

# EXTRAPAGE

 Society for the  
Physically Disabled

022/06/2012 | JULY 2012



**SPD'S THIRD CENTRE  
LAUNCHED**

**8&9**



Congratulations, Lin Li!

**4**



Kowloon club organises  
walk in support of SPD

**7**



Fun with volunteers

**10**



In pursuit of an  
ordinary life

**11**



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Writers' views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily that of SPD's.

We welcome contributions and feedback. If you would like to find out more about SPD or receive a soft copy version of our newsletter, do get in touch with us.

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# ANNOUNCEMENT

## BOARD OF MANAGEMENT ELECTION

A new Board of Management will be elected at the 48th Annual General Meeting (AGM) to be held on 25 August 2012.

The 48th AGM and the election proceedings will be conducted at the SPD Ability Centre at 1.30pm.

More information on the election will be put up on our website at [www.spd.org.sg](http://www.spd.org.sg) when it is available.



## WE NEED YOUR HELP

We rely on the generosity of the community to continue providing programmes and services to enhance the lives of people with disabilities. If you wish to make a contribution or to offer any other support, do call us at 6579 0700 or e-mail [information@spd.org.sg](mailto:information@spd.org.sg). For more information on SPD and the ways you can help us, log on to our website at [www.spd.org.sg](http://www.spd.org.sg).



Roles of occupational therapists in a palliative care setting

15



Fun with volunteers

10



Organisation Excellence Day

5



## CONGRATULATIONS, LIN LI!

We congratulate Ms Lim Lin Li for clinching the Exemplary Employees (EE) 2012 Award under the Enabling Employers Network.

Lin Li received her award from His Excellency President Tony Tan Keng Yam who was the Guest-of-Honour at the 2nd Enabling Employer Awards Gala Dinner held on 23 March 2012.

Lin Li, who uses a motorised wheelchair, was recommended for a vacancy at KK Women's and Children's Hospital Admission Department in

2008 by SPD. She has been working there till today.

As an Admission Assistant in the hospital, Lin Li faces many customers and patients everyday with various health and medical conditions. Having been in their shoes many times in the past and wanting to cheer them up, she resolves to provide the best customer service and never fails to put a smile on her face and greet everyone cheerfully.

Hers was a new individual award introduced to



recognise exemplary persons with disabilities who have performed exceptionally well at their workplaces.

The EE Awards is organised by the Enabling Employers

Network and supported by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports and the National Council of Social Service.



## E-FILING FOR CABBIES



SPD was once again lauded with the Top Volunteer e-Filing Service award from IRAS for providing free income tax e-filing services. We received the award at the IRAS e-Filing Service @ the Community Appreciation Ceremony held on 23 June 2012 at Revenue House.

The service was provided to taxi drivers at SPD Ability Centre from 15 March to 18 April by people with disabilities from SPD's Multimedia Centre, along with volunteers.

Having begun in 2006, the service has been offered

yearly and has since seen over 6,000 e-files done so far. It was first mooted as a way to show appreciation to taxi drivers for their invaluable support in providing transport services to disabled people.

Because of their physical limitations, taxis are often the only means of transport for many people with physical disabilities, providing door-to-door convenience for them to live life to the fullest. While making the filing of their income tax easier for taxi drivers, the service also gives the e-filers a way to contribute in the community.

## GRANT OFFERED FOR WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE TAXIS

On 22 May 2012, following a visit to the Building Bridges EIPIC Centre and Specialised Assistive Technology Centre, Acting Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports Mr Chan Chun Sing announced the availability of a grant offered to taxi companies to operate taxis that can accommodate larger and high-back motorised wheelchairs.

The grant is expected to defray part of the higher cost

of the taxis as well as the cost of setting up the service. This will help especially when the licences of the 15 London cabs currently plying our roads expire in March 2013.

We look forward to the availability of a new fleet of wheelchair accessible taxis that would not only provide greater convenience for people with disabilities, but would also be affordable and safe.



## CDA TO COVER ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PURCHASES

From 1 July 2012, parents can make payment for assistive technology (AT) devices at hospitals, voluntary welfare organisations and some private AT device suppliers for their children with the savings from the children's Child Development Account (CDA) under the Baby Bonus Scheme.

The Baby Bonus Scheme was introduced in 1 April 2001 to help married parents to offset some of the costs of raising children. The scheme has two parts, one of which is the CDA where the Government contributes dollar-for-dollar co-matching to the parents' savings, up to a cap, depending on the birth order of the child.

Previously, the CDA could be used only at organisations participating in the Baby Bonus Scheme as approved institutions such as child care centres, kindergartens, special education schools, early intervention programme providers and healthcare service providers.

With the improvements in place, parents can now use the CDA at AT device providers, including the Specialised Assistive Technology Centre, and also at pharmacies and optical shops. With effect from 1 January 2013, the CDA will also be extended by six years, up until the end of the child's 12th year.

The expansion in the area of use to AT and extension in the period it can be used in will certainly be of help to parents with disabled children.

## ORGANISATION EXCELLENCE DAY



SPD staff renewed their pledge towards Organisation Excellence (OE) once again on 13 April, a day set aside to focus on corporate plans and direction.

At the morning sharing session graced by Deputy Secretary of the MCYS Ms Ong Toon Hui, the 2012-2016 strategy map and scorecard were unveiled and the plans for the different divisions presented to all.

We hope that after having participated in the activities of the day which included an afternoon of games, the staff would be recharged and bolstered to face the upcoming year with a unified view to providing excellent care to the people with disabilities we serve.







## RECORDS BROKEN AT SPD FLAG DAY 2012

SPD's seventh Flag Day held on 31 March 2012 raised close to \$160,000, the highest amount collected from SPD's flag days so far. The event also saw about 5,000 volunteers helping in the street collection, the highest number of volunteers participating in an SPD Flag Day event.



The islandwide event is one of the major fundraising campaigns for SPD.

We take this opportunity to thank all our partners and volunteers for their help in making the event a successful one.

## WSQ ORGANISATIONAL ACCREDITATION

Following months of preparation that involved the Workforce Development Agency (WDA), the IT Apprenticeship Programme (ITAP) successfully secured accreditation as an Approved Training Organisation (ATO) with the WDA.

As an ATO, ITAP will be able to conduct Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) courses and award our

trainees WSQ Statements of Attainment for the courses they complete. This means that trainees will be equipped with the skills and knowledge to attain greater productivity and career readiness.

This is a major milestone in our journey to benchmark ITAP training curriculum to mainstream standards.

## JOB ACCOMMODATION FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

SPD participated in this year's Conference on Fair Employment Practices held on 18 April at Resorts World Sentosa.

Presented by the Singapore Tripartism Forum in partnership with the Tripartite Alliance for Fair Employment Practices, the conference focused on how being a fair and responsible employer can help employers capitalise on human resources and contribute to an organisation's growth in preparation for the challenging times ahead. The conference also helped participants

learn and understand more about strengthening and managing diversity and inclusion in workplaces.

The team from the Vocational Training division gave a presentation on job accommodation for disabled people. Videos on how assistive technology and accessible infocomm technology can help a disabled person better integrate into a work environment were also put together and shown.

The three videos can be viewed at [www.youtube.com/user/TechAbilityTV/](http://www.youtube.com/user/TechAbilityTV/) videos.

## SPD AT INNOVATE4GOOD@ MICROSOFT



Innovate4Good@Microsoft provided a platform for SPD to share about assistive technology with youths from different countries when Microsoft Singapore hosted the Asia Pacific leg of the global event on 28 and 29 April.

Participants were encouraged to speak and meet with visionaries and thought leaders in an open dialogue to discuss technology's role in bridging the growing opportunity divide, between those who have access to technology and a good education, and the skills and connections needed to be successful, and those who do not.

Through this event, it is hoped that participants and their communities would be empowered to build successful futures and bring positive change to their homes.



## KOWLOON CLUB ORGANISES WALK IN SUPPORT OF SPD

The Kowloon Club organised a charity walk at the Waterway@Punggol and raised more than \$12,000 for SPD. Seventeen clients from SPD's Sheltered Workshop joined more than 100 participants and volunteers in the walk at Singapore's longest man-made waterway.

President of the Kowloon Club Philip Chan said, "We organised this event to gather people of different backgrounds to come together for a good cause. We are glad that the money raised from this walk will be donated to SPD's various programmes and services for people with disabilities. This is a humble effort on our part in creating an inclusive society."



## SARADA KINDERGARTEN WALK

Teachers and parents of students at Sarada Kindergarten organised the Happy Feet Healthy Families fundraising walk on the morning of 2 June. They joined more than 400 current and ex-students, volunteers from Temasek Polytechnic and 10 SPD clients in the 5km walk at Bishan Park.

This is the third year that Sarada Kindergarten has adopted SPD as its beneficiary. Part of the proceeds raised from the walk and other fundraising events in the months to come will be donated to SPD.

We thank the Kowloon Club and Sarada Kindergarten for taking the time and effort to raise the much needed funds in aid of people with disabilities!



# SPD'S THIRD CENTRE LAUNCHED



## SPD'S REACH SO FAR



### CENTRAL REGION

SPD Ability Centre  
– Tiong Bahru

No. 2  
Peng Nguan Street  
Singapore 168955

#### Background

This area housed SPD since the 1960's. We had humble beginnings, offering employment opportunities from a ramshackle hut to people with disabilities who had difficulties seeking employment in the open market.

Work on the new centre started in 1990 and the SAP Vocational Rehabilitation Centre was completed in 1994. It was the first purpose-built service centre set up by a voluntary welfare organisation to meet the rehabilitation needs of people with disabilities. The building was subsequently renamed the SPD Ability Centre in 1998 after we changed our name from Society for Aid to the Paralysed to Society for the Physically Disabled.

#### Programmes and services

Therapy services for adults and children, early intervention services, employment and education support, vocational and IT training, apprenticeship programme, supported employment, assessment and consultation in assistive technology and loan of devices, day care, social support.



### IN THE EAST SPD@Tampines – Tampines

Blk 866  
Tampines St 83  
#01-237  
Singapore 520866

#### Background

SPD@Tampines was officially opened in June 2007, marked by a 30km overnight fundraising walk from SPD Ability Centre in Tiong Bahru to the new centre.

#### Programmes and services

Therapy services for adults and children, early intervention services, social support.



With the SPD Ability Centre already established in the central region and SPD@Tampines in the east, SPD took another step to reaching out to the disabled community by widening our footprint to the west.

The opening of Building Bridges EIPIIC Centre (Jurong) fulfills a long-standing dream of being situated closer to people with disabilities islandwide and offering services from three distinct regions.

The new centre is located at Jurong West and provides EIPIIC (Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children) for those aged 6 and below diagnosed with special needs that will affect their development.

Building Bridges EIPIIC Centre (Jurong) opened its doors to children in June 2012 and aims to serve 150 by the end of FY2012/2013. It joins the Tiong Bahru branch located within the SPD Ability Centre in helping to meet the growing demand in Singapore for EIPIIC services.





# FUN WITH VOLUNTEERS



25 FEB TO  
31 MAR 2012

HSBC sponsored a six-week course at Little Arts Academy for SPD's clients between the ages of 6 and 15 years old. They learnt creativity, teamwork and how to express themselves through interactive and engaging games from the trainer and HSBC volunteers. The course helped to build confidence and self-esteem in these students with disabilities.



2 MAY 2012

NTUC FairPrice launched its "We Care: Lighting Up Lives" programme which targets to increase its staff volunteer hours. Five DAC clients were given a \$50 voucher each and, accompanied by volunteers from NTUC FairPrice, went on a shopping spree at the NTUC FairPrice outlet at NEX.



27 APR 2012

Staff of Straits Developments Pte Ltd brought 22 clients from SPD's Sheltered Workshop on a Hippo Ride city tour as part of their CSR programme.



23 MAY 2012

Student volunteers from Commonwealth Secondary School made a difference at SPD with their 'M.A.D. with SPD' mini-carnival. They managed several tables providing art and craft activities including clay sculpting, paper cutting, origami and vegetable printing.



28 APR 2012

Volunteers from regular volunteer group Freedom Adventure Club brought 20 young clients from SPD's Education Programme to the Singapore Discovery Centre and Army Museum of Singapore where they got to see how the Singapore Army has developed since it started in the 1960s, and other exhibits concerning Singapore and what makes us unique.

# IN PURSUIT OF AN ORDINARY LIFE



*"When I saw Ms Lim fell, the first thing that came to my mind was to immediately help her. I didn't want to accept any taxi fare but she insisted, and I was very moved that she has chosen to live such an independent life despite her disabilities,"*

Mr Chan Joo Khoon,  
Comfort cabby

into a new set of clothing before she starts work.

Born with cerebral palsy, Ai Li has difficulty controlling the muscles in her arms and legs. She walks with an unsteady gait and every step requires concentration in order not to fall.

Her hands also don't function like those of others. She needs to specifically focus to be able to grasp at objects.

Despite these challenges, Ai Li has an indomitable fighting spirit which puts her a cut above the rest. While it would be no surprise to find one with her condition relying on the family for financial support, Ai Li prefers to take charge of her own life.

She completed her education at mainstream schools, receiving her GCE 'O' Levels certificate from Mayflower Secondary School, and then a Higher NITEC in Accounting from ITE Bishan. Her quest for higher learning and ultimately employment were met with many obstacles in the form of physical limitations, barriers in accessibility and even a protective family, yet Ai Li managed to overcome them all.

### PERSEVERANCE

Fiercely independent, she was determined to find a job so as to earn her keep. To upgrade after having left school, she enrolled in SPD's IT Apprenticeship Programme in August 2008 and received training in the use of Microsoft Office software.

To enable her to improve in her functions, the Specialised Assistive Technology Centre (ATC) matched her to a compact keyboard with a key guard so that she could access the computer with greater ease.

Then, armed and ready for the workplace, Ai Li signed up with the Employment Support Programme (ESP) which supported her in her job search.

On September 2011, her determination was rewarded with a call offering her a job as an accounts clerk at Laksania, a local restaurant which is also a social enterprise.

A job placement officer and occupational therapist from the ESP set about making the necessary assessments at her new workplace and also the route there from her house to ensure accessibility, and provided her and the staff and management at Laksania with training and support before she started work. Today, more than six months into the job, she is a proud employee that helps to keep the accounts in order and collates the staff timesheets.

While she only needs to report to work three times a week, she ensures that she finishes all her work before she leaves the office. Her willingness to learn and efforts to complete her tasks on time have earned her praises from her supervisors.

### INSPIRING TO OTHERS

Mr Chan Joo Khoon, a Comfort cabby, is an individual who got the chance to meet her. He was driving along Kim Tian Road on the morning of 11 April when he saw her fall. He promptly came to her aid and also drove her to SPD where she was headed for assessment for a motorised wheelchair.

Mr Chan was so eager to provide as much support to her as he could, he refused to accept her payment. However, true to her nature and conviction, Ai Li insisted on paying.

"When I saw Ms Lim fell, the first thing that came to my mind was to immediately help her. I didn't want to accept any taxi fare but she insisted, and I was very moved that she has chosen to live such an independent life despite her disabilities," said Mr Chan.

With her unwavering perseverance to be independent while facing daily challenges, Ai Li remains a real inspiration to everyone, disabled or not. We congratulate her for having come so far, and cheer her on as she continues in her resolve to live an ordinary life.



## YOUNG ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES: ROLE OF PARENTS IN THEIR TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT

Vocational training equips people with disabilities with skills so that they have a better chance at securing a job in the open market. The process involves different stakeholders who work towards the gainful employment of the disabled person. While the task of training lies on the shoulders of the service provider, parents also play an important part in the transition of a young person with disabilities going into vocational training and then into open employment. Social worker Goh Kee Choon explains how.

Graduating from school to the workforce marks a significant event in the life of any young adult. They become less dependent on their families and more independent in their living arrangements, financial management and health care. They also become legally responsible for their decisions, behaviours and resulting consequences (Blomquist et al, 1998).

For young adults with disabilities, this transition becomes even more challenging and difficult as certain levels of dependency still exist due to their special needs. Developmental tasks commonly accomplished by adolescents before moving into adulthood are affected by disabilities as the time required for treatment and rehabilitation means a time loss in achieving these developmental tasks.

### BENEFITS OF EMPLOYMENT

According to Lindstrom et al (2011), 'employment is one important marker of adult success in our society'. Employment brings about not only financial independence and self-sufficiency but also intangible benefits such as self-esteem, personal satisfaction and social interaction. Being employed provides increased training opportunities which helps in career development. For disabled people, these benefits are even more important in ensuring their well-being and independence.

### PARENTAL ROLES

Blomquist et al (1998) highlighted several factors that affect the successful transition for a young disabled person into employment, one of which is parental influence and expectation.

Due to the level of dependency on their parents, young people with disabilities have fewer opportunities to make decisions on their own. Unlike their able-bodied peers who assume more decision-making and responsibility on their choices in life as they transit into adulthood, much of the decision-making process for young persons with disabilities is still left to their parents.

Sometimes, it is the parents' protectiveness that curtails decision-making opportunities for a young disabled person. Parents are concerned that their child might be put in a disadvantaged position due to wrong decisions and become affected by the subsequent consequences. Parents take it upon themselves to ensure that decisions for them are taken care of, ensuring that the young disabled person is not affected by any negative consequences. However, this fear of letting go and protectiveness will likely reduce opportunities for young disabled people to learn and express their own choices. This affects their ability to take control and make conscious decisions

which according to Lindstrom et al (2011) is 'critical to coping with workplace obstacles and barriers'.

With few opportunities to make decisions, the young disabled person is likely to be shielded from the consequences of making mistakes. On top of this, due to their disabilities, the family and society might give extra leeway when mistakes are made, further protecting them from understanding and learning from the mistakes.

Inherently, disabilities may limit a young disabled person's social interactions with peers and others due to mobility or communication difficulties. Furthermore, protective parents are likely to restrict social interactions, because they fear that the young disabled person may be taken advantaged of in situations. Social interactions are then limited to within their family or special learning centres.

Because of fewer peer interactions and discussions, age-appropriate development of identity and sexuality may be affected for the young disabled person (Blomquist et al, 1998). The lack of opportunities to learn appropriate social interactions and behaviours in an open environment may bring about difficulties in interacting with fellow trainees or co-workers when moving into training and eventually employment. Young disabled people might experience rejection, finding it difficult to form meaningful relationships with others and building an identity for themselves.

Parental expectations and aspirations play a role in influencing career development and employment outcomes.

There is also evidence that parents' expectations influence vocational goals, self-efficacy and achievements of young disabled persons (Lindstrom et al, 2007). White & Shear (1992), as cited in Blomquist et al (1998), mentioned that one of the major factors contributing to delayed vocational maturity of young disabled persons is low expectations and competitive employment is often seen as an unrealistic goal for a young disabled person.

Different definitions of independence and success affect the outcome of vocational training as well. Some parents may not see the need for open employment as it poses a lot of challenges to the young disabled person, and therefore put little importance on vocational training. They might prefer that the young disabled person be in a sheltered and safe environment, which again limits the young disabled person's potential to grow.

### WHAT CAN BE DONE

Early intervention is therefore important for young disabled people. Blomquist et al (1998) suggested that the transition process should begin at the day of diagnosis for providers and adolescents with disabilities and their family. The plan should involve specific goals for independence and self-management and a flexible time schedule to recognise the young person's increasing capacity for choice and self-advocacy. Families and service providers involved in the training have to prepare for 'letting go'. They should not fear the unknown and should recognise the necessity for change.

If this process of transition is anticipated from the

beginning, then the message to children with disabilities and their parents is that they will survive and become self-sufficient, achieving the independence as all others do (Blomquist et al, 1998).

An effective collaboration between the young disabled person, parents and relevant staff is therefore necessary to ensure that the outcome of a successful transition from vocation training to employment is achievable.

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## WINDOWS ACCESSIBILITY

Norrizwan Rasip, digital accessibility specialist and IT trainer, shares about some computer accessibility features in the Microsoft Windows 7 operating system and provides examples of how they can be used to enable individuals with disabilities to access the computer more effectively.

We use the personal computer (PC) in our daily lives for work, school and leisure. We write essays in a word processing software, e-mail our friends, listen to music, watch videos and read status updates from our favourite social media websites via our PCs.

Most of us use standard peripherals such as the monitor, keyboard and mouse to interact with the computer but know little of how difficult it would be for a person with sensory, physical or learning disabilities to do the same.

A person with visual impairments will have difficulties in using a standard monitor to read the news from a website. A person who has impaired hand functions will have trouble using a standard keyboard to type out an e-mail. A student with a learning disability may find it hard to focus on completing tasks on the computer when distracted by unnecessary animations.

Most people use the Microsoft Windows 7 operating system on their PCs either at

work or at home. Microsoft Windows 7 is the most widely used operating system now and it includes significant accessibility improvements that make using the computer easier for different groups of persons with disabilities.

These options can be accessed via the upgraded Ease of Access Center which is centrally and conveniently located in the Windows Control Panel. The features mentioned below are not exhaustive and many more useful features can be found at the Ease of Access Center.



Ease of Access Center

### USING THE COMPUTER WITHOUT A DISPLAY VIA NARRATOR

For those who are blind, using the computer for tasks such as writing e-mails or reading work documents would be near impossible without the ability to see the computer screen.

The Ease of Access Center comes with a basic screen reading software called Narrator that will read aloud text that appears on the screen in the form of synthesised speech. Narrator also assists a user by reading out characters during a typing task. This can significantly reduce typing errors.

Narrator also reads events that happen while a user is using the computer, such as when an

continued from page 13

## WINDOWS ACCESSIBILITY

error message appears. This feature is useful to a blind user who may otherwise be unaware of system messages such as pop-up notification boxes. It gives better usability and helps to orientate the user.

### MAKING THE COMPUTER EASIER TO SEE VIA MAGNIFIER

For a person with low vision, it can be difficult to read standard text on a computer screen. Tasks such as surfing the Internet for information may prove to be challenging and could result in misinterpretation of documents and/or erroneous typing.

To overcome these issues, the Ease of Access Center comes with Magnifier, an accessibility feature that allows the user to magnify what is being displayed on the computer screen at various settings.

### USING THE COMPUTER WITHOUT A KEYBOARD

For people with physical disabilities, typing using a normal keyboard can be a challenge as they may not have the needed dexterity, range of motion or stamina to carry out typing tasks on conventional keyboards.

To overcome this, the On-Screen keyboard acts as an alternative to a physical keyboard. The user may use a mouse and switches coupled with a scanning software, or a head-pointing device, to carry out typing tasks.

There are three typing modes in the on-screen keyboard. In the 'clicking' mode, the user can use his mouse to click on the keys. The 'hover over keys' mode requires the user to hover the cursor over the desired key for a pre-selected period of time to type the selected

character. In 'scanning' mode, scans are done continually on the on-screen keyboard and the user can select the characters by pressing a keyboard shortcut, using a switch input device, or using a device such as a head pointer that simulates a mouse click.

In Windows 7, the on-screen keyboard also comes with a word prediction function which greatly reduces fatigue and typing time for the user.



On-screen keyboard

### CONCLUSION

While the Ease of Access Center offers users with disabilities simple and cost-free solutions to overcome their computer access difficulties, it is not a silver bullet solution for all. Some disabled people may have unique needs which can only be met through specialised software. It is therefore essential to seek proper assessment and prescription from a certified assistive technology practitioner to find a solution that is suitable for use in the long run.

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### CASE STUDY

Gerald has a degenerative visual impairment. He is currently employed as a stock controller at an animal clinic where his duties include filing of documents, managing invoices and tracking inventory of medical supplies.

Gerald works on a computer but finds it difficult to read e-mails or documents at normal screen settings due to his eye condition. Using the Magnifier, the screen magnification function that comes with the Windows 7 operating system, Gerald is able to set the screen setting to a level where he can comfortably see what is on his computer screen.

With Magnifier he is able to perform his work in a more accurate and efficient way. The accessibility feature has played a part in building up his confidence to take on more challenging responsibilities.

Gerald's employer is contented that a simple and cost-free solution managed to help increase his productivity at work.

Occupational therapist and assistant manager for the Day Activity Centre, Susan Teo, attended the International Occupational Therapy Conference 2012 in Hong Kong in February where she presented a paper on how occupational therapists can help in a palliative care setting. We bring you highlights from her presentation.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2000) palliative care is defined as '... the active total care, by a multi-professional team, of patients whose disease is not responsive to curative treatment. Control of pain, of other symptoms and of psychological, social and spiritual problems is paramount. The goal of palliative care is achievement of the best quality of life for patients and their families'.

Occupational therapy (OT) is a health profession concerned with promoting health and quality of life through activities. The primary goal of OT is to enable people to choose, control and participate in the activities of everyday life (WFOT, 2004). Being grounded by the professional philosophy of client-centered practice, holism and quality of life, OT was deemed a 'natural fit' to the concepts of palliative care (Trump, 2001).

## ROLES OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS IN A PALLIATIVE CARE SETTING



The first mention of OT in palliative care occurred in the early 80's. The early literature described that occupational therapists in palliative care adopted varied practice approaches which could be generally classified into psycho-social and spiritual framework, and rehabilitative framework.

### Psycho-social and spiritual framework

Under the psycho-social and spiritual framework, Holland & Nelson-Tigges (1981) mention

that the role of OT in palliative care 'is about realising that a person's purpose, self-esteem, mastery and adaptation rest in his ability to be purposefully engaged in regular and familiar life experiences, whether he has terminal cancer or any other problem.' Similarly, Picard & Magno (1982) share that the presence of OT in palliative care 'is value-adding as they provide direction in addressing the constant need for meaning-in-life by clients with terminal illnesses'. That

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need, according to (Rahman 2000) is achieved through use of meaningful activities which facilitate the adaptation of the loss of roles.

### Rehabilitative framework

As for rehabilitative framework, occupational therapists in palliative care look into maximising a patient's functional status in order to bring about quality of life. This is important because unmet needs in activities of daily living have been commonly identified among clients receiving palliative care. Even when clients are no longer able to be fully independent, rehabilitation continues to provide comfort and support. Some comfort measures performed by therapists include pain relieve measures, positioning for pressure relief and lymphedema management.

A local research was completed on the role of OT in palliative care in 2011. The results from the study show that although the roles are largely similar to that mentioned in the literature, it echoes the fact that it had more to contribute.

While this is so, this expansion of roles is not without challenges. Firstly, in Singapore, the provision of OT service in palliative care is relatively new. As such the number of occupational therapists working in this setting is small. This implies inadequate support and mentorship for therapists working in this setting. Hence expansion of roles would be challenging to the few occupational therapists currently working in palliative care.

Secondly, occupational therapists working in a non-palliative care setting have limited awareness of the work of their counterparts in a palliative care setting. Awareness in this area of practice needs to grow along with expansion of the role of occupational therapists in palliative care.

With the increasing emphasis on palliative care in Singapore, there is hope that the role of OT will also increase to bring about a greater quality of life for the clients with end of life issues.



# EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



*Provide employment, internship or project opportunities for them*

If you would like to know more about providing employment, internship or project opportunities for people with disabilities, please contact Jane Yeo at 6579 0745 or [Jane\\_YEO@spd.org.sg](mailto:Jane_YEO@spd.org.sg)

The Singapore Government also provides funding for employers who hire disabled people as interns. Funding is available for the redesign of job scope and processes, workplace modifications, integration programmes and apprenticeship programmes through the Open Door Fund, administered by the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF). For more information, please e-mail [opendoor@snef.org.sg](mailto:opendoor@snef.org.sg).

## COMMERCIAL PROJECTS

Our trainees are able to handle a wide variety of jobs that include:

- Braille name card printing
- CD/DVD duplication/ripping
- Data entry and archiving
- Digital imaging and scanning
- Graphic designing
- Invoice archiving
- Labelling and letter-shopping
- Packaging
- Photo restoration
- Shrink-wrapping
- Tagging
- Website design/maintenance

Our job coaches work closely with trainees to meet your requirements. Every job you provide is a hands-on work experience for our trainees and an opportunity to develop their portfolio and earn an allowance.

## EMPLOYMENT

Our Vocational Training team provides support for your organisation from the hiring process to the early stages of employment.

SPD provides job coaches to facilitate the integration of disabled people into their new work environment and social workers to conduct orientation briefing for your staff to understand more about working with disabled people.

## INTERNSHIP

Want to create a job opportunity for people with disabilities but unsure of where to start? Do consider giving our trainees a start through an internship in the following positions at your organisation:

- Office admin clerk
- Book-keeping assistant
- Web designer
- Junior graphic designer
- Data-entry clerk
- Call centre assistant

