

A Publication Printed by
The Society for the Physically Disabled

extrapage

Life After Stroke Can Be Fulfilling



▲ MCYS' Mr Gerard Chow (third from left) presents a framed copy of the stroke management brochure to Guest-of-Honour Miss Indranee Rajah, Member of Parliament for Tanjong Pagar GRC, at the 'Life After Stroke Can Be Fulfilling' Seminar. They are joined by Ms Winnie Tang, President of SNSA, and Mr See Cher, President of SPD

COVER STORIES

- Life After Stroke Can Be Fulfilling 1,2
- Joint Research Project by SPD and I²R Brings Hope to the Severely Disabled 16

IN & AROUND

- A Better Me 3
- A Celebration of Abilities 4
- In Gratitude to Our Volunteers 5
- Enrichment Programmes for the Young and the Young-at-Heart 7
- Our Celebrations Remembered 8,9
- SPD Family Carnival 2004 10
- Workshop on Spinal Cord Injury 10
- WOW, SPD's Organisational Excellence Journey Turns One! 11
- SPD's New Board of Management 2004/2006 12
- Volunteers Bring Smiles and Cheer 13

FUNDRAISING

- Charity Hongbao 2005 2
- Team RGS Does It Again! 4
- SPD 40th Anniversary Charity Draw 6

FEATURE

- Living and Loving to Live and Give 12
- My Tutor Friend 13,14
- Employment Placement Using a Holistic Approach 14,15

Mr Michael Yap was 60 years old when he had his stroke on 1 Jan 2000. The blow was both unexpected and untimely. He had to take a break from his business and instead of being the head of the household for the family, became dependent on his family members for the simplest of daily activities. It was another year before he could resume his normal activities.

According to the Ministry of Health, stroke is the second most common cause of death worldwide and the fourth leading cause of death in Singapore. Each year, about 10,000 of those hospitalized suffer from stroke. Of these, 25% recover with minor impairments while another 40% have moderate to severe impairments and require special care.

After a stroke, most survivors become anxious over their future and begin worrying over appropriate treatment and the costs involved, their job prospects, and support from relatives, friends and even employers. Caregivers on the other hand would be concerned over the increased responsibilities in caring for the stroke survivor, how much of an adjustment they would have to make in their lives and how this could come in the way of their fulfilling their goals.

On 23 October 2004, The Society for the Physically Disabled (SPD) and the Singapore National Stroke Association (SNSA) staged a seminar that served to let stroke survivors and their caregivers know about programmes and services available to help them cope.

The 'Life After Stroke Can Be Fulfilling' Seminar supported by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) covered a wide spectrum of topics from services available at hospitals and community-based organizations to different forms of rehabilitation and technologies available in the market to help stroke survivors. Speakers included social workers, therapists, nurses and doctors and also those renowned in healthcare like Senior Consultant of National Neuroscience Institute's Dept of Neurology, Dr N V Ramani, Head & Senior Consultant of Dept of Rehabilitative Medicine, Singapore General Hospital, Dr Peter A C Lim, and Head & Senior Consultant of Tan Tock Seng Hospital's Dept of Rehabilitation Medicine, Dr Kong Keng He.

The Seminar was attended by 170 stroke survivors, caregivers, and healthcare and social service workers in hospitals and voluntary welfare organizations. Through this platform, SPD and SNSA hope that participating organizations can form working relationships to offer even better programmes and services for the benefit of stroke survivors and their caregivers.

At the event, a public education brochure on stroke management was also launched to raise awareness of the condition. It contains a brief description of stroke and highlights warning signs, prevention, challenges encountered, programmes and services, and professional help available. The brochure available in four languages is

continue on page 2...

PATRON

Dr Wee Kim Wee

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Prof Kiang Ai Kim, PBM
Joseph Hoo, PBM
Mike Gray, PBM, BBM

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT 2004/2006

President

See Cher

Immediate Past President

Koh Nai Teck, PBM

Vice President

Soh Chee Keong, PBM

Honorary Treasurer

Benjamin Gan

Honorary Assistant Treasurer

Nancy Chia

Ex-Officio Secretary

Dr Ow Chee Chung

BOARD MEMBERS

Chia Yong Yong
Lee Han Yang, PBM
Dr Mallick Fazalur Rahman M
Poh Hwee Hian
Tan Eng Lock, PBM
Yeo Jiu Nam

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Dr Ow Chee Chung
Ms Loi Boon Lee
Ms Katherine Sng

extrapage

is a quarterly public affairs
communicator published by:



Society for the
Physically Disabled

2 Peng Nguan Street
SPD Ability Centre
Singapore 168955
Tel: (65) 6323 2303
Fax: (65) 6323 7008
E-mail: information@spd.org.sg

Writers' views and opinions expressed in **extrapage**
are not necessarily that of SPD's.

COVER STORIES **LIFE AFTER STROKE CAN BE FULFILLING**
FUNDRAISING **CHARITY HONGBAO 2005**

...continued from page 1

sponsored by MCYS and was launched at the Seminar by Miss Indraneel Rajah, Member of Parliament for Tanjong Pagar GRC. The brochure is available at hospitals and voluntary welfare organizations islandwide.

SPD's Executive Director Dr Ow Chee Chung explained why the current emphasis in this area: "In recent years, we have seen more young stroke survivors coming to seek support at SPD. We provide rehabilitation and other services for stroke survivors while SNSA is a support group for them. We realized that we could leverage on the synergy between both organisations for the benefit of stroke survivors. Our collaboration will enable more to be done for them and improve their quality of life".

"Because of the great change in lifestyle after a person has had stroke, many lose hope and feel that their life is over. Through this seminar, we hope to let people know that they can work towards improving their life and that they can still look forward to a full life," said Mr Michael Yap, who gave his personal testimony at the Seminar as a note of encouragement for stroke survivors.

Mr Yap is living proof of his claims. Today, he keeps himself busy with community work and qigong, even sharing and teaching the ancient



▲ Stroke survivors, caregivers, healthcare and social service workers in hospitals and voluntary welfare organizations attend the Seminar to learn more about the services available in the community for stroke survivors.

Chinese exercise at the Singapore Island Country Club. The former Vice President of SNSA is involved in grassroots activities and has taken up his former hobbies of golfing, dancing and traveling.

Those interested in obtaining a copy of the stroke public education brochure or to find out more about the help available for stroke survivors can contact SPD at 6323 2303 or the SNSA at 6358 4138, or visit the websites www.spd.org.sg or www.snsa.org.sg.

SPD runs a stroke programme at its Rehabilitation Centre and recently partnered the SNSA to start a Stroke Club. The SPD Stroke Club now conducts public education talks for stroke survivors and their caregivers at the SPD Rehabilitation Centre and is held every last Wednesday of the month at 2.30pm.

Charity Hongbao 2005

The SPD Charity Hongbao is here again. This year, funds raised from the project will go towards the SPD Education Programme which helps students with physical disabilities studying in mainstream schools and students with parents with physical disabilities.

As in previous years, hongbaos will be given out to students for them to put in their donations. SPD would arrange for the delivery and collection of hongbaos from the schools.

We seek the support of all schools in distributing the hongbaos to their students so that funds can be raised to help their disabled counterparts. Your support could mean the continuation of programmes and service in aid of students with physical disabilities.

For more information, please contact Ms Annie Kor at 6236 6372, or email Annie_KOR@spd.org.sg.

A Better Me

Beneficiaries at the WAC are put on a course to improve themselves. Workshop Supervisor Karen Yeong gives an account of the object and activities in the sessions.

The Personal Hygiene & Grooming (P & G) course was conducted from March to June in the year 2003. Nine sessions were held for the beneficiaries of the Work Activity Centre (WAC), each session lasting one and an half hours per week.

Beneficiaries with intellectual disabilities were the target group for the course as they had little or no knowledge of presenting themselves well in these areas. Topics such as nail, skin, dental and menstrual care, dressing and body odour management, shaving and hair grooming were covered. We were also privileged to have a volunteer dentist, Mr Siva Rajendram, deliver a talk and 'live' demonstration on the right way of brushing.

In the second quarter of 2004, the P & G course mushroomed into other areas. All WAC beneficiaries were required to attend the compulsory topic "Rules & Regulations". They then moved on to other areas like "Time & Money Concept" and "Healthy Lifestyle" which comprised topics such as osteoporosis and the importance of including fruits and vegetables in their diet.

The participants were specially chosen based on the different needs of individuals. For instance in the "Weight Management" session, those considered overweight were selected to attend in order to make them more aware of the potential health dangers of obesity. They were introduced to appropriate exercises that would help reduce other health risks. Worksheets were given out so that participants could assess themselves under the self-check column, and quizzes given to further reinforce the lessons learnt.

After each topic covered, information on the subject was put up at the Health Corner set up at the WAC. This



▲ The effects of smoking are expounded in 'Quit for Life' so that the beneficiaries are better informed of the impact of the habit in their lives



▲ Hands-on activities enable lessons on weight management to sink deeper in the participants

is so as to reach out to all beneficiaries who were encouraged to read what was happening in the sheltered workshop so that the valuable messages given in the sessions could be spread to all. ☺

The Work Activity Centre provides vocational rehabilitation for people with physical disabilities with limited functioning skills by giving them the

opportunity to engage in simple sub-contract work. For complete rehabilitation, a Client Wellness Programme provides beneficiaries with different experiences and arms them with skills that help in their integration into mainstream society. For more information on the services provided at the WAC, log on to our website at www.spd.org.sg, or call Sumanta Das at 6236 6413.

A Celebration of Abilities

The first Disability Awareness Campaign was held in Singapore on the week of 29 November 2004. This followed a survey commissioned by the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) to find out the attitudes and perceptions of Singaporeans towards people with disabilities.

The 1,210 respondents of the survey comprised members of the public, caregivers, people with disabilities and staff of voluntary welfare organizations (VWOs). Key findings included the following:

- 54% of the general public respondents thought that people with disabilities were dependent and had poor self-esteem
- 64% of the disabled surveyed felt that non-disabled people did not know their condition and needs
- 75% of caregivers worried that the non-disabled did not accept people with disabilities
- 76% of the general public felt that people with disabilities did not have enough opportunities to come into contact with the general public

To help provide the public with information on how to relate to people with disabilities and promote interaction between both parties, the NCSS spearheaded the Campaign

named 'A Celebration of Abilities' which was to coincide with the United Nation's declared International Day of Disabled Persons set for 3 December.

The nation-wide public education campaign involved 10 VWOs providing services for the disabled, including SPD. A media blitz on the different issues surrounding people with disabilities was arranged and a string of events and activities staged. One of these was a parade held on 2 December where people with disabilities, volunteers and staff of VWOs marched as a group down Orchard Road to distribute 'Friend of the Disabled' stickers to shoppers and passers-by.

The campaign culminated in a weekend carnival held on 4 and 5 December at the Singapore Expo. VWOs set up booths to explain their services and showcase the abilities of their beneficiaries. Stage performances were given by people with disabilities and talks on various subjects of interest by key members of the VWOs. SPD set up three booths focusing on the areas of rehabilitation, assistive technology and social enterprise.

Although the Campaign was put together with the hopes of bringing people with disabilities and the public closer together in understanding, the



▲ Visitors to the Disability Awareness Campaign carnival try their hands at the Assistive Technology devices at SPD's Technology booth.

aim should not stop with the event. Full participation of all persons can contribute to the development of truly inclusive societies and make for a better world for all. It is only with the continuing efforts of NCSS and VWOs that the message can be carried further and have a wider-reaching effect. ☺



▲ Demonstrations and explanations on Assistive Technology devices and rehabilitation equipment were given by SPD's staff to help increase understanding on the need for and use of such instruments.

Team RGPS Does It Again!

The students from Raffles Girls Primary School banded together in a community service project in which they raised more than \$10,000 and interacted with the beneficiaries of SPD through a concert and food and fun fair this year. Fundraiser Annie Kor details the efforts of the girls in this article.

The Star @ Raffles CIP Concert was held on 5 August 2004 at RGPS and it featured performances from the School's own band, Chinese Dance Club, choir, and Ballet and Drama Club. Beneficiaries from SPD joined in the fun at the concert and enjoyed the entertainment tremendously.

The highlight of the annual CIP Food and Fun Fair was the Friendly

Basketball Match held on 7 November. Both RGPS and SPD sent a team to pit their skills against one another in a game played on wheelchairs. Students helped manoeuvre the team from SPD around the court while Team RGPS zipped around determinedly on their own. A fierce fight ensued but with the advantage of being pushed around the court, SPD won the match. ☺



▲ Students of RGPS put up for sale goodies they made to raise funds for the beneficiaries of SPD

SPD takes this opportunity to thank the students and teachers of RGPS for their friendship and support, and for making it a game to remember for the beneficiaries.

In Gratitude to Our Volunteers


Volunteers are a special group of people. More often than not, their coming forward to offer their services at SPD stem from an inner motivation which leads them to go the extra mile to brighten the lives of our people with physical disabilities.

Mr Jimmy Yeong is one such volunteer, having helped at SPD since Oct 2002. Despite his busy schedule running his own consultancy firm, Mr Yeong comes twice a week to SPD to help at the Rehabilitation Centre and Day Activity Centre, and sits on the Freedom Adventure Club to help organize activities to provide people with physical disabilities with more experiences.

A stroke survivor, Mr Yeong leverages on his experience and offers invaluable

advice and encouragement to new stroke survivors as they embark on their rehabilitation.

SPD celebrates its volunteers in December in appreciation of their help. A Year-End Bash was held on 18 December where volunteers got to mingle with the beneficiaries, some of whom they have been helping in the year. At the thank you party, SPD honoured three outstanding volunteers for their continuing dedicated service to our beneficiaries. Dr Leong Lee San and his daughter Dr Angela Leong have been providing free medical consultation to our clients every Tuesday for the past seven years. In this time, they have dispensed more than medicine, becoming firm friends with the beneficiaries. The third outstanding volunteer is Mr Yeong.

In this issue of ExtraPage, we feature a letter written by a patient of SPD's Rehabilitation Centre in gratitude of the help given him by Mr Yeong. The letter may single out Mr Yeong, but it represents the sentiments of many of our beneficiaries for the help given them by all our volunteers. 

“ Words cannot express my appreciation and gratitude to all the very dedicated therapists, staff members and volunteers at SPD.

As regards volunteers in particular, I would like to specially commend the volunteer whom I have come to know only as Jimmy, whose physique and demeanor belie the fact that he was a stroke victim himself.

With his personal experience as a stroke victim, Jimmy has been able to share his own experiences with me and the other patients at the SPD gym, both young and elderly. He has been most encouraging and motivational in my and many other patients' rehabilitation efforts.

Jimmy does not just spend time to talk and advise and encourage me but he actually perspires profusely as he exerts his strength and muscles to support me, a brain stem stroke victim, when my therapist, Manchu, tries to get me to sit up and get on my feet.

Jimmy has even used his own car to help Manchu and Daniel teach me and my care-givers how I, whilst wheelchair bound, can go about transferring myself in and out of a car.

As a volunteer, Jimmy is a God-send and a real asset to SPD. I always look forward to having Jimmy around on my Wednesday therapy sessions at SPD.


*With sincere appreciation,
Remedios Leo Marcus, Jr.”*

For all the volunteers who give us your time and support in the past year, we thank you, and hope we have somehow helped to brighten up your lives as much as you have ours. (See also story on “Volunteers Bring Smiles and Cheer”, “My Tutor Friend” and “Living and Loving to Give and Live”.)



SPD 40th Anniversary Charity Draw 2004

In June 2004, SPD released the tickets for the SPD 40th Anniversary Charity Draw. The project raised close to \$170,000 and the funds go towards running the programmes and services for the benefit of people with physical disabilities.

The SPD 40th Anniversary Charity Draw 2004 was held on 17 December 2004. The winning tickets were drawn in the presence of 50 guests and witnesses at the SPD Ability Centre with the top ticket drawn by Ms Nancy Chia, SPD's Honorary Assistant Treasurer. Ticket holders stood to win a top prize of \$20,000 in cash, with a total of \$30,000 worth of cash prizes to be won in the Draw. 

We take this opportunity to thank all those who had responded to our appeal for the sale of the charity tickets. For all those who bought the tickets and missed the results announced in the press and on our websites, following are the winning ticket numbers.

Ticket holders of the above numbers can claim their prizes at the SPD Ability Centre between 9am to 5pm, Mondays to Fridays (not including public holidays), as long as they present the winning tickets by 16 February 2005.



▲ Member of the public, Mdm Rose Tay, helps to draw some of the winning tickets. The Draw is witnessed by SPD President, Mr See Cher and external auditor, Ms Tan Yan Chuang from Foo, Kon & Tan.

RESULTS OF THE SPD 40TH ANNIVERSARY CHARITY DRAW

1st: 002272 \$20,000 2nd: 042573 \$5,000 3rd: 049805 \$2,000

20 CONSOLATION PRIZES @ \$100 EACH

4 th : 013872	9 th : 071791	14 th : 015073	19 th : 022419
5 th : 041090	10 th : 010550	15 th : 029966	20 th : 025575
6 th : 035441	11 th : 005446	16 th : 000290	21 st : 060038
7 th : 038952	12 th : 006142	17 th : 009157	22 nd : 036645
8 th : 038369	13 th : 030607	18 th : 017391	23 rd : 026372

20 CONSOLATION PRIZES @ \$50 EACH

24 th : 049452	29 th : 051711	34 th : 034019	39 th : 055475
25 th : 041674	30 th : 066367	35 th : 009202	40 th : 012486
26 th : 025444	31 th : 030683	36 th : 030441	41 st : 000416
27 th : 063826	32 th : 000291	37 th : 024546	42 nd : 037200
28 th : 000274	33 th : 035943	38 th : 024558	43 rd : 072142

Enrichment Programmes for the Young and the Young-at-Heart

Social Worker Angela Chung reports on the activities organized for the participants of the SPD Education Programme and their caregivers in the year-end school holidays last year.

In line with the SPD Education Programme's philosophy to provide enrichment programmes to our bursary recipients and their family members, the Social Service Department organized the Creative Speech and Drama Workshop for primary school bursary recipients over a course of eight sessions from 31 July to 10 September 2004.

The programme was well received with a total of 23 participants, 15 of whom were physically disabled. The programme aimed to develop participants' confidence and creativity and foster teamwork. Hence, the emphasis was on participation rather than performance. A practical approach was adopted to allow the children to use their imaginations to create a narrative involving the basic skills of story making by combining character, setting, conflict and resolution.

Instructors were Mr Roger Jenkins, Artistic Director of Dramaplust Arts and 1995 Singapore Literature Prize winner, and Mr Ramesh Meyyappan, a full-time member of Dramaplust Arts and winner of the prestigious National Arts Council Scholarship in 2000. The instructors were able to capture the kids' attention and co-operation through different types of role plays, games and activities. At the end of the course, the kids showcased their creative acts and skits to an audience comprising their family members and SPD staff.

This speech and drama course achieved its aims to promote creativity and freer expression of emotions and ideas in the children. It is no wonder the audience gave their thumbs up for the performance.

The inaugural Golden SPeeDy Network meeting was held on 18 November 2004 and attended by four parents with physical disabilities and

two caregivers of the SPD Education Grant recipients. The highlight was a talk on communication with teenage children to help empower those present with the skills to communicate more effectively with their children.

It was also an opportunity to obtain feedback on the type of activities that was of interest to the participants. The unanimous consensus was for more social and recreational activities so that their children would be able to participate in outdoor activities without facing accessibility problems.

It was an encouragement to see the parents finding a common ground. Acquaintances were established which laid a foundation for more parents with disabilities and caregivers to join in for greater network and support.

Other enrichment courses were also organized for the older physically disabled students. These included a two-day Mindmapping Course taught by educators from the Buzan Learning Centre, as well as several certified computer courses like Macromedia Flash, Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Access held at SPD's Computer Lab during which the students acquired important skills to enhance their learning abilities.

A Karaoke cum Fundraising outing was also organized for the children. Most have never visited a karaoke lounge before and the experience

helped them acquire courage which came in useful as they stood in the streets to help sell the SPD Charity Draw tickets. The outing was followed by a debrief where some participants talked about the need to take initiative, while others shared how they overcame rejection by moving on to the next possible donor and the importance of being persistent in the face of difficulty.

The year closed with a year end bash with a snazzy theme "Electric Blue" held at the Ee Peng Liang Roof Terrace. Over 40 SPeeDy Club members turned up to enjoy interesting activities such as caricature drawing, magic demonstration, balloon sculpting, henna painting, and a range of creative arts performances such as symphonic band performance, piano recital and Christmas caroling. As volunteers also attended the event, the students were given the chance to express their appreciation to all those who have helped and befriended them. It was heartening to see many of our students letting their hair down.

Last but not least, a group of nine physically disabled secondary school students and their caregivers were invited by DBS Bank for an Asian Civilisation Museum tour cum Christmas party on 22 December. This museum tour is a first for these students, thus making it an eye-opening and informative learning experience. After the historical trail, the students were treated to a sumptuous hi-tea complete with games, magic performance and a musical to hype up the Christmas mood.

For the students of the Education Programme, the holiday season turned out to be merry and bright indeed with the many fun and enriching activities. 🎉



▲ Participants at the mindmapping course learn how to enhance their powers of retention.

OUR CELEBRATION

In 2004, SPD celebrated its 40th anniversary. In this is commemoration of four decades of partner



▲ The SPD Web Design Team was commissioned to develop the 40th anniversary logo which was unveiled on 9 January. Largely rooted in SPD's corporate logo, it simply sports the added text 'Celebrating 40 Years' as a mark of the Society's celebrations, suggesting that festivities aside, SPD remains steadfast in its mission to provide for the needs of the physically disabled.



▲ The Assistive Technology Centre, in collaboration with the Institute for Infocomm Research, launched Singapore's first Assistive Technology (AT) invention competition on 15 September to create awareness of AT and encourage the local production of affordable and reliable AT devices for people with physical disabilities.



▲ Beneficiaries from all programmes, staff and family members attended the SPD Family Carnival staged on 18 September in place of the annual sports day. Organised with help from students of Nanyang Polytechnic, the Carnival retained its sports element and also included a fun fair where games could be played and prizes won. Everyone enjoyed themselves and no one went home empty-handed!



▲ Community outreach was the Society's constant focus in the year with groups of volunteers garnered whenever possible to fan out to the streets islandwide to raise funds for as well as awareness of people with physical disabilities. Specially produced 40th anniversary leather bookmarks were also given out to donors.



▲ SPD's first Organizational Excellence Day was held on 7 October marking the first anniversary of the WOW! Journey. All staff broke from the usual routine and went out to the streets to solicit for support for the SPD 40th Anniversary Charity Draw. The day ended with an open house at SPD where displays were set up by the various depts showcasing their achievements and presentations made by various groups on improvements which could be made for a better organization.

NS REMEMBERED

In this issue of ExtraPage, we remember the events staged in partnership with people with physical disabilities. 6



▲ A series of ads based on the 40th anniversary theme 'Physically Disabled just means Physically Challenged' and featuring five different beneficiaries were produced and put up at 250 bus shelters islandwide beginning in August. The ads showcase the beneficiaries, all outstanding individuals with abilities that anyone would be proud of.



▲ In a bid to give back to society for its support, the SPD MMC team members helped taxi-drivers to e-file their income tax returns. This is also to highlight that people with physical disabilities can be contributing members of the society too.



▲ The 'Life After Stroke Can Be Fulfilling' Seminar was held on 23 October to highlight the services available for stroke survivors, and to offer a platform where service providers could interact and form working relationships for the benefit of stroke survivors. The event attracted 170 stroke survivors, caregivers, healthcare and social service workers from hospitals and voluntary welfare organizations.



▲ The SPD 40th Anniversary Charity Draw saw tickets at \$2 each sold from June 2004 to raise funds for the programmes and services of SPD. Staff and all supporters of SPD banded together in this fundraising effort which raised about \$170,000.



▲ Staff of SPD and some special guests celebrated and toasted to SPD's 40th anniversary at Red Ruby Tropics, a dinner with a tropical theme held on 3 December. Aside from a special programme commemorating the occasion, four of the Society's past donors and supporters were honoured for their dedication and efforts towards people with physical disabilities.

The SPD 5th floor Roof Terrace was named the Ee Peng Liang Roof Terrace in memory of the late Dr Ee Peng Liang who was a founder member and who contributed significantly towards the Building Fund in the early 1990s.

The Tay Teck Eng Multipurpose Hall was so named in honour of SPD's founder President, Tan Sri Tay Teck Eng, who laid the foundation for a successful organisation for people with disabilities.

The Production Workshop was dedicated as the Kiang Ai Kim Production Workshop in honour of Prof Kiang Ai Kim for his warm friendship, relentless support and commitment to the cause of people with physical disabilities.

The Boardroom was named the Ong Soon Kiat Board Room for Mr Ong Soon Kiat's generous donation of \$1 million made in 1993 to start the Building Fund. Today, the donation remains unrivalled.

SPD Family Carnival 2004

A family carnival day organized in place of the annual Sports Day turns out to be one of the most unforgettable events for the participants. Social Worker and Chairman of the Organising Committee Alan Poon reports on the day's events.

It was a beautiful Sunday morning where most of us would prefer to catch a little more sleep. Not for over 90 students from Nanyang Polytechnic's (NYP) School of Health Science who were up bright and early on 18 September 2004 to prepare for the SPD Family Carnival 2004 at their school premises.

For the past few years, NYP has been supporting SPD in helping to organize a yearly Sports Day for our beneficiaries. This year being SPD's 40th anniversary, we decided to do something different. Much tedious planning was in order but thanks to the help of the students, the carnival took shape taking into consideration the special needs of our beneficiaries.

About 250 SPD staff, beneficiaries and their family members and caregivers attended the event which took place that evening. There were two segments to the carnival. The first comprised three stations set up in the stadium where field games were played. The games were original and interestingly designed and created to suit different

levels of functionalities so that most if not all of the beneficiaries could be included. Many of the games incorporated activities of daily living like picking up selected food stuff and vegetables from a tub full of shredded paper and hanging up wet laundry.

The second segment saw participants heading for game stalls set up in the hall after dinner. Activities included balloon sculpturing and Henna painting to add creativity and fun for the younger children. With prizes sponsored by a few organizations, the beneficiaries and their family members enjoyed themselves thoroughly and wished they had more time to play at the stalls.

To ensure a truly enjoyable day for the beneficiaries, the student body also put up Wu Shu and Rap performances to entertain the crowd during the meal break. I personally appreciated the thoughtful gesture of a small group of them who went around busking to entertain those family members unable to play the games. 'Tian Mi Mi' and 'Chan Mali Chan' were just some of



▲ Participants have a fruitful day carting away the many prizes won at the game stalls

the local delights they sang from section to section at the stadium steps.

To many, the evening came to an end too soon. For the NYP students, it was a day of field practicum they would hardly be able to experience elsewhere, and for the beneficiaries and family members, a fun and enjoyable day indeed. We worked hard, we played hard as well. ☺



▲ Beneficiaries of all levels of disabilities take part in the field games held at three stations around the NYP stadium

Workshop on Spinal Cord Injury

The trauma that comes with Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) makes adjustment to life rather challenging. However, with rehabilitation and care, it is possible to cope effectively with daily living and lead a fulfilling life.

SPD is organizing the 'Re-integration, Let's Make It Happen' Workshop that will take place at 9am on 26 February 2005 at the SPD Ability Centre. The four-hour Workshop highlights the services available in the community to help SCI persons and

serves as a platform for acute healthcare and community-based service providers to develop collaborative working relationships.

The Workshop will offer useful information for SCI persons, caregivers, healthcare professionals and support staff from the hospitals and voluntary welfare organizations. ☺

For more information, please call Lim Lutin at 6236 6356 or Alan Poon at 6236 6374, or email

LIM_Lutin@spd.org.sg. More information can also be found at SPD's website www.spd.org.sg.

WOW, SPD's Organisational Excellence Journey Turns One!

SPD held its first Organisational Excellence Anniversary on 7 October. In marking the anniversary, SPD held an open house where the various departments showcased their achievements and work improvements resulting from the WOW! Journey.

For the past year, without fail, all staff had gathered together on a monthly basis to share and learn in the quest for a better organisation under the WOW! Learning series. Several WITs teams were also established with the view of improving work processes and doing a better job. It was not uncommon to see teams meeting and discussing over lunch and even after office hours all with the objective of improving service delivery. The hard work spoke for itself and this culminated at the first Organisational Excellence Day open house.

To show SPD's commitment to continuing the WOW! Journey, Board members and external guests were invited to the open house and judge the WITs' presentations. Four WITs presented their work. A noticeable achievement was made by the WITs on transport management. After many brainstorming sessions, the team successfully cut down waiting time for clients to the Rehabilitation Centre from three weeks to five days by zoning the clients to the location they live in. The judges were duly impressed and awarded the transport management WITs the top prize. Another WITs, through their discussions, worked out a better communication process with the beneficiaries and their caregivers.

The driver of the WOW! Journey, Executor Director Dr Ow Chee Chung said: "The WOW! Journey has been very encouraging. Other than putting systems and procedures in place, thanks to the WITs, SPD today has certainly made progress not just in its professionalism through service delivery but also in the softer skills of better relationship with our stake holders."

SPD thanks the three judges – Prof Kiang Ai Kim, SPD Board of Trustee, Ms Ang Bee Lian, Director of Social Welfare, MCYS, and Mr Seamus Phan,

a Management Consultant and Trainer, for taking time off to join us on our Organisational Excellence Day. 

As part of SPD's first OE Day, staff continued to demonstrate the teamwork that has taken the organisation this far. Senior Finance Executive Philip Ang shares his experience of that day which saw him and fellow colleagues breaking from the routine of office work and heading out to the streets.

It was a day when we were supposed to think and do something outside the box. I was looking forward to a break from the mundane routine of balancing figures and filing. We headed out to Orchard Road for a street sale of our charity draw tickets in commemoration of SPD's 40th anniversary.

We organised ourselves into groups of about 5 persons and scattered into different locations like Paragon, Wisma Atria and Tangs. For my group, we arrived at Far East Plaza, our assigned destination, at about 10.30am.

Approaching total strangers is always intimidating. We were at first afraid to approach the passers-by. However, Ruby Cheok from Social Enterprise gave us the confidence and encouragement to put our fears aside. Being sociable and armed with admirable PR skills, she sold a whole booklet of 10 tickets costing \$2 each to a lady the moment she stepped out of the vehicle. Thus inspired, we began our work.

The public in general were quite forthcoming and generous. A few simply made a donation without taking the tickets.

We stopped for lunch at the food centre at Far East Plaza. After a hearty meal, we prepared to pay for our food but were waved away by the stallholders. They refused payment, saying they



▲ Dr Ow explains the various department displays to MCYS Director of Social Welfare Ms Ang Bee Lian and other invited guests. Looking on (from left) are SPD's President Mr See Cher, Vice-President Mr Soh Chee Keong and Board of Trustee Prof Kiang Ai Kim

wanted to give us a treat. "We've always wanted to do charity but can't find the time. Since opportunity knocked at our door step, please allow us to pay for the meals", two of the ladies explained. They went further to offer us fruits for dessert which we didn't even order. Their kind gesture further reinforced what we came to learn that day - that Singaporeans in general are kind and generous.

We continued with our sales till about 2.30pm when the SPD van came to take us back to the office for the highlight of our OE day celebration, a presentation by a few WITs teams with suggestions on further improvements in other areas, and of course dinner. We were celebrating the hard work of everyone in their efforts to improve SPD, and also for raising almost \$3,500 from the street sale that day.

Aside from the kindness of Singaporeans, one thing that struck me was the accessibility of the roads we were on that day. The stretch from Far East Plaza to Tangs was very accessible for us wheelchair users as there were no kerbs or stairs. We had no problems getting around and that made the experience very pleasant indeed.

I look forward to a time when other roads and public places in Singapore could be the same. That way, people with physical disabilities can enjoy the amenities and other activities Singapore has to offer along with everyone else. I enjoyed taking in the sights and sounds that day, and encountering the friendliness of the people we met. If Singapore roads were more accessible, we needn't wait till an OE Day to do so!

Living and Loving to Live and Give

In this article, Volunteer Co-ordinator Ho Siew Sam writes about a volunteer with a genuine heart to give.

Chong Teng Sheng, a recipient of the Public Service Commission scholarship to study civil engineering in Kyoto University, came back to Singapore for a long deserved semester break in March 2003. When he did, he realized that barrier-free facilities in Singapore that meet the needs of people with physical disabilities were not as common as in Japan. This sparked his interest to help the physically disabled in Singapore and he began to surf the Internet for agencies he could volunteer his services in. It was then that he got to know about SPD. He visited the Society, and after undergoing an induction session one afternoon, he decided to register with as a volunteer.

I've seldom met young volunteers who were as disciplined, independent and diligent in their work as Teng Sheng. He does not volunteer in SPD because of the need to accumulate CIP hours. Yet, he comes a couple of times a week, usually on his own. He would start volunteering as early as nine in the morning, sometimes even leaving as late as six in the evening.

His enthusiasm to volunteer rose when asked to share his interests in arts and music with the beneficiaries at the Day

Activity Centre (DAC). He conducted pencil sketching classes and played the guitar to entertain them during their singing and music sessions. He enjoyed interacting and caring for the beneficiaries, and once told me: "Volunteering has allowed me to learn more about the less privileged group of people in our society, understand and empathize with them. The staff in SPD is very helpful, encouraging and amiable so I find my efforts fruitful and appreciated." No work being too menial for Teng Sheng, he would not mind lending his hand in mundane administrative work occasionally.

Before he left Singapore to continue his studies a month later, he promised that he would come back again as a volunteer upon completion of his studies. He kept his promise when he came back again in April 2004 to help out in DAC's hydrotherapy and sharing programmes while waiting to complete the balance of another year of mandatory national service.

I asked Teng Sheng what he learnt while volunteering with us. He replied cheerfully: "I learned how to treat and take care of people with physical disabilities. Some of them cannot express themselves well because they

are segregated from the public eye. It takes time to understand them, what they need and how you can help them to help themselves. Volunteering has shown me that life for the disadvantaged can still be as fulfilling and fun despite having to deal with their disabilities. This experience at SPD reinforces my optimism towards living and loving to live."

Volunteers come in many shapes and forms, and some to fulfill a personal need. Teng Sheng has shown me that although they are rare, there are people who volunteer spontaneously with passion and love. I hope his example would inspire others to be like him. ☺

Those interested to volunteer their services to help improve the quality of life for people with physical disabilities can contact Alice at 6236 6391 or Sam at 6236 6364, or email Alice_HUE@spd.org.sg or HO_Siew_Sam@spd.org.sg.



▲ Teng Sheng shares his passion for music with DAC beneficiary Eddie Koh

SPD's New Board of Management 2004/2006

A new board was elected at the Annual General Meeting held in September 2004. Headed by the affable Mr See Cher, a senior civil servant, the Society is set for an exciting year ahead with more to be done for people with physical disabilities, particularly in the areas of advocacy, rehabilitation and technology. ☺



ExtraPage welcomes the new members that have come to join the Board of Management:

<i>President</i>	- Mr See Cher
<i>Immediate Past President</i>	- Mr Koh Nai Teck, PBM
<i>Vice President</i>	- Mr Soh Chee Keong, PBM
<i>Honorary Treasurer</i>	- Mr Benjamin Gan
<i>Honorary Assistant Treasurer</i>	- Ms Nancy Chia
<i>Ex-Officio Secretary</i>	- Dr Ow Chee Chung
<i>Members</i>	- Ms Chia Yong Yong
	- Mr Lee Han Yang, PBM
	- Dr Mallick Fazalur Rahman M
	- Ms Poh Hwee Hian
	- Mr Tan Eng Lock, PBM
	- Mr Yeo Jeu Nam

◀ Mr See Cher (seated in centre) will head SPD's Board of Management as President for the next two years beginning in 2004. Other members (clockwise from left) Ms Chia Yong Yong, Mr Yeo Jeu Nam, Mr Koh Nai Teck, Ms Poh Hwee Hian, Ms Nancy Chia

Other members include (from top) Mr Benjamin Gan, Mr Tan Eng Lock, Mr Soh Chee Keong and Mr Lee Han Yang. Not in picture, Dr Mallick Fazalur Rahman M. ▶

Volunteers Bring Smiles and Cheer

Volunteer Co-ordinator Ho Siew Sam spends a day out swimming with SPD's beneficiaries and volunteers from IBM. He also shares the joy that volunteers from Samsung Asia Pte Ltd bring to our beneficiaries.

If not for volunteers, there would be probably little or no client wellness programme for our beneficiaries. Thanks to corporate volunteers and their corporate community involvement programmes, VWOs like SPD benefit from the volunteers' creativity that see beneficiaries attending many activities outside the normal programmes and services at the VWOs.

Thus on a hot Friday morning on 8 October 2004, a group of the 20 volunteers from IBM anxiously waited to receive our DAC beneficiaries at the poolside cafe of Laguna National Golf & Country Club. Some of these volunteers were in their favourite swim gear, waiting to give our beneficiaries a fun time in the pool.

Our 'stars' eventually arrived at the Club's swimming pool close to noon. Their excitement rose once they saw the beautiful pool with waterfall and slides. To ensure a safe and enjoyable

day, each beneficiary was paired with a volunteer before they started the activities planned for the day. Some of the beneficiaries were brought to the pool while those who were not swimming remained at the cafe for games. A few with a flair for art took the time to make "Thank You" cards for our host and volunteers.

The beneficiaries enjoyed themselves, especially those at the pool who got to play with the waterfall. The day ended with a sumptuous lunch sponsored by Laguna National Golf & Country Club.

A similar happy scene was replayed, this time on drier ground as 70 beneficiaries were hosted to a food and fun fair on 20 November. The event organised by volunteers from Samsung Asia Pte Ltd was held at the Ee Peng Liang Roof Terrace at the SPD Ability Centre. It was a rowdy day as 100 volunteers entertained, performed and cheered our beneficiaries as they tried their hands in



▲ With help from new friends from Samsung, DAC's Seah Hui tries her hand at shooting.

creative games all improvised by the volunteers. Beneficiaries won prizes in the games and lucky draw and had their wishes fulfilled. Samsung volunteers had gamely adopted our beneficiaries' wishes that varied from T-shirts to CDs.

On both occasions, beneficiaries had presented our hosts little mementos to express their heartfelt gratitude. The warmth and friendship of the IBM staff on the day at Laguna Golf & Country Club has led beneficiary James Poh to proclaim the occasion "*the happiest day in life*". What was most encouraging and touching was volunteers thanking us for giving them the opportunity to share their time with the beneficiaries. To quote Ms Tan Hwee Bin from Samsung Asia, "*Thanks for having us! Our colleagues have had a memorable and enjoyable time with the beneficiaries.*"

My Tutor Friend

What looked like an ordinary polytechnic open house paved the way for an extraordinary encounter that impacted the life of Ngee Ann Polytechnic graduate Jan Lee Junhui, a wheelchair-user and former participant of the SPD Education Programme. Social Worker Angela Chung shares more.

In February 2000, 23-year-old Jan, a paraplegic, attended an open house hosted by Ngee Ann Polytechnic for potential students. Despite the teeming crowd, Jan's presence did not escape the notice of eagle-eyed Mr Jonas Lee, a Business Administration lecturer. The two of them struck up a conversation from which Mr Lee was given to understand the concerns Jan would face if he were to be accepted into the polytechnic.

Mr Lee recounted that it was Jan who first amazed him with his positive attitude and never-say-die spirit in spite of his physical disability. With a strong belief that people with special needs should have a level playing field with the non-disabled, Mr Lee determined to do something about the inaccessibility of the campus to address Jan's concerns. He sought the support of his director and shortly after, with approval from the management, he

advocated for a series of changes to the campus' environment even before Jan received confirmation of his acceptance to the polytechnic.

One of the changes Mr Lee was responsible for was to make the sidewalks accessible to wheelchair users. Foreseeing that any adaptation would take awhile to complete if left on its natural course, he lobbied for the change to be done quickly so that

continued from page 13...

by the time Jan started his term time, the sidewalks would be modified.

Another modification Mr Lee made was to the library on the second level. At that point, it was only accessible via two flights of stairs. Knowing well that independent study is an essential part of tertiary education, Mr Lee mooted the idea of installing an elevator at the library's lobby main entrance. Similarly, given the time needed from conceptualisation to actual construction, Mr Lee made temporary arrangements with the librarian to allow Jan entry to the library via the back lift reserved only for library staff. The lift was finally ready at the end of Jan's first year in polytechnic and with it, Jan could breeze in via the main entrance, just like the rest of the students.

Although Mr Lee was Jan's tutor for only one semester, his care and concern for Jan did not stop there. Occasionally, he would ask after Jan's well-being and took practical steps to help him whenever possible. His

concern for his students went far beyond expressing mere words of encouragement.

One memorable incident Jan recalls of his ex-tutor was the occasion of his graduation ceremony where he was to receive the special award for commendable performance. Because of his wheelchair, Jan was arranged to sit in the front row on account of the many steps in the hall. Mr Lee thoughtfully went the extra mile and made provisions for Jan's parents and even himself to accompany Jan. It is no surprise that Mr Lee became a close family friend.



▲ Mr Jonas Lee's dedication and kindness lights up the academic journey of Jan and other students with special needs

Mr Lee's help did not stop after Jan's graduation. He recommended Jan home-based data entry jobs, thereby giving Jan the opportunity to help relieve the family's financial burden. When asked to comment on Mr Lee, Jan was quick to say, "Mr Lee is more than a tutor to me. He has certainly gone beyond his duties as a lecturer to help me in so many tangible ways. I am truly indebted to him."

Not one to dwell on accolades, Mr Lee would downplay his role. However, his benevolence towards his students with special needs has not gone unnoticed. Today, the modified sidewalks and glass elevator at the library lobby are testimonies of Mr Lee's persevering efforts at leveling the playing field for the physically disabled. Those students he has helped deeply appreciate and testify to the tremendous difference he has made in their lives in campus and beyond. 🌀

ExtraPage takes this opportunity to salute Mr Lee for his selfless devotion to his students with special needs.

EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT USING A HOLISTIC APPROACH

Employment Placement, or 'Emplacement' - is there a right approach? Head Social Worker Lim Lutin examines two successful cases and recommends a holistic approach towards emplacement.

Two trainees of the SPD Multimedia Centre (MMC), both aged 24, were successfully employed in August 2004. One is Ho Chee Siong, a tetraplegic whose spinal cord was severely damaged, resulting in paralysis of his legs and limiting the functions of his upper limbs. He uses a motorized wheelchair to move around more independently. In view of his high intellectual abilities and good work attitude, SPD assisted him in sourcing for employment. He was offered a part-time job as a General Clerk at Harry Elias Partnership, a law firm.

Deen is the other trainee with a success story to tell. He has very limited level of functioning of his right arm due to a

traffic accident. This means that he has to train his left hand to perform all activities of daily living and for work. Getting a job that can be done with only one hand would have been difficult. Even though Deen has only a secondary education, he is bright and self-motivated. He has an interest in computers and his aptitude in the hardware was self-taught. When he joined SPD, his perseverance and diligence paid off when he was selected for emplacement at a video editing company, Dav Rue Marketing.

The variables that create an impact on the emplacement process are:

- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Placement Activities



▲ Using a mouth-stick, Chee Siong is able to use the lift at his workplace independently

- Client Attributes
- Employer's Attitude

Vocational Rehabilitation

The purpose of vocational rehabilitation is to assist the access and return of people with disabilities to employment. In SPD, the MMC and Work Activity Centre (WAC) are two programmes that provide vocational rehabilitation for people with physical disabilities. The MMC exploits technology for IT-related work such as web designing, bookkeeping, data entry, and clerical duties. The training at the WAC involves simple sub-contracts like packaging, sorting and assembling. The job training may also be designed to enable beneficiaries to

continued from page 14...

learn specific skills for a particular job function such as telemarketing and reception work. Work behaviour and ethics such as punctuality, attendance, productivity, respect for supervisors and fellow workers are inculcated in the process. Upgrading of skills and knowledge through IT courses is available for beneficiaries in order to keep up with the demands of the job market. Moving along, the beneficiaries are taught soft skills to address interpersonal issues and personal grooming.

In the case of Chee Siong, after the completion of his diploma, he was unemployed for several months. SPD admitted him in early 2003 for vocational rehabilitation where he undertook general clerical duties. Deen joined SPD in July that same year where he learnt the skills of web designing. To enable them to undertake the job tasks, they underwent IT skills training at SPD and were provided on-the-job coaching and supervision from staff.

Placement Activities

Placement is the process of matching a beneficiary in employment. It begins at the point of entry into SPD where the beneficiary is assessed for employability based on age, qualifications, experience, and physical and intellectual capacities. The role of the placement officer (in these cases the social worker) was to be acquainted with the beneficiary's job performance, skills, aptitudes and temperament. The officer subsequently acts as a resource person in obtaining job leads, making employer contacts, appraising the job site and even accompanying the beneficiary to the interview. To enable him to overcome his physical limitations and perform his job tasks more efficiently and effectively, a multi-disciplinary approach is adopted. Occupational therapists accompany the placement officer to survey if the work environment is conducive and has disabled-friendly facilities. Recommendations are made to the employer where modification is required. Building accessibility is also very important as it determines if the incumbent client can accept the job.

In both Chee Siong's and Deen's cases, prior to securing the job, the social

worker went to explore the environment and was satisfied that there would be no barriers to accessibility. However, in no way were Chee Siong and Deen passive beneficiaries. They participated in the job interviews on their own. There was also an effort on Chee Siong's part to obtain transport with a hydraulic lift to take him to and from work. The social worker merely extended further efforts to advocate for a suitable transport time. Deen had no difficulty in that aspect as he is ambulant.

Client Attributes

Beneficiaries do and should assume responsibility for their employability and 'placeability'. In the course of vocational rehabilitation, attributes such as initiative, adaptability, ability to learn, quality of work, interpersonal skills, personality traits and behaviour at work are noted. Attention should also be paid to the physical condition, health and well-being of the clients. Assistive technology would feature largely in the lives of those with severe disabilities. Even the support of family and their adjustment to the disability can make a difference.

Both Chee Siong and Deen are bright and have the right attitude towards work. Chee Siong likes general clerical duties and is a reliable worker. He also has a very pleasant personality. Deen is inclined towards computer work. Thus the video editing job was the right match for him. Both of them have quiet personalities and come from very supportive families.

As Chee Siong's fine motor skills are weak, he needed a special device – a Cherry Compact Keyboard - to help him type faster and for a longer duration. He also needed a custom-made mouth-stick to aid him in pressing lift buttons as he does not have the strength to reach for the buttons himself.


Employer's Attitude

The employer's attitude also determines the success of the emplacement. Many employers do not have experience dealing with people with physical disabilities. The placement officer should develop the competence in advocating for the disabled and help the employer see that the disabled are able to contribute to society as well. Attitudinal barriers may not be easy to

change unless the person with physical disability himself proves that he is committed and able to perform the job. HR matters such as medical benefits would be a concern to the employer and this ought to be addressed at the onset. For some jobs, job modification may be required or even working hours adjusted. It is also the right of the beneficiary to expect job development and career progression.

Chee Siong's and Deen's employers were willing to give them an opportunity to start work on probation first. They were confirmed in less than three months as their employers were impressed and happy with their performance. Both of them certainly helped put people with physical disabilities in a positive light.

The above cases of Chee Siong and Deen are testaments that a holistic approach involving the interaction of various subsystems would help bring about a higher rate of success. It is also worth noting that both these beneficiaries found jobs for which the skills training provided at SPD were very relevant and applicable.

Disability should not be regarded as something out of the ordinary but as a natural part of human life and its spectrum of experiences. Hence, having a disability does not lessen a person's worth and right to equal opportunities in society. People with physical disabilities should have the same privileges as any other to be integrated and included in every arena in society, in particular employment. 



▲ A survey of the work environment before commencement of work is necessary to ensure that the area is conducive and has disabled-friendly facilities.

Joint Research Project by SPD and I²R Brings Hope to the Severely Disabled

SPD's collaboration with the Institute for Infocomm Research (I²R) on the *Brainy Communicator* to help people with extreme physical disabilities to live a more normal life was given a boost when the research project was awarded a grant under the Samsung DigitAll Hope.



▲ The *Brainy Communicator* receives a grant of \$98,700. Witnessing the presentation are (L – R) Mr Yeong, SPD President Mr See Cher; Mr Sang-Jin Park, Regional CEO & President, Samsung Asia; Prof. Lawrence Wong, Executive Director I²R and Dr Vivian Balakrishnan

Thinking with the *Brainy Communicator* is the latest technology-driven way to enable the disabled. The research project *Brainy Communicator* will allow the user to control the computer via brain activity, without any use of hands, legs or voice. This is a breakthrough technology, a first in Singapore, which would enable even the severely disabled to use the computer, and

eventually surf the Internet simply by “thinking” the commands.

Essentially, the *Brainy Communicator* acts as an interface which allows severely handicapped people the freedom to communicate with computers by reading a person's brain-wave patterns. The interface picks out the brain-wave patterns of what the user is thinking and types it out on the computer.

Although there are several assistive technologies available, those who have total loss of limbs and speech functions have difficulties using them. The *Brainy Communicator* brings to reality the ability through neuroscience methods (brain activity) to access the computer, to control wheelchairs, home environment devices like TV, lights, telephone, and even a robotic arm for feeding.

Both SPD and I²R are greatly encouraged that the research project has received support and recognition. The *Brainy Communicator* is one of the two projects in Singapore to receive a grant from Samsung DigitAll Hope. At the Samsung DigitAll Hope Presentation Ceremony held on 22 Nov, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Acting Minister for MCYS presented the grant of \$98,700 to SPD and I²R.

Ms Chia Woon Yee, Director of Technology, said: “SPD is grateful to Samsung for the timely grant to allow the research project to continue. With the Samsung DigitAll Hope grant, scientists at I²R are able to start testing with people with physical disabilities and it is likely that a commercially viable *Brainy Communicator* will be available in the market in two years' time.”

Looking forward to the final product is Mr Yeong Sam Choi, a tetraplegia after an industrial accident. One of the clients in the research trial now, Mr Yeong said: “I am very happy to participate in the project as there is much potential in the *Brainy Communicator* which will reduce my dependency on others and allow people like me to lead a fuller life.”

ExtraPage thanks Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd for funding the Brainy Communicator through the Samsung DigitAll Hope and I²R for the partnership in bringing hope to the disabled.

We welcome contributions and feedback. Also, if you would like to make a donation or know more about SPD, do get in touch with us.

The Editor, *extrapage*

The Society for the Physically Disabled
2 Peng Nguan Street
SPD Ability Centre Singapore 168955
Tel: (65) 6323 2303 Fax: (65) 6323 7008
E-mail: information@spd.org.sg
Website: www.spd.org.sg



Society for the
Physically Disabled