

SAMUDRA

A bi-monthly Publication of the Singapore Organisation of Seamen and Seacare Co-operative Limited

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**Better
Benefits with
Enhanced Schemes**

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SOS LAUNCHES ENHANCED WELFARE SCHEMES

\$S3M TO HELP SHIPPING COMPANIES AND SEAMEN CURB DOWNTURN

SOS officially launched its enhanced Seacare Sailors' Home Scheme, Seacare Medical Scheme and Seacare Maritime Training Scheme on 1 April 2017.

Formed as part of SOS's collective agreements with shipping companies, the union's three ongoing welfare schemes cover the accommodation, medical and training needs of members and shipping companies.

Announced at SOS's 45th anniversary celebration in December last year, the enhancement to the schemes will allow shipping companies to defray overheads while providing members with better employment security and training opportunities during the global downturn. It involves a funding boost of S\$3 million over the next two financial years, with S\$1 million pumped into each scheme.

"Hopefully, this contribution will help members remain employed and encourage them to continue training and upgrading their skills," SOS General Secretary Kam Soon Huat said in his interview with The Straits Times.

"The union is doing all it can to help companies tide over difficult times."



ENHANCEMENT AT A GLANCE

The enhancement, which aims to reduce the accommodation, medical and training expenditures of employers and seafarers, will last for two years from **1 April 2017** to **31 March 2019**.

Seacare Sailors' Home Scheme (SSS)

The SSS helps to lower the operating costs incurred by members of the shipping community by offering affordable accommodation.

The investment of S\$1 million into the scheme allows eligible shipping companies to use multi-purpose vouchers to redeem:

- Room Packages at The Seacare Hotel;
- Seminar Packages at The Maritime Hall, and
- Staff Gathering Packages at Club@52.

In addition to the vouchers, shipping companies will receive two complimentary Seminar Packages for The Maritime Hall, each year, for corporate functions.



Seacare Medical Scheme (SMS)

The SMS provides subsidised medical, dental and healthcare benefits. Expenses that can be claimed under the SMS include:

- Medical services
- Treatments and procedures

The investment of S\$1 million into the scheme allows eligible shipping companies to claim:

- Up to S\$600 worth of medical expenses per vessel each year from approved clinics in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines and Shanghai.

Visit www.sea.org.sg/s-smsclinics.html for list of approved clinics.

Seacare Maritime Training Scheme (SMTS)

The SMTS maintains a pool of quality ratings to serve on board by ensuring that the training needs of the ratings are met. Expenses that can be claimed under the SMTS include:

- Course fees
- Accommodation, transport and meals
- Trainee's allowances

The investment of S\$1 million into the scheme allows eligible shipping companies to claim:

- Up to S\$700 worth of training expenses per vessel each year.





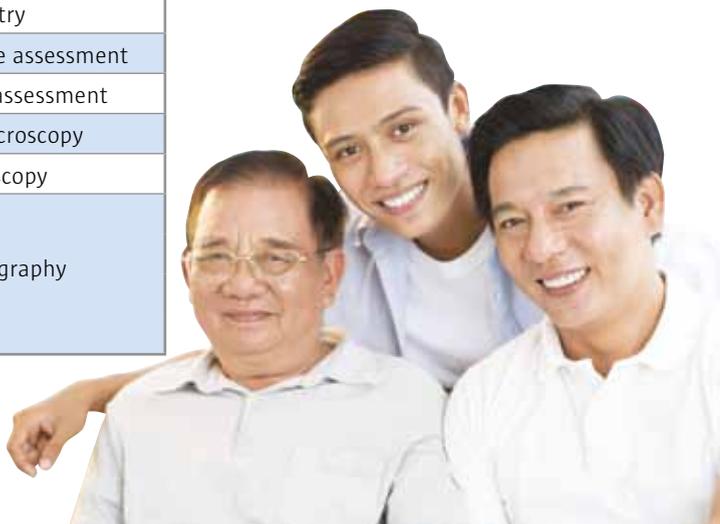
FREE HEALTH SCREENING & EYE EXAM BENEFIT EXTENDED

Good news! SOS has extended the complimentary Health Screening and Eye Examination by another year, starting from 1 April 2017.

Under the Seacare Medical Scheme, eligible local members and their dependants can continue to enjoy health screening and eye examination to identify and prevent potential health risks. Members are encouraged to get themselves screened even if they feel perfectly healthy.

Please call SOS Membership and Welfare Services at 6379 5666 to check your eligibility and make an appointment*.

Stay healthy!



|  |  |
|--|--|
| Health Screening | Eye Examination |
| Consultation and Complete Physical Examination | Visual acuity assessment |
| Biophysical Measurement | Binocular vision assessment |
| Office tests | Pupil assessment |
| Imaging Studies Lipid Profile | Colour vision assessment |
| Liver Profile | Central visual field screening |
| Hepatitis Profile | Keratometry |
| Kidney Profile | Intra-ocular pressure assessment |
| Endocrine Profile | Refractive status assessment |
| Bone & Joint Profile | Slit lamp biomicroscopy |
| Venereal Profile | Ophthalmoscopy |
| Urinalysis | Fundus photography |
| Full Blood Count | |
| 3 Cancer Markers | |
| Medical Review | |

* Available on a first-come-first-served basis.

•• Endocrine abnormalities include diabetes, which is a growing problem in Singapore. Visit www.moh.gov.sg to learn about the government's campaign against the disease.

Please refer to back cover for the list of approved clinics

LEARNING JOURNEY TO SMOU



SOS kicked off the first leg of its learning journey to local unions by calling on sister union Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU) on 2 March 2017.

Led by SOS General Secretary (GS) Kam Soon Huat, the 24-delegate team comprising SOS officers, ExCo members and staff were all set to hear about SMOU's best practices and tap on its 60 years of experience in safeguarding members' interests and welfare.

The close-knit and enlightening session, which was chaired by SMOU GS Mary Liew, saw the sharing of the union's policies and schemes for sustaining membership growth and its goals for the future.

Attendees from both unions discussed recent developments in the shipping industry such as the gradual automation of vessels, and traded suggestions on how to boost membership benefits and participation while ensuring that the members' evolving needs were being met at the same time. The session concluded with a tour around SMOU's Mariners' Lounge and dinner reception at Lighthouse Bistro.

"The learning journey enabled our leaders to acquire in-depth maritime-related knowledge, which will come in handy during decision-making and problem-solving," SOS Assistant Treasurer Sharon Li said.

"It was a constructive discussion as SMOU was most forthcoming in sharing with us their aims and plans to enhance the well-being of their members," SOS Executive Secretary and Leadership Development Committee Chairman Daniel Tan elaborated. "The mutual exchange of ideas and best practices strengthened the teamwork abilities and leadership skills of everyone present."

He added: "By learning from other unions and replicating their success, SOS hopes to achieve a higher level of performance across different areas at work and serve our members better."



RENEWED COMMITMENT TO OFFSHORE SECTOR SEAFARERS



With the aim of helping seafarers working in the offshore sector, members of International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) Asia Pacific Offshore Task Force Group (APOTFG) renewed their commitment with defined roles and action plans at a meeting in Singapore on 16 and 17 March 2017.

SOS Industrial Relations officers Daniel Tan, Chen Chuan Yi and Alan Kor represented the union at the meeting, which took place at the Seacare Building. The gathering of 21 delegates from Singapore, Indonesia, Myanmar, India, Australia and the United Kingdom was joined by ITF Offshore Task Force Group Chairman Mick Doleman and immediate past Chairman Norrie McVicar.

As part of the agenda, they deliberated over the opportunities and threats within the O&G industry in each country, and the measures taken by the government to cushion the impact of the downturn on the maritime sector.

"At the meeting, I was able to gain knowledge of the various campaigns that seafaring unions have come up with to counter the negative effects of the O&G industry downturn," Alan said. "Thanks to the comprehensive discussions, I now have a better understanding of the offshore industry."





Protecting the Workers

According to ITF, seafarers working offshore – who are usually on O&G mobile offshore units and their support vessels – have to cope with unique working and living conditions.

In addition to facing prolonged exposure to extreme weather and noisy working environments, they often have to work excessive hours and pull all-nighters due to demanding shift patterns.

Such conditions put them at increased risk of accidents and poor health brought on by anxiety, stress or general fatigue. ITF works to protect these seafarers by negotiating for offshore collective bargaining agreements to improve their working environments.





ITF YOUTH CONFERENCE: READY, SET, ACTION

Topics on future trends and imminent global challenges faced by transport workers took center stage at the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) Youth Conference.

Over 200 youth participants worldwide joined the conference, which ran from 28 to 30 March 2017 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Representing SOS at the conference was Industrial Relations Officer Alan Kor.

Keeping in mind the impact of a digital era on the future of work, the participants brainstormed, debated and explored ways to help young transport workers progress through the ranks of their workplaces and build the global power of trade unions. This included setting strategies that would strengthen the roles of the workers in both ITF's priority projects and its upcoming congress in 2018.

By raising awareness about the importance of international trade unionism and mentoring young leaders, the conference equipped the participants with the necessary tools for stronger engagement with the ITF and with each other.

The conference stemmed from ITF's belief that young transport workers are the future of the international Labour Movement. Learning about different obstacles that the workers encounter in their own countries was an enriching experience for us.

– Alan Kor, SOS Representative





LEARNING JOURNEY TO VIETNAM INSPIRES YOUNG UNIONISTS

Sixty-two youths from over 30 unions and the NTUC Youth Development Unit rolled up their sleeves and got down to business at this year’s Young NTUC Workplan Seminar. Among the participants who contributed to the success of the seminar was SOS representative Shirley Lai.

From 23 to 26 March 2017 in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam, the young unionists embarked on a series of visits to Co.opXtra Tan Phong, Foster Electric Company Ltd, and the Vietnam-Singapore Industrial Park (VSIP) in Binh Duong. The visit to VSIP, which is supported by Sembcorp Development, offered them a look into the operations of multi-national companies that had set up factories there.

“I came to know about how challenging it is for companies to expand beyond local territory due to cultural, lifestyle and language differences. Factors such as power supply and food hygiene, which we take for granted in Singapore, can hinder the business’s start-up,” Shirley said.



“I also learnt that instead of competing with local companies in the same trade, we can actually partner them to create a win-win situation for both parties,” she added.

“In Co.opXtra for example, the operations department is managed by Singapore and the legal department, by Vietnam. The company taps on this collaboration to bring in overseas products to sell, and to export Vietnamese items to the Singapore market.”

Having understood the know-how of the enterprises, the youths were inspired to brush up their servant leadership and problem-solving skills by approaching issues from different perspectives and coming up with innovative solutions.

The participants also dropped by the local orphanage Ky Quang Pagoda, where they set up a games carnival for the children. The opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the less fortunate reminded them to align to Young NTUC’s vision of developing future leaders.



The seminar combined the learning journey with a visit to the needy, which was splendid. We fostered strong bonds with the children and with each other. The learning journey was also heartening as we learnt about how the businesses took care of their workers’ welfare.

– Shirley Lai, SOS Representative

CFE REPORT MAPS SINGAPORE'S FUTURE



Singaporeans will be the pioneers of the next generation. That is what the Committee on the Future Economy (CFE) has envisioned for Singapore.

Formed in January 2016, the CFE seeks to develop economic strategies for the next decade by identifying areas of growth with regard to regional and global developments. The 30-member committee is co-chaired by the Minister for Finance Heng Swee Keat and the Minister for Trade and Industry S Iswaran, with Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and NTUC Secretary-General Chan Chun Sing as the Deputy Chairman.

In its report released on 9 February, the CFE called for the people to have deep skills and be inspired to learn throughout their lives, and for businesses to be innovative and nimble in the future economy. This was following a year-long consultation of over 9,000 trade associations and chambers, public agencies, unions, companies, workers, educators and students.

Three broad themes were proposed in the CFE report: keeping Singapore open and connected to the world, helping companies to grow and revolutionise the way they do things, and grooming employees to adapt to current and future changes in the workforce.

Grouped under these themes were seven strategies to:

1. Deepen and diversify our international connections
2. Acquire and utilise deep skills
3. Strengthen enterprise capabilities to innovate and scale up
4. Build strong digital capabilities
5. Develop a vibrant and connected city of opportunity
6. Develop and implement Industry Transformation Maps (ITMs)
7. Partner each other to enable innovation and growth

The CFE Report

Here is a summarised breakdown of the main aspects.

Implementing Industry Transformation Maps

- The Industry Transformation Maps (ITMs), announced during Budget 2016, are developed for 23 sectors and cover about 80 per cent of the economy. By targeting the problems within each industry, they bring together industries, trade associations and chambers, unions and the government. Six were launched in 2016, with the remaining 17 to be launched by the end of FY2017.

CFE Recommendations:

- Utilise early learning points from the first batch to improve subsequent ITMs
- Continue adopting a tailored approach for each industry so that each sector's potential can be realised to the fullest
- Enhance the ITMs by taking a cluster approach to maximise synergies across industries



Growing through Tripartism

- Tripartism plays an important role in maintaining Singapore's competitive edge. It is imperative for the government to strengthen partnerships with the Labour Movement, businesses, and trade associations and chambers, so as to create a sustainable environment that remains progressive, fair and competitive

CFE Recommendations:

- Improved collaboration between unions, employers and the government (Workforce Singapore and SkillsFuture Singapore) to prepare workers for the jobs of the future
- Unions to continue working in concert with enterprises and the government regarding the wellbeing of all Singaporeans, and to operationalise the ITMs

Acquiring Skills for Jobs of Tomorrow

- Rapid technological advancement has changed the workforce and the future of jobs. Workers need to develop deep skills to stay relevant, which includes going beyond the pursuit of academic qualifications to focus on lifelong learning and application of knowledge.

CFE Recommendations:

- The government to support company-led place-and-train schemes, as well as to improve existing support schemes like the Progressive Wage Model (which was advocated by the Labour Movement), Adapt and Grow, Workfare Income Supplement and Workfare Training Support
- Training providers and Institutes of Higher Learning to offer more modularised and technology-enabled training programmes
- Appoint more agents like NTUC's Employment and Employability Institute (e2i) to match harder-to-place jobseekers with potential employers

All information is adapted from the Committee on the Future Economy report.

CREATING BETTER WORKPLACES FOR WOMEN



ITF Women Transport Workers' Committee Chair Diana Holland

8 March, globally recognised as International Women's Day, is supported by thousands of organisations and individuals across the world.

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) commemorated the 106th anniversary of this collective day by highlighting the important role of women in the transportation industry, as well as raising visibility and participation in the union movement.

Diana Holland, chair of the ITF women transport workers' committee, pointed out that the day was more than a one-time celebration of resistance and diversity. It was also a time to review their achievements and growth.

Internationally, women transit workers have been fighting for equality and justice for over a hundred years. They also continue to be pioneers in building the Labour Movement.

"The ITF and its unions are proud to work with women transport workers to make workplaces better, safer and more representative," Ms Holland said. "Today also provides the opportunity to carry forward and report on two ITF initiatives: the launch of our Equality Testing in Transport Research, and the campaign for an International Labour Organization (ILO) convention on violence and harassment in the workplace."

ITF President Paddy Crumlin elaborated: "These projects are part of ITF's continuing and deep-rooted mission to support women transport workers. We will use the findings to develop collective bargaining strategies, which will encourage employers to implement more policies that promote gender equality and reduce harassment





and violence against women in the workplace. The results will also provide evidence of the need for an ILO convention on workplace harassment and violence.”

Most Women Want to Work: Survey

The ILO-Gallup joint report, which was released on the same day, showed that most women wished to be employed.

About 70 per cent of women prefer to work at paid jobs or be in situations that allow them to juggle work and family time, compared to a mere 27 per cent who want to stay at home. A majority of this 70 per cent, who are presently not in the workforce, include job seekers, retirees, full-time students and homemakers.

Interestingly, the figures reflected the same sentiments from women in almost all regions worldwide, including the Arab states and territories where women’s participation in the labour force has been traditionally low.

Women and Men’s Views Converge

Titled “Towards a better future for women and work: Voices of women and men”, the report also showed that men hold similar views in many instances.

Twenty-eight per cent of men prefer the women in their families to work, 29 per cent prefer them to stay at home, and 38 per cent prefer them to be able to do both.

At the global level, women who are working full time, favour situations which allow them to juggle between work and family commitments. Women and men with higher levels of education are also more likely to prefer that women do both, i.e. work and provide care.

“This survey clearly shows that most women and men around the globe prefer women to have paid jobs. Family-supportive policies that enable women to remain and progress in paid

employment, and encourage men to do their part in taking care of the family, are crucial to achieving gender equality at work,” ILO Director-General Guy Ryder said.

Problems Faced by Working Women

However, reconciling work with care for their families poses a significant challenge for women who are employed.

Both men and women in the vast majority of countries and territories surveyed agree that maintaining a balance between work and family is one of the biggest problems faced by working women.

Other prominent problems include unfair treatment, unequal pay compared to their male counterparts, workplace abuse and harassment, and a lack of well-paying jobs.

“The world needs to advance gender equality and empower women at work. This is not just for the benefit of women – it’s for the benefit of all humankind,” Gallup Chairman and CEO Jim Clifton concluded.

Supporting Women in Singapore

For the first time, Parliament debated a proposal to express support for women in Singapore.

Statistics show that while the labour force participation rate for men aged between 25 and 54 is 92 per cent, the rate for women in the same range is only 78 per cent.

The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) is looking into helping women play a bigger role in society by encouraging flexible work arrangements and skills training, among others.

“Employers should set targets, conduct regular performance assessments and appraise employees fairly based on work outcome, regardless of whether these employees are on flexi-time or based work arrangement,” MOM Minister Lim Swee Say said, adding that more could be done to enhance fair employment practices such as appraising employees based on work outcomes and not taking into account their work arrangements.



SOS SOCIAL & WELFARE ACTIVITIES FOR FY 2017/2018 (MEMBER-RELATED EVENTS)

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-----------|--|---|
| June 2017 | 30 | Sunday |  | |
| | | Monday | | |
| | | Tuesday | | |
| | | Wednesday | | |
| | | Thursday | | |
| | | Friday | | SOS /Seacare Hari Raya Celebration |
| | | Saturday | | |
| July 2017 | 15 | Sunday |  | |
| | | Monday | | |
| | | Tuesday | | |
| | | Wednesday | | |
| | | Thursday | | |
| | | Friday | | |
| | | Saturday | | SOS Fruits Day |
| August 2017 | 5 | Sunday |  | |
| | | Monday | | |
| | | Tuesday | | |
| | | Wednesday | | |
| | | Thursday | | |
| | | Friday | | |
| | | Saturday | | SOS Members' Night (1/3) |
| September 2017 | 2 - 5 | Sunday |  | |
| | | Monday | | |
| | | Tuesday | | |
| | | Wednesday | | |
| | | Thursday | | |
| | | Friday | | |
| | | Saturday | | SOS Family Outing |
| September 2017 | 29 | Sunday |  | |
| | | Monday | | |
| | | Tuesday | | |
| | | Wednesday | | |
| | | Thursday | | |
| | | Friday | | SOS World Maritime Day and Seacare's Annual General Meeting |
| | | Saturday | | |
| October 2017 | 14 | Sunday |  | |
| | | Monday | | |
| | | Tuesday | | |
| | | Wednesday | | |
| | | Thursday | | |
| | | Friday | | |
| | | Saturday | | SOS /Seacare Study Grant Presentation Ceremony |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------------|--|---|
| October 2017 | 28 | Sunday |  | |
| | | Monday | | |
| | | Tuesday | | |
| | | Wednesday | | |
| | | Thursday | | |
| | | Friday | | |
| | | Saturday | | SOS Deepavali Celebration |
| November 2017 | 18 | Sunday |  | |
| | | Monday | | |
| | | Tuesday | | |
| | | Wednesday | | |
| | | Thursday | | |
| | | Friday | | |
| | | Saturday | | SOS Members' Night (2/3) |
| November 2017 | 24 | Sunday |  | |
| | | Monday | | |
| | | Tuesday | | |
| | | Wednesday | | |
| | | Thursday | | |
| | | Friday | | SOS Members' Night in Manila |
| | | Saturday | | |
| January 2018 | 12 | Sunday |  | |
| | | Monday | | |
| | | Tuesday | | |
| | | Wednesday | | |
| | | Thursday | | |
| | | Friday | | SOS /Seacare New Year Reception in Manila |
| | | Saturday | | |
| February 2018 | 23 | Sunday |  | |
| | | Monday | | |
| | | Tuesday | | |
| | | Wednesday | | |
| | | Thursday | | |
| | | Friday | | SOS/Seacare Hong Bao Presentation /LNY Celebration/Long Membership Token |
| | | Saturday | | |
| March 2018 | 31 | Sunday |  | |
| | | Monday | | |
| | | Tuesday | | |
| | | Wednesday | | |
| | | Thursday | | |
| | | Friday | | |
| | | Saturday | | SOS Members' Night (3/3) |

* Please note that the dates / events / venues are subjected to changes.



SOS MEMBERS' NIGHT: SAYING IT WITH SAKURA

Konbanwa!

SOS Members' Night returned with a Japanese twist on 18 March 2017. Themed "Subarashii Sakura", the members-only event at Club@52, which had been aptly adorned with cherry blossom décor, saw 138 members eagerly tucking into a delectable Japanese buffet that included assorted





sushi, unagi and tempura, and washing them down with Japanese beverages.

In accordance with the theme, the emcee and a live band entertained the crowd with Japanese-related songs, dances and stage games. The highlight of the night was a rip-roaring geisha comedy that had everyone in stitches.

All too soon, the evening came to an end with the anticipated lucky draw, where winners received Japanese product brands such as a SONY mobile phone and CASIO G-Shock watches.

With fond memories, SOS members look forward to the next Members' Night.



SOS/SEACARE LO HEI LUNCH GATHERING

This year's mass Lunar New Year Lo Hei for the staff of SOS and Seacare was the longest one ever.

About 80 staff members gathered on 3 February 2017 at the open deck of Club@52, where they tossed the yusheng with loud shouts of auspicious wishes. This was followed by a buffet lunch and lucky draw. The exuberant event signified the solidarity between both organisations as one big family.



HONOURING THE LATE MR CHOO ENG KHOON



Mr Choo Eng Khoon, the late legal advisor and pioneer leader of SOS, was honoured by the union with a posthumous plaque of Appreciation Award (Leadership Excellence) for his years of invaluable service.

SOS President Mohamad Abu Bakar, accompanied by Seacare Deputy CEO Shena Foo, presented the plaque to Mr Choo's wife, Mdm Chan Sum Yoo, during a house visit on 15 February 2017.

Besides playing a pivotal role in drafting the SOS Constitution and the Bylaws of Seacare, he also used his knowledge and experience to support and guide the management staff of both organisations.

Mr Choo was one of the 50 luminaries honoured with a Special Recognition Award at NTUC's 50th Anniversary in 2011.

AN ACT OF KINDNESS

SOS's compassion for its members shone through in the union's visit to 80-year-old Too June Kiang on 6 March 2017..

As a member of SOS, Mr Too was among the recipients entitled to receive hong bao at the union's annual Hong Bao Presentation cum Lunar New Year celebration, but his difficulty in walking meant he had to miss the event. To ensure he was not left out, SOS representatives made a personal trip to his home to present him with a hong bao.

"Since I stopped attending union activities three years ago, I have not been able to catch up with my friends," Mr Too said. "I'm grateful to SOS for thinking of me."





SEACAREFOCUS

SEACAREFOCUS

SEACAREFOCUS

SEACAREFOCUS





FESTIVE FEASTING AT RED STAR



The largest Lunar New Year celebration, co-organised by SOS, Seacare and Chip Eng Seng Group, opened its doors to 420 senior residents from the Jalan Kukoh Estate on 7 February.

Joined by Special Guest Lim Tiam Seng, Honorary Chairman and Advisor of Chip Eng Seng Group, the residents enthusiastically tossed the yusheng in a mass lo hei. It was a star-studded event, as other than the standard God of Fortune and Lunar New Year song performances, the residents were also entertained by celebrities like actors Zheng Ge Ping, Hong Hui Fang,



Wang Lei and veteran Hong Kong singer Camy Tang Rui Xia.

Ten lucky draw winners walked away with hampers worth S\$160 each. No one was left out as each individual went home with a Lunar New Year goodie bag, S\$60 hong bao, and mandarin oranges.

This is the 15th year in a row that SOS and Seacare have celebrated Lunar New Year with the seniors of Jalan Kukoh.





PERSONALISED LUNAR NEW YEAR VISITS

The senior residents of Jalan Kukoh were delighted when 10 SOS and Seacare volunteers turned up at their doorsteps on 6 February 2017 to present them with hong bao, mandarin oranges and Lunar New Year (LNY) goodie bags in celebration of the new year.

The initiative is an ongoing effort by both organisations to strengthen bonds with the seniors in the Year of the Rooster. As these wheelchair-bound and bed-ridden seniors were unable to show up in person for the LNY Celebration organised by SOS, Seacare Co-operative Ltd and Chip Eng Seng Group on 7 February 2017, the door-to-door distributions ensured that they would not miss out on the festivities.





With a God of Fortune mascot in tow, the team, along with Jalan Kukoh Residents' Committee (RC) Vice- Chairperson Mdm Yeo Gek Nai and two RC volunteers, spread cheer and well wishes to 20 units scattered over eight blocks of flats.



LEARNING TRIP EDUCATES OKIKI CHINA'S EDUCATORS



A customer service enhancement workshop and an educational tour to pre-schools – this was what OKiKi China's learning trip cum retreat to Singapore from 11 to 18 March 2017 entailed.

With Seacare OKiKi P-Hub (S) Pte Ltd CEO Yuan Min heading the group of 10 teaching professionals from OKiKi China, they picked up useful tips at the workshop, which was held at the Seacare Seafarers' Room, on how to raise service standards and exceed customers' expectations by cultivating a positive mindset and drive for continuous improvement.

The educators also gained a firsthand experience of what early childhood education in Singapore was like through a visit to the Sparkletots Preschool @ Teck Ghee and My First Skool @ Braddell Heights Community Hub, where they were exposed to the pre-school curriculum.

The knowledge they gleaned from the learning trip would contribute to the development of a more professional and advanced early childhood education management system.

OKiKi China is a leading early childhood education institution in Shanghai, China, owning and operating four premier kindergartens that are based in Pudong, Xuhui, Jiaxing and Suzhou.



SEACARE SIGNS FIRST MOU WITH METHODIST CO-OP SOCIETY

Seacare Co-operative Ltd entered into its very first Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with another co-operative, the Methodist Co-operative Society Ltd (MCSL), on 2 March 2017.

The signing ceremony saw MCSL General Manager Victor Seow and Seacare Deputy CEO Shena Foo putting pen to paper, at Seacare's premises. It was witnessed by Seacare Executive Chairman Leow Ching Chuan, Group Corporate Relations Manager Mohamad Abu Bakar, and Group Corporate Relations Senior Manager Kathryn Ang.

Conceived with the objective of bringing mutual economic benefits to both parties, the MoU between Seacare and MCSL was signed after the co-operatives came to an understanding of each other's needs and mutual areas of interest. Through the MoU, Seacare can expand its customer base by tapping into MCSL's membership pool of 1,000, while MCSL stands to benefit from Seacare's medical and accommodation services such as discounted hotel stays in Singapore, Malaysia and the United Kingdom.

The success of this partnership can very well pave the way for future collaborations that will improve strategic ties between Seacare and other like-minded organisations.



About Methodist Co-operative Society Ltd (MCSL)

MCSL is a social enterprise committed to bettering and improving the welfare of the community through activities and services that meet the needs of both members and society.

To find out more, visit <http://www.methodistcoop.org.sg>.



MARITIME HEALTH IN SEAFARERS' WELL-BEING

The International Symposium on Maritime Health is back for its 14th year!

Themed “Maritime Health and Shipping: A Dynamic Partnership”, this year’s symposium aimed to improve the health and quality of life for seafarers by highlighting recent and emerging approaches to maritime health. It was co-organised by International Maritime Health Association (IMHA) and Maritime Clinics & Doctors Association of the Philippines (MARCDOP) in Manila from 22 to 24 March 2017.

Over 400 maritime health professionals and researchers, government agency representatives and members of the shipping community got together to share their perspectives on important healthcare issues concerning seafarers and to learn how strategic partnerships could foster maritime welfare. Among the participants was Dr Chia Yih Woei, CEO of Seacare Maritime Medical Centre Pte Ltd.

Poster presentations and breakout sessions on maritime health-related topics, such as the treatment of illnesses on board and global maritime healthcare innovations, made up the agenda of the illuminating three-day event.





This symposium is an excellent platform for international maritime healthcare providers to present important healthcare issues concerning seafarers, and recommend approaches and framework to improve the well-being of seafarers. The event allows maritime professionals from all over the world, including shipping companies, P&I clubs and manning agencies, to share their perspectives and set a new direction, making the discussions inclusive and comprehensive. There are also plenty of opportunities to network, foster friendships and explore a wide range of healthcare subjects over coffee breaks and meals together.

– Dr Chia Yih Woei, CEO of Seacare Maritime Medical Centre



CONNECT CENTRE: EVOLVING WITH THE TIMES

With CCPL CEO Andrew Leo & GM Angel Ng

“The rapid development of communication technologies in the market, such as social media and smartphone apps, has transformed the way we communicate,” says Andrew Leo, CEO of Connect Centre Pte Ltd (CCPL).

“This is why we have been constantly changing and improving from the day we stepped foot into the contact centre business.”

In 2004, CCPL hit the headlines when it broke into Singapore’s contact centre scene. Formed as part of the Yellow Ribbon Project, the social enterprise, which is an associate of Seacare Foundation Pte Ltd, was the first prison call centre in Southeast Asia to support and help ex-offenders re-integrate into society.

It has come a long way since. Today, CCPL is a one-stop service centre that delivers quality business-to-business and business-to-consumer telecommunications services using cutting-edge technology. The company utilises a multi-functional software system which organises emails, calls and SMSes at the same time.

At its helm are Andrew and General Manager (GM) Angel Ng, both of whom have been tirelessly training, inspiring and rehabilitating ex-offenders since the beginning. The leaders are also self-starters whose passion gets them the contracts needed to sustain their social cause.

“Many clients were initially unable to accept inmates as call agents, but we persevered. The result was a substantial increase in our client base. It was heartening to know that our years of hard work had paid off,” Angel said.

Andrew concurred, adding: “While it was satisfying to see the company grow, it is not just about hiring ex-offenders for a noble cause. We empower them through skills training to maximise their potential. Shorter waiting time and faster responses are what customers want nowadays, and we aim to help our agents meet these expectations.”

In order to do so, CCPL agents need to put their hearts into understanding the workflow and operation processes of every department within the clients’ organisations. Andrew, who is known for going the extra mile, believes that this will allow the agents to offer the best solutions, and strengthen the bond between the clients and their consumers in the process.

“Regardless of whether it is a social or business enterprise, the commitment to serve customers lies at the heart of every business,” he said.

Keeping Up with Current Trends

CCPL is rebranding its corporate image to improve customer service experience while it repositions itself as a niche player in the market. The rebrand will include a new website with a stronger virtual and social presence.

The company has also set its sights beyond the call centre industry on the vast, untapped potential of other businesses like property, food and beverage, and even smartphone apps.

Asked how far CCPL is willing to innovate to stay ahead of the curve, Andrew responded with his personal philosophy: “Whatever you want to be, be the best.”



Andrew Leo, CEO of Connect Centre



Angel Ng, GM of Connect Centre

CALL CENTRE SERVICES JUST A CALL AWAY!

Having a strong customer contact centre is essential for any corporate body that needs to service customers. Connect Centre Pte Ltd delivers beyond expectations, imparting a high level of operational expertise that synchronises the needs of clients and customers.

In addition to giving ex-offenders a second chance at life, we have also proven that Corporate Social Responsibility and professional call centre services can co-exist. Our significant growth and achievements over the years are not just the success of Connect Centre, but of each and every inmate who are walking this journey with us towards their re-integration into society.

We are committed to producing the results that you desire with:

- *Value-added customer service*
- *Technical and administrative support*
- *Quality telesales*



APPROVED CLINICS UNDER THE SEACARE MEDICAL SCHEME



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