

A quarterly newsletter from St. John's Home for Elderly Persons.

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Taming A Wild Soul

Uncle Rob was shaving his face when I walked into his dormitory. I noticed a tinge of charm in this 75-year-old as he skilfully grooms it. He was wearing an old wornout blue shirt even though there were nicely ironed shirts hung above his headrest. He sometimes lends these to his dorm mates for formal outings. Such generous gestures had not always come easily for Uncle Rob, a resident since 2009.

As a child, Uncle Rob studied at St Gabriel's School and Holy Innocents School and grew up in the Yio Chu Kang area. As a young man in his early twenties, he already had a small painting business. At its peak, he had 6 to 7 workers and had jobs with schools, HDB flats and shop houses.

Uncle Rob loved to hang out with his co-workers and friends in coffeeshops, particularly in the Toa Payoh area. At that time, besides drinking and chatting with his buddies about anything under the sun, he added with a bashful chuckle that he also kept numerous female companions by his side. Running his business in the day, he kept late nights with these gatherings. As a hot-tempered young man, Uncle Rob sometimes got involved in quarrels and unruly behaviours at these drinking sessions. These late night activities did not bode well with his then wife, and they divorced after more than 10 years of marriage. Uncle Rob then moved in with his sister, for which he slowly discovered the one-room flat was too crowded for him and his sister's family.

Since joining the Home, Uncle Rob has made remarkable adjustments towards communal living. He is aware that his quick temper would get him on the wrong side of "Communal Living Rules". He conceded that avoiding crowds will prevent conflict between himself and other residents which also means less trouble for himself. This is why Uncle Rob does not have his meals in the Dining Hall. "I don't like to chit-chat chit-chat with people," he said, a contrast to when he was young and a party animal.

Uncle Rob helped out in painting works around our Home when he first admitted. With raised eyebrows, he enthusiastically pointed out to me the walls and the metal sun shades he painted. He said this is what he likes about St John's Home for Elderly Persons; that he is allowed and encouraged to be active and help around the Home. Uncle Rob has also made a few good friends here. His best friends are Uncle Lim and Uncle Vic who share the same dormitory as him. They chat and help him, like bringing him food from the dining hall. "They are the best!" showing a thumbs up. A wild soul has come home to roost!

-Monica Chia



For his birthday wish, Uncle Rob wished for the ability to continue walking for as long as he can.



Ruby, our Physiotherapy Aide facilitating Uncle Rob with bedside exercises as he chooses not to join mass exercises.

Charity Transparency Awards 2018

We are proud to announce that St John's Home for Elderly Persons won a Charity Transparency Award! Our Chairman, Mr Woon Wee Yim received the award on our Home's behalf on 29th November 2018 from The Commissioner of Charities Dr Ang Hak Seng. An initiative by the

Charity Council, the Charity Transparency Awards recognises charities with good disclosure practices that the Charity Transparency Framework recommends.

-Monica Chia



Handyman Stevie - the Home's "Bao Gar Liao" Man!

Stevie is convinced that his job as an Operations Executive (OE) at St. John's Home for Elderly Persons (SJHEP) is God's plan and provision for him. After running his own IT business for 30 years, he was ready to end it and move on. God gave him the word, "manna"* and soon after he received a call from SJHEP asking him if he was interested in the OE position. Stevie is no stranger to SJHEP; he was a volunteer at SJHEP before he became a staff.

When he first joined SJHEP three years ago, Stevie's first month was a challenging one. The OE position had been vacant for a few months before Stevie joined SJHEP, so there was no one to show him the ropes. The Home was also due for inspection by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF). Without any prior experience in operations work, he had to hit the ground running. At that time there were also not many volunteers to help with the repair work. With his hard work and the help of all his staff - the Nursing Aides, Physiotherapy Aides and Healthcare Assistants, SJHEP passed the inspection the first time round. Everyone was delighted and Stevie showed his appreciation by buying his staff a McDonald's meal.

Asked about his duties and responsibilities, Stevie's short answer is "bao gar liao" which in Hokkien means "do everything". Stevie's work includes facilities management, people management and assisting in volunteer events. He ensures that operations at SJHEP run smoothly each day, the essential needs of the residents

are met, the equipment is maintained and in working order, and cleanliness and hygiene standards of the home are maintained. He does the painting and minor repairs like handling choked toilet bowls among others. He manages 16 staff who are mostly foreigners and also helps to deal with disputes and incidents involving the residents. He knows all the 80 residents by name and which dormitory they are in and their beds. He manages and shows volunteers what needs to be done on the premises. He also helps to set up the AVA equipment when volunteers come to sing and perform for the residents. Stevie is on his feet most of the time - his pedometer shows that on average he walks 15,000 steps daily at work!

Stevie finds people management challenging. He said that when a piece of equipment is faulty, you just need to repair it. Dealing with people is more complex and difficult, and can be frustrating. He asks God for wisdom when he needs help to handle people issues. At times when he feels like giving up, he hears God telling him to "take care of His sheep" and he stays on.

*In the bible, the people of Israel called the bread which God provided for them "manna".

- May Swee, volunteer writer for St John's for Elderly Persons



Stevie making sure the sound system is "pitch-perfect" for the volunteers.



Stevie supervising the arrival and installation of a new washing machine

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A Word from our Chairman

In 2018, though we spent much time on our new building project, we still kept our primary focus on our residents' well-being.

For our residents' physical well-being, we purchased two new physiotherapy equipment in 2018. These are:-

- (a) a Balance Tester cum Trainer -- a smart elderly-friendly equipment which performs balance and fall risk assessment and provides interactive exercise training to improve coordination and balancing; and
- (b) a Dual Function Leg Extension/Curl Rehab Trainer -- an elderly-friendly equipment which helps maintain/strengthen leg muscles to aid balancing, thus reducing fall risks.

On the new building front, construction works commenced in November 2018 with the opening of the construction entrance.

Four dormitories were demolished in December 2018 to make way for the new building. With careful planning, none of our residents had to be transferred out of the Home as we are able to accommodate them in other dormitories which are unaffected by the construction works.

The chapel too was demolished in December 2018. We now have Sunday services in the Lounge.

We like to thank all of you for your strong support over the years. The new building is due to be completed in December 2020 and we still need to raise \$5 million out of the building cost of \$15 million.

I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a Happy and Prosperous 2019.

-Woon Wee Yim

Encouraging Gratitude



Initially, most residents placed here by their loved ones would have some misgivings for being housed in a Shelter. Gradually, they get adjusted to staying here and understand that their loved ones have their interests at heart. Most are happy and grateful to stay at St. John's Home for Elderly Persons.

Uncle Lou's unmade bed

One morning, I received a complaint from a resident that his bed was not made. Uncle Lou was usually grateful to our staff and for the service rendered to him, but that morning was different. I realised he was quite unhappy that his bed sheet was not changed and probably was tired and wanted to rest on his bed, but could not due to the unsatisfactory state of the bed sheet.

I assured Uncle Lou that it would be done as soon as possible and requested his patience. I tried to appeal for his understanding and explained that it was likely the Healthcare Assistant (HA) was troubled by a late-night phone call about some problems encountered by her family. This could have caused her distraction and not made his bed in the usual time. I added that our HAs come from another country to work here, away from their loved ones. After listening to me, Uncle Lou instantly changed his attitude towards the situation and even went to say,

“thank you!” to the HA. Since then, there has not been any complaints from him.

Money no enough

In one of my conversations with Uncle Tom, he complained to me that his son did not give him enough spending money. On several occasions, Uncle Tom had been vocal in his demands for more money when in actual fact, he has much more as compared to other residents. I explained to him that he should feel grateful to his son who has taken upon himself to pay for his stay at our Home and even consistently giving him pocket money.

Auntie Ava is Home

81 years old Auntie Ava grew to love this place so much, that every time she goes out for lunch with her children, she will remind them to bring her “Home” as soon as they finish. Auntie Ava is grateful to her children for admitting her here, and shows appreciation to us for taking care of her. This is unlike before when she often yearned to return to her children.

Our Home has endeavoured to encourage our elderly residents to be grateful whenever the opportunity arises. We have seen positive results, including not hearing any more of Uncle Tom's demands of more pocket money. Nothing blesses us more when our seniors have caught the “gratitude bug”.

-Samuel Quek, Assistant Counsellor.

*Names in article had been changed.

Share your Ang Bao with an “Ah-gong” or “Ah-ma”



Chinese New Year is a festive season when everyone looks forward to feasting and family gatherings. In a long-term accommodation Shelter like St John's Home for Elderly Persons, some of our seniors do not have the opportunity to enjoy family reunions. In the Year of the Pig, which signifies wealth, share your Ang Bao and give our elderly residents a better Chinese New Year.

Watch our residents wish you a happy Chinese New Year and donate:
www.giving.sg/StJohnsHomeSg/AngBao2019

Donations will go towards the daily care and provision of our elderly residents and the upkeep of our Home.

Building Redevelopment Update

Architect:	Aamer Architects
Main Contractor:	Lim Wen Heng Construction Pte Ltd
Funds	
Project Amount:	S\$15 million
Current Collection:	S\$10 million
Dates	
Groundbreaking:	1st September 2018
Demolition:	December 2018
Piling:	Planned January 2019
Structure:	Planned End January 2019 to July 2019
Completion:	Planned end 2020

One Highlight Feature

Dedicated Activity Lounge for our volunteers to conduct activities and interact with our elderly residents.

Name-a-Room Campaign

To find out more about this donation campaign, call Monica at +65 62854446 or email cp.frm@StJohnEldersHome.org.sg



Demolition works started in December 2018

Throwback! Serving, Loving & Caring



Sennett Estate Cha Cha Line Dance Interest Group having a "hula time" at St John's Open House & Fundraising Carnival



Bake and Lunch with Hong Leong Finance



Lian Hup Tua Temple giving a lunch treat and ang bao gifts to our residents.



MBS Gaming Service Bar staff helping to spruce up our Home.



UWC students touring our garden before it would be closed for demolition works



Jasmine & friends having a "Singing Christmas" with our residents



Pat's Schoolhouse spreading the Christmas cheer to our seniors.



Jeric Salon has been giving our elderly residents free hair cuts for more than a decade.



Central Sikh Temple Lunch and Dance

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Donations In Cash

- Donate online at www.giving.sg/StJohnsHomeSg
- Issue cheque in favour of 'St. John's Home for Elderly Persons', and mail it to:
The General Manager
St. John's Home for Elderly Persons
69 Wan Tho Avenue Singapore 347601
- Walk-in donation at our office at 69 Wan Tho Avenue Singapore 347601



Donate Monthly

In-Kind

We welcome donations-in-kind including food and household items. For ease of donating, visit and buy at www.fairprice.com.sg/DonatetoSSOrg and choose St John's Home for Elderly Persons as your beneficiary.