

Dec 2005 + Jan 2006

samudra

A Bi-Monthly Publication of the Singapore Organisation of Seamen and Seacare Co-operative Limited

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A close-up photograph of a person's hands and forearms as they climb a rough, textured rock face. The person is wearing a red t-shirt. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day. The person's hands are firmly gripping the rock, and their forearms are visible, showing some sunburn or tanning. The background is slightly out of focus, showing more of the rock and the person's legs.

ASCENDING TO
GREATNESS
SOS and Seacare Unveil Workplans

Dec 2005 + Jan 2006

samudra

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SMS EXTENDED TO COVER EYE CARE

The Seacare Medical Scheme (SMS) has been further enhanced to make it even more beneficial, more attractive and more valuable to SOS local members. From 20 February 2006, all paid up members will get to enjoy comprehensive optometric eye examination (CEE) for free.

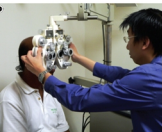
Commenting on this brand new benefit, SOS General Secretary Mr Leow Ching Chuan said: "We are always thinking out of the box and coming up with fresh approaches to enhance members' quality of life. The benefits in place that members enjoy are our way of appreciating them, and telling them that we will continue to do within our best to make things better for them."

Indeed, the gift of sight has been taken for granted by many. In explaining the rationale behind the benefit, the Union Chief remarked: "We often neglect to take good care of our eyes. And with time, our vision begins to pose challenges as part of our ageing process." However, with the great advancement in optometry and healthcare in general, it is easier than ever before for optometrists to help maintain good vision.

"Many visual conditions that were once considered sight-threatening may now be successfully treated if diagnosed early. Thus, we are extending the SMS to cover basic eye care," Mr Leow said.

"We are always thinking out of the box and coming up with fresh approaches to enhance members' quality of life. The benefits in place that members enjoy are our way of appreciating them, and telling them that we will continue to do our best to make things better for them."

Mr Leow Ching Chuan



The Comprehensive Optometric Eye Examination covers a series of clinical tests:

- Visual Acuity Assessment
- Binocular Vision Assessment
- Pupil Assessment
- Colour Vision Assessment
- Central Visual Field Screening
- Keratometry
- Intra-Ocular Pressure Assessment
- Refractive Status Assessment
- Slit Lamp Biomicroscopy
- Ophthalmoscopy
- Fundus Photography
- Summary Report

The benefit is made possible by the collaborative effort between Seacare Maritime Medical Centre and New Optometry & Ocular Care Centre (NOOCC). Under this new benefit, each paid-up local member will be entitled to one visit per term of office of four years. (For the current term of office ending March 2008, the scheme will take effect from 20 February 2006.) On top of that, SOS local members will get to enjoy a 20% discount on all frames and lens (except for controlled items by manufacturer) purchased at the NOOCC's in-house eyewear dispensary.

Speaking to Samudra, Ms Cigi Chew, the Executive Director of NOOCC, said:

As SOS's dedicated eye care specialist, NOOCC shares their mission in improving the overall well-being of their members by adding quality visual health care assessment to their current benefits.

How to Enjoy the Benefit

All local members must first ensure that you have paid up your subscription.

Step 1:

Contact SOS Welfare Division at (6379 5670 or 6379 5671) for verification of eligibility status and appointment date.

Step 2:

Collect the Application Form for CEE Benefit from the SOS Welfare Division at least two days before the appointment date.

Step 3:

Report at the NOOCC on the appointment date with the following:

- NRIC and SOS Membership Card
- Application Form for CEE Benefit (with Part 1 & Part 2 of the form duly completed)

For cancellation or request for change of appointment date, a minimum of three working days' notice is to be given to NOOCC at 6471 1771.



NOOCC, the one-stop centre for primary eye care, is a privately driven organisation established to deliver quality and affordable primary eye care services to the community.

NOOCC
新视康中心

NEW Optometry & Ocular Care Centre

300 Margaret Drive Singapore 149302 Tel: 6471 1771 Fax: 6475 1771
Email: publiccare@nooccc.com



For more information, please contact the Welfare Division at 6379 5671.



VISION IN ACTION



SOS, led by General Secretary Mr Leow Ching Chuan, kicked off 2006 with its eyes fixed on enhancing the value, services and relevancy of the Union. Fifty-five Executive Committee members, standing committee members as well as SOS staff spent five days reviewing the past year's performance and deliberating on the new financial year's tangible goals and workplans.

The Welfare cum Membership Workshop 2005 was held on 15 November 2005 to look into how membership benefits can be further enhanced to improve quality of life and value of membership. It was during the SOS Workshop that the report for 2005 was given the full endorsement and adoption.

In the next few pages, Samudra brings you the highlights of the workplans for the Financial Year 2006/2007 presented by the respective committee chairpersons and Admin Secretaries:

Industrial Relations	- Mr Kam Soon Huat
Membership & Organising	- Mr David Sim
Welfare & Community Services	- Mr Anthony Chan
Training & Skill Development	- Ms Mariana Amad
Seafarers' Provident Fund	- Mr David Shoo
Seacare Medical Scheme	- Mr David Shoo
International Relations	- Mr Leow Ching Chuan
Publication & Corporate Development	- Ms Jacquelyn Lam
Information Technology	- Ms Jacquelyn Lam
Finance & Investment	- Ms Tan Siew Hui
Human Resources	- Ms Julie Koh





Industrial Relations

- To review and refine the TCC agreement & IBF agreement
- To participate in ITF National Flags Working Group
- To develop more Bilateral Agreements
- To conclude more Singapore Flag Agreements



Membership & Organising

- To achieve membership target of 14,000
- Continue to assist unemployed members to secure shore & sea jobs
- To conduct a feasibility study on SOS General Branch Membership
- To carry out review on Form A & Form B with the aim to simplify foreign membership admission
- To implement the recommendations of SOS Welfare / Membership Workshop 2005



Welfare & Community Services

- To implement new benefits that are recommended at this Workshop, subject to Expo's approval
- To organise 13 social activities in FY06/07
- To organise 2 visits to Welfare Homes in May & Dec 2006
- To organise Christmas & New Year Party for Filipino members and their dependents in Dec 2006



Seafarers' Provident Fund

- To promote growth in the SPF Scheme
- To look into the enhancement of members' returns and chart future direction of the scheme





Training & Skills Development

- To continue reaching out to most members for the purpose of training and upgrading
- To continue to feature courses that are relevant and informational to members and to highlight members who attend courses in Samudra
- To continue to implement the recommendations of the Training & Skills Development Committee
- To continue exploring the various channels of funding that the Union can apply, so as to optimise the Union's training fund for the benefit of majority members
- To provide in-house training for members, committee members and staffs
- To work closely with the IT division on the updates and function of the training page on the SOS website
- To organise a workshop on review of SOS Training Grant Scheme
- To launch the Seacare Education Scheme in second half of FY06/07



Seacare Medical Scheme

- To widen scope of benefits for Local Members
- To create greater awareness among Foreign Members
- To appoint more SMMC Affiliated Branch Clinics
- To extend benefits to Shipping Management Staff
- To launch SMS for SOS Indonesian Members in 1st quarter of 2006
- To conduct feasibility study on SMS for SOS PRC & Malaysian Members
- To organise a SMS Evaluation Seminar in 2nd half of FY06/07
- To form a tripartite SMS Admin Committee



International Relations

- To continue to strengthen the network and co-operation between SOS and other fraternal seafarers' unions particularly the seafarers' unions in Asia/Pacific region
- To finalise the bi-lateral agreement with Norwegian Unions
- To organise in-house workshop on ITF National Flag policies and ILO consolidated Maritime Labour Convention
- To participate in all relevant meetings of ITF, ILO and IMO
- To continue to participate in ITF FOC campaign
- To organise one lunch seminar on ITF issue or other maritime related subjects





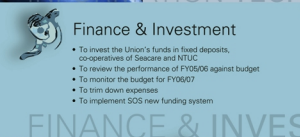
Publication & Corporate Development

- To publish six issues of Samudra
- To publish SOS EOGM Report
- To publish SOS Calendar 2007
- To publish Seacare Annual Report 2006
- To publish Seacare Corporate Planner/Calendar 2007
- To organise a SOS/Seacare Publication & Corporate Development Workshop in 2nd half of FY06/07.
- To formulate plans to achieve greater awareness and strengthen media relations.



Information Technology

- To develop SOS IT Programme, namely:
 - (a) Welfare and Seafarers Provident Fund Modules by 1st half of FY06/07
 - (b) Human Resources and Library Modules by 2nd half of FY06/07



Finance & Investment

- To invest the Union's funds in fixed deposits, co-operatives of Seacare and NTUC
- To review the performance of FY05/06 against budget
- To monitor the budget for FY06/07
- To trim down expenses
- To implement SOS new funding system



Human Resources

- To review SOS Staff Handbook
- To develop SOS Staff Training Scheme
- To organise SOS Staff Workshop on I.T. and Office Admin
- To organise a Workshop on Corporate Governance

SOS GS RE-APPOINTED TO MPA BOARD

Mr Leow Ching Chuan, SOS General Secretary, has been re-appointed by the Minister for Transport, Mr Yeo Cheow Tong, as a member of the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) for a period of three years with effect from 2 February 2006.



Mr Peter Ong, Permanent Secretary (MTI), was also re-appointed as Chairman of the Board.

Mr Andreas Sohmen-Pao, Managing Director of BW Shipping Managers Pte Ltd, and Dato' Jude Benny, Managing Partner of Joseph Tan Jude Benny are newly appointed members of the 11-member Board.

Stepping down from the MPA Board are Mr Chan Tuck Hoi, Managing Director, New Econ Line Pte Ltd, Mr Koh Siong Ling, Senior Director, Human Resource Division, Ministry of Home Affairs and Mr Lee Yi Shyan, Chief Executive Officer, International Enterprise Singapore.

Chairman -

Peter Ong
Permanent Secretary (Trade and Industry)

Members -

Bahren Bin Haji Shaari
Managing Director, UBS AG

Dato' Jude Benny
Managing Partner, Joseph Tan Jude Benny

Choo Chiau Chuan
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Keppel Offshore & Marine Ltd

Leow Ching Chuan
General Secretary, Singapore Organisation of Seamen

John Lu
Chairman, Singapore National Shippers' Council

Andreas Sohmen-Pao
Managing Director, BW Shipping Managers Pte Ltd

BG Tay Lim Heng
Chief Executive, Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore

RADM Ronnie Tay
Chief of Navy, Republic of Singapore Navy

Teo Siong Seng
President, Singapore Shipping Association

Ronald D Widdows
Chief Executive Officer, APL Co Pte Ltd

THE NEW MPA BOARD

NTUC ROCKS ON IN 2006

NTUC has unveiled six core priorities, dubbed the six big rocks of 2006, in its workplans to achieve better jobs, better pay and better life for all. Below are the highlights:

#1

NTUC Workfare Initiative (NWI)

Through the NWI's multi-pronged approach, NTUC aims to redesign more jobs to help the estimated 300,000 low-wage workers break out of the poverty trap and achieve higher productivity. More sectors such as toilet cleaning, building and estate management and air transport are slated for revamp. NTUC Deputy Secretary-General Mr Lim Swee Say said: "We see no reason why any sector should be excluded from job redesign."

Summary of NTUC Workfare Initiative

Job Re-creation Programme

- * \$50 million JRP fund to be set up
- * To re-create 10,000 existing jobs each year
- * Widen the programme to cover more sectors
- * To expand current targeted income range to jobs that pay up to \$2,500

Best Sourcing Initiative

- * To improve the terms and conditions of employment of workers so that they can earn more and work in better conditions
- * To target four to six sectors, including air transport, banking and cleaning, as early adopters

Customer-Centric Initiative

- * To expand from its pioneer batch of 20 retailers to about 900 retailers and 20,000 workers
- * NTUC, together with affiliated unions and other partners, will embark on a second wave of CCI this year

Helping workers stretch their dollar

- * NTUC Co-operatives to provide affordable goods and services to low-wage workers
- * NTUC and unions to continue to provide bursaries, scholarships, hardship grants and other assistance programmes

NTUC Deputy Secretary-General
Mr Lim Swee Say said:

"We see no reason why any sector should be excluded from job redesign."

#2

Raising Effective Retirement Age

Singapore's life expectancy rates rank among the highest in the world, the employment rates of people in their late 50s and 60s are low as compared to other developed countries. Thus, increasing the employment rate of older workers, especially those in their 50s, and the re-employment rate of older workers past the official retirement age of 62 is a priority of the labour movement.

NTUC will be working with 50 companies over the next two years to enhance the employment opportunities for older workers and retired workers. These companies, which employ about 30,000 workers, will spearhead the labour movement's drive for a job-based wage system, where one is paid based on the value of his job and how well he performs, not on his seniority or educational level.



#3 Towards 1 Million Members by 2015

The strategic efforts and innovations of the NTUC Membership Department (MED) resulted in union membership hitting 469,000 in 2005. To hit the one million membership mark by 2015 requires recruiting an average of 55,000 members every year. MED Director Mr Neo Gim Kian mapped out two strategies to meet the target. One is 'pow ka leov' (comprehensive and all encompassing) where four groups of people are zeroed in. They are existing members, atypical workers such as contract or part time workers, workers in new sectors such as info communications and biosciences and the youth. The second strategy is to look at how NTUC can be "a value-added partner" in the way these members work, live and play.



#4 Leadership Development

"Forging Consensus" and "Nurturing the Young" will be the two main thrusts of leadership development. One aims to instill in leaders the importance of forging the way ahead with a common goal while the other recognises young people with the potential to become good union leaders. Ong Teng Cheong Institute of Labour Studies (OTC Institute) Director S Thiagarajan noted that leadership development is a process that takes time and a conscious effort. Thus, the presence of senior union leaders is crucial as they provide the necessary guidance to nurture younger unionists, to help them find their feet. To achieve this, NTUC must continue to be flexible and remain relevant, in order to meet the changing needs and aspirations of this younger and better educated workforce, which is entering the labour market in new occupations and industries.

The other two priorities for 2006 are International Relations and Organisational Development Initiatives (ODI).



SOS was honoured to play host when they heard news that the Merchant Navy Officers' Guild (MNOG) from Hong Kong was in Singapore. Here on a friendly visit, the 12-member delegation popped into Seacare Building on 13 December 2005 to exchange views with SOS on union matters.

Headed by President Captain Dominic Ho, MNOG and SOS kept each other up to speed with their respective union's developments. Presenting on behalf of SOS was General Secretary Mr Leow who shared on what the union had been doing. Of particular interest to the Hong Kong counterparts were the Seafarers' Provident Fund (SPF) scheme, the welfare benefits, training and the Seacare businesses that SOS is well known for.

Judging by the open and frank exchanges that were flying across the tables, the cordial visit must have strengthened ties between these two parties.

MNOG visitors consisted of President Captain Dominic Ho, 2nd Vice-President Captain M L Ng, Treasurer Mr H C Lam, Administrator Captain Y C Yu, Administrative Officer Ms S K Hong and Executive Council Members Captain M K Leung, Captain C M Yu, Captain P K Yuen, Mr K W Cheung, Mr W T Cheung, Mr K Y Lai and Mr Y S Lau.

SOS was represented by General Secretary Mr Leow Ching Chuan, President Mr Tan Jing Bock, Executive Secretary Mr Kam Soon Huat, Vice-President Mr Mohamed Idris, Assistant Treasurer Mr David Sim and Admin Secretary, Welfare & Community Services Committee Mr Anthony Chan.



SOS MEMBERSHIP CARD

Introducing...

The All New SOS Membership Card!

Classy. Stylish. Cool. That's the newly revamped personalised card that is yours to have and to own!

With the new SOS membership card, members do not need to worry about the card's renewal date. Simply because we will be doing away with an expiry date.

The card's new design is uncomplicated and easy to take a liking to, with the SOS logo emblazoned prominently on the front. Spotting a less cluttered appearance, the card only reflects information that is necessary. The cool colours of the new card give a sense of uncompromised quality which is heightened with its glossiness. Reflecting the artistic image of waves, it is indeed a befitting card for SOS members to hold.

Our foreign members used to hold the orange card while local members own a blue card. In a bid to move with the times, the Union recognised the need to introduce a card that offers our members a unified identity. Thus, both local and foreign members will all own a card that has the same design and colour; a card that gives them ONE identity – that of a SOS member.





MOM

TO PHASE-OUT OSH COURSES TO ATP

"The Ministry will continue to focus on its role as a regulator to provide strategic directions on OSH Training."

By 31 March 2006, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) will not be offering training courses through their Occupational, Safety and Health (OSH) Training and Promotion Centre. Instead, they will be phasing out the training function to Accredited Training Providers (ATP) administered by the Ministry under their ATP certification scheme.

The change in this policy is aligned to the new OSH framework which called for greater ownership of safety outcome from the industry. The introduction of the ATP scheme back in 1997 has enabled the industry to build up its capacity and capabilities to provide the training service, and respond to the training needs of the industry. Nevertheless, the Ministry will continue to focus on its role as a regulator to provide strategic directions and ensure quality delivery of OSH training in the industry.

SOS has identified NTUC Learning Hub as one of the training providers accredited by MOM. Supported under the SOS Training Grant Benefit Scheme with regards to OSH courses, members who are keen on these courses can be assured that their needs will continue to be met. Upon the completion of the phasing out process, MOM will be releasing an advisory and the complete list of ATPs. SOS aims to work closely with these ATPs in providing more options for members who are interested in OSH courses.

LIFTING SUPERVISORS SAFETY COURSE

For Whom:

Personnel who is or would be appointed as Lifting Supervisor

Course Fees:

Day Classes - \$285
Night Classes - \$290
(All prices are inclusive of GST)

Training Location:

NTUC Learning Hub Pte Ltd,
Ulu Pandan Community Club
170 Ghim Moh Rd #04-01
Singapore 279621

Course Contents:

Requirements of Factories Act, BOWEC and Regulations concerning Lifting Equipment

- Roles and Duties of Personnel in Lifting Operation
- Safe Use of Mobile Cranes
- Safe Use of Tower Cranes/Requirements of Tower Cranes
- Safe Use of Other Lifting Machines
- Safe Use of Mobile Cranes
- Rigging Equipment and Rigging of Load
- Co-ordination in the use of Lifting Machines
- Investigations into Crane Accidents and Case Studies

Course Duration:

5 1/2 days (29 Hours)

For more information, you may contact the SOS Training Division at 6379 5671 or email angel_mariana@seacare.com.sg

LIFT ME UP!



The frequent promptings and encouragement from SOS to get more members to seriously upgrade their skills have not fallen on deaf ears. When former fire technician Mr Seah Kiang Cheow, 50, was retrenched, he remembered the persistent calls of the Union to train and retrain.

Mr Seah told Samudra: "I remembered what SOS said about upgrading ourselves, about how important it is for us workers to stay updated and keep ahead." He knew that staying relevant was imperative, and so far his quest for knowledge saw him acquire computer know-how as well as technical skills. This time, he enrolled in the Lifting Supervisors Safety Course. The fee for the five day training course is fully claimable under the SOS Training Grant. The Union also gives training allowance based on training hours attended.

Conducted by the NTUC Learning Hub following the phasing out by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), the course aims to familiarise participants with the roles and responsibilities as Lifting Supervisors and the legal requirements of lifting operations. More importantly, the preventive measures to be taken to ensure that lifting operations are carried out safely were given significant coverage.

Course trainer, Mr Roger Chong, who has been teaching with MOM-OSH since 1998, said that the participants were evidently positive in their studies. "They may be more mature but they embraced a keen attitude to learn. They have hands-on experience of the field. My role is to update them about the necessary safety rules and dos and don'ts. We share information and experience, and build good rapport as a result. I think I have learnt more from them!"



Through the course, Mr Seah has gained a better understanding of the severity and consequences of failure to abide by the safety rules. His parting shot: "Studying is not limited by age. And as we gain more knowledge, more windows of opportunity open. What's more, with the steady stream of help coming from both SOS and NTUC, I know I will not only be landing my next job soon, but I'm confident that I can handle the job better than ever!"

"I remembered what SOS said about upgrading ourselves, about how important it is for us workers to stay updated and keep ahead."

YOU WILL ?

John* had passed away at 35 years of age due to cancer, leaving behind his wife and son. Because he hadn't drawn up a Will, his wife inherited all of his assets, including an amount of cash in life insurance proceeds. His wife had promised him that she would take care of his elderly parents, who were then staying with them.

Sadly, she neglected them emotionally and financially. John's sister, Jane*, not only paid for their medical bills, but paid for a full-time maid to look after her parents. Twelve years on, their mother has also passed away, and John's wife has issued an ultimatum to her father-in-law: either he moves to an old folks' home, or moves in with Jane. John's wife has sold the HDB flat which became fully paid up by mortgage insurance on John's death.

Jane's fervent regret? If only John had written a Will before he passed away. A Will that had expressly provided for his ageing parents' maintenance.

There is no 'if only' where death is concerned. Such cases are not uncommon, and are especially poignant if someone passes away prematurely. This story illustrates the importance of writing a Will.

A Will ensures that your loved ones, aged parents or even an uncle or aunt who had taken good care of you when you were young, are expressly provided for.



Said Mr Yik Tze Kong, a lawyer with 15 years of experience and partner of the law firm Yik Koh Teo LLC: "The general person on the street tends to think that they needn't worry about their possessions because they don't have much to begin with, or that the people they leave behind wouldn't argue over their estate. They couldn't be more wrong."

Mr Yik gave a talk about drawing up a Will at the Seacare Building on 25 January 2006. He conducted the talk in Mandarin while Mr Masagoes Abdul Karim gave the talk in English. A total of 28 members attended the two sessions.



"Drawing up a Will pre-emptes disputes between family members or siblings, and allows the testator to make a rational and wise decision in asset distribution and choose a reliable executor. This peace of mind is the best comfort that the drawing up of a Will can offer," Mr Yik explained.



A testator refers to the person drawing up a Will. And Mr Yik also warns of a false sense of security that once a Will is drawn up, the testator may think everything is done with. "Not true. Ideally, you should review your Will regularly, preferably every three to five years, or whenever there is a change in status. A Will is revocable at any time prior to the testator's death and upon the making of a subsequent Will to replace it." A Will made prior to marriage becomes invalidated after marriage, though a divorce or separation will not cause your Will to be revoked.

Said 64-year-old Philip Chen, "Because I am single and there's just me and my mom, I thought it safer to be educated about the process, and it's always best to hear it from an expert from the field, rather than hearsay from friends."

Another member, Mr Wood Ah Jee agreed. Before attending the talk, he had heard from friends that if he didn't have any Will, his estate will go to the government. He has since realised he was misinformed.

Mr Yik clarified: "One of the biggest misconceptions is that the government will take over the estate of anyone without a Will. As laid down by law, the government takes your estate only if you do not leave a Will and/or do not have any living kin or relatives."



It is also important to note that properties cannot be willed away if they are owned under a joint tenancy. For such type of ownership, when the owner dies, the surviving joint owner or joint owners will inherit the property automatically. You can will away your share of a property only if it is owned under a tenancy-in-common arrangement, where you and your co-owner or co-owners have agreed on the percentage of the property that each owns.

You Should Know This

Beneficiaries and their spouses cannot be witnesses when testator draws up a Will. It is possible to draw up your own Will, however it is advisable to seek the advice and assistance of a professional as certain legal requirements must be followed.

Some Practical Pointers

It is prudent to annex a list of assets owned by you to the Will. This list of assets will not be referred to the Will and does not form part of your will. Rather, it will be attached behind the Will to help your Executors identify the assets belonging to you.

You should state the reasons in your Will if you are giving disproportionate amounts to certain beneficiaries, or even excluding a potential beneficiary. Stating why will help explain your intent and lower the chances of your Will being challenged.

You should also inform a few people of the existence of your Will and the Will should be registered with the Wills Registry.

How To Change Your Will

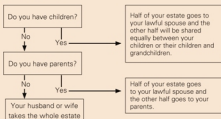
- Do not simply cross out or add words to your Will or attach any paper with your latest intentions to the Will.
- Prepare a new Will.
- Amend your Will by way of a "codicil". This codicil has to be attested by two witnesses as in a case of a Will.

What Assets Cannot Be Distributed Under Your Will?

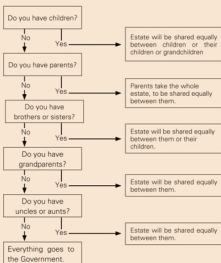
- Section 73 CLPA Life Insurance Policy
- Section 45 Co-operative Societies Act Nomination
- Section 25 CPF Act Nomination

The Laws of Intestacy

If you are married



If you are not married (single, widowed or divorced)



SPREAD THE

JOY!

And SOS will gladly do it, many times with groceries for the residents of the Asian Women's Welfare Association (AWWA) come rain or shine.

Last year, SOS gave away 140 sets of new bedspreads to AWWA. This time round, they brought along tables and chairs to host a sumptuous buffet lunch for the elderly residents!

The seven-men team from SOS led by President Mr Tan Jing Bock arrived at the AWWA Community Home on 21 December 2005 in the Seacare van loaded with goodies and immediately got down to work to convey the supplies upstairs before rushing downstairs again.

They busied themselves laying the tables and chairs at the void deck of the HDB flats. It was no mean feat as they had to set up some 14 tables from scratch with lightning speed, while the buffet caterer arranged the trays of food, ready to be served.



The aromatic whiff from the buffet spread was enough to entice everyone and soon, the queue began and everyone held out their plates eagerly for a bigger serving. Some even went for a second helping!



Mr Tan summed up the sentiments: "This is our way of bringing some cheer to the elderly residents during this festive season. We hope it can lift their spirits. Seeing the old folks' smiles, seeing them tuck heartily into the buffet lunch, our hard work, our perspiration – everything becomes worth it."

HELLO 2006

GOODBYE 2005 AND HELLO 2006!



Two hundred and twenty SOS members and staff could not have chosen a better way to bid farewell to 2005 and usher in 2006. At the SOS Year End Gathering held on 29 December 2005, it was indeed play and more play.

The generous spread of food and seemingly endless stream of drinks at Club@52 whipped up the celebratory mood. The party atmosphere was further enhanced by the smooth performance of the three-piece band which was specially brought in for the occasion. The crowd swayed and sashayed to the music and high energy entertainment.



And who would forget that 15 minutes of fervent wishing of one who longed to win one of those festive hampers during the lucky draw? No matter what, prizes or no prizes, some walked away elated while others partied on.

What a memorable end to the great year of 2005!

COMING EVENTS



DIALOGUE SESSION

WITH GENERAL SECRETARY

When: 21 March 2006

Where: Club@52

SOS/SEACARE

MEMBERS NITE

When: 25 March 2006

Where: Club@52



HOUSEWIVES' GATHERING

When: 22 April 2006

CONDOLENCES

SOS would like to convey its deepest condolences to the family of Mr Chong Goon Hu, who passed away on 14 December 2005.

Seacare Focus



SEACARE - TOWARDS TARGET 2009

By 2009, Seacare will have a developed and comprehensive medical, educational, insurance and sailor's home schemes for the benefit of both SOS local and foreign members. The scope of participation in promoting international seafarers welfare will also be enlarged.

In four years' time, Seacare will achieve a yearly revenue exceeding \$40 million and yearly profit before taxation exceeding \$2 million. There will be a leading core company that will propel Seacare to greater heights.



This bold vision was cast at the Seacare Workshop 2006 by Chairman Mr Leow Ching Chuan. Held in Kunming and Lijiang, China, from 6 to 11 December 2005, the Workshop with the theme 'Towards Target 2009' had one objective and that was to identify the growth strategy for Seacare to achieve by 2009.

Mr Leow revealed that the target spelled out was inspired by the social

responsibility of Seacare which is to support SOS in fulfilling its obligation in promoting the material, educational, social and cultural welfare of both local and foreign members.

The target was also determined and shaped by its commercial objective of building strong and commercially viable enterprises to sustain growth and achieve higher returns for shareholders.



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Besides reviewing their FY 2005 workplans, the heads of the respective Seacare companies also shared their 2009 vision and target for the companies under their charge as well as workplans for FY 2006.



At the Workshop, the Seacare Directors and Management team had the opportunity to hear the expert views of two guest speakers. Mr Selander Ake Gunnar, Seacare Honorary Advisor painted an "Overview of the International Committee On Seafarers' Welfare" touching on issues such as the ICSW structure, roles and functions, the possible role of Seacare as a promoter of welfare for international seafarers and the possible joint involvement by ICSW and Seacare in the promotion of welfare for international seafarers.

Dr Wang Wei, CEO, China Society of Education (CSE) gave an "Introduction to EduChina Group and Kinstar International School" outlining the School's organisation structure, mission, vision and commitment, scope of businesses, recent developments and more.

Dr Jin Hui, CEO, Kinstar International School and Dr Khong Heng Poh, Chairman, iHub Education Pte Ltd, attended the Workshop as invited guests.

Regroup, Consolidate, Expand



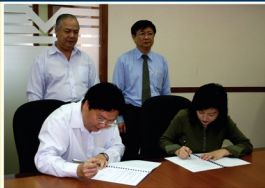
Seacare Holdings Chairman Says...

Regroup, Consolidate, Expand and make Seacare a distinct red dot in the international maritime community.

Seacare Holdings Chairman Mr Kong Mun Kwong delivered this passionate call at the Seacare Workshop 2005. After giving a pat on the back to the 'efficient and committed staff' for demonstrating creativity in the enterprises, Mr Kong urged Seacare to constantly take stock of where the organisation stands and decide how to move on to make an impact not just in China but also in India and Vietnam.



SMMC SEES EYE TO EYE WITH NOOCC



Come 20 February 2006, all paid-up SOS local members will be the direct beneficiaries of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the Seacare Maritime Medical Centre (SMMC) and the New Optometry & Ocular Care Centre (NOOCC).

The MOU, which was sealed on 5 January 2006, signalled the start of a close collaborative effort between SMMC and NOOCC to provide professional comprehensive optometric eye examination to SOS local members under the Seacare Medical Scheme (SMS). Dr Chia Yih Woei, CEO of the SMMC, signed the MOU at the Seacare Building with Ms Cigi Chew, Executive Director of NOOCC. Seacare Chairman Mr Leow Ching Chuan and NOOCC CEO Mr Timothy Ow, were also present at the ceremony.

The MOU spelled out each SOS local member's privileged entitlements and top on the list is the Comprehensive Optometric Eye Examination which covers a series of clinical tests, including

Visual Acuity Assessment and Colour Vision Screening, and the Optometrist's summary report. Fundus Photography will also be provided if the patient is referred for further assessment.

The MOU also features a 20% discount benefit on all frames and lens (except for controlled items by manufacturer) purchased at the Centre's in-house eyewear dispensary by SOS local members as well as SMMC staff or patient and Seacare staff.

Ms Chew acknowledged and praised the win-win MOU saying: "We really salute SOS and we are pleased to join hands with SMMC to partner them in extending this dimension of eye care to its members."

Through an integrated professional diagnostic and ocular care centre with its own in-house eye wear dispensary and edging laboratory, NOOCC is a one-stop centre for primary eye care. It has facilities comprising of a pre-screening room, seven consultation rooms and

one advanced diagnostic room. To facilitate professional development and training, NOOCC is also equipped with a seminar room, two training rooms and a resource library.



Optimistic about the tie-up with NOOCC, Dr Chia remarked: "SOS and SMMC have always been very focused on our social obligations. This co-operation with NOOCC is a result of our common purpose and commitment to provide quality and professional care to our members. It also makes good business sense to offer a value added service to our patients."



"We really salute SOS and we are pleased to join hands with SMMC to partner them in extending this dimension of eye care to its members."

EYE CAN SEE CLEARLY NOW

6 / 12
Minimum Acuity

6 / 7.5
Typical Newsprint

6 / 6
Standard Acuity

COMPREHENSIVE OPTOMETRIC EYE EXAMINATION

PRESBYOPIA IS WHEN THE LENS LOSES ITS ABILITY TO BRING NEAR IMAGE INTO FOCUS. IT AFFECTS MOSTLY INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ABOVE AGE 40.

IF YOU ARE ABLE TO READ THIS LINE OF TEXTS COMFORTABLY, YOU HAVE ACHIEVED THE STANDARD VISUAL ACUITY FOR NEAR READING.

This Chart serves only as a guide for your clarity of sight at near.

Clarity of sight at near should achieve minimum at 6/12 acuity for general reading purpose. If you do not achieve it, it may be time for you to visit your optometrist for an **eye examination**.

Vision is more than just clarity of sight. Eye examination is necessary for the assessment of your overall visual health.

Do You Know

As we advance in age, we begin to experience subtle changes in our vision. Although natural vision changes cannot be prevented, by practising good health habits and having regular comprehensive optometric eye examinations, we can continue to enjoy an active and productive independent lifestyle.

Here we list some common ailments that we may experience as we age.

Condition: **Presbyopia**

Commonly known as "near-sightedness", Presbyopia is a condition whereby the lens of the eye becomes less flexible until it loses its flexibility to focus near objects.

Solution: This condition can be easily overcome by the use of glasses prescribed for near work. However, you should continue to visit your optometrist to have your eyes checked as your prescription changes periodically.

Condition: **Cataracts**

This is a progressive condition in which the lens of the eye gradually becomes hard and loses its transparency. This reduces or blocks the amount of light entering the eye and as a result, only scattering light passes through. Blur vision occurs and images are not focused.

Solution: Regular comprehensive eye examination performed by the optometrist can help in monitoring the condition and a proper referral to the ophthalmologist for surgery can also be made when the need arises, such as when functional vision is crippled. The eye's natural lens is replaced with a lens implant. Optometrists will often advise on the use of UV protected eyewear to slow down the progress of cataract.

Seacare Education Pte Ltd **PLUS** Sino-Sing Center Pte Ltd

equals

XINNET EDUCATION CENTRE PTE LTD

新网教育文化发展中心



Seacare is paving the road into the China education market. Together with Sino-Sing Centre Pte Ltd, Seacare Education Pte Ltd has birthed Xinnet Education Centre, whose business scope covers Preschool English Programmes in China, Student Exchange and Immersion Programmes and Training for Bilingual Teachers.

Xinnet is already making its presence known in Tianjin, Shanghai, Harbin and Fuxin with Sino-Sing's implementation of the Kidsland Preschool English Programme in China.

The partnership with the preschools in China spun off a demand for Student Exchange and Immersion Programmes. Under a programme last August 2005, with Singapore Soka Kindergarten, a group of teachers and students from Hopeland International Kindergarten in China, had the opportunity to exchange knowledge and experience.

"Since its inception, Seacare Education has set its sight on China. On the other hand, Sino-Sing has already been in the China education market for more than four years though it lacks the resources of Seacare Education. Hence it makes sense for the two organisations to pool together our resources and allow us to venture into the China market with greater confidence and experience."

Ms Chua Lay Mui, General Manager, Xinnet Education



Due to the rise in demand for bilingual teachers in China, Sino-Sing launched a Training for Bilingual Teachers called "How To Teach English in Preschools", in collaboration with the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD Singapore). Jointly developed by Dr Ang Wai Hoong, former Director of CDIS and Senior Fellow in NIE and Mrs Kam Kum Wone, the programme is now a compulsory course for teachers intending to teach the KidsLand Preschool programme. Training for bilingual teachers also included study trips to Singapore to better understand how the bilingual education system in preschools can be effectively implemented in China.

In the pipeline...

- A possibility of setting up a preschool arts centre by Tianjin Cathay Future Preschool Group.
- Xinnet is considering the setting up of an enrichment centre in Tianjin to promote child development programmes such as Speech, Drama, Phonics, Reading and Literacy.
- Further collaboration with ASCD Singapore to launch certification programmes (preschool to secondary school level) for teacher training in China and Indonesia.
- To work with the Singapore Examination and Assessment Board in developing and implementing the Singapore Primary School syllabus in China and Indonesia.
- In the long term, to work with foreign universities in UK or Australia to validate the teacher training programmes for diploma and degree courses.

Xinnet



Xinnet's New General Manager

RARING TO START!

Behind every successful venture is a successful team that drives the project. One such team member who joined Xinnet Education Centre on 1 February 2006 is General Manager Ms Chua Lay Mui.

Highly motivated and focused, Ms Chua brings with her a wealth of relevant experience that will move boulders and break barriers for Xinnet.

Before Xinnet, Ms Chua was the General Manager of Sino-Sing Centre and had travelled to China extensively. She actively promoted the KidsLand Preschool English Programme to the kindergartens in China and was also involved in conducting teacher training and teacher assessment as well as establishing an overall monitoring system. Ms Chua too is adept at marketing and making presentations to provincial authorities, principals and educational groups in various parts of China.

"With Xinnet setting its sights on the neighbouring countries such as the Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia education markets, I can look forward to more enriching challenges. Dealing with cultural differences poses the greatest challenge. Singapore is fast-paced and convenient, as compared to a big country like China, where standards and the mode of operation varies from city to city," said Ms Chua. "Thus, there is no fixed formula to run a business and one would need to be very patient in exercising flexibility in the working model with each party."

According to Ms Chua, due to the one-child policy in China, parents are generally more concerned and anxious about their child's education and are willing to spend good money to give them a sound grounding. "On the other hand, it is more demanding to convince parents from not-so-affluent countries to send their children for quality education."



Following Xinnet's plans to set up the first enrichment centre in Tianjin, Ms Chua is all geared up to do her part and help open more doors within China and to venture out to other neighbouring countries. "Xinnet Education is an ideal result between two like-minded parties. With the combination of Seacare Education's resources and Sino-Sing Center's vast experience and contacts within the region, this is an unsurpassed win-win outcome, and I'm definitely glad to be part of the action!"

"Dealing with cultural differences poses the greatest challenge. Singapore is fast-paced and convenient, as compared to a big country like China, where standards and the mode of operation varies from city to city,"

Ms Chua Lay Mui

WELCOME ONBOARD!

"A challenge my way makes my day!" must be the motto that Joewyn Tan lives by everyday. In fact, she probably wishes the challenges don't stop at one.

An administrative executive who not only processes payroll, but performs IT support for administrative programmes too. A pest exterminator she's not, though she debugs programmes and checks out system errors whenever they occur.

Said Joewyn, who has a diploma in IT, "My responsibilities here are nothing

like what I've had before. I get a thrilling tingle of challenge before I embark on troubleshooting those problematic systems and programmes, and an immense sense of job satisfaction after that."

As she confessed, since joining Seacare Manpower Services Pte Ltd in February 2005, she has blossomed from an unsure girl with full of jitters, to one confident lady who knows her potential is limitless. "My managers' and seniors' patient guidance did it. Here at Seacare, I found my turning point."



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Ms Pauline Lim, 55, is now a full-fledged administrative assistant with Seacare Manpower Services Pte Ltd, after converting to being a permanent staff from January 2006.

Previously working with a trading firm, the changing of her job means a change to a new arena; to an industry that she wasn't familiar with. As much as her job scope entails administrative duties, these were of a different nature from what her responsibilities used to be. But Pauline remains undaunted.

"Thanks to the support I had from my fellow colleagues, who are just like my second family. It doesn't matter that I was a temporary staff then, for they taught me all that there was to be known and guided me along when I stumbled. I'm glad I took my children's advice to continue working even though I thought I should take things easy. What was initially a job taken on to kill time has made me some real friends and really fulfilling job satisfaction!"



Thanks to the support I had from my fellow colleagues, who are just like my second family. It doesn't matter that I was a temporary staff then, for they taught me all that there was to be known and guided me along when I stumbled."



NO MORE
WISHFUL
THINKING...

Because
Club@52
knows our
patrons' love for
the Scotch whisky
– Chivas Regal!

At only \$190 for two bottles (usual price at \$128 per bottle), it is time to sit down with the smooth whisky, perfect for sharing with friends! And it is time to hurry down to Club@52, because promotion ends 31 March 2006.

QUALITY

Teacher Assistants in the Making

Seacare Manpower Services does a lot more than match Teacher Assistants (TAs) to schools.

We train as well!

A training curriculum has been specially drawn up by experts to equip Teacher Assistants to add value to schools all over Singapore.



The TAs Training Course will enable TAs to

- Assist teachers in classroom and CCA management
- Facilitate the teacher in group work activities and project work
- Forge a positive relationship with teachers, parents and students and MORE!

So send your TAs to us. We'll train, equip and empower them to be effective in their own unique school experience.

For enquiries, call Seacare Manpower Services at 6379 5632



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