthropy groups, many have reached a threshold in terms of fixed capacity and ability. I have gotten tired of being

asked to donate because I rarely know where my donation goes.

More significantly, I simply cannot respond to the assortment of demands that are increasing almost exponentially.

There is a multitude of methods through which traditional fund-raising methodologies and mechanisms can be improved and diversified.

Many overseas charities — and some local ones — have ventured into revenue-generating enterprises to fund activities and initiatives.

The notion of a social enterprise within charities allows the latter to make use of profits more effectively and efficiently.

Though initial conceptualisation and planning might be challenging, a charity which manages to balance profit

orientation and the key social objectives would find its income more sustainable; and in some ways, involve its beneficiaries too.

Alternatively, charities with parallel or similar aims can find ways of collaboration; or continue to involve student groups in the search for more projects to boost fund-raising awareness.

From my knowledge, organisations such as the Student Advisory Centre (SAC) have been active in doing so.

Ultimately, the key is for voluntary welfare organisations and non-profit organisations to adapt and adopt new methods.

Maintaining the status quo and continued reliance on the authorities — except for key organisations — is not the way to go.

LIFT UPGRADING PROGRAMME

Direct lift access not always possible: HDB

Letter from Chee Kheng Chye
Deputy Director
(Upgrading Programmes Management)
Housing and Development Board (HDB)

WE THANK Mr Ryman Lim for his feedback on the newly-upgraded lifts (picture) at Block 340 Clementi Ave 5 ("Not wheelchair-friendly at all", Nov 5).

The objective of the Lift Upgrading Programme (LUP) is to provide direct lift access to the flats for the convenience of residents. For most blocks, this has been achieved through the upgrading of existing lifts or the addition of a new lift. However, there is a small number of blocks where direct lift access is not possible due to site or technical constraints. Block 340 is one such block.

HDB has earlier explored various options to overcome the site constraints. However, the only viable LUP solution then was a "half-landing solution". While this solution could not provide direct access to the flats, it would improve the existing situation by reducing the number of steps that residents have to climb. Hence, the solution was supported by the residents for implementation.



DON WONG

The blue stickers on the new lifts indicate that the lift car is wheelchair friendly as it comes with handrail bars, and the doors are wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair. It does not suggest that full barrier-free accessibility has been achieved. We empathise with Mr Lim's situation, and seek his understanding on the LUP solution implemented for his block.

FROM READER STEFAN H

Shame on those who look down on the wheelchair-bound

I WAS appalled to read about Mr Ng Eng Gee and the names he is called ("They call him little tyrant", The New Paper, 3 Oct).

For someone in a wheelchair, Singapore is difficult to navigate at best and impossible at worst. I know this after helping my brother-in-law, who is confined to a wheelchair, around town.

Ridiculously high kerbs make crossing the street dangerous, if not impossible, even with assistance.

Thus, the few handicap ramps available are very valuable to someone in a wheelchair.

Many hawkker centres are extremely difficult to navigate with a wheelchair.

Mr Ng is not asking the police to issue fines to every owner of illegally parked vehicles in the area. He is focusing on vehicles that affect the ability of wheelchair-bound people to move around.

Would any of you accept that someone, albeit temporarily, has built a barb-wire fence across your walkway, keeping you from going where you wanted even for 15 minutes?

That is what you do when you park in



ST FILE PICTURE

ILLEGAL: A wheelchair-bound person needs space to move in and out of a car.

such a way that you hinder a person in a wheelchair from getting through. This is the reason it is illegal to park that way in the first place.

Do those who object think people in wheelchairs are worth less than people who do not need such implements to get around?

My opinion is quite clear: People who hold such opinions should be ashamed of themselves.

Calendar of Events

for January to March 2010



jan

8 January

Tan Tock Seng
Occupational
Therapy Day

Organised by TTS

22 January

Leng Ern Jee
Temple 65th
Anniversary

Organised by Leng
Ern Jee Temple

28-29 January

The Sports for
People with
Disabilities

Organised by
National Library

30 January

National Parks
D&D Charity
Auction

Organised by NParks

feb

21 February

CNY Dinner for
Members

Organised by HWA



26 February

Vegetarian Dinner @
Singapore Buddhist
Youth Mission

Organised by Singapore
Buddhist Youth Mission

27 February

Ride on the
Singapore Flyer

Organised by YMCA



28 February

YOUth Got Heart
(VWO Roadshow)

Organised by HWA

mar

6 March

Dinner @ Driving
Instructor
Association

Organised by Driving
Instructor Assn

20 March

Y-Opera

Organised by YMCA

25-28 March

IPOH Tour

Organised by HWA



HWA All-Cash Donation Draw 2010

Good news! HWA's All-Cash donation draw 2010 tickets will be out in early February 2010. We know that many of you are waiting eagerly for the attractive prizes. Prizes Include: 1st prize of \$18,888; 2nd prize of \$8,888 and the 3rd prize of \$2,888.

Do not
miss out!

Delifrance has once again kindly supported us by sponsoring free coffee for a minimum of \$10 spent on a la carte purchase at its outlet. Do extend your support to us by buying tickets.

For members of Public and HWA who wish to sell these tickets, please contact Mr Richard Foo, Mr Dexter Goh or Ms Yvonne Tan at Tel: 6254 3006 for purchase and sale of tickets.



HWA 2010年 捐款全现金抽奖

好消息！我们的2010年捐款全现金抽奖的奖券将在2010年2月初发行。我们知道，你们中许多人都在热切地等待着。奖金十分吸引人。首奖是\$ 18,888 (你不仅能得到这笔钱，还能得到运气)。第二奖是\$ 8,888，第三奖是\$ 2,888。所以千万不要错过哦！

Delifrance再次提供慷慨的赞助。如果按原价消费至少10元，就能享受免费的咖啡。所以，请购买奖券来支持我们。如果您想帮助我们销售奖券，你也将得到很好的佣金。购买或销售请联系Richard Foo先生，Dexter Goh先生或Yvonne Tan小姐，电话：6254 3006。除此之外，有意帮忙销售奖券的会员也可以填写附录的“参与表格”来参加。

HWA Car Wash Marathon 2010

Handicaps Welfare Association would like to request for our members and members of the public to volunteer for our upcoming HWA Car Wash Marathon 2010. The event will take place on the 22 & 23 of May 2010. Your contribution in any means will help us continue to enhance the quality of life of people with physical disabilities and integrate them into mainstream society.

In this continuous 12-hour marathon car wash, HWA aims to raise ninety thousand dollars for the needy disabled. The Marathon will follow through from 9 am to 9 pm at Dempsey Hill, West Coast Park and other designated petrol stations around the island.



We sincerely hope that members, donors and volunteers will continue to extend their kind support and generosity towards HWA.

For any queries, please feel free to contact **Bryan Lim** or **Richard Foo** at Tel: **6254 3006** or Email: **bryan@hwa.org.sg / richard@hwa.org.sg**

Wheel, Walk or Jog 2010

It will be the 26th year running Wheel, Walk or Jog; Singapore's only 'walk on wheels' event. WWJ 2010 will be held at West Coast Park on 4 July (Sunday) from 9 am to 12 pm.

Collaborations with our main partners, support from the National Parks Board and Ministry of Foreign Affairs will most certainly make this event a memorable and exciting one.

With an exciting array of activities, performances, games and lucky draw lined up, we look forward to seeing one and all once again this year.

For any queries, please feel free to contact **Bryan Lim** or **Richard Foo** at Tel: **6254 3006** or Email: **bryan@hwa.org.sg / richard@hwa.org.sg**

Venue: West Coast Park
(near to McDonald's Restaurant)

Date of event: Sunday, 4 July 2010,
Registration starts at 8.00am

Mid-Autumn Festival 2010



The Mid-Autumn Festival is marked as a day for reunion with our loved ones. To share the joy of this festive Season with our members, HWA will be organising a Mid-Autumn Celebration on 11 September 2010 at our premises.

We would like to extend an invitation to all donors to share these moments with us. Lanterns will be sold to donors, tagged with donor names/initials and will be on display in HWA's premises for the entire Eighth Lunar Month, starting from 11 September 2010.

Amounts raised through this event will help to defray HWA's annual operating expenses of \$3.5

million. Held on 11 September 2010, Saturday, from 6 pm onwards, we have prepared a series of programs for all our donors / sponsors and members. We truly seek your generous support and look forward to your presence with us on the day.

For any queries, please feel free to contact **Bryan Lim** or **Dexter Goh** at Tel: **6254 3006** or Email: bryan@hwa.org.sg / dexter@hwa.org.sg



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Help Us.

To Uplift the Lives of People with Disabilities

The Handicaps Welfare Association (HWA) was formed in December 1969. Since then, the Association has grown to over 1,800 members and its membership is increasing every month. As a self-help group, HWA raises funds on its own.

HWA has been serving the needs of people with disabilities from the low socio-economic group for 39 years. It has strenuously made every attempt to help meet their needs through its ever-expanding range of services, which is on-going. The HWA has been able to do this simply because the Singapore public has been more than generous and forthcoming in their monetary contribution.

HWA provides a range of programmes and services for its members and the community – from welfare assistance to education courses, a door-to-door

dedicated transport service, financial assistance and food rations to the needy, driving lessons for the disabled and a befriender service. It also runs Rehabilitation cum Independent Living Centre and Personal Care Service for the disabled people in the community.

Please help us to uplift the lives of the disabled people by making a donation to the Association. No donation is too small for charity. **Thank you for your generosity and kind support.**

To:
HANDICAPS Welfare Association
16 Whampoa Drive
Singapore 327725

I/ We wish to donate \$ _____ to the Handicaps Welfare Association.
Enclosed is my/our cheque /postal /money order No. _____.

The tax-deductible receipt is to be issued to:-

Name: _____ NRIC NO.: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ (H) _____ (O) _____ (HP)

* Tax-deductible receipts (2.5x) will only be issued for donations of S\$50 and above.
For additional information or clarification, please call us at (65) 6254 3006.

Advertisement Rates



If you wish to advertise your products or services in Handicaps Digest, please fill up the form below and mail it back to us at the following address:

Handicaps Welfare Association
16 Whampoa Drive Singapore 327725
Tel : 62543006 / Fax: 62537375
Email: hwa@hwa.org.sg

I / We hereby agree to take up an advertisement space in your HWA Digest magazine.

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Address: _____
Contact Person: _____
Telephone / Fax No: _____

Advertising Rates: Please tick the appropriate box below and kindly forward a cheque of the same amount payable to **Handicaps Welfare Association**

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- \$200.00 Listing

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1. The advertiser warrants that the advertising material submitted for publication:
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2. HWA shall not be held liable for failure to publish advertisements for any reason whatsoever, including but not limited to strikes, riots, accidents, acts of God or other delays beyond its control and in no event shall it be liable for consequential or resulting damage.
3. The advertiser will keep HWA indemnified against all claims, actions, suits, demands, losses, costs and expenses in respect of the printed matter.
4. The booking of the advertisement is based on a first-come-first-served basis. HWA reserves the right to reject any advertisement at any time.
5. Artwork/materials will not be returned to advertiser unless specifically requested by advertiser. Artwork/materials will be discarded after six months.
6. The advertiser shall pay by crossed cheque payable to Handicaps Welfare Association within 30 days upon confirmation of the secured advertisement space.

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the quality of life of people
with physical disabilities
and integrate them into
mainstream society.