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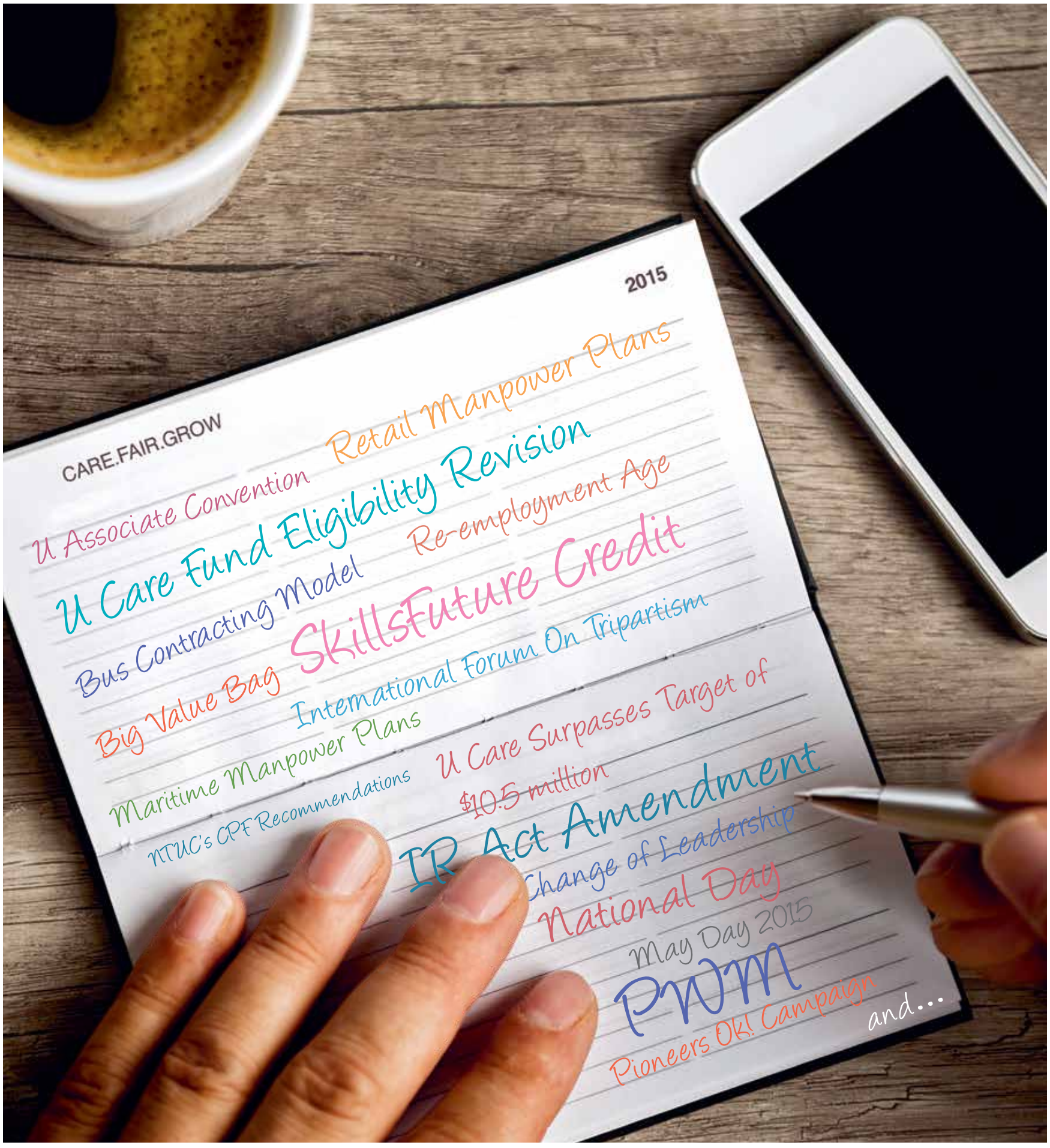

YEAR IN REVIEW

Look inside for the Labour Movement's top stories for the year 2015.

Top LM News 2015

The team has been busy scouring through our past 50 issues to bring you the most important news that defined the Labour Movement for this year... just in case you missed out.

Note: Main dates featured here refer to when *NTUC This Week* was published.

4 JANUARY

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT AMENDMENT

We were glad of the outcome on this one, after unions had been lobbying hard for a review as the Professionals, Managers and Executives (PMEs) numbers were slated to increase in the workforce over time. It was a key milestone change for the Labour Movement as it opened up opportunities to better protect PMEs.

The Industrial Relations (Amendment) Bill was read for the second time and subsequently passed in Parliament on 19 January 2015. The amendments took effect on 1 April 2015.

The amendments now mean that PMEs can seek help in re-employment matters with regard to their limited representation on an individual basis. This protection component adds to the already available scopes of limited representation for PMEs like unfair dismissal, payment of retrenchment benefits, victimisation and breach of employment contract.

Another amendment to the act was collective bargaining for PMEs. This now means that rank-and-file unions can collectively represent PMEs like they do for rank-and-file workers in their collective agreements.

25 JANUARY

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CPF CHANGES

The Central Provident Fund (CPF) scheme was back in the news. Following a two-month long engagement with some 250 union leaders, workers, youths and active agers, the Labour Movement made several recommendations towards enhancing the CPF scheme. A few of these included helping workers build their Minimum Sum, introducing more flexibility on the Lump Sum Withdrawal, and having more CPF Life scheme options on the monthly payouts.

In Budget 2015, Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam announced several changes including raising the CPF Ordinary Wage Ceiling from $5,000 to $6,000 and increasing the contribution rates for older workers. These enhancements were part of the proposals made by NTUC.

1 FEBRUARY

EXPANDING TRIPARTITE PARTNERSHIPS

The spotlight fell on Professionals, Managers and Executives (PMEs) in this issue. The inaugural U Associate Convention on 28 January 2015 saw then-NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say acknowledging that while the tripartite framework was effective for rank-and-file workers, it was still incomplete for PMEs. The U Associate Programme represents NTUC's efforts to reach out to more PMEs through partnerships with major industry leaders. The number of U Associates today stands at 22, up from 12 at the convention.

SKILLSFUTURE CREDIT

Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and then-Finance Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam announced the SkillsFuture Credit during Budget 2015.

From 1 January 2016, Singaporeans aged 25 and above will receive an initial credit of $500, which will not expire and will be topped up at regular intervals. The credits can be used on more than 10,000 skills-based courses supported by government agencies.

The SkillsFuture Credit came about after the Labour Movement called on the Government on 26 January 2015 for individual Skillsave Account for every Singaporean worker to help them be future-ready and to inculcate the spirit of lifelong learning.

Prior to that, NTUC Income, NTUC Childcare, NTUC FairPrice and NTUC Thrift & Loan conducted a four-year pilot called the SkillsSave Scheme for its workers.

By the end of the pilot, NTUC learned that workers were generally more encouraged when given the flexibility to be responsible for their own upskilling.

23 MARCH

A TRIBUTE TO MR LEE KUAN YEW

Singapore lost its first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew when he passed on after a prolonged period of illness on 23 March 2015.

As a tribute to Mr Lee, the Labour Movement published a special 41-page edition of *NTUC This Week*, dedicating it to his life, work and contributions towards the growth of the Labour Movement and the well-being of all workers in Singapore. Long before Mr Lee became Prime Minister, he had championed the cause of workers.

In a condolence letter to Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, NTUC's Central Committee leaders said: "Mr Lee dedicated his whole life to the workers and people of Singapore. He has left an indelible mark on the lives of us all. Our heavy hearts are filled with sadness, but also gratitude. His selfless leadership and steadfast support to the unions and workers of Singapore will forever remain in our hearts. We will always honour and remember his legacy, lived out in each and every one of our lives."

26 APRIL

UPLIFT FOR LANDSCAPE INDUSTRY

In an effort to attract and retain local workers, the Tripartite Cluster for Landscape (TCL) launched the Progressive Wage Model (PWM) for the landscape industry on 24 April 2015.

From June 2016, the PWM will be made a mandatory condition for companies that want to be registered under the Landscape Company Register (LCR) administered by the National Parks Board (NParks).

The TCL also recommended the entry level basic monthly wage to be $1,300, which will increase as the worker becomes better skilled, more productive and takes on higher responsibilities. Around 3,000 resident landscape maintenance workers stand to benefit from the PWM.

The cleaning industry and the security industry saw similar models introduced in October 2012 and October 2014 respectively.

12 APRIL / 1 NOVEMBER

WELCOMING OUR LABOUR LEADERS

It was a year of changes within NTUC itself. The Labour Movement welcomed its sixth Secretary-General, Mr Chan Chun Sing, to succeed Mr Lim Swee Say. Mr Chan was appointed NTUC Secretary-General on 4 May 2015. He was first appointed Deputy Secretary-General on 27 January 2015. During the National Delegates Conference (NDC) on 29 October 2015, Mr Chan was elected to the Central Committee and re-appointed as the Secretary-General. Mr Chan concurrently holds the Cabinet position of Minister in the Prime Minister's Office.

At the NDC, NTUC also welcomed its 21-member Central Committee to lead the way into 2019 with a strong focus on Care, Fair and Grow. The day also saw President Mary Liew, Secretary for Financial Affairs Toh Hock Poh and Vice-President Tan Hock Soon taking over from stalwarts Diana Chia, Lim Kuang Beng and Nora Kang.

3 MAY

MAY DAY 2015

This year's May Day Rally saw Prime Minister (PM) Lee addressing over 4,000 tripartite representatives at The Star Performing Arts Centre, where he stressed that no other country in the world had a strong tripartite relationship between the Government, union and employers, and nowhere else had such a bond lasted so long. He touched on the values of tripartism where the partners work constructively together on growing and upgrading the economy, keeping Singapore exceptional to survive, and leadership renewal.

Then-outgoing NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say also urged Singapore's unionists and workers to keep doing well to turn future challenges into opportunities and move forward with trust and confidence.

17 MAY

THE TRANSPORT INDUSTRY

When Tower Transit was awarded the first bus package under the Bus Contracting Model on 8 May 2015, the National Transport Workers' Union moved swiftly to work with the new operator to ensure the interests of affected workers will be protected, under the terms stated by the Public Transport Tripartite Committee (PTTC). Affected workers have the choice to be redeployed or join the new operator, and cannot be offered employment terms worse off than what they currently enjoy.

31 MAY

UPLIFTING LIVES OF LOW WAGE WORKERS

The Labour Movement welcomed recommendations made by the National Wages Council (NWC) which focused on helping low-wage workers and giving productivity a boost. NWC recommended that employers grant a built-in wage increase of at least $60 for low-wage workers earning a basic monthly salary of up to $1,100. The NWC also strongly supported the Labour Movement's Progressive Wage Model.

9 JULY

BIG VALUE BAG

Singaporeans had something to smile about when NTUC FairPrice, NTUC Foodfare, NTUC Health and NTUC Income joined hands on 8 July 2015 to launch the $35 million 'Big Value Bag: Made for Singapore' initiative over six months, comprising reduced prices on daily essentials, cooked food, health products and insurance plans. The initiative aimed to help Singaporeans cut daily expenses, give back to the community, and help those who are in need.

9 AUGUST

NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS

Over 5,000 unionists, pioneer generation union leaders, tripartite partners and their families gathered at The Promontory@Marina Bay to celebrate Singapore's 50th birthday on 1 August 2015.

Hailed as one of the largest National Day Observance Ceremony (NDOC), the event saw tripartite partners from NTUC, Singapore National Employers Federation and Ministry of Manpower coming together to participate in an NDOC for the first time.

On 7 August 2015, active agers and their families gathered to celebrate National Day. Themed 'U Live, Time of Your Life!' the event brought participants together to catch up and reminisce times of yesteryears.

On 8 August 2015, over 5,000 babies and their families turned up at yet another one of the largest NDOCs. Aptly called Baby's Day Out – My First National Day Party, the event saw some 500 jubilee babies born this year celebrate the nation's birthday for the very first time.

On National Day itself on 9 August 2015, more than 8,000 youth members and their families, along with key NTUC personnel, attended a six-hour celebration event featuring energetic performances by nEbO and Young NTUC's affinity group p.L.a.Y (Performing with Love by Active Youth).

The event also showcased a total of 1,000 red and white spheres, each displaying a youth member's aspirations for the country in the next 50 years. These were placed into an SG100 time capsule, to be opened in 2065.

23 AUGUST

INTENSIFYING OUTREACH

It was time to look at the Labour Movement's reach to workers out there. As at August 2015, it had 888,000 members, 40 per cent of which are Professionals, Managers and Executives (PMEs). The Labour Movement also turned its attention to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as they employed 70 per cent of Singapore's workforce.

EMPLOYMENT ACT AMENDMENT

The amendments to the Employment Act was passed in Parliament on 17 August 2015.
The new Act will take effect from 1 April 2016 and will require employers to issue itemised payslips and provide key employment terms to new hires within 14 days of their employment. This was good news for the Labour Movement, especially when it had been making calls to revise the Act. The amendments are set to benefit all workers, especially foreign and part-time employees who often lack the knowledge of their employment terms.

30 AUGUST

PIONEERS OK! CAMPAIGN

Pioneers continued to enjoy great savings in the year. NTUC social enterprises announced on 20 August 2015 that its Pioneers OK! package, launched in October 2014, had helped pioneers save more than $4.4 million from when it first started till June 2015.
The Pioneers OK! package offered the pioneer generation special discounts on Pioneers Monday amounting to 3 per cent at NTUC FairPrice, 6.5 per cent at NTUC Health's Unity pharmacies and 12 per cent at NTUC Foodfare. The discounts were over and above the ongoing Senior Tuesday Discounts enjoyed by all senior citizens.
The package also included instituting Pioneers Priority queues and seating in stores and food courts, as well as Pioneers Exclusives such as specially designed training workshops, insurance plans and redemptions with Plus! card.

RE-EMPLOYMENT AGE UPPED TO 67

The announcement by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong during the 2015 National Day Rally that the re-employment age would be raised from the current 65 to 67 in 2017 spelt good news for seniors who want to work longer.
At the forefront of championing the raising of the re-employment age, together with other union leaders, was NTUC Deputy Secretary-General Heng Chee How. He said that the efforts from the Labour Movement since 2012 when the re-employment age was last increased to 65 had paid off.

13 SEPTEMBER

LM VOICES IN PARLIAMENT

Singaporeans went to the polls on 11 September 2015 and the Labour Movement fielded six candidates under the People's Action Party (PAP). The PAP won a resounding 69.9 percent of the votes. Those from NTUC who won were: Secretary-General Chan Chun Sing (Tanjong Pagar GRC), Deputy Secretary-General Heng Chee How (Jalan Besar GRC), Assistant Secretary-General Patrick Tay (West Coast GRC), Assistant Secretary-General Ang Hin Kee (Ang Mo Kio GRC), Assistant Secretary-General Zainal Sapari (Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC), Mr Desmond Choo in Tampines GRC and Mr Melvin Yong from Tanjong Pagar GRC.

Mr Melvin Yong joined NTUC after the General Election.

20 SEPTEMBER

FIGHTING THE HAZE

The haze was back and once again the people within the Labour Movement family were back in action to help workers as PSI levels reached unhealthy levels during the month of September 2015. NTUC Director of Workplace Safety and Health Secretariat Yeo Guat Kwang issued a statement to remind employers it was their duty to ensure all necessary precautions were taken to shield employees from the haze hazards. Various unions also got busy distributing N95 masks to their members across the island.

4 OCTOBER

SECTORAL MANPOWER PLANS

With future challenges and trends on the horizon, Singapore's key sectors are all gearing up to get their workforce future-ready. Nearly 25 sectoral manpower plans are being drawn up with the involvement of the relevant industry players, trade unions and government agencies.

So far three sectoral manpower plans have been announced for the maritime, hotel and retail industries in 2015. The first one kicked off on 25 September 2015 with the Sectoral Tripartite Committee for Transport (Sea) coming up with new measures to attract Singaporeans and help them deepen skills and advance their careers in the seafaring and shore-based sector.

11 October 2015: The hotel industry launched its five-year manpower plan on 9 October as part of the SkillsFuture initiative. It will strive to upgrade workers through more structured internships, an Earn-and-Learn programme for Polytechnic and ITE students, and a framework of new skills needed and career progression opportunities from operations level to senior management roles.

As of print, the Retail Sector Manpower Plan launched on 10 December 2015 involved The Singapore Manual and Mercantile Worker's Union and the Food, Drinks and Allied Workers Union.

1 NOVEMBER

STRENGTHENING TRIPARTISM

The International Forum on Tripartism came to Singapore for the first time on 26 October 2015. The event was jointly organised by the Manpower Ministry, NTUC and the Singapore National Employer's Federation as part of the country's 50th anniversary celebrations.

NTUC Secretary-General Chan Chun Sing announced at the one-day Forum that union leaders and government officials will be cross-posted to allow the younger generation to cross-pollinate ideas and understand each other's concerns. A younger generation of union leaders would also be posted to work on the tripartite committees being set up under the SkillsFuture initiative to develop together nearly 25 sectoral manpower plans.

U CARE EFFORTS 2015

Low-wage workers continued to be a main focus of our help efforts for 2015. Here were some of the outcomes, released in a report at the Family Fair – Back to School edition on 29 November 2015.

The year saw a total of $9.1 million from the NTUC-U Care Fund disbursed to support low-income union members and their families through various NTUC U Care assistance programmes. NTUC U Care Centre (UCC) helped 7,000 workers on workplace-related issues. We reached out to 11,000 low-wage workers in the Malay-Muslim community after plans were announced to work with the Enhanced Mosque Clusters and Mendaki SENSE. This was to increase awareness among the Malay-Muslim community on the services the centre provides.

6 DECEMBER

And The Award Goes To...

"NTUC social enterprises work hard to live out our social mission. We are happy that this year, our group's efforts have been recognised through these accolades. We will continue to excel to bring value and greater social impact to the community that we serve."

NTUC Enterprise Group CEO Tan Suee Chieh on social enterprises receiving accolades throughout 2015.

NTUC Income

Marketing Excellence Awards 2015

NTUC Income bagged the Gold Award for Excellence in Launch Marketing and Gold Award for Excellence in Customer Engagement at the Marketing Excellence Awards.

NTUC Health

Singapore Excellence in Growth – Home Healthcare Service

As the largest healthcare cooperative in Singapore, NTUC Health was recognised during the 2015 Frost & Sullivan Singapore Excellence Awards for its remarkable achievements and the trusted name for home healthcare through its Care@home services.

Finalist for 'Best Home Care Operator' category

NTUC Health's Care@home was awarded Finalist for Best Home Care Operator in the region at the third Asia Pacific Eldercare Innovation Awards 2015.

The Asia Pacific Eldercare Innovation Award recognises the best in eldercare product and service delivery. The prestigious industry award takes place annually in conjunction with the international Ageing Asia Innovation Forum (AAIF) in Singapore.

NTUC Foodfare

Ranked first In The Food Courts Subsector

NTUC Foodfare clinched top spot for customer satisfaction in the food courts subsector of the Customer Satisfaction Index 2015 Food & Beverage Sector, scoring 69.0 – significantly above the national average of 66.5 for food courts.

NTUC FairPrice Foundation

Community Partnership Excellence Award

People's Association (PA) presented the award to NTUC FairPrice Foundation in appreciation of the invaluable support rendered to various Community Development Councils.

NTUC FairPrice

SG50 Social Enterprise Award

NTUC FairPrice received the SG50 Social Enterprise Award during the President's Challenge Social Enterprise Awards 2015 for its role in building and shaping Singapore by fulfilling its commitment to moderate the cost of living over the past 42 years.

Top Influential Brands 2015

NTUC FairPrice topped the supermarket category in the Top Influential Brands 2015 survey by Brand Alliance.

NTUC First Campus

NTUC First Campus childcare centres include My First Skool and Little Skool House. Its social mission of providing quality and affordable early childhood care and education services have seen them clinch these awards in 2015.

Ministry of Education Outstanding Pre-School Mother Tongue Language Teacher Award 2015

- Outstanding Award: Wang Yan Li (My First Skool)
- Merit Award: Li Li (Little Skool House)

Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) Awards for Excellence in Early Childhood Development

- Outstanding Early Childhood Leader Award: Ms Wendy Ong, Principal of NTUC First Campus My First Skool

2015 Green Carpet School Award (Merit):

- Project Greenhouse by My First Skool Marine Terrace

Being A Friend

NTUC WDS launches the WeCare Befriender Programme as part of its WeCare for U Project to reach out to more single mothers.

By **Fawwaz Baktee**

As part of its efforts to provide better assistance to single mothers, NTUC Women's Development Secretariat (WDS) launched the WeCare Befriender Programme on 28 November 2015. At the same time, it also marked the sixth year since the WeCare for U Project was rolled out.

The WeCare Befriender Programme will see 15 pioneer WeCare for U beneficiaries become friend and mentor to single mothers who have newly joined the initiative. To effectively carry out their roles, these 15 befrienders have gone through a training workshop and other preparations with Family Central, a service by Fei Yue Community Services. They will also act as ambassadors by actively reaching out and helping to refer single mums to WDS.

WDS Director Sylvia Choo said: "Over the years, many single mothers have benefited from the WeCare for U programmes. Other than providing them with self-improvement workshops and helping them to find gainful employment, we have partnered with the Ministry of Social and Family Development and Housing Development Board to explain the various schemes available to them.

"We have certainly seen them improve their lives. Many are now more confident and positive, and some have stepped forward to ask how they could contribute back to the community of single mothers. So we mooted this idea of them becoming befrienders to help single mothers who join the programme."

GIVING BACK

One befriender, Ms Meharoon Nisha, has benefited from the WeCare initiative since early 2010. She said that she understands the plight of other single mothers like herself and that they need not have to face the challenges alone.

"It's been a wonderful experience since I joined the programme. I've been able to spend more quality time with my children. We have benefited from the educational programmes WDS provides, and the single mothers here have a strong bond and friendship with each other. I strongly urge single mothers to come forward and join the family," said Ms Meharoon.

THE ROLE OF UNIONS

WDS also said that women union leaders can play a role in helping single mothers at the workplace.

Singapore Union of Broadcasting Employees (SUBE) General Secretary Sim Siew Lect said: "I think as women leaders, we can keep a look out for single mothers at the workplace and introduce them to the WeCare for U initiative.

"Through it, not only do the single parents benefit but so do the children. If there are any single mothers under SUBE, I'd like them to know that they can come forward to any of our executive committee members and we will not hesitate to provide the help they need."

LAUNCH OF PROGRAMME

In 2009, WDS launched the WeCare for U Project to uplift the lives of single mothers in Singapore. Since then, WDS has engaged close to 1,700 single mothers and their children.

"With the coming of the SkillsFuture Credit, WDS together with its leaders will also reach out to more single mothers to guide them in making informed choices to enhance their employability and self-development," said Ms Choo.

Single mothers who are keen to join the WeCare for U Programme may contact WDS at ***62138383*** *or* ***wds@ntuc.org.sg.***

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ANDROID

Helping Single Mums

Befriender Sara wants to reach out to more single mums to let them know they are not alone.

By **Ryan Chan**

Ms Saralfathurunisha Muhd Jahabar does not strike one as an introvert. "I used to be very quiet and didn't know how to talk to people," she shared. "My mother used to tell me to go out more and be more open, but at that time I had no idea how to. I found it hard to trust people, but joining NTUC Women's Development Secretariat's (WDS) programmes has changed all that."

She has now become a Befriender, which is part of the WeCare for U project organised by WDS.

HELPING OTHERS

The single mother of two first got to know about WDS when her colleague, a fellow kindergarten teacher, brought her along to a movie event. She came to enjoy the sense of community among the other participants at the event and others that followed as they allowed her to spend time with her family and meet other single mothers like herself.

Ms Sara was thrilled when WDS gave her the opportunity to become a Befriender, as it fulfilled her passion to help others. The role, she explained, gives her the responsibility of reaching out to single mothers to share her experience from the WeCare for U programmes, which include self-improvement workshops.

As part of her preparation as a Befriender, she had to undergo a Befriending and Helping Skills for Solo Parents workshop organised by Family Central, a service offered by Fei Yue Community Services.

During the course, she learned basic skills of connecting with others through the GREW model – be Genuine, Respectful, with Empathy and showing Warmth – which she will apply in her new role.

THE RIGHT DIRECTION

When asked what advice she would give to single mothers out there, Ms Sara said: "Keeping it to yourself doesn't help. When you have people to share it with, it makes it a little bit better. It doesn't take away the pain, but it does make you more positive and stronger."

"The activities organised by WDS allow us to share our stories with each other. Doing so helps us to realise that we were strong enough to move on from the past, and hardly weak at all," she said.

For Ms Sara, it gave her not just the confidence to open up, but also a new perspective on life.

"These activities have helped me to improve a lot personally. I'm happier and more social now, and it got me thinking that there are plenty of other mums out there who are unaware of who to turn to," she added.

*Visit **www.ntucwds.org.sg** and click on **WeCare for U Project** for more information.*

FACT FILE

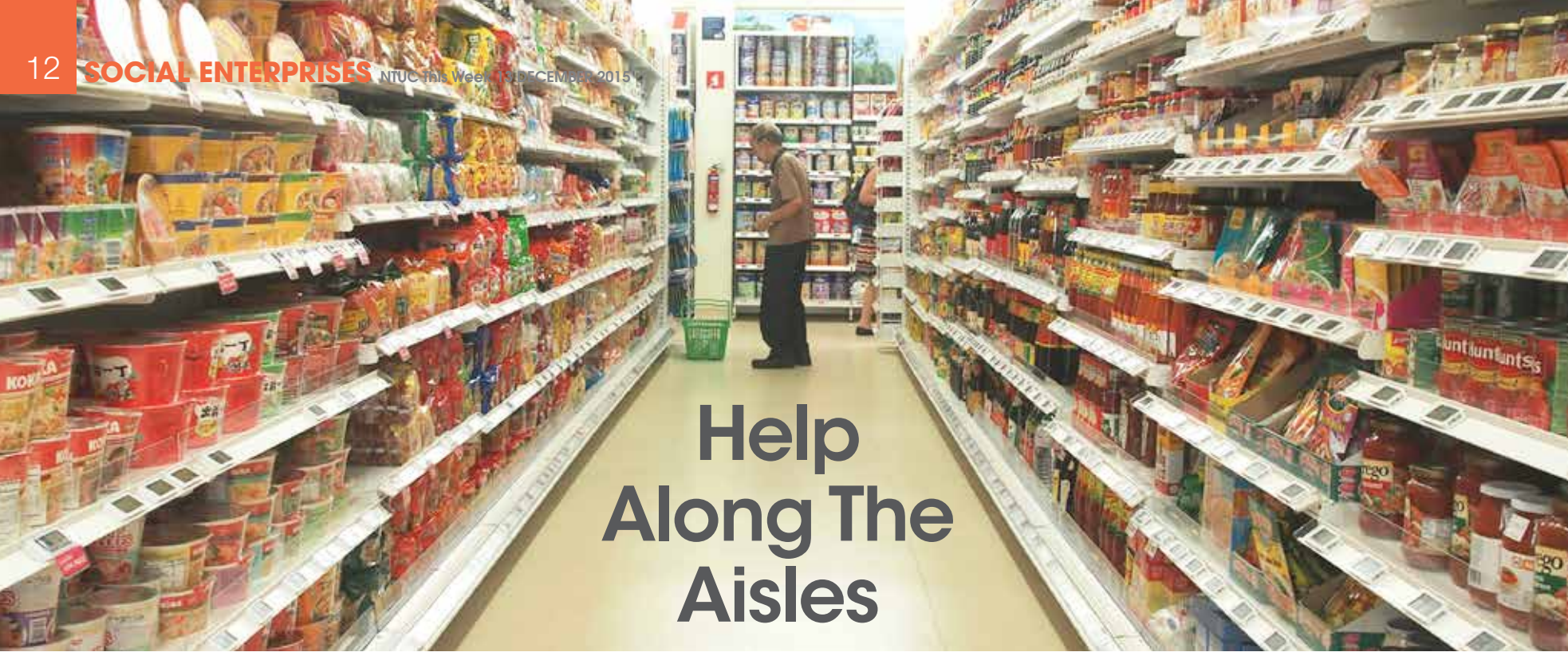
NTUC Women's Development Secretariat

Who They Are: Established in 1973 as the NTUC Women's Committee, WDS is one of the key programme drivers of NTUC for women.

What They Do: WDS has programmes and initiatives like Back2Work with U and WeCare for U to assist women with re-entering the workforce, enhancing their employability and develop their strengths.

Why They Are Doing This: WDS wants to help women remain the workforce by promoting work-life integration and also be an effective voice for all working women. They help make recommendations to help women earn a better living so that they can lead a better life.

When & Where: WDS regularly organises activities for bonding and self-improvement. For the full list of upcoming events and more information on WDS, visit **www.ntucwds.org.sg**.



Help Along The Aisles

The elderly and disabled can now shop with greater ease as NTUC FairPrice's first Enabled Store opens its doors.

By **Shukry Rashid**

NTUC FairPrice opened its first Enabled Store on 2 December 2015 at Lengkok Bahru, designed to meet the needs of Singapore's ageing population and support persons with disabilities. This comes as the number of seniors in Singapore is expected to grow to more than 900,000 by 2030, and with more than 77,200 with disabilities above age 18.

FairPrice CEO Seah Kian Peng said: "FairPrice constantly evolves to meet the changing needs of Singapore's population. We support seniors and persons with disabilities in living high-quality and independent lives, and recognise their needs amidst a backdrop of a rapidly ageing population."

SPECIAL FEATURES

Examples of the features in the store include call buttons located at the entrance and along store aisles to offer assistance, magnifying glasses at every aisle to help customers read product labels, and merchandise shelves customised to ideal heights for easy reach.

Staff at the store have also undergone a jointly developed training programme by NTUC LearningHub, Centre for Seniors and Dr Oon Chiew Seng Trust. They have been equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to serve elderly customers, and those with disabilities.

Shoppers will find various tools that will enhance their shopping experience.

LOCATION DETAILS

The Enabled Store is located within the Enabling Village, an integrated community space for people with disabilities. It is located at 20 Lengkok Bahru, #01-13 and opens daily from 8am to 9pm.

Need a break? Shoppers will find plenty of rest areas.

Running For A Cause

Next year's NTUC Income RUN 350 will continue the movement's aim of spreading the message of sustainability.

NTUC Income RUN 350 is back for the seventh time and will once again look to create awareness among the public on reducing our carbon footprint and inspire youths to do their part for the environment.

Organised by Young NTUC, next year's RUN 350 on 10 April 2016 will increase the number of green initiatives from 2015 in a bid to combat climate change. Participants will not be required to print confirmation slips for race pack collection to reduce the use of paper. Biodiesel, instead of regular diesel, will power up the generators on race day.

RUN 350 advocates the need to lower atmospheric carbon dioxide levels to 350 parts per million (ppm), which is the level required for a sustainable Earth. The level of CO2 in the atmosphere today is 400ppm.

NEW THIS YEAR

Here's something interesting – Registrants, bring along your utility bill as part of a new Utility Challenge. Should the bill reflect usage below the national average, the first 1,000 participants will receive a cash voucher from NTUC FairPrice.

This year will also see the addition of a new race category titled 'Fun on Wheels', where participants aged 13 and above can cycle, in-line skate or scoot through a 4km route. This race is intended to demonstrate effective alternatives of environment-friendly transport.

Creating Awareness On SkillsFuture

A Learning Festival teaches PMEs all about the SkillsFuture Credit which kicks in on 1 January 2016 for all Singaporeans aged 25 and above.

By **Ramesh Subbaraman**

NTUC e2i's Learning Festival had numerous activities to spread awareness on the upcoming SkillsFuture Credit in January next year.

Have you been wondering about what this future skills talk is all about? In that case, you should have been at the Festival of Learning organised by NTUC and NTUC e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) on 5 December 2015.

Some 230 people attended the Festival and workshops at the Devan Nair Institute for Employment and Employability at Jurong East.

USING SKILLSFUTURE CREDIT

Responding to queries, e2i said the event highlighted the importance for Singaporean workers to keep up with essential Future Skills useful for them and encouraged workers to take ownership of their learning journey to complement their need for self-development and career progression.

One of the activities at the Learning Festival was the SkillsFuture Connect workshop they were briefed on: the $500 credit they would be getting; how to navigate the SkillsFuture Credit site to access courses; and how to start planning their learning journey early to stay employable.

A skills profiling test was also conducted to help participants find out their developmental areas so that they could narrow down the skills that they would want to pick up with the credit.

FUTURE SKILLS WORKSHOPS

During the Learning Festival, five Future Skills workshops were held, with each highlighting proficiencies and abilities required across different jobs and work settings in future jobs.

The Future Learning Exhibition showcased mobile-based self-driven learning through the Internet and touch-based devices like iPad.

It also showcased how learning will be like in the future like the SMART Board and SMART Table that makes use of technology to allow learners to collaborate and share large amounts of information with others actively.

Over the next few months, e2i will be planning a number of lunch time talks and hands-on workshop for the public to guide them step-by-step on how to navigate the SkillsFuture Credit site **(www.skillsfuture.sg)** to access the courses available.

SkillsFuture Credit At A Glance

In keeping with the Government's sustained push to foster a culture of lifelong learning amongst Singaporeans, citizens are now encouraged to take charge of their personal development with skills upgrading and advancement. To help defray the costs of these courses, SkillsFuture Credit will be made available from 1 January 2016.

Here's a closer look at what SkillsFuture Credit is all about.

$500

Singaporeans aged 25 and above will receive an initial credit of $500 which can be used to pay for course fees. This works in addition to any course subsidies.

10,000 Courses

The credits can be used for more than 10,000 approved courses across 57 functional areas covering all key industries. See the list of available courses at **www.SkillsFuture.sg/credit**.

January 2016

Throughout the month of January, eligible Singaporeans will receive letters informing them on how they can activate their SkillsFuture Credit accounts. The credit can be used for courses that commence on or after 1 January 2016.

Something For Everyone

The extensive list of approved courses includes those offered by the Workforce Development Agency (WDA), e2i, Ministry of Education-funded institutions, People's Association, Infocomm Development Authority's participating Silver Infocomm Junctions and supporting public agencies.

No Expiry Date

The SkillsFuture Credit will not expire, so citizens need not rush to use their credits. Periodic top-ups will be made by the Government.

UTAP

Need an extra boost? NTUC members can count on UTAP (Union Training Assistance Programme) for additional help in defraying the cost of training. Think of this as skills upgrading, where you can get 50 per cent off the costs up to a maximum of $250 each calendar year.

Snapshots

A quick round up of what went on in and around the Labour Movement recently.

By ***NTUC This Week*** **Team**

Youths For The Future

nEbO, the junior membership arm of NTUC, reaffirmed its commitment to prepare youths to be Work-Ready, World-Ready and Life-Ready as it welcomed its 100,000th member on 4 December 2015.

Launched in 2007 as a pipeline between youths aged 12 to 25 and the Labour Movement, nEbO is now a credible voice to speak on behalf of Singapore youths to make a positive contribution to nation-building.

With leadership development a key focus for nEbO, members are regularly given opportunities to spearhead new initiatives to allow for fresh ideas from the ground up.

Toh Lip An, a Singapore Polytechnic student and current nEbO Entrepreneurship Champion, shared how he was given the opportunity to plan and organise events even though he did not have prior knowledge or experience.

"Sometimes problems arose and I felt like giving up completely. But the mentorship of the nEbO advisors helped me to become a better person and worker. I've also learnt to push myself further with the encouragement from the nEbO advisors, and become more resilient in times of difficulties," he added.

Going From Strength To Strength

The second Youth Impact Awards organised by Young NTUC on 3 December 2015 saw young union leaders and activists recognised for their efforts to the Labour Movement.

The awards, which was held in conjunction with Young NTUC's 10th anniversary, hailed outstanding individuals and groups that embrace the values to 'Do More' and 'Do Good'.

At the ceremony, Guest-of-Honour NTUC Secretary-General Chan Chun Sing spoke of the common aim of "never going down in history as the best".

"This may sound quite strange, but that means generations onwards will not be as good as us. Instead, if we want to go down in history having lent our shoulders for others to stand taller and see further, then I have every confidence that Singapore and the Labour Movement will go from strength to strength.

"We will not only celebrate SG50 with pride and confidence as we have done, but SG100 and beyond with an even greater sense of identity, pride and accomplishment in time to come," said SG Chan.

The 80 Per Cent Programme

International News: What if your company was to tell you to go easy on the eating and drinking during the holiday season? While it may sound like an interference with your personal life, Daiwa Securities Group Inc. in Japan is sending this message to its employees in a bid to improve their health and fitness, especially for older workers, to boost productivity and keep them from burning out.

The company is encouraging its 13,600 domestic employees to eat and drink moderately for 30 days from 14 December 2015 in anticipation of the many upcoming year-end and new-year parties.

The initiative, known as the "80 Percent Program", urges workers to stop eating once they feel full and monitor breakfast, lunch and dinner habits.

There's also an attractive incentive for mature workers aged 45 and above: Complete the 30-day course and there may be salary increases in your 50s and 60s.

荣誉归于...

“全国职工总会属下各社会企业致力履行其社会使命，今年分别获得不同组织的认可，我们对此感到非常庆兴。职总社会企业同仁将一如既往，追求卓越，继续践行工运价值观，扩大我们的社会影响力。”

— 职总创优企业集团总裁陈诸杰谈到社会企业在2015年所获得的奖项。

职总平价

SG50社会企业奖

最近职总平价在总统挑战慈善颁奖活动中获颁建国50周年社会企业奖，该组织此举是为了表彰职总平价过去42年来以抑制国人生活费为己任，在建设国家和造福人民方面所做的贡献。

2015年最具影响力品牌

职总平价在品牌联盟所进行的超市组别调查中名列榜首，获得2015年最具影响力品牌的荣誉。

职总保健

新加坡卓越成长奖（家庭护理服务）

作为全新加坡规模最大的保健合作社，其在领导力、技术创新、客户服务和策略产品开发等方面表现突出，成绩不凡，并为此荣获 Frost & Sullivan 颁发之2015年新加坡卓越表现奖，以表彰该保健合作社所取得的显著成就和顾客给予它的信赖。

“最佳家庭护理营运商”入围奖

职总保健因提供Care@home家庭护理服务而在第三届亚太老龄护理创新奖2015中获得“最佳家庭护理营运商”组别的入围奖。

亚太老龄护理创新奖旨在认可那些提供最佳老龄产品和服务的营运商。此项颁奖活动每年举行一届，合作方是国际老龄化亚洲创新论坛（新加坡）。

职总平价基金会

社区伙伴卓越奖

人民协会颁发社区伙伴卓越奖给职总平价基金会，以资感谢基金会给予各社区发展理事会不可或缺的重大支持。

职总英康

杰出营销奖2015

职总英康在杰出营销奖颁奖礼中双双囊括卓越营销方式组别及客户互动组别之金质奖。

职总英康推出的未来发展计划，以短片“上学的最后一天”提高了公众对其企业社会责任项目“橙色援助”的关注程度。

这这部短片自2015年7月14日首次上载之后，马上引起各媒体平台的注视，视频点击人次在短短4个月内便高达250万，促使“橙色援助”的每月筹款数额提高了三倍，而新捐款人数的同比率也超过五倍之多。这都要归公于宣传方式的成效。

“橙色援助”将捐款整合纳入保户定期交付的保费之中，是职总英康设计的创新筹款方式，旨在协助弱势职前青年，以保障他们的未来。

职总优儿学府

职总优儿学府属下的托儿中心包括幼乐园及小小学庭。他们履行的社会使命是为大众提供优质的、学费适宜的的托儿及学前教育服务。他们之所以赢得奖项和肯定与该组织所奉行的宗旨密不可分。

教育部杰出学前母语教师奖2015

– 杰出奖:王艳丽 (幼乐园)

– 优异奖: 李莉 (小小学庭)

幼儿培育署颁发的卓越幼儿培育奖

– 杰出幼儿培育领袖奖:

颁予职总优学府之幼乐园园长王桂兰

绿地毯学校奖2015（优异组）

– 颁予马林台幼乐园之绿屋项目

职总富食客

在食阁组别中排名第一

职总富食客在2015年餐饮行业顾客满意度调查中得分69，显著高于全国平均指数的66.5，排名居食阁组别之冠。

这项数据是以新加坡公民、永久居民和旅客为对象进行抽样调查而取得，调查项目包括食阁工作人员的礼貌、找座位的难易、食物的质量和环境卫生等。

“职总周报

2015年12月13日
售价 60c
MCI (P) 044/12/2014

2015年首要工运新闻

岁末将至，本报团队回顾过去50期所刊载的内容，并扼要整理出当中的新闻亮点供读者浏览。

2月1日

未来技能培训补助

副总理及前财长尚达曼在发表2015年财政预算时宣布未来技能培训补助计划。

按计划，从2016年1月1日起，年龄在25岁及以上的国人将起始得到500元的补助金用作未来技能培训用途。补助金不设停发日期，并将定期填补分发。培训补助金可用来进修政府部门支持的技能进修课程，选修科目有1万门之多。

未来技能培训补助是政府回应工运的呼吁而设的计划。2015年1月26日工运呼吁政府设立个人技能储蓄户头，以协助我国工友掌握未来技能，为适应未来的需要做好准备，同时培养终身学习的精神。

在此之前，职总英康、职总托儿、职总平价和职总储蓄与贷款等多家合作社曾为他们的工友推出为期4年的技能储蓄计划。

职总在该计划期满之后搜集到的回馈是，工友一般上对于这种允许灵活动用储蓄提升技能的计划感到满意，并为此而受鼓舞。

4月12日/11月1日

领袖更新

这是职总领导层自我更新的年度。今年工运迎来了第六届秘书长陈振声，以接替前任秘书长林瑞生的职务。陈振声是在2015年1月27日先受委为职总副秘书长，之后才于同年5月4日升任职总秘书长。在2015年10月29日举行的全国代表大会上，陈振声当选为职总秘书长。他同时是政府内阁成员，官职是总理公署部长。

与此同时，全国代表们也推选出21名中央委员，领导工运以关怀、公平和成长为主攻方向，携手迈入2019年。大会当天，原职总领袖谢秀慧、林光明和江巧爱的职务也分别由新任会长雷家英、财务秘书杜国宝及副会长陈福顺接任。

4月26日

提升园艺行业

为吸引和留住本地工友，园艺业劳资政集群于2015年4月24日推出园艺业渐进式薪金制。

按规定，自2016年6月开始，凡是要在国家公园局属下园艺公司注册处办理营业执照的公司，都须执行渐进式薪金制作为申请的前提条件。

此外，园艺业劳资政集群鉴于工友的技能与生产力都获得提升，责任担子也加重了，所以建议把园艺业工友的起薪提高至1300元。预计将有3000名左右的本地园艺护养工友从渐进式薪金制的实施中获益。

早在2013及2014年清洁与保安业已实施此项计划。

11月1日

强化劳资政协作

劳资政国际论坛于10月26日首次在新加坡举行。这是人力部、职总和全国雇主联合会联合主办的大型活动。

职总秘书长陈振声在为期一天的论坛上宣布，工会领袖和政府官员将跨机构调任，以便年轻一代能够从工作交流中亲身体认彼此的关注点和想法。年轻一代的工会领袖也将调派到劳资政委员会工作，以便吸取经验和贡献力量。劳资政委员会是未来技能计划的下属工作委员会，委员们共同设计了近25个适用于行业部门的人力计划。

8月30日

建国一代OK配套

建国一代可以继续省钱。

职总创优企业于2015年8月20日宣布其在2014年10月首推的建国一代OK配套将继续生效。截至今年6月为止，该优惠措施已为建国一代公民节省了440万元。

每逢星期一，凡是建国一代公民前往职总平价购物都享有3% 折扣，而前往职总仁益药房消费，折扣率则为6.5%，到职总富食客去更可节省12%的金额。此外，原定星期二给予年长国民的优待照常实施。这意味着建国一代可以享受到双重节省。

此项优惠配套还包括：在商店和食阁消费，建国一代公民可以优先排队，也有特设的优先座位让他们就坐进食。此外，有关单位还特为他们开设培训讲座、保险计划，并允许他们凭Plus!卡享受兑现的好处。