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The Society for the Physically Disabled

extrapage



▲ Koon Heng receiving his award from Mr Mah Bow Tan

Their Disability Proves Not A Hindrance But An Inspiration For All

The last quarter of 2002 was a particularly proud time for us at SPD as we saw two of our beneficiaries picked as award recipients for their outstanding spirits.

We have all heard it being said that less is more. This is never better demonstrated than in the lives of Lim Koon Heng and Loh Ah Chai, both persons with disabilities and yet exemplary figures for all, able-bodied and otherwise. The end of 2002 saw both beneficiaries of SPD receiving accolades from two separate organisations for their vision on life, determination and their efforts in transforming their disabilities to making the world a better place.

36-year-old Lim Koon Heng is a familiar sight in many Voluntary Welfare Organisations. He is a member of the Tetraplegia Workgroup and Spinal Support Group, a life member of the Handicaps Welfare Association, an avid volunteer with the Ren Ci Hospital and Tan Tock Seng (TTSH) Rehabilitation Centre, and member of SPD's inaugural web design team made up of people with disabilities.

Although rendered disabled after a motorcycle accident in June 1989 which caused permanent injuries to his cervical spine, Koon Heng refuses to succumb to a life of passivity but contributes to society by being actively involved in volunteerism and community service. He spends a large part of his weekdays now working on

the latest website he is helping to design. His other time is given over to bringing a smile on the faces of the disadvantaged.

After his accident, Koon Heng was homebound for 10 years at his parent's home in Pasir Ris since the block's lift did not stop on his floor. Then, without a motorised wheelchair and trying not to be a burden to anyone, he kept himself in bed facing the four walls. After he got his new flat in Hougang that is more accessible by wheelchair, he eventually started to get out of his home and that began his life of giving today.

Most weekends would find him in his motorized wheelchair with a metal tin in hand, joining the masses of students in collecting donations in the latest flag-day exercise. Otherwise, he would be visiting the patients at the TTSH Rehabilitation Centre and the bedbound residents of Ren Ci Hospital. He would talk to them, bring them their favourite food and be all round buddy. He even brings along his laptop donated by a supporter to show the inpatients the wonders of the Internet.

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are not necessarily that of SPD's.

COVER STORIES *CHINESE TEMPLES GIVE THEIR SUPPORT TO SPD THE 8th FESPIC GAMES*

Chinese Temples Give Their Support to SPD

BENEFICIARIES of SPD got to enjoy the hospitality of the Tong Sian Tng Temple on the occasion of the Temple's annual celebration of the birthday of Goddess Guan Yin on 24 October 2002.

All 80 of them were treated to a sumptuous vegetarian lunch and also each received a red packet through the generosity of the Temple's management.

In another event, SPD was one of the benefiting charities of the generosity of the Tampines Chinese Temple which donated \$36,000 to 18 charities. The Temple celebrated its 11th Anniversary at an event held on 3 November 2002

and graced by Minister for National Development and MP for Tampines GRC (Tampines East), Mr Mah Bow Tan. The year 2003 also started well for SPD with generous donations from Tuas Pek Kong Keng Management Council and Leng Ern Jee Temple.

SPD takes this opportunity to record its gratitude to the management of the Tong Sian Tng Temple, the Tampines Chinese Temple, Tuas Pek Kong Keng Management Council and Leng Ern Jee Temple for the continued warm support of our disabled! 🙏

The 8th FESPIC Games

The FESPIC Games (Far East and South Pacific Games for the Disabled) held from 26 October to 1 November in Busan, Korea, this year saw some 1,700 athletes with disabilities from 42 member countries participating in 17 sports.

SPD is proud to have been represented by Mr Frankie Thanapal Sinniah, Mr Mawjit Singh and Mr Azman bin Yusof in the Singapore contingent at the Games, and we heartily congratulate Mr Thanapal for having won the bronze medal for the Discus event, and Mr Azman for winning the bronze medals for both the 100 m and 200 m events. 🏅

With the PARC, I Hope to Walk Again

Mr Png Chee Seng, currently undergoing therapy at the Singapore Power Post Acute Rehabilitation Centre (SP-PARC), recounts to ExtraPage his initial apprehension over receiving therapy services and his subsequent conversion.

SINCE my second stroke in January 2002, I have been wheelchair-bound. I want to walk again – I led a busy life as a hawker so I cannot get used to moving around on a wheelchair.

My neurologist at the hospital told me about the rehabilitation centre at SPD and recommended that I go for therapy services there. At that time I thought that I could only get professional services from a hospital so I did not like the idea of going for therapy outside a hospital. But after I heard that SPD has been providing services for 38 years already, I felt more reassured.

When I heard that I had to pay a fee, I did not want to go. Therapy services are very expensive and I did not want to be a burden. My wife stays at home and looks after me so my daughter is the only one working. As a freelance designer her income is not fixed. But the staff of SPD told me not to worry. They said that they could look into my family income and work out something that we can afford. That is a big help to people like me.

I started therapy there in October 2002 and I have been going to the centre twice a week. Today I find myself moving about easier. All the staff there are very friendly and caring. They also explain to me what exercise I should go through when I am there and how it is good for me.

At the centre I meet others who have had a stroke like me, and some who became disabled after being involved in an accident. I can see now that many people need this kind of service even after they leave the hospital. I also know that the SP-PARC programme came about because there is a greater need now for this kind of services outside the hospital. I think the programme is good because it can help many people like me.

I am very glad to be able to come to the centre. I would like very much to walk again one day. With the therapy services I am now receiving, I can see myself doing that one day. 🍀

▼ Mr Png receiving upper limb rehabilitation



Singapore's Latest Step Down Rehabilitation Centre Set Up At SPD

After months of planning and preparation, SPD's Post Acute Rehabilitation Centre is finally fully equipped. The Centre, named as Singapore Power Post Acute Rehabilitation Centre (SP-PARC) aims to complement hospital based rehabilitation services for people who require continuing rehabilitative programme after discharge from hospitals.

As medical science progresses in Singapore, the need for more step-down facilities for rehabilitation services is increasingly being recognised. Upon discharge from hospital, more patients today seek rehabilitation services from centres outside of a hospital setting that provide professional therapy services.

However, with the current lack of facilities offering this type of rehabilitation services, many find themselves going through therapy exercises either at home or with therapists with hectic schedules hard put to provide individual attention. Seeking to offer a higher level of care, the SP-PARC aims to provide a more personalized service with trained occupational therapists and physiotherapists conducting each session on an individual basis.

Its experienced professional team and extensive range of equipment allows the Centre to serve patients suffering from orthopaedic, neurological and medical disorders as well as those recovering from surgery. Detailed records of each session are also kept for the purpose of close monitoring of the patients' progress and the cases reviewed on a regular basis.

The Centre offers step-down facilities for those discharged from hospitals. Yet despite the personalized service,

▲ The Paraffin Wax Bath helps to relieve pain due to joint stiffness, strains, tendinitis and arthritis



▲ The Tilt Table enables weight-bearing on lower extremities to prevent osteoporosis

fees are kept affordable with subsidies offered on the basis of a needs assessment. Transport to and from SPD's Ability Centre where SP-PARC is located is also available when required.

The SP-PARC is well equipped with devices and equipment ranging from those for perceptual cognitive remedial activities and training for activities of daily living, to computerised gait trainers, all of which cater to the different rehabilitation needs of patients.

The Tilt Table, for example, allows wheelchair-dependent or bedridden clients to do weight-bearing exercises to prevent muscle tightness and contractures. For the less severely disabled clients, the Treadmill, Power Trainer and Multi-Gym are useful equipment that can help strengthen muscles and promote cardiovascular conditioning.

Also available at the Centre are various electro therapy equipment such as the Intereferential Therapy Ultrasound, TENS Unit, Hydrocollator and Paraffin Wax Bath, all used as part of pain management and improvement of peripheral circulation.

For younger clients, the therapists will conduct vocational assessments using the VALPAR Work Samples designed to assess the various job-related factors required for specific jobs. Apart from the routine therapeutic activities, emphasis is also given to performance of activities of daily living (ADL) and further work-related skills which would be needed by the client upon his discharge from the SP-PARC.

If found to be unsuitable for open employment, the client is assessed by the therapists and referred to SPD's Work Activity Centre or Day Activity Centre where he can receive further care and attention.

The SP-PARC is made possible by Singapore Power Ltd for funding the operating costs and Singapore Pools (Private) Limited for sponsoring the rehabilitation equipment. 🏆

▼ The Multi-Gym provides multiple exercise stations that help improve muscle strength and endurance



A Christmas Like No Other

This Christmas is brighter indeed as we received the warm support and generosity of organisations and individuals in raising funds for SPD's newly-established IT Training Fund and the SP-PARC, increasing awareness and bringing smiles all around to the faces of our beneficiaries.

Christmas Cheer 2002

A visit from the members of the Rotary Club of Singapore West (RCSW) recently sparked off an event to raise \$25,000 to help equip our disabled with computer skills for employment whilst renewing ties between SPD and the Club which contributed to the founding of the Society in 1964.

CHRISTMAS Cheer 2002 was organised by the RSCW together with SanMerry Food Industries Pte Ltd and Christianio De Florist. It involved 100 junior RCSW Rotarians otherwise known as 'Interactors' or 'Rotaractors' from various schools and organisations. From 1 to 25 December, 11 booths were set up at CentrePoint Shopping Mall, Great World City, Parco Bugis Junction and

▼ Seng Ngjap putting the finishing touches on a ginger bread with the help of an Interactor



Suntec City as well as selected Singapore Petroleum Company (SPC) petrol stations where handicrafts made by SPD's beneficiaries were sold alongside Christmas goodies like fruit cakes, ginger breads and hampers.

The Interactors prepared themselves for their task by first spending time at SPD interacting with the beneficiaries and familiarising themselves with the programmes and services. After that they attended a workshop which taught them the finer points of sales management and handling customers.

The funds were raised from part proceeds from the sale of the foodstuff from SanMerry's bakeries and Christianio De Florists, and full proceeds from SPD's handicrafts.

The members of RCSW visited the SPD Ability Centre in early September



▲ Sale of Christmas goodies at the Christmas Cheer booth at Suntec City

as part of their ongoing search for charities which they can adopt for the many community service events which they engage in annually.

Said Mr Tay Wei Lien, President Elect of RCSW and son of Tan Sri Dr Tay Teck Eng, SPD's first President, "RSCW supports various charities and causes through its community service outreach programme. This year we are very happy to renew our ties with SPD again after having helped establish the Society in 1964. We are especially proud that SPD has progressed from just a small production workshop to a five-storey building today catering to people with disabilities in their education, employment, rehabilitation, vocational training and general well-being." 🍷

Funtasia Family Christmas Party

The heavy rain did nothing to stop the arrival of Santa at SPD's Christmas party held on 20 December 2002 for SPD's disabled children and their families.

MOST only got to know each other at SPD's first holiday camps for disabled children held recently during the school holidays. However, they played like old friends when they got together again at the Funtasia Family Christmas Party, also a first held in SPD for children in years.

The event included games, songs, presents for all, and even a performance put up by professional clown Mr Knik Pang and his team. His performance and the arrival of

Santa so thrilled the children that the smiles on their faces were all that were needed to brighten a dreary day. Indeed, the heavy rain did nothing to dampen spirits as the participants helped one another don colourful party hats, sang along with the Christmas carols and wholeheartedly participated in the games.

All in all, the event put everyone in the right mood for the festive season and was a good gathering for all before the start of another school year. 🍷



▲ Mr Knik Pang and his team clowning around

SP Christmas Tree Of Hope

Singapore Power Ltd drew on the expertise of its staff to design and construct a 7-metre Christmas tree made of electric cables and gas pipes. The unique structure not only attracted attention, it brought in donations that go towards funding the operating cost of the Singapore Power Post Acute Rehabilitation Centre.

WORK commenced in October when staff of Singapore Power gathered to design the architectural framework of the tree. The tree, displayed at Singapore Power's lobby over the festive season was decorated by 350 stars 'purchased' by Singapore Power and its business associates. The stars were 'sold' at \$1,000 each, raising \$350,000 in total that will go

towards providing affordable rehabilitation and physiotherapy services to those who become disabled after sustaining serious injury arising from illness or accidents.

This project is one of a series of events organised by Singapore Power as part of its adoption scheme of SPD for the year. 🌟



▲ Singapore Power's unique Tree of Hope

Americans Run for Charity

The American Club's annual Thanksgiving charity fun run took place amidst some measure of increased security in light of the recent bombings in the region but the event of 10 November 2002 garnered even more support than in the previous year.

IT could have been the strong spirit of tradition which drew some 283 participants, over 100 more participants than the previous year, to take part in the 5 km and 1 mile walk that sunny day.

The charity event began with a warm up session with the mascot Yankee Doodle led by professional trainers. This was followed by a run around the SPE Stadium at Bukit Timah (formerly known as the NIE Sports Stadium) before proceeding to the paths within the Singapore Botanic Gardens.

Families with kids as young as two years old participated in the run, some with the family pet in tow. Even SPD's six beneficiaries who attended the American Club Fun Run could not help themselves from taking part in the traditional walk round the Stadium.

This is the third year the Club has extended their support to SPD through the event. The run raised \$3,500 for SPD. 🏆

We thank the members, staff and management of The American Club Singapore for your kind hospitality, and look forward to your continued support!



▲ Warm-up session led by professional trainers of The American Club together with mascot Yankee Doodle



▲ SPD's beneficiaries joining the rest of the participants in the traditional walk/run around the stadium



▲ SPD Education Programme recipient Evelyn How giving her testimony accompanied by her mother Mdm Ng Bee Lay

Wells Of Support For Wells Of Joy

Yet another effort in Singapore Power's adoption scheme saw the comeback of SPD's fundraising event Wells of Joy (WOJ) raising over \$43,000 for the Post Acute Rehabilitation Centre.

THE event was scaled down over the last two years for lack of support but with the help extended by Singapore Power and 160 of its staff and family members, WOJ made a grand return in December 2002 to catch on the festive giving and sharing. Singapore Power also sponsored the fabrication of the donation boxes and donation envelopes.

Rain or shine, staff and beneficiaries of SPD worked tirelessly alongside

staff of Singapore Power at Junction 8 Shopping Centre, Orchard Emerald as well as West Mall for seven hours each time over four weekends giving out donation envelopes and appealing for donations, and talking to potential supporters to increase awareness. Their hard work helped to bring in over \$43,000 for the newly established Singapore Power Post Acute Rehabilitation Centre.

One volunteer who found the



▲ The smiles still evident on the faces of Singapore Power staff after seven long hours of hard work!

experience beneficial is Mr Loh Mun Fei from Power Grid, a subsidiary of Singapore Power. Mr Loh who had also recruited his wife and two children to volunteer at West Mall said: "Volunteering as a family allows us to spend quality time together and help the less fortunate too. It is also a good opportunity for my children to learn interpersonal skills as they need to talk and relate to strangers to solicit support for charity." ☺

Don't Bottle Up Your Care – Show It With Your Donated BRAND'S Caps

The first BRAND'S charity drive did so well the previous year and garnered so much support that it prompted Cerebos Pacific Limited to organise another round, this time to collect 40,000 caps for SPD.

BETWEEN 15 October 2002 to 15 January 2003, a public appeal was made for the donation of BRAND'S aluminum caps and bottles to help the disabled community in Singapore. This was part of Cerebos Pacific Limited's charity drive *BRAND'S Enriching Lives Campaign* that offered a helping hand to the disabled by meeting their educational needs and providing them with income opportunities.

The leading food and health supplements company pledged to donate \$0.50 to SPD for every used BRAND'S aluminum cap collected during the period. The funds raised would be channeled to the SPD Education Programme. At the same time, used BRAND'S bottles collected would be given to BizLink to be used as material for making gift packs for sale.

Associate Professor Koo Tsai Kee, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of National Development and Ministry for Defence and MP for Tanjong Pagar GRC launched the

Campaign on 22 October 2002. To facilitate donation of the BRAND'S caps and bottles, collection boxes were erected at 14 NTUC FairPrice supermarkets and 15 MRT stations island-wide.

At the launch, Mr Lam Pin Woon, CEO (South Asia) of Cerebos Pacific Ltd said, "The success of last year was the result of the positive response from civic-conscious Singaporeans whose donations amounted to almost three times our original target. For this year's campaign, we call upon the public once again to step forward to enrich the lives of the disabled in Singapore, especially during these uncertain times".

To 8-year-old Evelyn How, beneficiary of the SPD Education Programme and the face behind the campaign, "I know that if more people donate BRAND'S caps and bottles, SPD would be able to help my friends and I. So, I hope that everybody would help to collect these caps and bottles to put into the collection bins". Evelyn has cerebral palsy.

The SPD Education Programme provides financial assistance to students with physical disabilities and students with physically disabled parents from low-income families. ☺



▲ Assoc Prof Koo Tsai Kee and Mr Lam Pin Woon launching the BRAND'S Enriching Lives Campaign with a giant BRAND'S cap

bond'S First Performance in World Tour to Benefit Disabled of SPD

The sizzling string quartet will kick off their world tour in Singapore and what's more, their performance is set to raise funds for the SPD Education Programme.

THEY don't carry guns or deliver punches, but these *bond* girls will knock you out with their string sorcery at the Caltex Stars by the Bay Charity Gala which will be held on 21 January 2003 at Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay.

This event supports the Caltex Golfers with Heart charity drive organised in conjunction with the Caltex Masters. The double bill includes a private performance by internationally renowned salsa musicians Los Reyes (The Gipsy Kings) before and after *bond's* show.

A charity auction will also be held at the dinner where a number of personal effects and sporting memorabilia belonging to international sports celebrities will be auctioned off.

Mr Glenn Weckerlin, Caltex's General Manager, Brand, said: "Caltex's core values revolve around people, partnership and performance – helping people help themselves through small, practical and necessary assistance, helping them get back on their road, and achieving their hopes, goals and ambitions. ...The Caltex Stars by the Bay Charity Gala brings those values firmly together, and we're delighted to have *bond* launching their world tour on this important night, showing they're just as dedicated to helping Singapore as we are."

Caltex's Golfers with Heart event did so well last year featuring a spectacular performance by international pop sensation Geri Halliwell that Caltex decided to continue with its fundraising efforts this year.

The Caltex Stars by the Bay Charity Gala is the first in a series of Caltex's charity activities including the Caltex Cup Celebrity Challenge 2003. The funds raised will be donated to SPD and one other charity. The organisers hope to exceed the sum of \$68,000 they raised in the last year's event. 🍀



▲ Mr Glenn Weckerlin presenting SPD with a cheque for the funds raised to date under the Caltex Golfers with Heart charity drive

Bona Fide Event Raises Awareness for SPD

A group of students from Singapore Management University volunteer their time in a community service project to raise funds as well as awareness for SPD.

AS part of their school project, the 'bonafides', as the group has come to call itself, volunteered their time in creating visual materials that were used to help promote awareness and understanding of people with disabilities amongst the public. The group of seven also aimed to raise the profile of SPD's programme and services for people with disabilities.

The materials were displayed at booths set up at Junction 8 Shopping Centre on 26 and 27 October, and at an exhibition organised by Teens Magazine at Ngee Ann City from 8 to

10 November 2002. The team also gave a talk at Raffles Girls Primary School in its efforts at correcting misconceptions regarding people with disabilities. At the talk, the students were taught how to handle and interact with disabled people including those confined to a wheelchair. Experiential games that were organised and conducted helped to bring the message home to everyone present.

The session ended with a fair where the proceeds from the items sold were donated to SPD. 🍀



▲ Part of the 'bonafides' team and at their booth set up at Ngee Ann City

Thank you, bonafides for your voluntary effort. We wish you all the best in your studies and hope you made top grade with your project. You certainly deserve it with your warm support and enthusiasm!

Moods and Movements 2002

Drama has communicative, expressive, creative and symbolic functions. It is a way for children to express their dreams, desires, hopes, wishes, fears and conflicts. In this 3-day drama camp held in November, mainstream primary school children with physical disabilities were given the opportunity to depict their inner selves with confidence through a specific dramatic form.

By Lim Lutin, Social Worker

WITH contents comprising the acquiring of acting techniques, mime, music appreciation, rap and learning to make shakers, the camp was focused on driving home the various elements of drama. Throw in wet and wild games, relay games and a treasure hunt, the balance of fun was created. The result was enjoyable.

There was a good blend of quiet and extrovert children. The camaraderie developed among the children was tremendous.

The camp culminated in a 1-hour mini concert on Day 3 where the stage was set for the children to showcase their talent in a skit entitled "The Giving Tree". In order not to miss this special highlight, family members were invited to watch the delightful performance of their children. Indeed, a flair for play-acting could not be concealed in some of them as they earnestly portrayed the sentiments of their characters which brought amusement all around.

Thereafter, Gilbert Tan, an accomplished mouth artist and

songwriter who became physically disabled after injuring his spinal cord, treated the parents and children to song renditions. He literally 'struck a chord' with the audience by his inspiring messages and caused them to 'resonate' with laughter by his innate sense of humour. His exuberance so pervaded the air that when it was time for a sing-along session, the children joyfully sang their hearts out.

Lim Qi Mao, aged 9, one of the camp participants, had enjoyed himself so much that he wished the camp could be extended another 2 more days. Other children such as Wong Choon How, aged 8, also shared the same sentiment. Parents of Reuel (aged 9) and Ivan (aged 12) gave their thumbs up for the programme.

Well, the camp not only touched the hearts and made a difference in the lives of the children, but more importantly, it gave them the opportunity to develop their social skills, harness their creativity and free themselves from self-imposed inhibitions. 🌟



▲ Participants working on props for their skit



▲ Everyone had a part in the camp, even as walking, talking trees and flowers!



▲ The entire cast involved in the skit

Something's A-Fowl!

Beneficiaries from the Work Activity Centre and the Education Programme spend an afternoon with the birds at the Jurong Bird Park.

ON 16 November 2002, 45 beneficiaries from the Work Activity Centre and SPD Education Programme spent half a day amongst the birds at the Jurong Bird Park in an outing organised and sponsored by the Marina City Rotary Club.

There were lots of gawking amidst the squawking as our beneficiaries stared, captivated by the many multi-coloured birds that hopped, flitted and even

walked by in the giant aviary. The afternoon treat included a bird show which saw various types of fowl exhibiting their talents in a very unusual performance indeed.

To our newfound friends at the Marina City Rotary Club, thanks for a very enjoyable afternoon! 🌟

Beneficiaries from the Work Activity Centre posing with the ostriches ▶



ATC Lab Opens Its Doors

The Assistive Technology Centre's new computer laboratory opened its doors for the first time on 12 November 2002 to guests from StarHub, NCSS and the media. The laboratory is equipped with PCs donated by StarHub.

THE Assistive Technology Centre's new laboratory opened on 12 November with 13 desktop computers (PCs) donated by StarHub from its IDD Charity Fund. Besides the PCs, StarHub also pledged \$46,000 to SPD for the purchase of assistive technology hardware and software. This is part of the telecommunication company's community service project that will see \$130,000 worth of PCs, printers and assistive technology hardware and software such as educational software for speech, mouse splitters and augmentative alternative communication equipment donated to eight charities.

According to Mr Terry Clontz, President & CEO of StarHub, "It has always been a part of StarHub's mission to provide services that enhance the quality of life for our customers. So it is only natural that we would extend that mission to providing the means for physically challenged people to communicate, thereby giving them the opportunity to lead a more fulfilling life and become more active participants in society".

Launched in July 2000, the StarHub IDD Charity Fund has been instrumental in driving StarHub's community programme, from funding

basic necessities and educational tools to experiential benefits such as overseas and field trips. The Fund has been strongly supported by StarHub customers as StarHub has committed one per cent of its IDD revenue to the Fund. To date, StarHub has donated over \$600,000 to charity, including \$25,000 donated to the SPD Education Programme last year. 🍌

▼ ATC Manager Ms Chia Woon Yee and SPD beneficiary Lim Koon Heng with Mr Benedict Cheong, Mr Koh Nai Teck and Mr Terry Clontz



We Welcome SPD's New Board of Management 2002/2004

We bid a warm welcome to SPD's new board of management elected for the term 2002/2004.

Koh Nai Teck	<i>President</i>
Tan Eng Lock, PBM	<i>1st Vice President</i>
Soh Chee Keong, PBM	<i>2nd Vice President</i>
Yeo Jeu Nam	<i>Honorary Treasurer</i>
Frankie Thanapal Sinniah, PBM	<i>Honorary Assistant Treasurer</i>

Members:

Nancy Chia	David Goh Kia Ngan, PBM
Benjamin Gan Beng Chwee	Kong See Wah
Anthony Gan Kong Meng	K V Veloo
Laurence Wee	

Book Reviews

Staring Back: The Disability Experience from the Inside Out – by Kenny Fries (Editor)

In this groundbreaking and far-reaching collection, writers such as Andre Dubus, Stanley Elkin, and Adrienne Rich, confront what it means to be disabled in our society. Through the vehicles of nonfiction, poetry, fiction, and drama, “Staring Back” is the first anthology to open the landscape of the disabled experience for exploration and discussion.

Everybody's Different: Understanding and Changing Our Reactions to Disabilities– by Nancy B. Miller and Catherine C. Sammons

This book helps us enrich our interactions with people who have disability differences. The authors explore how our reactions to and beliefs about disabilities influence our progress toward an inclusive society and share their innovative approach to becoming more at ease with the concept of disability. With specific interaction tips, this enlightening guide gives us practical ways to improve our personal, professional, and community relationships. An essential read for all who want to live comfortably in our ever-widening diverse world.

Disability and Culture – by Benedicte Ingstad (Editor) and Susan Reynolds Whyte (Editor)

Published in 1995, this collection of essays on the relationship between disability and culture offers for the first time a global multicultural perspective on the subject. Based on the results of research undertaken in a wide variety of settings the contributors explore the significance of mental, sensory and motor impairment in light of fundamental culturally determined assumptions about humanity and personhood. This book is invaluable for its “medical anthropology” approach to viewing aspects of disability. It contributes to the growing body of literature that examines disability as a socio-political construction rather than just a medical condition.



▲ Dr Balaji Sadasivan presenting Ah Chai with his award at SSCO's Senior Citizen Dinner cum Variety Show 2002

...continued from page 1

Although a tetraplegic and wheelchair-dependent, Koon Heng has never seen himself as unable. What is most inspiring about his story is the fact that he demonstrates without a doubt that anyone anywhere has a part in contributing to the society and the community. He shows us that a light can shine from anywhere, even if it is from a wheelchair.

For his determination towards overcoming the odds that act to weigh him down and helping others overcome theirs, Koon Heng was awarded the Inner Strength Award by the Singapore Red Cross Society, an inaugural award aimed at recognising and honouring outstanding individuals who have met challenges in extraordinary ways.

Koon Heng received his award from Mr Mah Bow Tan, Minister for National Development and MP for Tampines GRC (Tampines East), at the

Gift of Life Gala Dinner held at Conrad Centennial Singapore on 26 December 2002. Upon receiving his award, Koon Heng said: "I've got a brain, I've got time. I can still help those who have lost hope."

His can-do attitude is similar to that of another individual formerly featured in the pages of ExtraPage. 58-year-old Loh Ah Chai lives a life of simplicity. Yet behind this humble exterior is a man of steel who has, despite his own disability and that of his wife, brought up two able and healthy daughters.

Ah Chai fell victim to polio when he was only 5. Subsequently, although he studied in mainstream schools till primary six, he could not find secured employment until he joined SPD's Production Workshop 23 years ago where he now works as a Production Worker. It was here that he found the love of his life, Siang Noi, who also is a polio victim.

Although both are disabled, they bravely went on to carve a life together. Their fierce independence is evident in their single-handedly bringing up both daughters with only occasional help from Ah Chai's mother when the girls were very young. Today, Ah Chai's older daughter Mei Ling, 20, has recently graduated from Singapore Polytechnic and has begun working as an assistant engineering whereas Mei Fang, 16, has just completed her GCE 'O' Level examinations. She was one of the top students in her class.

Ah Chai received a special award recently from the Sathya Sai Central Organisation for fighting the odds and winning. The humble Ah Chai found

himself undeserving of the award since there were others who led tougher lives. He said: "I have a job and married the love of my life. I have a close-knit family with two beautiful daughters. There's nothing more I can ask for."

The Sathya Sai Central Organisation's (SSCO) annual Achiever Against All Odds Awards was introduced in 1998 to recognize the exceptional efforts made by physically or intellectually disabled individuals who, by their own strength and moral standing, rise above their handicap and achieve excellence.

Ah Chai was presented with the award on 22 November 2002 at the Toa Payoh Indoor Stadium by Guest-of-Honour Dr Balaji Sadasivan, Minister of State, Ministry for Health and Ministry of the Environment.

According to Ah Chai: "Even though I have a disability, I want to lead a normal life. Everyone can do so, it's just how much you try to overcome your difficulty." ☺

To both beneficiaries who show us that a disabled spirit is far more crippling than a disabled body, SPD commends you for your fighting spirit, and congratulate you on receiving your much-deserved awards.

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

The Editor, **extrapage**

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