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caring & sharing



A Newsletter by Leong Hwa Monastery and Viriya Community Services

OUR STORIES



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Message from President

Dear friends,

Welcome to the last edition of our newsletter for year 2013 and yet another in many more to come.

This is a time of the year for me to reflect on our contributions to the community, in particular the journey with our staff, beneficiaries, partners, donors and volunteers. In this edition, we share with you stories of these people; their stories illustrate how each of them plays his part and come together as the Viriya family to put our mission of bringing joy and enhancing the quality of life into actions.

In our twelve years in social service, our human spirit of loving kindness and compassion has been greatly enriched by the life stories of those whom we have served. Their stories, of trials and tribulations, of resilience and strength and of growth and successes have added fulfillment in our lives.

Viriya, meaning the right effort in Pali, represents our belief in exerting the right effort in a wise and balanced manner to achieve progress joyfully. In our work, more than just making a difference, we want to make differences that indeed make a difference to the lives of the less privileged and achieve true happiness through joyful effort with all including going for the extra mile to change the script and create good endings.

2013 has been an exciting year for Viriya Community Services. Our new Viriya Family Service Centre at Potong Pasir will be operational by the time you receive this newsletter. We launched the Viriya Elderly Medical Fund in July and together with on-going enhancements to our existing services and programmes, we have been truthful to our mission.

I hope you will enjoy reading the stories and will be happy that you have partnered with us to achieve these good outcomes. I look forward to your unwavering support. May each of you continue with your true spirit of giving to benefit others at the expense of oneself.

Happy Holidays!

Jenny Lim

President

jennylin@viriy.org.sg

主席序言

亲爱的朋友，

欢迎浏览我们2013年最后一期的时事通讯。我们期待在将来为您呈现更多精彩的时事报道。

又到了一年的尾声，让我回顾一下这一年里我们为社区所付出的努力，尤其是那一段我们与员工，受益者，合作伙伴，捐赠者以及义工们共同走过的旅程。在本期刊里，我们将与您分享他们的故事。这些故事描述他们每个人如何在进觉的大家庭中尽自己的一份力量，致力于将我们传播欢乐和提高生活质量的使命付诸于行动。

在这为社会公益服务的十二年里，我们人类慈爱，善良，与富怜悯心的天性从我们所帮助的受益者的生活故事里得到进一步的升华。他们在困顿中磨砺的故事，培养韧性与坚强的故事，成长与成功的故事给了我们巨大的满足感。

进觉，在巴利语的意思是正确的努力。它也表明了我们的信念：以一种明智和谐的方式作出正确的努力来取得令人愉快的进步。我们的工作，决不仅仅是为了改变而改变，我们希望这些改变能让受益者的人生有所不同。我们愿尽一切可能，修改生命的脚本，去创造一个美好的结局，希望通过一切令人欣喜的努力行为，来帮助他们获得真正的幸福。

对进觉福利协会来说，2013年是振奋人心的一年。在七月份，进觉乐龄医疗基金已经正式开展运作，同时我们也对现有的服务项目作了进一步的改善。我们位于波动巴西崭新的进觉家庭服务中心在年底前将正式开始运营。我们无愧于我们的使命。

我希望您会喜欢这则通讯里所包含的故事，并为至今的合作关系所取得的优异成果感到欣慰。我期待着您坚定不移的支持。愿您继续以您真诚给予的精神去尽自己薄力受益他人。

祝您佳节愉快!

林寅女女士

主席



Using Stories to Promote Holistic Development

Stories not only enhance the literacy and language development of children, stories also promote social, emotional and overall cognitive development of children.

Through stories and drama, children learn new words, sentence structures and creative use of language. Being absorbed into the storyline, children learn to process and deal with the adventures and even misadventures presented through the plot.

Children often re-enact scenes from their favourite stories and partake in free play to express their emotions, thoughts and experiences, promoting their sense of self and emotional development. When children get involved in stories together, the benefits are amplified as children learn social rules such as discipline and concentration while listening to stories



Acting out stories together promotes social skills of taking turns and cooperation.

and taking turns and cooperation through pretend play.

Whispering Hearts Infant and Child Care Centre believes strongly in the power of stories in promoting holistic development of our children and these are some of the activities and programmes to expose our children to stories and allow them to reap the benefits of the wonderful tales of the world and in their daily lives. Even infants are exposed to nursery rhymes,



Exposing young infants to the wonderful experience of flipping through books.

stories, and music and movement on a daily basis.

- Daily story telling
- Fortnightly library visits
- Exposure to theatre and drama plays
- Daily drama centre activities
- Music and movement
- Weekly Show and Tell
- Nursery rhymes

Evelyn Lai



The drama centre promotes expression when children re-enact scenes of stories.

Drawing out their favourite stories allows children to process and re-present their experience through creativity.



Children are totally absorbed in listening to stories.



Storytelling and nursery rhymes help infants in early language development.



Creating Equal Opportunities for All Children

“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.”

– Aristotle

Since its opening, Whispering Hearts Student Care Centre (WHSCC) has been committed to total development of children focusing on education. By education, we mean developing knowledge and skills, imparting values and very importantly, grooming positive character.

Working closely with Whispering Hearts Family Service Centre, WHSCC receives referral of children, from low-income

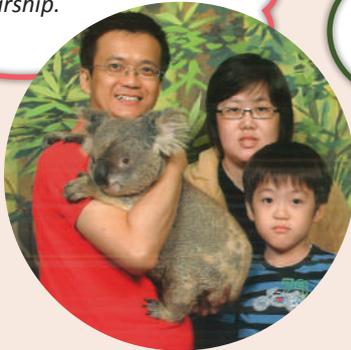
families, who could benefit from before and after school care and additional educational support to achieve their potential. WHSCC has been providing an all rounded curriculum and also scholarships and educational grants to motivate children towards academic excellence as well as to assist low income families with educational expenses. WHSCC has also recently set up a Care Fund to provide further assistance to ensure that children from low income families are given equal access to educational opportunities and support.

Through the years, we have cared for disadvantaged children and witnessed how our centre has contributed to improvements academically, developmentally and socially in the children. These testimonies affirm our belief in going the extra mile to care for and support children from disadvantaged families. We will continue to aim to open doors of opportunities, provide the required support and equip our children with the necessary knowledge, skills and values to maximise their potential.

Evelyn Lai

“We are extremely grateful that Ryan was given the privilege to receive a scholarship which not only motivates him but eases our financial burden as well.”

- Mr Teo, father of Ryan, recipient of the Viriya-Ong Kim Leong Scholarship.



“My daughter has improved in her studies and also behaviour. Now she does her school homework and revision without being told. She looks forward to going to WHSCC. She will tell me what she has done at the centre with much excitement. The teachers there have given her a lot of encouragement and advice. Now she has a positive attitude to life.”

- Mdm Kairani, referred by Whispering Hearts Family Service Centre to place her 10 year old daughter in WHSCC.



“WHSCC provides programmes for my children’s holistic development. The enrichment lessons also include life skills and social skills which I feel are beneficial.”

- Mother of Li Jun, 9 years old, who has been receiving scholarship from WHSCC since she joined us in Primary 1.



“The bursary award is an encouragement for my family to strive for a better future. My son has also benefitted a lot from WHSCC. His conduct has improved. As for academic, he is progressing under the supervision of all the caring teachers.”

- Mr Teo, single father, with his 9 year old son.

“I am very thankful to Whispering Hearts Student Care Centre as my children have learnt to be more independent and have gained knowledge beyond the school syllabus.”

- Single father of two children, aged 9 and 10.





Going All Out for the Youths

Every week, the TAP team can be seen on the streets, in neighbourhood parks and even fast food joints. The team's aims are to engage the youths loitering around, build up meaningful relationships and support the youth towards positive development.

Jay, a TAP youth worker shares that every time the team goes out for street outreach, be it day or night, they will discover something new and that keeps the work exciting, sometimes even scary. However, the work has also brought satisfaction and motivates the team to engage the youths further. Ashikin, another TAP youth worker, feels that while the youths are often labeled as nuisances in the neighbourhood, she has seen the good side of the youths when she got to know the youths better, and she is proud of the talents that the youths possess.

The TAP team was formed in July 2013 and started their youth outreach work in September 2013. During their initial efforts, they were often misunderstood to be undercover cops. Today, the TAP team has built good rapport with groups of youths. Zaid, a TAP youth worker proudly shares that they have



TAP Youth Worker in action at night.

gained the respect of the youths and have been able to influence the youths to better behaviour. The TAP team gels easily into the groups, chatting with the youths, singing together and are even planning a guitar performance together for the Whispering Hearts Year End Carnival in December 2013.

However, all is not rosy yet. The TAP team observes a marked difference in the profile of youths loitering in the day from those at night. The night groups

comprise older youths in their late teens to early adulthood and tend to congregate in bigger groups. They are more mobile and often travel from spot to spot. The TAP team finds that the older youths are less open and tend to be rowdier than the groups in the day. The main challenge in engaging the youths appears to be the still misunderstood identity of the TAP team as police officers.

Nonetheless, the TAP team is hopeful that with their sincerity, they will be able to guide the youths towards positive development. The TAP team strongly believes that the youths are just bored and hence loiter around, increasing their exposure to risk situations and youth delinquency. The TAP team hopes that they will become trusted adults in the lives of the youths, creating opportunities for the youths to be engaged meaningfully and to achieve positive development. The TAP team is already planning new engagements for the youths in the coming year. It will be an exciting 2014 ahead for the TAP team with the youths.

Evelyn Lai



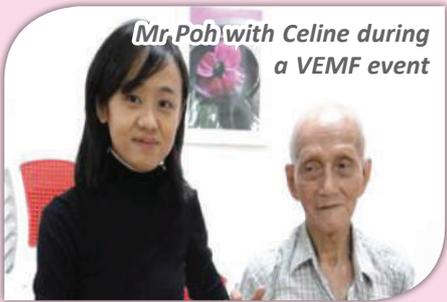
TAP Youth Worker engaging a group of youths outside a shopping mall during a day outreach session.



Living Well with Viriya Elderly Medical Fund (VEMF) 生活因进觉乐龄医疗基金更美好

Mr Poh Weng Fook, 83 years old, is a recipient of our pilot phase of Viriya Community Services' new Elderly Medical Fund (VEMF) which provides financial and social assistance for elderly beneficiaries who require long term medical attention. The fund aims to plug the gaps unmet by current medical subsidies for elderly to continue living in the community with dignity.

Mr Poh's voice quavered as he narrated how he lost his right leg as a result of an air raid during the Japanese Occupation. Then still a teenager, the images of the Japanese bombers shrieking across the sky have been seared into his memory. Since then, Mr Poh has fitted himself with a prosthetic leg, but still walks with an awkward gait with the aid of a walking stick. The mobility difficulty has also affected his other leg and he requires regular traditional Chinese medical treatment to help him cope with the pain and aches.



Mr. Poh with Celine during a VEMF event

Without any close kin since his parents, wife and children passed on years ago, Mr Poh has been residing (with a co-tenant) at a rental flat for the past 13 years. Without much savings, Mr Poh had to work well into his golden years till 78 as a newspaper vendor. Now retired, Mr Poh relies on Public Assistance amounting to \$450 per month to meet his basic needs. That amount is barely enough given his condition. Mr Poh added that transportation to the free clinic where he receives treatment is already a burden.

Mr Poh's wrinkled face broke into a rare smile as he recounted how he used the VEMF NTUC vouchers to buy food and daily necessities. Critically, the money saved has allowed Mr Poh to travel to various medical centres for treatment independently.

今年83岁高龄的布荣福先生，是进觉福利协会新的进觉乐龄医疗基金（VEMF）的一位受益者。进觉乐龄医疗基金为需要长期医疗看护的乐龄人士提供经济以及社会援助。这项基金致力于填补现有的医疗补助金未涉及的空间，以让乐龄人士继续有尊严地生活在社区中。

布先生颤抖着声音讲述他是如何在日占时期的一次空袭中失去了右腿。那时他还是个少年，但日军的炸弹从天空呼啸而过的画面却深深烙进在他的记忆中。后来，布先生虽然装了义肢，行走依然困难。他的行动困难也已经影响了他的另一条腿，于是他需要定期的中医治疗来缓解他的疼痛。

在他的父母、妻子和孩子都过世之后，布先生没有了任何的近亲。他在一间政府租赁房里与另一位租客同居住了十三年。因为没有足够的积蓄，直到78岁，布先生都不得不靠卖报维持自己的生活。现在布先生退休了，他依靠着每月450元的公共补助来满足生活基本需求。由于他的身体状况，这点数量的补助金仅能勉强支持他的生活。布先生还说，

The various venues include the Outram polyclinic and a Chinese medical hall at Beach Road to treat his leg and another Chinese medical hall near Chinatown for his other ailments. Previously, Mr Poh had to rely on a volunteer's availability to send him for his treatments or on the public transport, and even walking. Given Mr Poh's ambulatory difficulties, this is no mean feat for him as he had to meander through countless small alleys and navigate the complex bus and MRT network. Indeed, Mr Poh was flushed with emotion as he recalled how he was able to take a taxi home when

虽然他去免费诊所接受治疗，仅仅交通费已是个负担。

当布先生述说他是如何用进觉乐龄医疗基金所提供的NTUC代金券去购买食物和日用品时，他满是皱纹的脸上终于绽放了难得的笑容。所省下的钱让布先生能独立的去诊所接受治疗。过去，布先生不得不依赖于志愿者的帮助送他去治疗。当志愿者没空时，布先生只能依赖公共交通，甚至是步行前往。因为布先生的行动不便，要在数不清的小巷中穿行以及在复杂的巴士和地铁网络中找到正确方向，对他来说实在不是一件容易的事情。当布先生回忆起最近他被雨困住却能坐德士回家的事情时，他的心情也不由得激动起来。

我们的社工，Celine，定期去探访布先生，并且邀请他参与在心意中心举办的各项社区活动。这个项目让布先生能够在维持基本生活需求的同时，也过着有意义的生活。

这，就是进觉乐龄医疗基金的一项目标：让所有的乐龄人士都能受到关爱与援助，让他们有尊严地度过晚年。

he was caught in the rain recently.

Our Social Work Associate, Celine, has also been checking in on Mr Poh regularly and engaging him in various community events at My Centre @ Moulmein. The programme has allowed Mr Poh the means to not just survive but live life meaningfully.

That, is one of the objectives of VEMF, for all elderly to receive appropriate care and assistance to age in place with dignity.

Clement Cheong



IS THIS HAPPENING AT HOME



Viriya Family Service Centre will be fully operational to serve the residents of Potong Pasir and Joo Seng from November 2013. Being the focal point of social services, Viriya Family Service Centre will provide the following services and programmes:

- Information and referral services for social assistance;**
- Casework and counselling for individuals, couples and families;**
- Financial assistance such as school pocket money fund for school-going children;**
- Community support programmes;**
- Viriya Elderly Medical Fund;**
- And many other fun and exciting engagements!**

Join us for the soft launch of VFSC at Potong Pasir Avenue 3 on 16 February 2014 from 10am to 1pm.
For more information, call 6285 8033 or visit our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/ViriyaFSC.



进觉家庭服务中心



进觉家庭服务中心推介与嘉年华会

日期: 2014年2月16日 (星期日)

时间: 10am-1pm

地点: 波东巴希民众俱乐部旁边的草地

大牌142波东巴希3巷#01-224



请上我们的面簿网页索取最新消息! <http://www.facebook.com/ViriyaFSC>

电话号码: 6285-8033 传真号码: 6285-8062 电邮地址: vfsc@viriy.org.sg



Viriya Family Service Centre First Joint Community Project

Viriya Family Service Centre (VFSC) held its first People-Public-Private collaboration in July 2013, marking the beginning of Viriya's journey with the people at Potong Pasir and Joo Seng. The collaboration was a joint effort of VFSC, Potong Pasir grassroots organisations, and KPMG through the ROSE programme.



"Human chain" of KPMG volunteers packing ROSE food items.

The ROSE (Rice, Oil, Sugar and Essential) programme was initiated by Mr Sitoh Yih Pin, MP for Potong Pasir Single Member Constituency to serve needy families in Potong Pasir through the monthly provision of food and essential items. ROSE has been warmly received by residents since its inception in April 2012. In fact, ROSE was a winner of the Prime Minister Community Initiatives Award earlier this year.



KPMG staff and grassroots volunteer distributing ROSE packs right to the homes of needy families.

Liaising through Mr Abner Koh, Viriya Community Services Management Committee member, the KPMG Tax practice adopted ROSE in July 2013 as a joint Corporate Social Responsibility project with VFSC at Potong Pasir and Joo Seng. KPMG Tax partners, directors and staff purchased a prescribed list of food and provision items and the KPMG staff packed and distributed them to needy residents together with our VFSC staff on 30 June and 7 July 2013.



VFSC staff all ready to set off with our KPMG partners.

The successful collaboration signifies our commitment that we will do more when we set up the Viriya Family Service Centre at Block 142, Potong Pasir Avenue 3. VFSC will grow together with the people to become stronger and better individuals in society.

Clement Cheong

进觉家庭服务中心首次联合社区项目

进觉家庭服务中心在2013年7月首次举行了一项人民、公众与私人机构的联合活动项目，标志着中心与波东巴西及裕成区居民合作旅程的开始。此次活动通过 "ROSE" 方案由进觉家庭服务中心联合波东巴西基层组织及毕马威会计师事务所合作举办。

"ROSE" 的名称是以人民家中的必需品，米 (Rice)、油 (Oil)、糖 (Sugar) 与其他生活必需品 (Essentials)，的英文简称所集合而成。此方案是由波东巴西单选区议员司徒宇斌先生在2012年4月发起，每月为波东巴西单选区有需要的家庭提供粮食和生活必需品。"ROSE" 方案自发起以来受到居民的热烈反应，也同时在今年初赢得总理颁发的社区活动奖。

国际会计师事务所毕马威通过进觉福利协会管理委员会成员许先生的联络，在今年七月筛选出进觉家庭服务中心在波东巴西及裕成区推出的 "ROSE" 方案为应事务所支持的一项企业社会责任活动项目。毕马威会计师事务所的税务部门负责购买食品及其他中心规定明列表上的必需物品，并且在6月30日与7月7日连同中心负责员工一起包装和分配其物品给有需要的居民。

此次的成功表明了进觉家庭服务中心对该区居民的承诺，我们在中心成立后将会做得更多，并承诺与居民共同成长、进步，提升大家的生活水平。进觉家庭服务中心将成立在波东巴西3道，大牌142号。



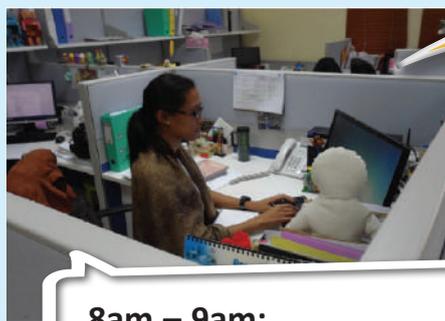
Mr Sitoh Yih Pin, MP for Potong Pasir, with staff of VFSC and KPMG volunteers.



A Day in the Life of a Social Worker

A Social Worker wears multiple hats as a case manager, counsellor, broker, educator, networker, project planner and policy advocate. Ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes? Join our resident newshound as he shadows Ms Frances Montañez, Senior Social Worker from Whispering Hearts Family Service Centre, for a day.

Frances holds a master's degree in Social Work and credits her aunt, a Court Social Worker to be her inspiration for joining the Social Service sector. Frances is at the vanguard of efforts to improve the lives of our beneficiaries and heads Women Inc., an empowerment programme for women, and Viriya Children's Medical Fund, which provides financial and social assistance for children with chronic medical conditions.



8am – 9am:

Starting the day with emails and administrative work.



Clement Cheong

9am – 12noon:

Donning the educator hat to share knowledge with fellow practitioners.

“My job is never boring. There's always action, whether it's working with clients, heading a project or event, or attending professional development courses.”

– Frances Montanez



12noon – 1pm:

Recharging with a wholesome and nutritious home prepared lunch.



5pm:

Finally, home sweet home.

3pm – 5pm:

Travelling out to brief student volunteers for a VCMF gathering. On other days, Frances may also be out doing home visits for social assessments.

1pm – 2pm:

Transforming into a counsellor, providing couple therapy.



2pm – 3pm:

Quickly switching hat to that of a broker to network with stakeholders and link needy families to community resources.





After Office Hours - VCS Goes Overseas!

Without reward or remuneration, and simply driven by a desire to serve, VCS staff and Management Committee members take their own time and money from their pockets to volunteer for overseas charitable expeditions. From nearby Batam to far flung Mongolia, we chronicle the overseas volunteering adventures of our staff and Management Committee members. Indeed, once a social worker, always a social worker!

Cow liberation: In the practice of generosity, one of the noblest gifts is the gift of life. In 2013, **Varada Effort** undertook various cow liberation projects in Sri Lanka. Cows were purchased from the local slaughter houses, and after blessings by monks in a simple ceremony, they were distributed to the poorest families in various villages. These families, who have pledged not to kill or sell the cows during their lifetime and to care for them till their natural demise, will be able to milk the cows and use them for farming.



In September 2013, our Social Worker, Dorothy, made the trek to Mongolia to help build homes for needy families.

Clement Cheong



Khuan Heng, President of Whispering Hearts Family Service Centre, participated in a cow liberation process and committed "With this rope I hand this cow to you."



In December 2012, Whispering Hearts FSC staff journeyed across the Singapore Strait to Batam to volunteer at a local orphanage.

In February 2013, Kailing, another Social Worker, ventured to Philippines as part of her volunteering and sponsorship efforts with World Vision. Kailing has been making regular donations and this time, real actions to benefit the children. Coincidentally, also with the group is the Treasurer of VCS Management Committee who shares the same passion for helping.



Every gift is of value to our beneficiaries

A Generous Donation from Chee Swee Cheng & Co Pte Ltd

We are very fortunate to receive a donation of \$100,000 from Chee Swee Cheng & Co Pte Ltd during the official opening of the group's very first hotel, Holiday Inn Express on 6 October 2013. The donation was made in memory of their late director, Mr James Chee who passed away on 2 March 2013. The late Mr James Chee was responsible for the financial and investment strategies of the group.

The Holiday Inn Express, a 220-room hotel is located at Bideford Road, the site of the previous Wellington Building. At the official opening, Mr Chee Eng Hoon, an Executive Director of the group said, "This is a milestone project for the group as well as a partnership with IHG. We are confident of the brand and have signed a second agreement to operate a Holiday Inn Express in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia."

The group's other business interests include property investment and development and Atlas Ice Company Berhad in Malaysia. The latter celebrated their 100th Anniversary in year 2012 and announced a Centenary Charity Giveaway of One Million Ringgit!



The wife of the late Mr James Chee presenting a generous donation of \$100,000 to Venerable Sek Meow Ee, Founder of Viriya Community Services.

The founder was Mr Chee Swee Cheng, a prominent Straits born Chinese businessman. Additionally, the late Mr Chee Swee Cheng was fondly remembered for his philanthropy with various hospitals in Malacca. His greatest contribution to the family was the building of the Chee family ancestral temple at 117 Heeren Street, Malacca, dedicated in memory of his late grandfather.

Jenny Lim



Venerable Sek Meow Ee with the directors of Chee Swee Cheng & Co Pte Ltd

This is a season of joy and giving. When you give what you have, the gift is good, no matter how humble it is. We should give when we can give.

We give out of compassion and loving kindness when we realise that there are people who are in need of help. When our act of giving comes from our heart and mind, we will feel joyful because, in our little way, we have come together to make a difference in the lives of the people who are less fortunate than us.

When Buddhists perform the act of dana (i.e. act of giving), it also helps them to reduce their personal greed, selfishness and craving. This is true charity because there is no expectation of any benefit in return. We describe this as a wholesome act.

Giving is also a secular act, regardless of faith and race. Every gift is of value to our beneficiaries.

Viriya Community Services serves more than 5000 individuals through our 6 service centres and other community programmes. To sustain our programmes, we aim to raise \$600,000 annually. Every bit counts and we appeal to your support in our programmes and services.

To find out more about our programmes and services and join us in the meaningful journey, please visit our website www.viriya.org.sg. All outright cash donations of at least S\$50 qualify for 2½ times income tax deduction.