

BUILD-UP

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BUILD-UP

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The General Secretary
HDB Staff Union, Block 530,
Toa Payoh Lorong 6 #04-01
Singapore 310530
Tel: 6336 5544 Fax: 6356 6798

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Message



MR LEE HSIEN LOONG
PRIME MINISTER

GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

2008 has been an eventful and challenging year. The world is entering the most serious economic crisis in sixty years. The global financial system has seized up, companies are finding it harder to obtain credit, and economies everywhere are slowing down. Europe and Japan have joined the US in a simultaneous recession. Asia too is seeing a sharp slowdown.

As a small, open economy, Singapore cannot avoid being hit. We earn our living by trading with and servicing the world. So the fall in worldwide demand has hit our exports, our tourism sector, and our broader economy. We have gone into a recession, though growth for the year as a whole is still positive at 1.5%.

The outlook is highly uncertain. At each stage of this crisis, events have turned out worse than the experts predicted. Governments everywhere have been implementing monetary and fiscal measures, rescuing troubled financial institutions and key corporations and pumping money into the economy. But no one is sure how the financial systems and economies will respond, or which policies will work. There is a loss of business and consumer confidence and, hence, one thing is certain: things cannot turn around overnight. Quite likely the global recession will be followed not by a quick rebound, but by several more years of slow growth.

We must therefore prepare for a difficult year ahead, and especially the first half of 2009. Our economy will probably contract further. More companies will be forced to downsize. So far we have not seen many job losses, but I expect more retrenchments in the next few months. We must be psychologically prepared.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO SAVE JOBS

The Government has responded promptly to this economic storm. Our key focus is jobs – keeping people in jobs, helping workers who lose jobs find new ones, and retraining them with new skills. To do this, we have to help businesses ride over this rough period. So long as people have work, they can take care of themselves and their families.

We have already implemented two significant initiatives. The first initiative is the Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience (SPUR), which was jointly launched by the tripartite partners on 1 December. SPUR helps businesses pay for their staff training. The tripartite partners have reported good response. Already, more than 120 companies have come on board, which together will train more than 4,200 workers.

The second initiative is enhancing government financing programmes for companies. This is to ensure that basically sound firms, especially the smaller ones, can still obtain financing despite the tight credit climate, and

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so keep their operations going. We have also recently reduced interest rates and increased insurance premium subsidies under the schemes. These measures will benefit some 13,500 existing loans worth \$550 million and an estimated \$3 billion in new loans.

Apart from these two measures, we also lowered corporate taxes in 2008. New enterprises and smaller companies enjoy further tax exemptions, which mean that many pay little or no taxes. For households, the 2008 Budget package included Growth Dividends, U-SAVE, S&CC and Rental Rebates, and top-ups to Post-Secondary Education Accounts. These schemes are helping Singaporeans, particularly lower income families, to tide over the difficult period.

Our next major move will be the 2009 Budget, which we have brought forward to January. The emphasis is still to protect jobs. We will do more to help viable companies to stay afloat and continue to employ their workers. We will introduce measures to help them with their business costs, including rental and wage bills. We are also studying further financing support for companies.

Compared to the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, this crisis is more difficult for us to overcome because it is global. Still, it will not last forever. After a few years, conditions will go back to normal, though we cannot expect a quick return to the boom years before the crisis. Meanwhile, a world in recession is not a world without opportunities. In the midst of the storm, we must keep pursuing new growth chances, and look beyond the immediate problems to ensure that Singapore emerges stronger after the downturn. Hence, the Budget will also contain measures to develop our competitiveness and build up new and long term capabilities. Some businesses may not recover from the slump in global demand, but most should survive. We will help them to build up their operations, and also encourage new businesses to grow, so that there will always be good jobs for Singaporeans.

The Budget package will not restore our economy to high growth overnight. But our measures will moderate the impact on Singaporeans, and on our economy. We will continue to monitor closely how events unfold. If more measures become necessary, we have the resources, and the will, to do more to see Singapore through this recession.

MEETING THE CRISIS AS ONE NATION

However, Government help alone will not solve the problem. Every one of us has a part to play. Companies should work with the unions to find ways to cut costs, and consider downsizing only as a last resort. During a downturn, businesses should try hard to keep their core team together, to hold on to their critical knowledge and skills. They should also take advantage of this slack period and the available schemes to build new and better capabilities. Such a far-sighted approach will pay off when the upturn comes.

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On their part, workers should go for upgrading and pick up new skills. There are still many good jobs even now. Singapore has attracted exceptionally high investment commitments in the last two years. For 2009, EDB forecasts that investment commitments will be lower, but could still exceed \$10 billion. When these projects are completed they will create many new jobs.

In addition, sectors like construction and marine which have not been popular with Singaporeans still offer many jobs. There are also vacancies in the service industry, such as in healthcare and education, the IRs and retail trade, and in the Home Team and security. There are jobs not only for the rank and file, but also supervisory and technical positions for professionals, managers and executives. If you are job hunting, I hope you will venture beyond your comfort zone to take up these available jobs, even if they are not your first choice.

In this difficult period, families must bind together, as Asian societies have always done in times of trouble. We must all fulfil our duties to our parents, our spouses and our children. In particular, we must safeguard our children's future. Parents must ensure that children continue to attend kindergarten or childcare centre, and keep up their school attendance and school work.

Singaporeans must also take care of one another beyond our immediate families. Community and welfare organisations, as well as grassroots organisations all over the island, have expanded their schemes to help needy citizens – food hampers, Fairprice vouchers, bursaries, and pocket money for needy students. The Government will also continue to play its part, by helping the poor through ComCare. These efforts must be supported by all Singaporeans. If you are able to contribute, do volunteer your help.

TACKLING SECURITY CHALLENGES

Besides the economic downturn, 2008 has also brought political instability and security threats to some countries in our region, making it harder for these countries to focus on their economic problems.

Extremist terrorism is a continuing threat. The recent terrible attacks in Mumbai were a vivid reminder of this. Singapore was not the target, but tragically a Singaporean, Ms Lo Hwei Yen, became a victim. We all mourn her loss. We must also understand what this incident means for our security, and how we can protect ourselves better from the threat of terrorism.

We are doing our utmost to prevent something like this from happening here. Our security and intelligence agencies monitor potential threats closely, and cooperate quietly with their counterparts in neighbouring countries. We are tightening up border security, and taking physical precautions at major events. Ordinary citizens can help in this too, by being on the alert and reporting anything suspicious.

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But there is no 100% guarantee that we will never be hit. Therefore, we must strengthen our psychological resilience and our social cohesion, so that should an attack ever occur despite all our efforts, we can absorb the shock, pull together and recover from the blow.

Most importantly, extremist terrorism must not be allowed to undermine our racial and religious harmony. Singaporeans understand that terrorism is a threat to all of us. All religious groups have unequivocally condemned the Mumbai attacks. We need to work continuously to further strengthen this unity, trust and resilience. This is the purpose of the Community Engagement Programme (CEP) – to prepare ourselves to respond to any crisis not as individuals or different communities, but as one nation.

CONCLUSION

Despite the storm clouds, we have good reasons to be quietly confident. Around the world, people recognise that Singapore started with precious little but built a prosperous and cohesive multi-racial nation through our ingenuity and effort. On my recent journeys abroad, I found everywhere a high regard for Singapore. Whether in Latin America, China or the Middle East, people admired what we have achieved, and were eager to learn from our experiences. I was asked many questions about how we tackle our problems, and in particular how we are responding to the crisis. They were confident that we would pull through and wanted to pick up ideas from us. Perhaps that is why the World Bank is setting up a World Bank-Singapore Urban Hub in Singapore, to share some of our experience and expertise with other developing countries.

Singapore's key strengths are our honest and capable leadership, sound policies which look beyond the short term, social cohesion and talented and hardworking people. These strengths have brought us peace, prosperity and progress for decades, and they will see us through these difficult times. When the environment was favourable, we upgraded and grew our economy, lived within our means and patiently built up sizeable reserves. So when this sudden, severe storm struck, we were ready.

Together, we will overcome this downturn, as we have overcome many previous ones, and emerge stronger from the experience. Together, we can meet the future with confidence.

I wish all Singaporeans a Happy New Year.

Message



MR LIM SWEE SAY SECRETARY-GENERAL NATIONAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Happy New Year to you and your families.

As outlined by Prime Minister in his New Year's message, 2009 will be a difficult year. He stressed the importance of tackling the economic crisis as one nation. We, in the Labour Movement, are committed to play our constructive role and stand in unity with the government and employers to protect jobs and create growth. This is the best way for Singapore to pull through the global crisis.

In 2009, we have three core priorities:

First, cut costs to save jobs. On the ground, we see how fast the world economy is declining and how badly it is affecting our businesses and workers. We see idle capacity at our factories, seaport and air-cargo operations. We see a drop in hotel occupancy and ticket sales of concert events. We share the concerns of retailers in surviving the lull period between Chinese New Year and the Great Singapore Sale. We are also concerned with the increasing number of workers affected by retrenchment, reduced overtime and shorter work-week. This is why we must be pro-active in working closely with the management and government to improve productivity and reduce total costs - wage costs and non-wage costs - as best as we can. We need to be even more flexible and adaptable in 2009, because more cost reduction for our businesses would mean more jobs saved for our workers.

Second, up-skill and re-skill for new and different jobs. Global recession does not mean zero job creation. We will lose some of our existing jobs due to a drastic drop in global demand. However, many job sectors are still employing and some new ones will be taking off in 2009 - from Home Team to education and healthcare; from marine to construction and public transport; from new hotels to new shopping malls and new Integrated Resorts. Our challenge is to encourage workers to not just look for "same job with same pay". We must help them understand that the world has changed and the Singapore Economy will have to change even faster to stay competitive. We need them to believe in themselves and be willing to adapt to new job demands, so that we can help them up-skill and re-skill to take on new and different jobs in different industries.

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Third, stay the course to achieve our longer term objectives. We have worked hard to increase the employment rate of women and older workers through various tripartite efforts. We have also worked hard to reduce unemployment and under-employment by re-creating low-paying jobs, promoting best-sourcing of contract services, and enhancing the employability of low-skilled workers. These are responses to long-term trends in our economy and society. The pace of our efforts will be affected by the short-term crisis due to excess manpower in a growing number of companies. However, we must not allow these initiatives to stall in 2009. We will spare no effort in sustaining the momentum jointly with our tripartite partners.

There is much for us to do in 2009. Fortunately, our foundation is strong, and we can face the challenges with confidence. I thank all NTUC-affiliated unions and associations, and NTUC co-operatives for your contribution in 2008. We look forward to your strong support in 2009 as we strive to do even more for our union members and the workers of Singapore.

Tripartism is Singapore's unique advantage. We are in this crisis together and we will overcome it together with our workers, our Government and the employers. As we start a new year, let us pledge to stand together, stay focused and press forward as one united labour movement, one united tripartite partnership and one united Singapore.

Together, we can upturn the downturn.



MR RICHARD TAN
GENERAL SECRETARY, HDBSU

2008 has been an eventful, fruitful and challenging year for HDB and HDBSU, indeed there is much for HDB staff to be proud of. Last year, HDB has clinched several significant awards. Among them is the prestigious United Nations Public Service Award (UNPSA) for our Home Ownership Programme and also the Singapore Quality Award with Special Commendation.

The awards not only gain international recognition of excellence in public service, it is also given to public institutions for their creative achievements and contributions that lead to a more effective and responsive public administration. These accolades are tributes to each and every staff member in HDB. We have worked closely together as a team to fulfill Singaporean's aspirations for quality and yet affordable homes, as well as build strong, cohesive communities.

We are also very proud that HDB won the Work-Life Achiever Award 2008, which is a tribute to their efforts in implementing effective work-life strategies. HDB has implemented various work-life integration programmes like the Telecommuting Scheme, Part-time Employment Scheme, Women back to work Programme and the Re-Employment Scheme. The Re-Employment Scheme is to facilitate the continued employment of workers beyond 62 years old. In this regard, HDB and HDBSU have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on 11 December 2008 to put in place the re-employment structure well in advance, to ensure the smooth implementation of re-employment in HDB.

We urge our staff members in HDB to constantly upgrade themselves so that they can continue to improve their productivity and deliver excellent service that the public has come to expect. Skills upgrading is essential in ensuring our employability and the continuation of employment beyond 62 years old.

With the strong tradition of cooperation and close labour-management relations between HDB and HDB Staff Union, we will continue to partner closely with HDB management to give them our support and feedback. It is also very important that we work together with HDB management so that we can achieve our shared commitment towards meeting HDB's vision and mission while enhancing the well-being and development of our staff members.

2009 marks the dawn of the Lunar Year of the Ox in the Chinese Almanac Calendar and my best wishes to every Chinese member on our OX-picious Lunar New Year.



FOCC CHINESE NEW YEAR BAZAAR

\$3,500 COLLECTED FOR THE CANOSSAVILLE CHILDREN'S HOME

The Club HDB Nexus was packed daily from 14 to 16 January 2009 for the Chinese New Year Bazaar organised by the Canossaville Children's Home Committee. The aim of the bazaar was to provide an opportunity for HDB staff to purchase goodies, clothing and gifts for the Lunar New Year celebrations and at the same time raise fund for the Committee so that they could do more to help the Canossaville Children's Home.

The Bazaar had raised \$3,500 for the Canossaville Children's Home. This year's bazaar attracted more stalls than previous years. This included stalls promoting food items, chocolates, wine, clothing, trinkets, costume jewellery, medicinal products and two credit card companies. The most popular stalls were the ones selling various Chinese New Year goodies.

The 'Bak Kua' stalls appeared to be the hit over the three days. They were offering a discounted price

during the bazaar. As prices for 'Bak Kua' were expected to rise very steeply nearer to the Chinese New Year, HDB Chinese staff made full use of the opportunity to store up for the festive season.

Looking at the crowds in the Nexus over the three days, HDB staff were very pleased to have the opportunity to do a portion of their Chinese New Year shopping right at the doorstep of their work place. The reasonable prices were an added attraction to the staff to visit the bazaar in droves.

Vice-President, HDBSU Mr Toh Leng Swee summed up the Union's view "We were fortunate to have so many stalls this year. In fact we had to turn away some applicants due to space constraints. We ensured that there was a good mix of stalls as this would be more beneficial for the staff. We are very pleased that we were able to raise \$3,500 for the FOCC. This fits in nicely with the festive spirit of sharing and bringing some cheer to others."





SHARE OUR KINDNESS DAY



HDB Charity Walkathon



HDB CHARITY WALKATHON HELD ON 9 JANUARY 2009

A large crowd made of HDB staff in sports attire gathered at the lobby of HDB Hub on the morning of Friday, 9 January 2009. What was the occasion? The HDB staff were participating in the HDB Charity Walkathon held as part of Share Our Kindness Day. The event was organised by the SHARE Committee 2008/2009.

The Guest-of-Honour for the event was HDB Chairman, Mr Koh Cher Siang. Chairman Mr Koh and HDBSU General Secretary, Mr Richard Tan jointly flagged off the walkers at 9.30 am. The nearly 150 participants were divided into two groups. The 2 km walk was completed in about half an hour. The participants appeared to be very relaxed as they completed the walk at a very leisurely pace.

After flagging off the walkathon, the Guest-of-Honour, Mr Koh Cher Siang toured the HDB Charity Bazaar held at basement 1 of HDB Hub. Mr Koh chatted with the staff manning the 12 stalls. The participating organisations were trying to raise fund by selling souvenirs and decorative items. They also disseminated information about their organisations and their activities. The following are the organisations participated in the HDB Charity Bazaar:





- Oasis Day Centre
- Spastic Children's Association of Singapore
- Singapore Disabled Riding Association
- Asian Women's Welfare Association(AWWA)
- Lions Befriender Association
- Sunlove Home
- Canossville Children's Home
- YMCA
- Dover Road Hospice
- Biz Link
- Singapore Cheshire Home
- Sundac Bedok

A reception was held at the Club HDB multi-purpose hall for the VIP's including HDB senior staff, HDBSU Exco members, NCSS, representatives from the sponsors and the adopted charity Grace Orchard School. The Guest-of-Honour later presented appreciation plagues to HDBSU and all the sponsors.

The HDB Charity Walkathon was a meaningful event organised by the Share Committee 2008/2009 as part of the 'Share Our Kindness Day'. Through this event, an amount of \$50,000 was raised and it has provided an opportunity for HDB staff to contribute to a worthy cause.

SIGNING OF MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT FOR RE-EMPLOYMENT OF OLDER WORKERS

HDB AND HDBSU INK AGREEMENT WHICH WILL PERMIT THE RE-EMPLOYMENT OF WORKERS BEYOND AGE 62

MR LIM SWEE SAY, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF NTUC WITNESSES THE SIGNING AND PRAISES HDB FOR ITS INITIATIVE IN ANTICIPATION OF RE-EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION IN 2012



A large gathering which included NTUC representatives, HDB senior staff, HDBSU Exco members and invited guests from several public sector unions witnessed the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement for the Re-employment of Workers held at the HDB auditorium on 11 December 2008.

Among the other VIP's in attendance were the Guest-of-Honour Mr Lim Swee Say, Secretary-General of NTUC; Mr Heng Chee How, Deputy Secretary-General, NTUC and Madam Halimah Yacob, Deputy Secretary-General, NTUC and Board Members of HDB.

NTUC Secretary-General, Mr Lim Swee Say witnessed the signing and delivered a speech at the ceremony. Mr Lim praised HDB for taking the initiative to address the important issue of the re-employment of workers beyond the retirement age well in advance of relevant legislation in 2012. Mr Lim reminded that the Government had decided to be pro-active to address the problems arising from an aging



workforce. The Tripartite Committee on Employment of Older Workers (Tricom) had made several important recommendations including the introduction of legislation by 2012. HDB Chief Executive Officer, Mr Tay Kim Poh and HDBSU President, Mr Michael Koh also addressed the gathering. HDB Director (Corporate Development), Ms Lau Chay Yean and HDBSU General Secretary, Mr Richard Tan signed the Memorandum of Agreement for HDB and HDBSU respectively.

Mr Tay Kim Poh pointed out that 60% of HDB staff are currently

aged 40 and above. As the largest employer among statutory boards in Singapore, HDB had addressed the issue seriously so as to prepare the groundwork to have systems in place well before re-employment legislation is enacted in 2012.

This includes reviewing current re-employment policies and working in partnership with HDBSU to draw up new policies and procedures to re-employ workers who will be retiring over the next few years. The effort put in by HDB in partnership with HDBSU had resulted in the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement.

Mr Tay also referred to HDB's emphasis on re-training and lifelong learning of its staff. The recent Lifelong Learner Award won by HDB clearly affirms the commitment to people development. HDB will put in place a system which will enable staff to plan for their immediate and longer term training needs. This will be done on an annual basis.

He also urged staff to play their part as well, as re-employment is a two-way process. Staff should take active steps to perform well in their duties, stay healthy and re-train to acquire new skills. Those who are nearing retirement age and are seeking re-employment should adopt an open mind, be receptive to changes and be prepared for adjustments to their job scope and terms of employment.

Besides equipping staff for re-training and life-long learning, HDB is also committed to promoting work-life effectiveness and enhancing the well-being of the staff. HDB has implemented a comprehensive Workplace Health Program, as well as various work - life initiatives catering to the needs of the staff at different stages of their career.

The audience also listened to a presentation of HDB's current policies on re-training and life-long learning programs and the vision for the future. All participants were invited to a tea reception after the signing ceremony.

The challenge of an aging population is now a global phenomenon, with the percentage of workers who are 65 and above rising steadily. Statistics show that as a result of the declining fertility rates and the aging of the baby boomers, the growth of the labour force both globally and in Singapore will begin to slow very significantly after 2010. Currently 53% of the resident workforce in Singapore are aged 40 and above. This means that in the years to come, older workers will eventually make up a larger proportion of the workforce.

To prepare for this scenario, the Government decided to take pro-active steps to address the issue. A Tripartite Committee on Employment of Older Workers (Tricom) was set up to study the problem in detail. In due course, Tricom recommended a slew of measures to enhance the continued employment of older workers. One of the major recommendations is the enactment of legislation by 2012 to enable more workers to continue working beyond the current statutory retirement age of 62. The public sector has already announced its commitment to implement service-wide re-employment of retiring workers by 2010.

As a strong advocate of the re-employment of older workers, NTUC and its affiliated Unions have been working with unionised companies to build up knowledge and expertise in re-employment initiatives. In February 2006, NTUC launched its efforts to enhance the employability of older workers, in support of the recommendations of the Tripartite Committee on Employability of Older Workers. Two teams were set up for the purpose of promoting the employability of older workers. More and more companies have committed at varying levels to re-employ their older workers.

The national target for the re-employment of older workers aged 55 to 64 is 65%. Currently 56% in this age group are employed. With the labour movement's relentless push



to open up job opportunities for older workers, it is expected that the national target can be achieved.

The signing of the Memorandum of Agreement for re-employment between HDB and HDBSU has augers well for the future. It is a clear indication that HDB is taking the issue of the re-employment of workers seriously. A lot of thought, planning and consultation had taken place and this will continue so that appropriate systems will be in place well in advance of 2012. HDB and HDBSU will be working in partnership to ensure that the initiative is implemented successfully.





FOCC MOVIE OUTING FOR CHILDREN

**45 CHILDREN TREATED TO A MOVIE
ON 5 DECEMBER AT TOA PAYOH
ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE
- MADAGASCAR: ESCAPE 2 AFRICA**



The Friends of Canossaville Children's Home Committee (FOCC) organised a movie outing for the children on Friday 5 December 2008.

45 children from the Canossaville Children's Home participated in the outing. Acting Assistant General Secretary Ms Cheung Meiling and Ms Soh Ai Leen accompanied the children together with several teachers from the Home.

The children were picked up from the Home at 1pm. The presence of the teachers from the Home was useful as they were more familiar with the children. The children were very chirpy and excited during the coach ride to Toa Payoh.

Upon arrival at Toa Payoh Entertainment Centre, the children received popcorn and drinks from the FOCC before being ushered into



the movie theatre. The children found the movie 'Madagascar: Escape 2 from Africa' very entertaining and interesting. After watching the movie - lasting about two and three quarter hours, the children proceeded to HDBSU House for tea.

After the tea reception the children had lots of fun at the Club HDB Games Arcade and Multi-purpose Hall. Apart from the various electronic games at the Arcade, the children played basketball and other traditional games like finger-guessing and mother-hen game etc.

The children really enjoyed the outing organised by FOCC. In addition to the thrill of watching the movie they had a good time at the HDB Club. However, all good things come to an end. So at 5pm it was time to head home. They cheerfully boarded the bus with plenty of thanks to the FOCC for organising and leading the event.

DONATION OF TABLE TENNIS TABLES TO CANOSSAVILLE CHILDREN'S HOME

On 17 Dec 2008, Bishan Branch Office donated 2 table tennis tables to the Canossaville Children's Home. These two table tennis tables are in very good condition. The children are very happy to receive the tables as now they have one more sports to play in the Home. The Home would like to thank Ms Tan Ai Ling, Head of Branch Office and staff from Bishan Branch Office for their kind gesture & generosity.



REPAIR OF FLYING FOX AT CANOSSAVILLE CHILDREN'S HOME



The Home made a request to the DCEO(EC) Ms Tan Poh Hong to repair the flying fox in the children's playground and FOCC quickly got down to complete the task.

Mr Cheng Kiah Lim, Chairman of the FOCC, approached a BTDC colleague Mr Halifi Bin Ramli who is familiar in mechanical equipment maintenance. He volunteered to undertake the repairs for FOCC with the help of contractors. The cost of \$1,200 was borne by FOCC.

The Home expressed its gratitude to FOCC for undertaking the repairs so quickly and effectively. Immediately after the repairs were completed, the children of the Home were enjoying themselves with the flying fox in the children's playground.

Mr Cheng Kiah Lim, Chairman of the FOCC said "It was most gratifying to be able to meet the request by the Home to repair the flying fox. We are grateful to Mr Halifi Bin Ramli of BTDC for volunteering to undertake the repairs. FOCC had the funds to absorb the total cost of the repairs. I can proudly say that we were able to make a difference and extend our help when it was requested for."





HDB/HDBSU JOINT WORKSHOP 'STRATEGIC UNION-MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP HDB-HDBSU'

Thursday 16 October 2008

Building rapport amid the beautiful National Orchid Garden at Burkill Hall!

After last year's successful Management/Union workshop, the Organising Committee decided to hold this year's workshop amid the lush surroundings of the Botanic Gardens. To be exact, the workshop was held at Burkill Hall which is located at the Orchid Gardens. Burkill Hall, the home of previous Directors of the Botanic Gardens is located in a very secluded location off Tyrsell Road.

The 49 participants (24 from HDB and 25 from HDBSU) gathered bright and early at Burkill Hall for registration and breakfast. Quite a number were seen wandering around the orchid gardens and taking in the bright and pleasant surroundings.

After breakfast, the participants made their way to the meeting room on the 2nd floor. Unlike normal meetings, the participants were seated at round tables to facilitate interaction. The theme of the workshop this year was 'Strategic Union-Management Partnership at HDB/HDBSU'

As in past years, the workshop was facilitated by the Ong Teng Cheong Institute of Labour Studies. Playing

the role of Facilitator for the day was Ms Lulu Goh from the Institute. The joint workshop was formally opened by Ms Lau Chay Yean, Director, Corporate Development and Mr Michael Koh, President, HDBSU.

The first item in the program was an hour-long presentation on:

- 1) Understanding the Industry – Trends and Challenges
 - Increased demand for HDB rental flats.
 - Increased demand for new HDB flats.
 - Higher construction costs.
 - To meets the needs of an aging society, while at the same time catering to the lifestyle of young families.
- 2) HDB2010 – An Update
 - To become an employer of choice that inspires and develops the staff to give of their best and contribute to HDB's success.
 - To become a leader in service and innovation excellence.
 - To ensure that the public perceives HDB to be an outstanding organisation.

- 3) HDBSU2011 - To create a working environment where all Union members can earn a better living and live a better life.

The presentation was followed by a Group Discussion on "Seeking Alignment: Enhancing LMR/IR Climate in HDB". The participants were divided into groups for the purpose of the discussion. After brainstorming the topic, each group had to nominate a representative to present the conclusions reached.

After a nice lunch, the participants gathered for the presentations by the various group representatives. The different groups provided perceptive insights into the LMR and IR scene at HDB and the vision for the future. The indoor programme ended with a summary of the day's discussions by the Facilitator from the Ong Teng Cheong Institute of Labour Studies.

The afternoon session focused on outdoor activities amid the lush surroundings of the Orchid Gardens. In order to encourage greater interaction and bonding, the participants were divided into five groups. The activity entailed a two-





hour treasure hunt based on the 'Amazing Race' format.

So for nearly two hours the 49 participants were seen huffi ngand puffi ngin the Orchid Gardens following the various trails and clues. It was also a test of team-work, as the only way to win prizes was by working in unison. Considering that it was a disparate group, the various teams did not disappoint and were always in high spirits.

After the tea-break, the group gathered again in the meeting room for the closing activities. This included the presentation of prizes to the winners of the 'Amazing Race' competition. Director, Corporate Development, Ms Lau Chay Yean and President, HDBSU Mr Michael Koh presented Certificates of Participation to all the participants.

General Secretary, Mr Richard Tan said "We have been holding such joint workshops over the last few years. The close rapport with HDB is already there and built up over many years. The aim is not to take things for granted and to continue to build on what has been established. You will be surprised on how much rapport is built at these gatherings. If all goes well, we can hold this gathering at an overseas location next year".





BOWLING AT PLANET BOWL

80 PARTICIPATE IN THE HDBSU TRIO BOWLING COMPETITION 2008 CUM HDBSU/CDD FRIENDLY BOWLING TOURNAMENT

**CHAMPION TEAM FOR 2008:
DON'T PLAY PLAY BOWLERS -
ROSELAWATI, ZAINAL ABIDIN AND
TAN AH CHYE**

**INDIVIDUAL WINNERS FOR 2008:
CHAMPION: ROSELAWATI
1st RUNNER-UP: ZAINAL ABIDIN
2nd RUNNER-UP: LOO PENG KUAN**



The Union's bowling competition for 2008 was held on Friday, 10 October 2008 at the Planet Bowl located at the Civil Service Club in Tessensohn Road.

Organised by the Union's Membership & Welfare Secretariat, the HDBSU Trio Bowling Competition 2008 attracted 80 bowlers in 20 teams. This year, there were 14 teams of Union members competing for the mantle of best bowlers in the Union. In addition to the main tournament, six mixed teams comprising bowlers from the Union

and the Corporate Development Department competed in a separate friendly tournament.

Like in past years, there was tremendous enthusiasm among Union members for the annual bowling tournament. There has always been a small group of highly skilled bowlers among Union members, who are always ready to pit their skills and win prizes.

After a light dinner, Director CDD, Ms Lau Chay Yean and President HDBSU, Mr Michael Koh bowled first

to start off the HDBSU Trio Bowling Tournament 2008.

After one and half hours of competitive bowling, the following teams and individuals emerged as champions.

The competition ended with a short prize-giving ceremony and a group photograph. Apart from an exciting evening of competitive bowling, the tournament also provided an excellent opportunity for the Union to interact with the staff of CDD.

TEAM STANDINGS – HBSU BOWLING TOURNAMENT 2008



Champion: Don't Play Play Bowlers
Roselawati, Zainal Abidin, Tan Ah Chye



1st Runner-Up: HDB Team 1
Chou Loi Choo, Edmund Yue, Loo Peng Kuan



2nd Runner-Up: ABC Team
Andy Low, (Lee Bee Eng and Ng Cheng Teck are not in the picture)



Champion:
Roselawati



1st Runner-Up:
Zainal Abidin



2nd Runner-Up:
Loo Peng Kuan

INDIVIDUAL STANDINGS

TEAM STANDINGS – HBSU/CDD FRIENDLY BOWLING TOURNAMENT 2008



Champion: VIP Team 4
Ivy Ooi, Tan Kok Ser, Alan Tan



1st Runner-Up: VIP Team 2
Joanne Ng, Michael Koh, Stephen Leung



2nd Runner-Up: VIP Team 1
Tay Peck Kiang, Lau Chay Yean, Richard Tan



3rd Runner-Up: VIP Team 3
Joseph Lee, Deborah Lin, Rolland Wong



2D/1N MALACCA WOK & WALK

On 22 and 23 November 2008

The HDBSU Women's Secretariat committee organised a 2D/1N Malacca Wok & Walk for 38 members and families. They experienced the history and culture of Malacca in this unique tour which comes with a hands-on cooking class taught by the head chef at Equatorial Hotel, Malacca.

Upon arrival in Malacca town, they head to a Peranakan restaurant for a sumptuous Nyonya lunch. After lunch, they took a nostalgic journey into its glorious past, which is reflected in its ancient buildings, intriguing streets, delectable cuisine and unique cultural heritage. Make their way to Porta De Santiago, a fortress built by the Portuguese admiral, Alfonso d'Albuquerque in 1511 and the striking red Christ Church with its handmade pews, ceiling beams (constructed without joints), brass bible, tombstone, Dutch Square; the Clock Tower; Queen Victoria's Fountain, the red Stadhuy building and more.

In the evening, the group embarked on a walking tour to Jonker Street night market which is closed to traffic at night. This street is famous for chicken rice ball, "Aik Cheong" coffee, freshly baked pineapple tarts, gula melaka, dessert "Durian Chendol" preserved fish, shrimps paste, coconut cookies, oyster omelette, etc.

The next morning, after a hearty breakfast, it was free and easy morning for the non-cooking participants where they proceed for shopping at the nearby Mahkota Parade Shopping Mall or Dataran Pahlawan Mega Mall, located next to Hotel Equatorial. The rest of the participants proceeded to the hotel's Peranakan restaurant where they learnt to dish up three types of Peranakan dishes and receive a souvenir apron, chef hat and certificate of participation for your culinary accomplishment. The participants also experience a sumptuous Nyonya lunch in a truly Peranakan table setting and ambiance.

On the way home, they also stopped by a local product shop before ending the day shopping at Tebrau City JUSCO, the biggest and latest mall in Johor. The group had a very fruitful trip where they brought back with them cooking skills as well as goodies from Malacca.



BUKIT BATOK AWARD

**ADMINISTRATIVE EXECUTIVE
CHANDRA MOHAN
FROM BUKIT BATOK BRANCH
OFFICE RECEIVED THE
“BUKIT BATOK AWARD”**



Administrative Executive (AE) Chandra Mohan joined HDB in October 1985. He has served at Branch Offices for the last 23 years. He is also the member of HDB Staff Union since 1992.

AE Chandra is currently attached to the Bukit Batok Branch Office managing the 22,000 parking lots in Bukit Batok Estates. Beside his day to day duties in the office, AE Chandra also supervising the Service Providers, Certis CISCO Security Pte Ltd in carrying out the enforcement actions in Bukit Batok car parks. In addition, he has also work tirelessly with the Town Councils and Contractors on the numerous car park improvement work within the Estates.

AE Chandra has also established a close working relationship with his staff. He is a good model worker. He is dedicated to his work and helpful to his fellow colleagues.

Over the years, he has established a cordial relationship and close rapport with the grassroots organisations in Bukit Batok Division of Jurong GRC. This has proven to be advantageous in his dealing with the grassroots leader on various car park issues affecting the residents. AE Chandra played a key role in the implementation of the 4 Electronic Parking System car parks in Bukit Batok Estate in April/May 08 and also the first “Partial Free Parking on Sunday/Public Holidays” Scheme in HDB car parks to meet the residents’ needs in May 08. He also contributed



as an HDB representative in the Bt Batok National Day Celebration Dinner Working Committee on the provision of temporary car park for heavy vehicles which the Heavy Vehicle site was used for Bt Batok National Day Celebration Dinner in August 08.

Each year, the “Bukit Batok Award” is presented by Bukit Batok CCC to

grassroots leaders, volunteers or officials who have made outstanding contributions to the Jurong GRC (Bukit Batok Division). This year, AE Chandra was conferred the award for his above outstanding contributions to the Division. Ms Grace Fu, Senior Minister of State (ND) and MP for Jurong GRC presented him the Award at the celebration dinner on 11 October 08.

HDB AND HDBSU JOINT BURSARY AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY

100 RECEIVED UNION'S BURSARY; 5 ARE AWARDED THE HDB BURSARY

86 MEMBERS ALSO RECEIVED THE LONG MEMBERSHIP AWARD

The HDB's CEO Mr Tay Kim Poh was the Guest-Of-Honour at this year's HDB and HDBSU Joint Bursary Award Presentation while Union's 3rd Honorary Advisor, Mr Chay Wai Chuen was the Special Guest. The ceremony which was held at the New Park Hotel in Kitchener Road on Saturday 23 August 2008 was witnessed by Senior Management Officials of HDB and HDBSU Exco members.

In his opening address, Mr K Sampath, HDBSU Vice President and Chairman of the Membership and Welfare Secretariat welcomed all award recipients and parents. He congratulated the students who had qualified for bursaries. He advised them to make full use of the opportunities provided and to pursue their studies diligently by saying that "a person who would like to have something he never had, will have to do something well, that he hasn't done yet". The bursaries of \$14,360 were given out to members' children ranging from primary to tertiary level.

Mr K Sampath also congratulated the 86 members who were receiving the Long Membership Award. These members were being recognised for 12 years of continuous Union membership. It was the Union's way of saying thank you to them for their support. They would be entitled to certain privileges like discounts and the like.





He also mentioned 81% of HDB staff are now members of HDBSU. This was a good reflection of the usefulness of Union membership and the strong Labour/Management relations at HDB.

Our Guest of Honour, CEO HDB, Mr Tay Kim Poh in his speech at the ceremony noted that the joint presentation ceremony for bursaries awarded by HDBSU and HDB is indicative of the close working relationship between both organisations. Mr Tay also complimented HDBSU for providing the bursaries to deserving children of Union members. He advised the students to make full use of the educational opportunities available to them, and to learn from outside the classroom as well.

We congratulate the students who had been awarded the HDB and HDBSU bursaries this year. The aim of the bursaries is to motivate the students to pursue their studies diligently and to attain high academic standards. Only by doing this effectively can they succeed in life. As for the 86 members who received the Long Membership Awards, we hope that you will continue to value Union membership during the rest of your career with HDB.

HOUSING THE NATIONAL FLAG AT HDB HUB – A CHARITY FUND-RAISING PROJECT BY NUS STUDENTS FOR CANOSSAVILLE CHILDREN’S HOME



A group of NUS students who were finalists in the Citibank – YMCA Youth For Causes 2008 organised a fund-raising project for the Canossaville Children’s Home. The Friends of Canossaville Committee (FOCC) of HDB lent its full support to the project undertaken by the NUS students. The month-long fund-raising project ended with a ceremony at the HDB Hub on 30 August 2008.

The project entailed forming the Singapore flag with the use of origami hearts (4m X 6m) which would earn a place in the Singapore Book of Records as the world’s largest national flag made by origami hearts. The flag was formed by 16 pieces of lightweight plastic cardboard pasted with origami hearts. All the proceeds of the project would be channelled to the Canossaville Children’s Home.

The students had canvassed members of the public for a whole month to adopt a paper heart at \$2 each - and to write their wishes for the children of the Home in the paper heart. This donation drive was undertaken at the NUS, in several schools, in Orchard Road, Junction 8 and Chinatown Point. They even managed to secure a sponsorship from Ben & Jerry’s, the ice-cream company. The sale of Ben & Jerry’s ice also contributed to the fund-raising efforts.

After seeking approval from HDB, the FOCC identified the large wall opposite the Coffee Bean at HDB Hub to display the Singapore flag. FOCC assisted the students to mount and display the flag properly. The HDB was also recognised by the organisers as a sponsor in kind by being responsible for publicity of the event (including banner and logo display).

The donation drive ended with a ceremony at the HDB Hub on Saturday 30 August 2008. Apart from the NUS students, there were representatives from the Ministry of Education, HDB, HDBSU, FOCC, Citibank, YMCA, NUS Business School, Ben & Jerry’s, and the Canossaville Children’s Home. The event was witnessed by representatives of the Singapore Book of Records. During the event, the fund-raising continued with the sale of Ben & Jerry’s ice cream.

The Guest-of-Honour Mr. Lim Wee Kiat, MP for Sembawang GRC, did the honours by cutting the ribbon and making a short speech. He congratulated the NUS students for undertaking the fund-raising project successfully. The Guest-of-Honour later presented tokens of appreciation to the main sponsor, Ben & Jerry’s and to the other contributors. The event concluded with a musical performance by children of the Canossaville Children’s Home.

The FOCC would like to express its gratitude to the students from the NUS Business School for organising the fund-raising project for the benefit of the Canossaville Children’s Home.





LUNCH-TIME TALK ON SKIN CARE



40 MEMBERS ATTENDED TALK AND DEMONSTRATION BY DERMA FLORA ON 26 NOVEMBER 2008 AT THE OSCAR ROOM

The Union's IT and Publicity Secretariat organised a lunch-time talk on skin care on 26 November 2008 at the Oscar Room. The talk was conducted by Derma Flora, a well known skin care company.

Some 40 Union members and HDB staff attended the talk. The event was part of a series of lunch-time talks organised for the benefit of members.

The participants were able to gain some knowledge about proper skin care and witness a demonstration of the various skin care products marketed by Derma Flora.

The participants found the talk and presentation valuable. They felt that it saved time as it was conducted during the lunch-break rather than attending such talks after office hours.



LUNCH-TIME TALK ON ZIWEI (PURPLE STAR ASTROLOGY)

70 ATTEND TALK AT THE OSCAR ROOM ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2008

The Union organised a lunch time talk on ZiWei (Purple Star Astrology) on Monday 29 September 2008. 70 members attended the talk, which was conducted in Mandarin. This was part of a series of lunch-time talks organised by the Union for the benefit of members.

“Zi Wei Dou Shu” is a form of fortune-reading that was widely used in ancient China. Zi Wei – literally translated as Purple Star - is the ‘Emperor Star’ of the chart. It is known as the North Star in the West. Dou Shu means calculation.

Thus, Zi Wei Dou Shu means the study of a person’s life based on the movement and location of the Emperor Star and more than 100 other stars at the specific time the person was born.

The talk was conducted by widely acclaimed ZiWei Master Jolesca Phang XiuRu. Master Jo specializes in Zhi Wei Dou Shu and is one of the most sought after practitioners in Yuan Zhong Ziu. Her accuracy in ZiWei has helped many clients to enhance their destiny in life. She can also forecast a person’s life path and provide recommendations on how to achieve inner balance.

Based on the person’s Year, Month, Date and Time of Birth (also known as Ba Zi), calculations are worked out to chart the stars into 12 different palaces or Gong. This would then be the person’s Birth Chart or Ming Pan.

By integrating the stars and palaces, their attributes, environmental factors, elemental forces, the Yin and Yang concept, and all the possible combinations and variations – the



individual personalities can be fully understood. In addition, personal and professional relationships can also be predicted and also what to expect in any given year. The duration of specific events can also be forecasted as well.

Participants found the talk beneficial as it provided an insight into this ancient art of fortune reading. Participants were very impressed with the knowledge of Master Jolesca Pang XiuRiu and her ability to explain such a complicated topic in very simple terms. They felt that the knowledge acquired as a result of the talk is of practical value.



WEIGHT MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP BY DR DYLAN CHAU OF CLEVENUS

THERE IS NO MIRACLE BUT THERE IS MEDICINE!

The Union organised a workshop on weight loss and slimming on 15 September 2008 at the Oscars. About 80 members attended the lunchtime workshop which was conducted by Dr Dylan Chau from the Clevenus Aesthetic Clinic. The talk was co-hosted by Abbot.

A booth had been set up earlier for participants to check their BMI and assess the individual's heart risk.

Dr Chau briefed the participants on what constitutes obesity and the dangers of being overweight. He said that people with weight problems face greater health risks. People with health problems have to incur greater expenses for medication and face greater mortality. Being overweight also affects a person's self esteem.

Dr Chau advised participants to test their BMI regularly and to closely monitor their blood pressure and cholesterol levels. People who ignored their BMI face greater risk in developing health problems which may result in heart attacks and strokes. Sometimes the risk will be higher if there is a family history of health problems like high cholesterol and high blood pressure.

He advised participants to monitor their weight very carefully. Emphasis should be placed on diet and regular exercise. A basic knowledge of nutrition would be useful to maintain a good diet. Where eating habits are concerned, it is better not to overeat, avoid snacking and totally avoid food with high fat content.

For people who were keen to reduce their weight, Clevenus offers a weight management programme called iDECIDE. This program offers a doctor-supervised holistic approach to weight management that guides participants to develop a healthy lifestyle through a series of progressive goals.

The participants found the workshop very beneficial. The advice on good eating habits and the constant need to monitor one's weight was well received. Some who felt that they needed a weight loss program expressed a desire to follow up with Clevenus, and to find out more about their iDECIDE weight management program.





Building Up Mental Resilience



By
Jansen Yeo

While most Housing Board staff can still count on job security despite the economic downturn, it doesn't mean they are unaffected by the doom and gloom. Some may have spouses, family members or close friends who have lost their jobs; others may have had their fingers burnt in bad investments. To help those psychologically and emotionally affected, HDBSU and HDB introduced the work-life coaching programme in November 2008.

This programme avails preventive and early intervention measures to help staff build up mental resilience to cope with work-life challenges.

"It is not uncommon to hear anyone urge, 'Leave your domestic problems at home.' But in actual fact, we can't divorce ourselves from our problems at the snap of fingers.

"Our work-life coaching programme will be able to help employees in identifying and resolving personal concerns such as health, marriage, family, finance, alcohol dependency, drug abuse, emotion and stress," said HDB Staff Union President Michael Koh.

In place are a 24-hour telephone counselling service, an email counselling service and personal consultations which work-life coaches from HDAP Singapore Private Limited, the service provider, recommend.

"We believe a happy worker is a productive worker. HDBSU, together with the HDB management, will continue to look into ways to provide for our members' wellbeing in all aspects," said Mr Koh.



Just Call My Name And I'll Be There... HDBSU leaders such as President Michael Koh are just a phone call away for members in need.

The Housing & Development Board Staff Union was formed in 1967 as the house union of HDB. HDBSU has 2,806 Ordinary Branch members and about 300 General Branch members. The union aims to increase its GB membership by another 500 by 2011.

Two Together, Do Together

Since its inception in 1967, the Housing & Development Board Staff Union has built up a strong Labour-Management Relationship with its HDB management.

"We hold Industrial Relations Circle meetings every two months with our Human Resource Department and most of the other department administrative heads to discuss any issues that may affect our staff. Management-initiated measures are raised to the Circle, where our union can give our feedback. This helps to prevent any potential problems on the ground."

One idea that was germinated at such meetings blossomed in 2001.

"HDBSU and HDB have made Canossaville Children's Home our adopted charity. Together, we visit to the Home. Together, we help to clean the premises. Together, we spend time with the children. This regular activity strengthens the bond between our union and our management," said HDBSU President Michael Koh.



Big-hearted Actions... By working together on their charity project, HDBSU and HDB have forged stronger ties.

Source: NTUC This Week