

Challenges ahead

Dear members,

After just having entered the year of the Ox, the NCA can look back on a successful year with many fundraising activities, big and small.

Take, for example, the variety of workshops organized by both members and non-members in the past year. Arts and crafts were represented in our workshops with Ceramics Painting for Children and Chinese Lantern making, whilst anyone interested in learning to cook new dishes could take the Thai Cooking workshop. Of course we will be aiming to set up a variety of workshops again, and hope you will participate as actively as last year again! Our upcoming workshops will cover Flower Arranging, Bread Baking from scratch and, due to its success last year, the Thai Cooking workshop will return in March.

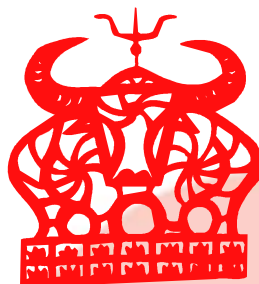
Of course our two big annual events will once again be organized. First of all our annual Garage Sale will be held in May. From Friday the 24th of April and every Friday thereafter until the 30th of May, you may donate any unwanted household goods and clothes to our volunteers at **64 Sime Road** from 9.30 AM to 12.30 PM. We would hereby like to thank our sponsor, the Uni Group Worldwide UTS for providing boxes and transport to the Hollandse Club. They, in turn, have once again been so kind to open up the Rotterdam Room

free of charge for this annual event.

Although we are excited about organizing activities again this year, we are also aware that as a charity, it is likely that we will have a more difficult year ahead than the years before. Many people are leaving Singapore at short notice, and the NCA has begun to notice a downturn in its member numbers. This has also affected the committee, where various members who have been actively participating for two years will be leaving us soon. This means that there are opportunities to join us so if you are interested working on the committee, please contact us at ncasingapore@hotmail.com.

Further, if you are reading this, and you are not a member of the NCA, we would be very pleased if you signed up. Being a member of the NCA costs only S\$50 per year, and with that money the NCA can continue our activities in Singapore. Of course, if you would like to donate more we would be even more pleased. When you become a member of the NCA, you will be put on our e-mail list and we will keep you updated about our fundraising activities.

Tineke Hiemstra
NCA President



The committee

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Tineke Hiemstra
Vice President
Catherina van der Zee

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S\$ 50 yearly
Donations welcome!

DBS Bank:
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Did you get your game set yet?



Introduced in 2007, it has become one of our most popular NCA items: the NCA My Singapore Memories game set. And now it's more available than ever.

The images are a feast of recognition for those who live or have lived here with pictures of everyday Singapore icons (like Singapore taxi's, chicken rice, Peranakan design, parking coupons, fire hydrants, etc). And all that for the very affordable price of \$25. We are very happy to inform you that now our Memory game is not only at the Hollandse School reception desk and the Hollandse club Library, but also at the following retail outlets:

Charkol Pte Ltd	Mandai Orchid Garden
Tango Mango	Tanglin Mall
Toy Station	Serene Centre
Pharmaplus Pte Ltd	Camden Medical Centre

A great gift for departing friends!



Christmas Fair 2008 Revenue

The overall proceeds of the Christmas Fair was again an amazing amount of more than \$50,000. We are very proud that once again with the help of so many volunteers we managed to raise a nett profit of \$20,723.91!! More financial news will be available at our annual general meeting in April.

Table	Cost	Sales	Nett
Advertising	2,159.00	1,500.00	-659.00
CCF costs	100.06		-100.06
Books	3,199.65	5,035.88	1,836.23
Children's table	244.36	1,376.90	1,132.54
Children's Home Sun-		734.35	734.35
Cake stall		2,232.60	2,232.60
Christmas Wreaths	1,354.89	1,881.34	526.45
Bric a Brac	546.86	895.10	348.24
NCA Memory Game		878.00	878.00
Lucky Draw	195.00	2,256.00	2,061.00
Crea		1,871.50	1,871.50
Cards	4,916.40	7,707.00	2,790.60
Dutch Products	13,455.04	19,911.00	6,455.96
Funky Frogs		114.00	114.00
Grazynia		42.00	42.00
Clothing		459.50	459.50
Total	26,171.26	46,895.17	\$20,723.91

Charity	Cost	Sales	Nett
Tabitha			\$2,000.00
Past Perfect			\$620.00
Soksabay			\$900.00
Good Sheppard's Centre		300	\$300.00
SPD		100	\$100.00
India		600	\$300.00
Down syndrome			\$400.00
Funky frogs			\$1,140.00
Total			\$5,760.00

TOTAL NETT:
\$ 26,483,91

THANK YOU!! to all our Sponsors of 2008

Our corporate sponsors:

- Embassy of the kingdom of the Netherlands
- Heineken Asia Pacific Pte Ltd
- Hollandse Club
- Moduspec Engineering
- Savitar
- Smit Singapore Pte Ltd
- UTS Unigroup Worldwide

And numerous private sponsors. Thank you all so much!



Another great Christmas fair

Together, the charities raised the wonderful sum of \$5,200.

Thanks to all our fantastic volunteers (some even helped us the evening before, until near midnight!) the NCA managed to raise a sales volume of almost \$47,000. Together it made the turnover \$52,200 a fantastic amount!. After deducting all the bills the NCA earned just over \$20,000

All of this has been absolutely impossible without our indispensable and much appreciated main sponsors: KLM, KLM

Cargo and the Hollandse Club. Thanks to KLM for so generously donating tickets to A' dam. Thanks to KLM Cargo for the enormous amount of Dutch products being shipped for free to Singapore. And last, but certainly not least, thanks to The Hollandse Club for being such an abundant sponsor to the NCA by always granting us accommodation and help whenever needed.

Naturally, we are extremely grateful to the many, many other sponsors!



The lucky winner of the main prize, two KLM sponsored tickets to the Netherlands

The last NCA Christmas Fair was a very successful event in many ways.

This year, we asked the choir from HOME to perform in the morning instead of the afternoon. That turned out to work beautifully! They started to sing around 11 am, creating a really Christmassy mood for the shoppers. If you thought that must have been enough to lift our spirits, you'd be absolutely right. However, no one anticipated the joy that the children from the Down Syndrome Association were about to bring.

As they jumped on the stage during one of the choir's last songs and started to dance and hum along, there was not person in the hall who didn't have a smile on their face. The pure joy these children radiated even made some of us a bit teary. It did not matter at all that sales stopped for a moment, this was a shared moment of happiness for all of us.

Later, after thunderous applause, the children informed us they would like to sing a song on their own at the next fair. We hope to see and hear a lot more from them!

This year, there were a lot of requests from charities for a table to sell their wares. Unfortunately we could not cater to all requests for lack of space, but in the end we had a nice mix of tables with a variety of products for our customers.

Krentenbollen and Focaccia baking



We have lots of good food readily available to us here in Singapore, but good bread is still not so easy to come by. So in February, we started a successful series of workshops on how to bake a variety of European breads.

In the first workshop we made lots of delicious krentenbollen (raisin buns) and Kaiser buns. The next workshop focused on the more Mediterranean breads, like focaccia and the very tasty focaccia farcitta.

Due to popular demand, we will be repeating these workshops in the near future so keep your eyes peeled for our upcoming events!.

Leprosy, the forgotten disease



Is there still leprosy in Singapore? YES. Every year about 5 to 6 children are diagnosed with leprosy and about 20 sufferers come from Bangladesh to Singapore for treatment. When it is diagnosed in the early stages, there is good treatment available for leprosy and patients can usually return home after treatment. The treatment takes place at specialist clinics. The SILRA home (*Singapore Leprosy Relief Association*) was founded in 1971.

What does SILRA do?

SILRA takes care of ex-sufferers of leprosy. Although these people are cured of the leprosy itself, they may be physically disabled, do not have a home to go to or cannot be treated at home anymore. Employees and charity workers at SILRA do their best to give these ex-sufferers the best possible life by offering a social environment with the primary needs provided, like food and lodging. The male and female sleeping facilities are separated, because there is a lack of privacy. Couples are only separated from the other residents by a curtain.

Besides receiving their primary needs, residents also get weekly medical treatment if needed.

There are social activities for those who take interest; things like weaving, painting and sewing. The residents look quite happy.

At the moment, 55 adults are living at the SILRA home, varying in age from 59 to 90 years old. In 1971 there

were 150 ex-sufferers living there. In 2005 they moved to a new location, which improved the standard of living considerably (as seen on the *before* and *after* photo's of sleeping and living facilities at SILRA on the left!).

What does it cost to take care of the residents?

To be able to give residents the best life possible, SILRA needs about S\$ 700,000.00 annually. A bit more than half of the amount comes from local charity organizations. The rest, SILRA needs to earn by selling products that have been made by the ex-patients themselves, or from singing in the street and other initiatives. Most years they do not meet their annual target.

At the end of the visit the NCA received a tour of the new location. We were shown where residents live, sleep, eat and receive medical treatment. And the workshops, where they create the products that are being sold to raise money. One of the places they sell their handicrafts is the annual NCA Charity Christmas Fair! During our visit, Mister Francis Tan showed us a slide show about the history of SILRA. He also gave us a clear explanation about the current situation. This helped NCA to get a clear picture about the current status of the SILRA project and our conclusion is that this project is still a good project to keep supporting. In the year 2008 SILRA received a donation of \$5,000.00 from NCA.

Special Hollandse Club Centennial donation

A very special year for the Hollandse Club has come to an end. To celebrate its 100th birthday last year, the Hollandse Club organized many festive occasions.

One of the highlights this year was the centennial dinner at the Ritz Carlton. During this dinner the festivity committee, together with Nancy Reniri and Catharina van der Zee, organized a silent auction. The Children of the Down Syndrome Association had enthusiastically decorated a lot of original Dutch wooden shoes under the supervision of Nancy and her helpers. Catharina and her team went out of their way to look for attractive and unusual items for the auction! Fortunately, the silent auction during the dinner and dance was well attended and this resulted in a donation from the Hollandse Club to both Down Syndrome Association and the Netherlands Charity association of \$4031.69 each.

The NCA is of course very grateful to all involved.

Honoring the preference of the Hollandse club we passed this amount on, together with our own donation, to the local charity "The Breadline Group".

The NCA congratulates the Hollandse Club on their 100th anniversary and we would like to thank the Club for all their help and assistance in the past! We do hope to continue this pleasant collaboration in the future.





Interview: NCA bursary Polytechnic students

For years the NCA has supported students at the Singapore Polytechnic (Dover Road) by paying their school fee of \$2100. We started with three students but later, after an urgent request from Polytechnic, we increased our support to five students.

We asked two of 'our' bursary students to tell us something about themselves.

Some background information: in order for a student to qualify for a bursary from the NCA, the total family's monthly income should not exceed \$1000.

Keep in mind that without the indispensable support from our members and sponsors, the NCA could not have supported these students throughout their education at Polytechnic!

Could you introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about you and your family?

I am Toh You Cai, an outgoing guy with a family of five, consisting of me, my parents and two younger sisters. My family basically has no breadwinner as my father is permanently disabled and my mother is taking care of him and my siblings full-time. My two younger sisters are still studying full-time.

My name is Richie and I come from a family of five. My family have been experiencing financial problems ever since the 911 attack. We have been struggling to have bread on the table and enough money to continue our education.

What are you studying and how many years does it take to graduate?

I am currently taking a Diploma in Computer Network Technology and it is a 3-year full-time course.

I'm a final year student studying at Singapore Polytechnic. I've been with the school for 4 years now.

Why did you choose this particular course?

It is because of the interest I have in the computer line and the potential of the job scope I will have in the future.

I chose to study Aerospace Electronics here because of the prospect of the course.

Can you elaborate on what it means to you to receive the NCA bursary?

It is the equivalent of the cost of an entire semester of my diploma and it allowed me to spend time studying where I might have had to put in extra time in my part-time jobs to fund my own studies.

Receiving the bursary from NCA has been a great help to my studies. Because of the help NCA has given I am able to concentrate on my studies without worrying about school fees. I no longer have to worry about not having to complete my polytechnic education due to my poor family background.

Do you think it is necessary for Singapore charities to support students?

Yes, of course. As it can be seen in my own circumstances, it is really a struggle to fund oneself through school as the lessons, exams and projects are tedious enough without the extra work we have to do outside of school work.

I believe that it is necessary that charities in Singapore support some students. I believe that it is not fair to any student to not have an education because of his or her poor background. With this help they will be able to have the proper education and may even become big achievers in the future. They shouldn't be denied this chance.

Do you want to continue your education after you finish at Polytechnic or will you look for a job?

I will have to look for a job to save up before I can even think of continuing my education.

I plan to look for a job after graduating from Polytechnic and maybe save up money for further studies if possible.

Spreading a little sunshine at Sunbeam Place

The Singapore Children's Society helps to protect and nurture children of all races and religions, especially those who have been abused or neglected. It runs Sunbeam Place in Choa Chu Kang; a home for children whose families are temporarily unable to look after them.

Back in 1996, a small group of NCA volunteers began visiting the Children's Society Home (based in Woodlands at that time) and I'm happy to report that these visits continue today. We have grown into an international group of volunteers who visit Sunbeam Place every week to spend a few hours with the youngest children (pre-school and primary age).



Active and quiet play time

A typical visit involves some active playtime followed by a quieter activity. For the active playtime we take the children to the local play park where they enjoy clambering over the climbing frames or zipping down the slides. If it's too hot or wet, we stay undercover in the play area at Sunbeam Place and play with the large toys, ball games or, a particular favorite, skipping.

For the quieter playtime, we play board games, draw and paint or organize craft activities where the children have the opportunity to give free reign to their creativity while learning new skills at the same time. Once or twice a year we also organize a larger event for the children such as a party, picnic or cultural trip.

Twice a year we help Sunbeam Place to raise funds by selling toys at the NCA Christmas Fair and Garage Sale.

Branching Out

Some of our volunteers have recently begun to participate in the Reading Program at Sunbeam Place. The main goals of this program are to expose children to books, to cultivate reading habits in children, to encourage a love of books and to help children improve their literacy.

The children at Sunbeam Place have often experienced a disrupted family life and may have missed out on a lot of schooling. This means that they are often lagging behind their peer group at school so need extra help with their schoolwork, especially reading.

The volunteers will be receiving some training from the professionals at Sunbeam Place in the next week or so and after that the program will begin in earnest. We look forward to reporting on the progress of this new venture in the next newsletter.

Upcoming events

March

Workshop Thai Cooking

When: March 24, 2009

Where: 23 Swiss Club Road

From: 9:30 am - 12:20 pm

Price members: \$ 65

Price non-members: \$ 75

April

Annual General meeting

When: April 14, 2009

Where: Ambassador's Residence,
Ridout Road

From: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Workshop Flower Arrangement

When: April 21, 2009

Where: 23 Swiss Club Road

From: 9:30 am - 12:30 pm

Price members: \$ 75

Price non-members: \$ 85

May

May Fair

When: May 27, 2009

Where: Hollandse Club,
22 Camden Park

From: 10 am - 5 pm

Garage Sale

When: May 31, 2009

Where: Hollandse Club,
22 Camden Park (Rotterdam Room)

From: 9:30 am - 12:00 pm

For more information or for signing up, please mail us or call Jeannet at **98622237**.

ncasingapore@hotmail.com

