

THE NCBM OUTREACH



Issue No. 72

July – September 2013

Permit no. PP 7594/08/2012(030560)

President

Jasmine Khoo

Editor

Godfrey Ooi Goat See
B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed.

Produced by

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND,
MALAYSIA

94B Jalan Tun Sambanthan, Brickfields
50470 KUALA LUMPUR

Tel : 03-22724959

Fax : 03-22724960

E-Mail : nctfb@po.jaring.my

**A quarterly
publication of NCBM**

Printed by: Sylog Print Systems Sdn. Bhd. (166439-T)

19 & 20, Block C, Lot 757, Jalan Subang 3, Persiaran Subang, 47610 Subang Jaya, Selangor

Tel : 603 - 5632 1302 / 1307 Fax : 603 - 5632 4190 / 5637 3703 Email : sylogprint@gmail.com

VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT OF NCBM

To ensure blind people will receive appropriate training and enjoy quality services regardless of where they live in the country.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Godfrey Ooi Goat See

Ivan Ho Tuck Choy

Moses Choo Siew Cheong

Wong Kwee Heong

Inungkiran Mongijal

CONTENTS

Vision And Mission Statement Of Ncbm	2
My Day Out With A Homeless Person <i>By Dr. Tan Tok Shiong</i>	4
The NCBM Plan Of Action 2012 <i>By Ivan Ho Tuck Choy</i>	8
The Ncbm Education Seminar 2013	10
Support Our Cause	15
Special Announcement	15
Post-Bag Letter From Wong Kow	16
News From The Malaysian Association For The Blind	18
Technology Update: How Good Are The Windows 8 Accessibility Features For The Blind? <i>By Moses Choo Siew Chong</i>	23
Climbing Kinabalu At Age 63 <i>By Godfrey Ooi Goat See</i>	31
Promoting Participation In The Political Processes And In Decision-Making <i>By Datuk P. Manogran</i>	34
A Point To Ponder: Why Must You Always Be In A Hurry? <i>By Wong Kow</i>	42
Quotations From The Calendar 2011-2013	45
Principal Office-Bearers And Council Members Of NCBM For 2012 - 2014	47
Chairpersons Of Committees Of NCBM For 2012 - 2014	48
Auditor 2012 - 2014	48
Representatives Of NCBM To Other Organisations, 2010 - 2012	48
Earn Some Extra Cash	49
Notes	50
Notes	51
Notes	52

MY DAY OUT WITH A HOMELESS PERSON

By Dr. Tan Tok Shiong

I could not fully understand Ah Chuan, a homeless person whom I met about three years ago. I was having a walk with some blind friends in the Lake Garden, a public park behind K.L. Sentral, when we first bumped into him and then he disappeared. However, as we frequently got lost in the park, he would suddenly appear from no where and offer us assistance.

After meeting him a few times, we began chatting and we gradually found out about his personal life story. He was formerly a supervisor in a metal factory but he had some health problems. He was advised by the doctor to go for surgery but he was reluctant to have his body operated on. Thus, his poor health persisted and so he had to resign from his job.

Ah Chuan then earned his living by washing bowls in an ordinary coffee shop. Unfortunately, he had some friction with the shop owner and so he decided to quit. This left him without any income and he had to rely on his savings and economise on expenses. He had to give up his rented room and live on the streets.

Ah Chuan said that he would spend about ten Ringgit a day. This included RM2.00 on a loaf of bread, RM1.50 on a large bottle of drinking water, RM3.00 on a packet of Indonesian cigarettes, and RM1.00 for using a toilet to bathe and wash his clothes. Everyday he would spend his time walking in the city and depend on the free lunches and dinners given by the charities.

He showed us the place where he slept at night. It was the tiled floor of the corridor in the K.L. Sentral building. He would use a large jacket for his blanket and a haver-sack for his pillow.

One day I was walking with a blind friend, George Wong, when we met Ah Chuan again in the Lake Garden. He told us that as he had so much time, he could take us anywhere we wanted to go. So we suggested going to the Mid-Valley mall for a drink. We sat down in the food court and made our

orders. We were astonished when he stubbornly refused to take our money and he kept saying that our lunch was on him. He got some fried chicken and some soft drinks for the two of us.

The next time I met him in Brickfields, he was collecting discarded cardboard boxes and aluminium cans. He said that he was able to get about RM20.00 a day by selling the recyclable materials.

After this, we did not see Ah Chuan for at least two years. George Wong and I wondered where he had gone to. We guessed that probably he had gone somewhere else to live or perhaps he might have fallen ill and died. Then we were very surprised to meet him again one day after such long time.

He told us what had happened to him during the last two years. While sleeping in the corridor of the K.L. Sentral, he was arrested by officers from the Welfare Department and he was sent to the Jerantut Detention Centre in Pahang. According to him, there were about eight hundred in-mates in the Centre and they were from all races; the majority of them were either mentally unsound or they were drug addicts. Many of them were homeless people. The in-mates were treated well in the Centre - they were given five meals a day, they had a proper bed to sleep in, and basic medical care was provided. The main complaint, however, was boredom. After staying there for about twenty months, his sister went to the Centre to be his guarantor so that he could leave the Centre. He was warned not to sleep in the streets again.

He was fifty-five years old when he left the Jerantut Centre. So he immediately went to the Employees, Provident Fund (EPF) office and withdrew all his savings of about RM40,000.00. Half of the money he put in the safe-keeping of his sister; with the remaining half of the money, he went to the Genting Highlands casino. He was hopeful of making some regular winnings from the casino in order to meet his daily expenses. Unfortunately, within a short span of time, he lost nearly all the money. Most of it went to the casino and the rest was spent on food and accommodation. Thus, he had to go back to square one and once again live on the streets. This time he slept under the LRT tracks in order to avoid detection and arrest.

In fact, I had forgotten all about Ah Chuan until one day late in the morning when I met him as I emerged from the main gate of Kompleks MAB. He seemed very happy to see me again and he insisted on buying lunch for me. We sat down in a mamak shop and i told him to get me just a piece of roti chanai kosong. Instead, I was amazed when he came back with two plates of beriani chicken rice with roasted mutton.

“Where did you get yor money?” I asked him immediately.

“Oh, don’t worry,” he said. ”I still have some savings with my sister but soon it will all be finished!”

After lunch, he asked me to accompany him to the Genting Highlands casino where he hope to win just a little bit of money. I told him I could not go as I was not wearing a proper pair of shoes.

“Don’t worry,” Ah Chuan said. ”I will get you a pair of shoes and pay for all your expenses.”

I told him I would be happy to follow him on the condition that he allowed me to pay for my own expenses. He agreed and we made a stop at the Public Bank where Ah Chuan made some withdrawals. Then he took me to a shop where I got for myself a new pair of rubber shoes for RM9.00. I was surprised to find that the cheap shoes were as comfortable as my expensive timberland shoes which had cost me RM400.00.

Then we went to the Pudu Raya bus station and caught the bus to Genting. Before boarding, however, Ah Chuan had brought along only a thick jacket, the rest of his belongings having been deposited in a shop for safe-keeping and for which he paid only RM2.00.

In the bus, we chatted for a while before dozing off to sleep. The bus journey ended at the Batang Kali terminal and we then took the Skyway, Genting’s cable car service, in order to get to our destination. Upon reaching the Genting Highlands, we went straight to the casino and he went to the counter to pay for RM200.00 worth of chips. We had some orange juice and coffee which were given free of charge.

The casino was quite empty as it was a Tuesday, which was not a public holiday, and it was not the week-end. I sat in front of a jackpot machine while he went to one of the tables to play The Banker and The Player Game.

“I only put my bet when the card is good,” Ah Chuan assured me. But he came back 45 minutes later and told me he had lost RM100.00. I waited for him for another hour and expected him to lose another RM100.00. However, when he finally returned, he showed me some large chips and told me that he had won RM100.00. He said that initially he had lost all the RM200.00 but he bought another RM500.00 worth of chips and doubled up his bet. After many games, he managed to recover his original losses and made an extra hundred Ringgit before quitting.

We then took the cable car back to the Batang Kali bus terminal. We were chatting so happily that we did not realise that the bus to Kuala Lumpur had come and gone. Eventually, we managed to get onto another bus after a long time of waiting.

As we journeyed back to Kuala Lumpur, he gave me another surprise when he told me that he would be going to board the Genting Star Cruise in Penang the next day. He would, therefore, be taking the night train to Butterworth after reaching Kuala Lumpur. I advised him to be careful with his spending as he did not have very much savings left. He replied coolly that it did not matter as his money would somehow be finished anyway.

Thus, my day out with Ah Chuan ended when he helped me to board a bus home from Brickfields. Now I am convinced that Ah Chuan is a compulsive gambler and I believe it is this gambling habit that has driven him to become a homeless person.

THE NCBM PLAN OF ACTION 2012

*By Ivan Ho Tuck Choy,
Executive Director,
National Council For The Blind, Malaysia*

The NCBM Plan of Action, spanning the period from 2012 to 2020, was drawn up based on the Declaration adopted at the NCBM Convention held in December 2011 as well as decisions of recent council and exco meetings and recommendations from dialogues and seminars organised by NCBM. This Plan, containing the goals and targets with indicators to track its progress, is aimed at achieving measurable progress in NCBM and its member-organisations within the course of the ASEAN decade of Persons With Disabilities (2011-2020) which was proclaimed by the Governments of ASEAN in Bali in November 2011.

The various disability-related documents adopted by the United Nations and its related agencies, particularly those of UNESCAP, the Persons with Disabilities Act, and the Constitution of the World Blind Union will be closely followed when implementing the Action Plan. Bi-annual reviews will be conducted so that appropriate measures can be taken to ensure that the goals set out in the Plan can be achieved.

The goals to be achieved are as follows:

1. Promote Partnership with Member-Organisations

NCBM seeks to establish partnerships with member-organisations in realising the objectives and functions of the organisation as set forth in NCBM's Constitution.

2. Access

Access, being the precondition for the blind to realise their rights in an inclusive society, will work toward creating access to the physical environment, public transportation, information and communication services based on the universal design for the safety and ease of use of everyone, including the blind.

3. Education

NCBM seeks to ensure that all blind children receive the same level of free quality education provided by the Government.

4. Training and Employment

The blind to be gainfully employed so as to enable them to participate actively in society, thus improving their quality of life.

5. Leadership and Empowerment

NCBM will advocate for the blind to be included in all levels of decision-making, thereby realising the goal that there is “nothing about us without us” in “making the right real”.

6. Collaboration

NCBM will collaborate with Government agencies and civil society organisations in achieving equalisation of opportunities for Persons With Disabilities, including the blind.

7. The CARE Unit

This Unit will be developed to be a centre of excellence for best practices related to the work for the blind.

8. Counselling and Rehabilitation

NCBM will equip the blind with the necessary skills so as to enable them to realise their optimum potential, thereby enhancing the independence and empowerment of the blind.

9. Registration and Data Collection

NCBM will collect data in order to reflect the actual status of the blind in the country so as to enable the policy-makers to draw up the necessary plans.

10. International Cooperation

NCBM will work together with international bodies in building a better future for the blind.

(Readers may contact NCBM for the detailed plan)

THE NCBM EDUCATION SEMINAR 2013

*By Moses Choo Siew Chong,
Deputy Executive Director,
National Council for the Blind, Malaysia*

The NCBM Education Seminar was held at the Hotel Capitol, Jalan Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur from 4th to 5th March, 2013. The theme of the Seminar was “Empowering the BVI’s Through Education and ICT”.

The objectives of the Seminar were as follows:

1. To collaborate with the Government in formulating strategies to ensure that the needs of blind students will be provided for under the National Education Blueprint 2013-2025.
2. Work to realise the goal of Education for All Vision-Impaired (EFA-VIC) by 2015 as resolved by the World Blind Union (WBU) and International Council for the Education of Persons with Vision Impairment (ICEVI) initiative.

Dr. Kway Eng Hock, Chairman of the Organising Committee for the NCBM Education Seminar 2013 and the NCBM Committee on Education, bid a warm welcome to all guests and participants to the Seminar.

Mrs. Rina Prasarani, Secretary-general of WBU, then gave her message from the World Blind Union. Braille slates and notepads were then presented to representatives of schools.

The keynote address was presented by Mr. Bong Muk Shin, Director of the Special Education Division, Ministry of Education. In his speech, Mr. Bong touched on the National Education Blueprint and how it can transform education for the blind to bring it to a higher level. He also elaborated on what NCBM and its member-organisations could do to assist in the process.

There were six sessions altogether and the topics deliberated upon were as follows:

Topic 1: How can we prepare and support blind children to enter the education system? The session was chaired by Mr. Ivan Ho, NCBM Executive Director, and the presenters were Mr. Alvin Teoh from the Parent Support Group of Penang and Mr. Wong On Fook, Hon. Secretary of NCBM and Headmaster of Sekolah Pendidikan Khas Tuaran, Sabah.

Topic 2: Formulating a national strategy to track the progress of the Education for All Vision-Impaired Children presented by Dr. Suwimon Udompiriyasak, Director of Special Education of the Suan Dusit Rajabhat University, Thailand and Chairperson of the ICEVI East Asia Regional Committee.

The second session was chaired by Dato' Dr. Hsiung Kwo Yeun, President of the Sarawak Society for the Blind and delegate to the NCBM Council. The topics were:

Topic 1: Setting up of the Braille Council of Malaysia presented by Dr. Kway Eng Hock, Senior Lecturer of the Faculty of Education and Human Development, Sultan Idris Education University, Perak.

Topic 2: E-kod Braille - online solution for learning Braille presented by Associate Prof. Dr. Lee Lay Wah, Programme Chairperson (Special Education), School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang.

The third session was chaired by Mr. William G. Brohier, delegate of St. Nicholas Home, Penang to the NCBM Council. The topic was Meeting the Educational Needs of the Blind with Additional Disabilities presented by Mr. Akhil S. Paul, founder director of Sense International, India and founder-member of the board of the National Trust for Welfare of People with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities.

The fourth session was chaired by Mr. Wong On Fook and the topic was Preparing Teachers to Meet the Needs of Vision-Impaired Children presented by Mdm. Lee Chee Pheng, Senior Lecturer of the Specialist Teachers' Training Institute, Kuala Lumpur.

The fifth session was chaired by Dr. Kway Eng Hock and the topics were:

Topic 1: Provision of Braille Textbooks presented by Mr. Aliodin Bin Daud, Assistant Director of the Textbook Division, Ministry of Education.

Topic 2: Sharing of issues related to Braille Production presented by Mr. Thangaveloo Varathan, Administrator of the Education and Resource Centre of St. Nicholas Home, Penang.

The sixth session was chaired by Mr. Wong Yoon Loong, Manager of the Centre for Advocacy, Research and Empowerment (CARE) of NCBM. The topic was Making ICT Accessible and Free in the Transformation of Education for the Blind presented by Mr. James Teh, vice president of NV access Inc., Australia and co-lead developer of Non-Visual Desktop Access (NVDA) and keyboardist for the Prog Rock Band with Nth Degree.

The resolutions session was chaired by Mr. Wong Yoon Loong and the recommendations from the NCBM Education Seminar were as follows:

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE NCBM EDUCATION SEMINAR 2013

(Held in Kuala Lumpur from 4 – 5 March 2013).

1. Collaborate with the Government in realising the aspirations of the Malaysian Education Transformation Blueprint 2013-2025 by holding regular consultations with the relevant authorities and by implementing the NCBM Education Support Programme.
2. Promote the setting up of early intervention programmes and pre-school programmes among Member Organisations to prepare blind and vision-impaired (BVI) children for Inclusive Education.
3. Encourage and support the formation of Family Support Networks nationwide.

4. Advocate for the setting up of the Braille Council of Malaysia (BCM) to ensure Braille is given proper attention in the lives of BVI's. A sizeable number of members on BCM should be proficient in Braille and are Braille users.
5. Use and support all possible channels in highlighting the importance of Braille to the BVI's, including bringing to the attention of BCM the issues relating to the production of Braille textbooks, and to promote Braille literacy in striving for academic and other achievements.
6. Work with the Bahagian Buku Teks (BBT) of the Ministry of Education in negotiating with publishers to get their textbooks in accessible format to speed up the production of the Braille version.
7. Identify a suitable model for the provision of educational programme for children with multi-sensory impairment (MSI), and to work with the Government and Member Organisations in its implementation.
8. Identify the problems arising from the mismatch in the placement of teachers for OKU students with the aim of highlighting them to the Ministry of Education and the National Council of Persons with Disabilities in the interest of promoting quality education for the BVI's.
9. Towards the goal of achieving a higher literacy rate in ICT among the BVI's, NCBM to facilitate the use of Open Source screenreaders and to work with software developers to build a Malay text-to-speech engine.

Prepared by:

1. Dr. Kway Eng Hock,
Chairman,
Committee on Education.

2. Mr. Ivan Ho Tuck Choy,
Executive Director,
NCBM.

3. Mr. Moses Choo Siew Cheng,
Assistant Executive Director,
NCBM.

4. Mr. Wong Yoon Loong,
Manager,
Centre on Advocacy, Research and Empowerment (CARE).



SUPPORT OUR CAUSE

The National Council for the Blind, Malaysia (NCBM) provides a vital link between the organisations serving the blind in this country by acting as the national coordinating body. Through NCBM, the organisations for and of the blind have a channel to discuss and formulate national policies and plans and to pioneer new programmes for the benefit of the blind.

Your financial support will, therefore, go a long way in helping to bring about new developments and progress for the blind. All contributions are deeply appreciated.

Donations should be made in the name of :

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND, MALAYSIA

Address:

94-B Jalan Tun Sambanthan, Brickfields

50470 Kuala Lumpur

Tel: 03-2272 4959

Fax: 03-2272 4960

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Readers are reminded that their contribution of articles, suggestions and jokes are most welcome for inclusion in “The NCBM Outreach”. However, please note that it would be very helpful to the Editor if such contributions could be submitted either on diskette or on single-sided Braille pages to facilitate editing.

Also please note that if the article is accompanied by at least two relevant photographs and if they are accepted for publication, you will be paid an additional RM25.00 fee.

You should include your address, telephone number and bank account number so that the money can be sent to you easily.

For details of payment, please see the last page.

POST-BAG LETTER FROM WONG KOW

Dear Editor,

Reflections on the Life of Chua Eh Dam

I read the article about Chua Eh Dam which appeared in “The NCBM Outreach” of January – March 2013. I feel that it is rather unfortunate that the husband would consider a second marriage just because they had a blind or disabled child. Is it not the responsibility of both parents to work together for the well-being of their own child?

Chua was kept at home until he was thirty-two years old. This was despite the fact that friends had told the family to send him for education at St. Nicholas school in Penang. However, their ignorance kept them from doing the right thing.

I am sure that over the years, Chua’s parents would have brought him to see a doctor when he fell ill. Such a doctor would surely have detected that he had eye problems and should have referred him to an eye specialist. Then the parents might have received advice to register Chua with the Welfare Department who would then have referred him to an appropriate institution for education or training.

Unfortunately, Chua was referred to the Welfare Department when he was already thirty-one years of age. However, instead of sending him to a centre where he could learn massage as he desired, they sent him to Taman Harapan for agricultural training, which was not his interest at all.

Eventually, Chua voiced out his desire and was sent to the Gurney Training Centre for massage training. Unfortunately, he had to wait for five months before being admitted to the Centre. Then he had to spend another two years in the carpentry section before being given the opportunity to take up the one-year course in massage.

I feel that the Welfare Officer should have a complete list of the courses available at the Training Centres so that he can help the applicant request for the course of his choice immediately. Furthermore, the Training Centres should have a proper assessment Programme so that the trainees can be channelled to the appropriate course straight away. Then they would not have to waste so many years of their precious life waiting for the right course.

Anyway, I must extend my heartfelt congratulations to Chua for having been able to attain his goal to gain a proper livelihood against all odds. I wish him every success in finding a suitable life-partner so that he can start his own family.

Well done, Chua Eh Dam! I sincerely hope that your dreams will come true.

Indeed, the year 2020 is fast approaching and Malaysia is expected to become a developed nation. It is my earnest hope that all sectors in our country will by then have reached the stage where everyone, including the blind, can have quality life.

NEWS FROM THE MALAYSIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND

Farewell to Barnabas Lee Ah Guan

Barnabas Lee retired from service with MAB at the end of March 2013. At the farewell party, the citation for Barnabas was read out as follows:

“En. Barnabas Lee has worked with the Malaysian Association for the Blind for a period of thirteen years from the year 2000 to 2013. He first joined the service of MAB as telephonist -cum-receptionist on March 16, 2000 and was subsequently promoted to the position of low-vision assistant on March 16, 2002.

“During his short stint of about two years as telephone operator, En. Barnabas had served the general public well by providing them with information on the work of MAB. In fact, because of his fluency of language when communicating with the public, he earned for himself the title of ‘the Englishman’!

“During the next ten years or so of his tenure of service, En. Barnabas was able to provide commendable service to clients with low-vision from different parts of the country. Being the only staff in the Low-vision Department, he had to carry out not only the work of the clerical worker but he also had to administer the programme single-handedly by himself. However, he was able to cooperate well with the volunteer optometrist from the Tun Hussein Onn National Eye Hospital (THONEH) in carrying out vision assessment exercises and an average of about 70 clients were served annually in the early years of his service. In meeting the needs of the low-vision clients for special equipment, he was able to bring in an income of RM100,000 to RM300,000 at the peak of 2007.

“Visitors, both blind and sighted, will remember En. Barnabas for his willingness to escort them from the office to their vehicle, open the door for them and wish them a hearty ‘bon voyage’!

“En. Barnabas is fond of reading self-improvement books and is always

happy to share useful tips on management and leadership style. Therefore, MAB will surely profit greatly from his parting bit of wisdom – ‘The Organisation should be big enough to serve you and yet be small enough to know you’!

“And so we take this opportunity to wish En. Barnabas Lee Ah Guan all the best and may he find fulfillment and achievement in new undertakings during his life of retirement.

With God’s blessings.”

New Organisation Chart

The management structure of MAB has undergone another restructuring exercise, the last one being in 2011. The New Organisation Chart takes effect from June 1, 2013 with the Executive Director and seven managers to drive the organization forward into the future.

The interim executive director is En. Santhirasegaran and he has been in office since February 2013 with the termination of contract of the former executive director, Dato’ Ganesan Supayah, at the end of January 2013.

The seven managers are as follows:

Jacqueline Emmanuel has been appointed as the Manager of Public Relations, Fund-raising and Sales with En. Ramdas Nayar as Assistant Manager; Zainuddin Jasmi becomes the Manager of Job Placement, Welfare Services and Accessibility Issues;

Mohd. Safni Hussain is the Manager of Administration, Finance and Human Resources;

Liza Umi is the Assistant Director of Regional Centres Development;

Silatul Rahim Derahman is the Senior Manager of ICT and Call Centres Training;

Sumitha Ramasamy is Principal of GTC and Manager of Rehabilitation and Vocational Training (Taman Harapan, Kinta Valley Centre, etc.), and

Godfrey Ooi is Senior Manager of Education, Library Services, Research and Development.

Massage Club Trip to Melaka:

The Massage Club of MAB organised a day trip to Melaka on June 26, 2013 (Wednesday). Interesting events in the programme included the duck cruise and visits to the submarine, animal farm and beehive.

For the duck cruise, you actually ride in a boat fitted with wheels so that it can move both on land and in the sea. At the animal farm, the animals included many kinds of birds with their different calls or songs, colourful insects and snakes, rabbits and even crocodiles which live freely in open spaces beyond the perimeter fence as in a natural habitat; you can actually see them sleeping or swimming and even “discover” where they have hidden their eggs.

Unfortunately, there was no time for shopping at the famous Jongker Street. However, the blind visitors managed to get some of the goodies such as durian dodol from the Tan Kim Hock Shopping Mall, lovely jam tarts from a Cottage Shop and to taste various kinds of honey FOC at the beehive.

If you really want to enjoy the Nyonya food and delicacies, then you should stay overnight. There is the Baba Nyonya Hotel which costs about RM150 per night or you could stay at a hotel near the Tan Kim Hock Shopping Mall which costs only about RM60 to RM70 per night.

The National Library Reading Campaign

The National Library collaborated with MAB in organising the Reading Campaign for the Blind on Thursday, June 27, 2013 at Kompleks MAB. They held a similar programme for the blind at the Putra World Trade Centre in the 1990’s.

This time the theme of the programme was “Mari Membaca Satu Malaysia”. The programme included an indoor games competition, a Braille reading competition in Bahasa Malaysia and English, a motivational talk by the first Malaysian, Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor, who went to space, and the closing ceremony during which a blind masseur, Anna Loo, rendered a vocal number and played on the harmonica.

The winners for the Bahasa reading were Norizati Mior Samsuddin, Lele Suryani, and Rosni Saini with RM300.00, RM200.00 and RM100.00 respectively.

The winners for the English reading competition were Chan Sau Yin, Timothy Mok Kam Yin and Tan Chai Chin with RM300.00, RM200.00 and RM100.00 respectively. All the other reading contestants received a consolation prize of RM50.00 each.

For the indoor games competition, only the champions were given prizes. They were Muhamad Harun for dominoes, Zainah Salleh for Chongkak, Chin Mui Yun for draughts, and Chin Mui Lan for Othello.

The National Library also donated some Braille and audio books as well as the CDs Windows-ISIS software for library administration, assets management, inventory, cataloguing and user database.

Incheon Strategy 2013-2022

At the International Conference on Disability held in Incheon, South Korea in November 2012, it had been decided to implement the Third Decade of Persons With Disabilities in the Asia-Pacific Region from 2013 to 2022. The Incheon Strategy with ten goals to “Make the Right Real” for Persons With Disabilities was thus formulated.

As a follow-up, the Malaysian Council for Rehabilitation (MCR) organised the Malaysian Conference on Disability in collaboration with the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, the Department of Social Welfare, and the National Council for Persons With Disabilities. The Conference was held at the Berjaya Time Square Hotel from July 1 to 2, 2013.

The keynote address was given by Ms. Cai Cai, Chief Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Section, UNESCAP. She spoke on the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons With Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.

Topics addressed at the plenary sessions were Towards Realising the Incheon Strategy in Malaysia and The Inspiration on the Incheon Strategy. Panel sessions were held to see how the ten goals of the Incheon Strategy could or should be implemented in Malaysia.

The ten goals of the Incheon Strategy to

”Make the Right Real” for Persons With Disabilities are as follows:

- a. Reduce poverty and enhance work and employment prospects;
- b. Promote participation in the political processes and in decision-making;
- c. Enhance access to the physical environment, public transportation, knowledge, information and communication;
- d. Strengthen social protection;
- e. Expand early intervention and education of children with disabilities;
- f. Ensure gender equality and women’s empowerment;
- g. Ensure disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction and management;
- h. Improve the reliability and comparability of disability data;
- i. Accelerate the ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities and the harmonisation of national legislation with the convention;
- j. Advance sub-regional, regional and inter-regional cooperation.

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE: HOW GOOD ARE THE WINDOWS 8 ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES FOR THE BLIND?

*By Moses Choo Siew Cheong
Assistant Executive Director,
National Council for the Blind, Malaysia*

While Windows 8 has been in Malaysia for quite some time now, we have not heard of many blind people actively using it. Perhaps, after reading this article, you may have a better understanding why this is so.

According to the reviewer, Mardon Erbland, the makers of JAWS and other screen-reader software will have lots of work to do before their programmes will be able to work well with Windows 8.

Boot Up Experience

When Windows 8 first boots up, it goes into what Microsoft calls a “lock screen”. This Screen displays information such as the time of day but it does not allow for any user input. To advance to the Login Screen, you press “Tab”. Once at this location, you can type in your password.

Windows 8 is designed to encourage the use of a Microsoft Account and its associated username and password for logging into your local PC. Hotmail users will already have a Microsoft account. This is apparently done to allow access to the many cloud-based features built into Windows 8. The Login Screen also contains an icon for shutting down the computer. Navigate to it by pressing Tab repeatedly. Once there, hit “enter” to get a menu for Sleep, Shut Down or Restart.

While at the Login Screen, repeatedly pressing Tab will cycle from the Login Box to the Submit Button to the Ease of Access Icon to the Shut Down Icon then back to the Login Box. The Ease of Access Button gives a Menu that can be navigated with the up and down arrows. If no keys are pressed, the Menu selections advance on their own after a short time

interval. The Menu contains the Narrator, Magnifier, On-Screen Keyboard, High Contrast, Sticky Keys, and the Filter Keys. The Escape Key takes you back to the Login Screen.

Measuring Metro's Worth

After logging in, you go to what Microsoft calls the Metro User Interface. This displays a series of icons in table – some might call “tile-like” – format. Use the arrow keys to navigate. Unfortunately, all the cells are not the same size. This makes the table more difficult for a blind person to navigate.

There is no Start Button in Windows 8. Metro replaces it. The Metro Screen contains many icons that can be used to launch programmes and apps, which are new to Windows 8. Their icons are dynamic in that they show the status of the apps and programmes they represent. For example, the Weather Icon shows temperatures and weather conditions. The Music App Icon shows what is playing. However, it is not clear how this dynamic approach will work with a screen-reader.

The Metro Screen also contains an icon for your personal user account. Pressing Tab will move you between the programme and app icons in Metro and your user account. After first arriving at Metro, you can Tab once to go to your user account. Press enter. This brings up a Menu that contains three options - Change Account Picture, Lock and Sign Out. Arrow keys can be used to navigate this Menu. Escape exits the Menu.

While in Metro, the arrow keys can be used to navigate to the individual icons. There are things such as Mass, Weather, People, Xbox, Messaging plus any Programmes that you have “Pinned to Start”. Once you arrow to the programme or app you want to launch, press Enter to launch it.

Navigating Apps

Not all programmes are displayed on the Metro Screen. To access all of the apps and programmes, you must press Control plus Tab while in Metro. This brings up an apps screen containing icons for all apps and programmes. It is much like what would have been accessed via the Start Button in previous

versions of Windows. Use the arrow keys to navigate this screen. Standard features like the Control Panel are accessed from this apps page. Press the Windows key to go back to Metro.

Once you are on the Apps screen and have navigated with the arrow keys to a programme of interest, you can press Enter to launch the App or programme. You can also press Space to get another Menu. When this second Menu opens, you will get several choices that can be navigated with the right and left arrow keys. The options available depend on the programme but may include “Pin or Unpin from Start”, “Pin or Unpin from Taskbar” ”Open New Window”, ”Open File Location”, and so on. Pinning a programme to Start places it in the Metro screen. Press the Windows key to return to Metro.

Press Alt Tab lets you switch between open Apps or programmes. Pressing Alt plus F4 seems to close individual Windows just as it does in previous versions of Windows. When programmes such as Windows Explorer are launched, they open on the Desktop and the shortcut keys seem to work like in old versions of Windows. While at the Desktop, you can navigate the Taskbar as previously with a combination of Tab and arrow key movements. The Desktop is the one part of Windows 8 that is very similar to previous versions of Windows.

Multimedia Mayhem

The Windows Media Player is still accessible via the Apps page but it is no longer the default player for video or music. The defaults are the new Video App and Music App. However, neither App seems to be accessible via the keyboard shortcuts. The problem with this is that if you accidentally open a Video or Music from Windows Explorer by hitting Enter, there is no way to stop the music or video from playing by using keyboard shortcuts.

When a DVD is inserted, it begins playing automatically in Windows Media Centre. Once the movie is playing, the Right Click Key can be pressed in order to bring up a set of Action Menus. Use the right and left arrow keys to move within this Menu. From here you can do such things as play or eject the disc and go to the Title Menu or Root Menu of the disc. How to pause the Video using keyboard shortcuts from within the Windows Media Centre

is still a mystery. However, it can be done with a mouse by simply moving it; A new Menu appears allowing the user to control the speed of the video and to pause it.

Probably, the Windows Media Centre operates the same way in Windows 8 as in Windows 7. However, the problem is that the default programme for playing DVD's is now the Windows Media Centre and not Windows Media Player, and there seems to be no way by using keyboard shortcuts to open the DVD in WMP.

Not Good Enough Yet

In summary, it is obvious that Microsoft designed this OS with the primary focus on Touch-Screen compatibility. The bad news is that it is going to be a real headache for blind people currently using a Screen-Reader like JAWS with Windows 7 and no mouse. Many of the apps do not implement keyboard shortcuts effectively. Many do not use them at all. On the other hand, the good news is that Windows 8 will make a great OS for tablets.

Navigation of the actual operating system using keyboard shortcuts is not too bad. But it is the next level down where the problems begin. The apps and programmes are a long way from being screen-reader friendly. Substantial collaboration with software developers will be needed to make Windows 8 app and programmes work with screen-readers.

For sighted users, the transition may not be too bad but people averse to change will certainly hate Windows 8. The move to replace the Start Button with the Apps page may seem like a big change at first but it is really not that different once you get used to using the Apps page instead.

Nevertheless, the feel of the Metro UI is a big change obviously driven by a desire to make this OS Integrated with the cloud and work on tablets and phones. In this regard, it will have no benefit for blind users since there is not yet any tablet or phone that is accessible to the totally blind community.

CLIMBING KINABALU AT AGE 63

by Godfrey Ooi Goat See

Irene Shiu, volunteer, leading team of blind climbers at KLIA Airport
October 13, 2011 Thursday



Godfrey leading Kinabalu climbers singing at Sabah restaurant
October 13, 2011



The climbers at Kinabalu Peak
October 15, 2011 Saturday



Godfrey and other climbers at Kinabalu Peak
October 15, 2011 Saturday



Godfrey at Kinabalu Peak with Rotary members



Godfrey receiving cert from Dato' Jimmy Lim, President, Rotary Bandar
Utama
October 15, 2011 Saturday



The four blind climbers holding their certs - Kinabalu Climb
October 15, 2011 Saturday



The four Blind Climbers with Rotary Members – Kinabalu Climb
October15 2011 Saturday



CLIMBING KINABALU AT AGE 63

By Godfrey Ooi Goat See

One day I received a phone call from a friend, Irene Shiu, informing me that I had been selected to be among eighteen disabled persons to climb Mount Kinabalu, the highest peak in South-East Asia. Three other blind persons who would join me were Jacqueline Emmanuel, Eddy Chong Ted Hin, and Taslim Kosni.

I could not believe it – how could I climb such a high mountain at the age of sixty-three? I remembered the 1960's when the Blind at St. Nicholas School for the Blind in Penang had the first opportunity to climb the mountain – I was not chosen because they needed only “the strong people”! Thus, when I heard of the offer to climb over the phone, I was filled with worry and anxiety. And so I suggested to Irene the names of two other blind persons but she said that the organisers wanted me.

Subsequently, I heard the story of a cerebral palsied girl who managed to make it to the top of Kinabalu. Initially, Mr. Ong Hock Siew, the event organiser, had doubted her ability to climb. However, when he saw her determination and courage, he gave her the opportunity and she did not disappoint him and saw her seemingly impossible dream come true. This filled me with such inspiration that I told Irene I would give it a try.

When I told my wife and some friends that I had made up my mind to climb the mountain, they tried to dissuade me because they were genuinely concerned. They said that I was too small and too weak; the rocks were too high and too steep and the steps were as tall as a man's height; the winds were cold and chilly and the stones were sharp and slippery; in fact, climbers had fallen sick or even died from injuries and had to be carried down by stretcher for hundreds of Ringgit or flown out by helicopter for thousands of Ringgit. These warnings did make me a little fearful but I decided that I would not allow such fears to deter me.

And so I took up the training by climbing various hills in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor during the week-ends. The training, organised by Paul Nyu and Nigel of the Rotary Club, helped greatly to build up my strength and stamina and gave me the confidence and the determination not to lose the golden

opportunity of a lifetime. I was further encouraged when I heard that others aged seventy and more had done it – so why not me at 63?

On Thursday, October 13, 2011, we started off at about 7 a.m. At first the climb was not too difficult and so I joined the two jolly Rotarian members in my team, John Siau and Yap, singing our way up. But we eventually fell silent as the climb got harder and we had to struggle over big rocks which seemed to be never-ending. We were supposed to have reached Laban Rata, the mid-point, by 5 p.m. However, we only made it at around 8.15 p.m.

I felt so tired that I was thinking of not continuing with the second stage of the climb. In the morning, however, I felt my vigour restored and so I renewed my determination to complete my mission. Indeed, the Climb was even tougher as the rocks were much higher and steeper; at one stage, I had to cling on to the ropes as I edged my way along the narrow and steep mountainside. My hands hurt, my muscles ached and I was afraid I might tumble down the treacherous slope. But I knew there was no turning back!

At long last, it was around 2.30 p.m. on October 15 (Saturday) when we reached the top at Sir Hugh Low's Peak! What a relief and great joy I felt surging within me despite my tired and aching feet – I could not believe it, I had made it to the Peak of Kinabalu – 4095.2 metres above sea level!

Climbing down also had its difficulties and challenges but they did not bother me too much as I had accomplished my goal. I had to slide on my bottom in order to get down safely from the high rocks which were slippery with the rain. The tracks were full of water, my shoes and socks were soaking wet, one of my legs got trapped in holes and gaps occasionally, and my toes were giving way. But with persistence, I managed to reach the lodge at Laban Rata by about 7.00 p.m., two hours later than normal.

As we climbed down from Laban Rata the next morning on Sunday, October 16, my tired feet found the big steps and narrow pathways quite tricky and difficult and I nearly tumbled head over heels several times – fortunately, I had the strong hand of the native guide to keep me from falling!

At one stage, I slowed to a halt and I thought I would surely not make it down the hill. I took an energy bar and prayed to God for strength and perseverance to continue. Then an idea came to my head and I remembered the advice given to me when we climbed the Penang Hill in 1976 – “Land on

your heels; don't land on your toes"! Then I was tickled with laughter as I remembered Eddy Chong teasing me the night before when I told him I had been landing too much on my toes – "Don't do the ballet on the mountain!" He teased.

After quite a long rest, I walked slowly at first. Gradually, I found more energy and less pain except when I happened to snag on my aching toes!

Then when the guide said that we were just one hundred metres more from our destination, my heart leaped with great joy. Finally, I reached the bottom at around 5.00 p.m. to shouts of warm welcome and happy triumph!

Indeed, I must thank Rotary for the wonderful opportunity I have had to discover my capacity and realise my potential. In the course of my mountaineering challenge, these words came to my mind and I want to dedicate them to Rotary:

When the climb is tough
And the mountain is high
And the big rocks are
The only stones you'll see.

I will try, I will try,
Oh no, I won't give up,
Cause I know Rotary's there
With you and me.

Oh Rotary, Rotary,
Thanks Rotary, thanks Rotary,
For the climb beyond
Disabilities.

Oh Rotary, Rotary,
Stand by me, you stood by me,
Thanks Rotary,
You made our dreams come true.

Malaysia boleh,
Rotary boleh,
OKU boleh!

PROMOTING PARTICIPATION IN THE POLITICAL PROCESSES AND IN DECISION-MAKING

By Datuk P. Manogran

Editor's note: Ten goals have been outlined in the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons With Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. This Strategy was formulated at the International Conference on Disability held in South Korea in November 2012.

Malaysia held a follow-up Conference in July 2013 for implementation of the Incheon Strategy in the country. Datuk P. Manogran looks at the second goal in the Strategy to see how it can be implemented in Malaysia.

The Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons With Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific has as its second goal the need to "Promote Participation in the Political Processes and in decision-making".

In Malaysia this can be analysed from three dimensions; namely:

- a. The policies, legislations and groups representing Persons With Disabilities;
- b. The practices of the Election Management Body in terms of registering Persons With Disabilities as electors, the appropriate physical environment to vote, and suitable methods of voting.
- c. Persons With Disabilities as electors and their support network.



The PWD's face numerous barriers which can be categorised into five types as follows:

a. **Architectural and Physical:**

This would include places for registration of electors, the layout of the polling station, provision of ramps, location of the polling station and voting devices.

b. **Attitudinal and Cultural:**

This would include the beliefs, assumptions and action or inaction on the part of the Election Management Body, political parties and disability organisations that may result in systems that are not designed with the needs of the PWD's in mind.

c. **Information and Communication:**

This would include the lack of voter education and awareness programmes designed specifically for the PWD's, information on where and when to register, location of polling centres and polling stations and information on parties and candidates;

d. **Laws and Policies:**

This refers to the provisions in the laws and regulations and the statement of specific policies to encourage the participation of the PWD's, and if they are enforceable and are in fact enforced.

e. **The Socio-Economic Status of the PWD's**

This would encompass their place of stay, friends, neighbours, level of education, age and the care-givers.

Election Commission of Malaysia

The Election Commission of Malaysia was established under article 114 of the Federal Constitution on 4th September 1957. When it started, it had a Chairman and two members. Now it has a Chairman, Deputy Chairman and five members. They are appointed by the Yang Di Pertuan Agong after consultation with the Council of Rulers. They are appointed till they reach the age of 66. However, a member can resign by writing to the Agong. He can also be removed if he becomes an undischarged bankrupt, is employed in any other position that brings him monetary income or is a member of the House of Representatives. However, a member of the EC cannot be removed from office except on the like grounds and in the like manner as a Judge of the Federal Court.

The EC undertakes three main functions as follows:

- A. Conducts elections to the House of Representatives and the State Legislative Assemblies, including the by-elections.
- B. Reviews the division of the Federation into Parliamentary constituencies and the States into State Constituencies at an interval of not less than eight years between the date of completion of one review and the commencement of the next review. These reviews are done in accordance with the Thirteenth schedule of the Federal Constitution.

The laws and regulations governing elections in Malaysia are as follows:

- a. The Federal Constitution
- b. The State Constitutions
- c. The Elections Act, 1958
- d. Election Offences Act, 1958
- e. Election (Conduct of Elections) Regulations 1981
- f. Elections (Registration of Electors) Regulations 2002
- g. Elections (Postal Voting) Regulations 2003.

There is nothing in the Federal and State Constitutions and the election laws and regulations that discriminate against the PWD's. Under Article 47 of the Federal Constitution, every citizen resident in the Federation is qualified to be a member of the Senate if he/she is not less than 30 years old and a member of the House of Representatives if he is not less than 21 years old.

Similarly, nothing prevents a person who has attained the age of 21 from contesting in an election. A person need not even be a registered elector to be appointed a Senator or to stand for an election. The only exception is a person of unsound mind.

A person will be disqualified from being appointed a Senator or to stand for election only if:

- a. He is and has been found or declared to be of unsound mind;
- b. He is an undischarged bankrupt;
- c. He holds an office of profit;
- d. Having been nominated to stand for election or having acted as an agent of the candidate, or failed to file any return of election expenses within 31 days after the results are gazetted.
- e. He has been convicted of an offence by a court of law in the Federation and sentenced to an imprisonment for a term of not less than one year or to a fine of not less than RM2,000.00 and has not received a free pardon;
- f. He has voluntarily acquired citizenship to any country outside the Federation.

The PWD's are also not excluded from registering as an elector and voting during the elections. To register as an elector, one must:

- a. Be a Malaysian citizen
- b. Have attained the age of 21 on the qualifying date
- c. Be a resident in a constituency on such qualifying date or if not a resident, is an absent voter.

The laws and regulations in Malaysia do not distinguish between the PWD's and others as electors. The only exception is the specific provision in Sub-Regulation 19(7) of the Elections (Conduct of Elections) Regulations 1981. This provision states that at the request of a voter who is incapacitated by blindness or other physical cause may take along any person whom he trusts to mark the ballot paper on his behalf in a manner dictated by the voter and subsequently placed in the ballot box. In the past, the trusted person had

to be a relative and his/her name must appear in the electoral roll. Now the trusted person only has to make a statutory declaration using Form 10. In the absence of a trusted person, the voter may seek the assistance of the Presiding Officer.

The EC has undertaken several measures to assist the PWD's on polling day. For example, wheelchairs are provided at every polling centre for the PWD's. Ushers have been appointed for each polling centre to help the PWD's arriving at the entrance of the centre. They will help the PWD's with a wheelchair if required, obtain the serial number and the number of the polling station before taking them to the right polling station. At the polling station, the PWD's need not wait in line to cast their vote.

The EC has also implemented an operational procedure where the first polling station (or Stream 1) in any polling centre has to be on the ground floor for the convenience of the voters since Stream 1 is meant for senior citizens. Unfortunately, in the case of the PWD's, the EC has no record to indicate a citizen who has registered as an elector is a person with a disability. While this is a sign that the EC treats all electors equally, the downside is that the EC will not be able to take specific measures for the benefit of the PWD's. They only get "spotted" when they arrive at the polling centre and then the ushers assist in whatever way they can. However, there are disabilities that are not apparent externally, like those who are hearing-impaired or those who have speech impairment.

Given that Form A, which is used to apply for registration as an elector, does not request any data on disability, the EC has no record of any person's disabilities. As a result, the EC has no idea as to how many PWD's have registered themselves as electors and how many actually turn out to cast their votes. International research suggests that the PWD's are less likely to be registered as an elector due to a number of factors. Organisations dealing with different disabilities may have to look into this and help ensure that more of these persons have the opportunity to exercise their vote.

While the limited mention of people with disabilities in the laws and regulations related to election may mean that there is no discrimination against the PWD's, it could also mean that the EC and others involved

in the electoral processes and decision-making may not be aware of the specific needs of the PWD's. Based on the findings of studies in developed countries, the latter seems to be the more probable.

This is made worse by the fact that the needs of the people with different kinds of disabilities will differ. Probably, the PWD's themselves may not be aware of their rights and obligation as citizens and therefore they may not even register as electors in the first place let alone vote.

Another reality is that the number of PWD's is limited and therefore does not form a critical mass important enough for political parties to focus their attention on them. The same applies to the EC which may not be aware of the peculiar needs of the different categories of PWD's.

Suggestions

- a. In cooperation with the EC, provide voter education and create awareness among the PWD's about the importance of election in a democracy and their roles in the electoral processes.
- b. Encourage the PWD's to register as electors by working with the EC to make the process accessible to them.
- c. After an individual has applied to be registered as an elector, follow through to ensure that the application for registration is successful. If the name is not included in the Supplementary Electoral Roll for that quarter, submit a claim for the name to be included in the Roll.
- d. If the PWD moves to another place of residence, use Form A to apply for a change of polling centre. This is to ensure that the PWD gets a polling centre that is close to his place of residence.
- e. Obtain materials on elections from the EC and translate them into the medium most suitable to the needs of Persons With Specific Disabilities, such as in Braille for those who are vision-impaired.

- f. Organisations can assist in creating awareness among their members about the system of government, democracy and the rights of the electors.
- g. The Bodies can also assist in arranging for transport of the PWD's to the polling centres.
- h. Organisations may request to be members of task forces or work groups to convey the needs of the PWD's to the EC. A good example was a request for a team of Persons With Disabilities to observe the 13th General Elections recently. Their purpose was to observe the extent to which the physical environment at the polling centre and the polling station meets the requirements of the PWD's.
- i. The Treasury should allocate more resources in the form of money and personnel to the EC for it to implement some of the good practices implemented in developed countries.

New Practices In Developed Countries

Some of the more developed countries have adopted new approaches, methods and techniques in the electoral processes to increase the participation of the PWD's. They include Canada, the United States, New Zealand and Australia. These practices include:

- a. Postal voting for PWD's was introduced in Britain in the late 1940's and it has now been extended to the PWD's.
- b. Mobile voting whereby election officials with ballot box and ballot papers go to the institutions such as hospitals and nursing homes to get the PWD's to cast their votes.
- c. New tactile voting devices to replace the traditional voting system for PWD's.
- d. Casting ballot papers through telephone to a secure call centre as in Australia.

- e. Family members of a PWD who is a registered elector can be allowed to cast his vote on his behalf.
- f. Nominate others to register them as electors on their behalf and also to vote on their behalf if they do not have the capacity to understand the nature of their decisions.
- g. Those intending to vote by post do not need the signature of a notary or medical certification.
- h. Providing magnifying glasses at polling stations and ballot papers in Braille to make the role of a trusted person unnecessary.
- i. The use of new techniques in voting such as optical scanning machines, direct record electronic voting machines and the laptop computer notebook.
- j. Electronic and Internet Voting. However, this has been rejected by at least one country for privacy and security reasons.

(Note: Datuk Dr. P. Manogran is a Member of the Election Commission Malaysia)

A POINT TO PONDER: WHY MUST YOU ALWAYS BE IN A HURRY?

By Datuk P. Manogran

You would probably have heard stories of people forgetting to bring along important items just to carry out some necessary chores. Can you imagine the frustration of the person who, after climbing up tens of floors to his apartment in a condominium, found out that he had forgotten the keys to the main door entrance? Thus, he had to walk down so many flights of stairs to fetch his keys from the car and then walk up again to his apartment.

My neighbor, Jane (not her real name), recently retired from her full-time job. As she was still relatively young and active, she liked to help around with relatives, friends and neighbours, answering calls and solving some minor problems here and there.

Frequently, upon hearing of requests for help, Jane would rush to the scene and discover that she had forgotten some important matters. Consequently, she had to rush to the place more than once in order to get the job done.

For example, she may be asked to help with some minor repairs for a sewing-machine or a kitchen utensil. However, only after reaching the place would she remember that she had forgotten to bring along the necessary tools.

When she discovered defects on an electrical item, she would bring it back to the shop for replacement. Unfortunately, she would discover that she had not brought along the warranty card or the receipt.

When dealing with matters pertaining to the Government, she would often forget the long lunch-break, thereby resulting in a long waiting time or even insufficient time for her to complete an otherwise simple and straightforward task. Likewise, after showing her Identity Card to the bank, hospital or Government department, she would often forget to collect back the most important document upon leaving the office. Therefore, she would have to waste additional time trying to retrieve the Identity Card.

One day, she had to attend a wedding reception in a hotel. Only as she approached the area did she realise that there were two or three similar hotels. Moreover, she forgot to bring along the invitation card and she had to waste lots of precious time looking for the right place.

On another occasion, she mistakenly brought along her daughter's passport and only realised the mistake when she was at the airport customs checkpoint. Can you imagine the frustration she had to go through to make new arrangements for her travel?

Indeed, the list of forgetting this and that is endless – however, with some careful thought, this kind of inconvenience could be avoided and much time would be saved. This would in turn enable us to carry out our daily duties more efficiently and effectively if we are not always in a hurry!

So how do we avoid all this forgetting and prevent such inconveniences from occurring?

Firstly, remember that our memory is not always reliable, especially when we are rushing against time and we need to keep in mind the many things that have to be done. Writing or recording down some of the important points according to sequence and priority could be very helpful. Nowadays there are so many modern tools for us to do this such as the computer, smart phone or mini-recorder; however, even a pencil or, in the case of the blind, just a stylus and Braille frame will do!

Secondly, don't forget to make appointments when you are required to see a medical specialist, a lawyer or any other specific personnel. It may seem to be long-winded but it is always wiser to reconfirm the appointment one or two days before the actual meeting.

Thirdly, in the case of attending a few chores on the same day, make sure that you have a clear idea of the travel route. This would save you from having to travel, say, thirty kilometers north for one errand and then come back twenty-five kilometers south to complete another task. Nevertheless, we should take note that in some cases, various documents may have to be made for an application; in such a circumstance when preference has

to be given to producing such documentation, travelling extra miles would probably be unavoidable.

In whatever circumstances, take a few moments to calm ourselves down first. Know exactly what we are going to do and then make preparations for the necessary arrangements, documentation and equipment or tools to be brought along.

Make sure that all receipts, especially for electrical items, are kept in an easy to find place. You may need those receipts when certain items have to be repaired or replaced.

Also, ensure that all your important documents are up to date. Passports and driving licences have to be renewed while insurance or other instalments have to be paid up on time. In the case of beneficiaries of your EPF and insurance scheme, you should ascertain once in a while as to whether they are still alive. If they have passed away, you can rename your beneficiaries as you wish.

Finally, I would like to emphasise the importance of writing down or making a record of important points whenever possible. Do not leave everything to memory because that would be like leaving everything to chance – like it or not, our memory can fail us many a time!

QUOTATIONS FROM THE CALENDAR 2011-2013

Here are some quotations which appeared in the calendars of St. Nicholas Home from 2011 to 2013:

Confucius:

Our greatest glory is not in never falling but in getting up everytime we do.

Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.

You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree.

Worrying doesn't take away tomorrow's troubles, it takes away today's peace.

Patience has its limits. Take it too far, and its cowardice.

Can there be anything worse than losing eye-sight? Yes, losing your vision.

Believing everybody is dangerous, believing nobody is very dangerous.

The best religion is the one that makes you a better person.

The Universe is the echo of our actions and our thoughts.

To handle yourself use your head, to handle others use your heart.

What you do for yourself dies with you but what you do for other people lives on.

Barack Obama:

Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.

Sight is what we see with our eyes. Insight is what we gain without seeing.

When you are in the light, everything follows you. When you are in the dark, even your own shadow doesn't follow you.

A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one.

Do ordinary things in an extraordinary way.

I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I still can do something. Because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do. – Helen Keller

The happiest people in the world are not those who have no problems, but those who learn to live with things that are less than perfect.

Wise men speak because they have something to say; fools speak because they have to say something. – Plato

When we are young, we learn to read; when we grow up, we read to learn.

Think globally but act locally.

**PRINCIPAL OFFICE-BEARERS AND COUNCIL
MEMBERS OF NCBM
FOR 2012 - 2014**

Mdm Jasmine Khoo Khin Sheen,
President, NCBM

Rev. Rt. Andrew Phang See Yin,
Vice-President, NCBM - St. Nicholas Home

Mr. Wong On Fook,
Hon. Secretary, NCBM - Sabah Society for the Blind

Mr. (James) Lau Kung Wuong,
Hon. Treasurer, NCBM - Sarawak Society for the Blind

Prof. Datuk (Dr) Abdullah Malim Baginda -
Malaysian Association for the Blind

Mr. George Heng Kiang Choong -
Malaysian Association for the Blind

Mdm Rosalind Chew -
Sabah Society for the Blind

Mr. William G. Brohier -
St. Nicholas Home

Dato' Dr Hsiung Kwo Yeun -
Sarawak Society for the Blind

En. Mohd Mustaza Mohamad Zin -
Society of the Blind in Malaysia

Mr. Loh Kong Ken -
Society of the Blind in Malaysia

CHAIRPERSONS OF COMMITTEES OF NCBM FOR 2012 - 2014

Committee on Education (COE) -
Dr. Kway Eng Hock

Committee on Employment and Economic Empowerment (CEEE) -
Dr Wong Huey Siew

Committee on Wellness and Prevention of Blindness (CWPB) -
Dr Choong Yean Yaw

AUDITOR 2012 - 2014

Inpana & Associates,
Kuala Lumpur

REPRESENTATIVES OF NCBM TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS, 2010 - 2012

Malaysian Council for Rehabilitation (MCR) -
Mr Moses Choo Siew Cheong

National Council of Welfare and Social Development Malaysia
(NCWSDM)
Mr Loh Kong Ken

World Blind Union
Dato' Hsiung Kwo Yuen and Mr Ivan Ho Tuck Choy

EARN SOME EXTRA CASH

Readers are invited to write for our publication, “THE NCBM OUTREACH”. For articles published, payments are as follows:-

1. Original articles on the achievements of blind people or of an inspirational nature (about 500 words) - RM75.00
2. Articles containing ideas and suggestions for the improvement of NCBM or its member-organisations (about 500 words) - RM75.00
3. Articles on funny or unusual experiences (250 - 500 words) - RM35.00 - RM75.00
4. Interesting articles taken from magazines or documents of limited circulation - RM10.00.

(Note: Articles submitted by officials of NCBM or its member-organisations will not qualify for payment unless these submissions have nothing to do with their daily office duties.)

NOTES

NOTES

NOTES