## NCBMI OUTREACH



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The views expressed in this publication are those of the author/contributor and do not necessarily represent the views of NCBM.

### VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT OF NOBM

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



Moses Choo Siew Cheong

Wong Yoon Loong

Wong Kwee Heong

Nurun Jamiah

Chin Yew Cheng

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## 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 and vision-impaired (BVI).

It cost the National Council for the Blind, Malaysia RM 30,000.00 a year to produce both print and Braille.

Your financial support, therefore, will 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 the National Council for the Blind, Malaysia or Majlis Kebangsaan bagi Orang Buta, Malaysia.

Donations should be made in the name of:

### NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND, MALAYSIA OR MAJLIS KEBANGSAAN BAGI ORANG BUTA, MALAYSIA

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\* Please note that NCBM has not appointed any agent to collect cash on its behalf. Thank you.

## ANNOUNCEVIENTS

#### NCBM'S SUPPORT SCHEMES FOR THE BLIND

### 1. NCBM's Job Pioneering Scheme

This scheme was launched in 2012 whereby NCBM collaborates with prospective employers in providing employment opportunities for the blind. The blind person will work for a period of three to six months and be paid a monthly allowance of RM1,200 by NCBM. At the end of the period, it is hoped that the employer will be convinced of the blind person's capabilities and give him permanent employment.

Please contact the NCBM secretariat for the application form. Tel. 03-2028 1999.

### 2. Equipment Loan Fund for the Blind

NCBM would like to see significant improvement in job opportunities for the blind in Malaysia. Therefore, blind persons in employment who face the difficulty in obtaining adaptive equipment to help them in their work can get in touch with NCBM for such assistance.

For more details, please call the NCBM secretariat at 03-2028 1999.

#### 1. Research Grant

Anybody, blind or sighted, interested in carrying out research on employment for the blind or on blindness prevention can make application to NCBM for a research grant. The amount to be provided can range from RM3,000 to RM5,000.

#### Note:

For more details concerning these projects and for the application form, you can contact the NCBM Secretariat.

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Email: info@ncbm.org.my

Contact person: administrative assistant

### NCBM NATIONAL BRAILLE READING COMPETITION 2019 HELD ON 15 NOVEMBERAT KOMPLEKS MAB

### BAHASA MELAYU (JUNIOR CATEGORY)

1st Prize - KELVIN MAKUPI (Representing Sabah Society for the Blind)

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize - PARTIBAN A/L PERUMAL (Representing MAB)

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize - ALEEYA NURAISYAH BT MOHAMAD (Representing SBM)

### BAHASA MELAYU (SENIOR CATEGORY)

1st Prize - ROSNI BT SAINI (Representing SBM)

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize - NAWAL BT KHAIRIL ANWAR (Representing SNH)

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize - ABIAN JAMBOT (Representing MAB)

### **ENGLISH (JUNIOR CATEGORY)**

1st Prize - RISHAN PONRAJ A/L SIVARAJ (Representing MAB)

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize – TAN JUN SHENG (Representing SNH)

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize – THEW MING SOON (Representing SBM)

### **ENGLISH (SENIOR CATEGORY)**

1st Prize - NAWAL BT. KHAIRIL ANWAR (Representing SNH)

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize – CHAN SAU YIN (Representing SBM)

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize – SOMIIN BT SUALIN (Representing Sabah Society for the Blind)

### NEWS FROM NCBM AND MEMBER-ORGANISATIONS

### ENABRING MATAYSIA ROT JUST COMPLAINT, BUTTAKE ACTIONS

By Nadhir Nasir and Wong Yoon Loong

It was said that Malaysia has shifted from a charity-based mindset to human rights-based consciousness in regard to persons with disabilities. Of course, it is the duty of the Government to promote, protect, and ensure the rights of Malaysians with disabilities, be it in the form of policies, programs, and even subsistence aids. But, what about our roles and responsibilities, especially the leaders of local Organisations of Disabled People (ODP) and the disabled community in general., We will discuss the attitude, knowledge, and action amongst Malaysians with disabilities themselves.

We are not simply condemning any or all organizations for and of persons with disabilities in this country, nor to attack any particular personality. Instead, we hope to encourage critical consciousness among Malaysians with disabilities in our effort and aspiration to make this beloved country truly inclusive for all. Let use the recent national budget discourse among persons with disabilities as a case example. Whether online or offline conversations, the most prominent issue among persons with disabilities was the need to increase the amount of assistance aid for them, particularly the disabled worker allowance (EPC). It is not an exaggeration to say that this issue became the mainstream talking point in every year budget discussion, at least for the last five years.

Of course, the financial assistance schemes provided by the government offered immediate and short-term relief for those who need them. However, it is only a short-term remedy. Asking for an increase in the assistance amount did not tackle the structural ecosystem which prohibited persons with disabilities to achieve and sustain their quality of life in the first place. We are not saying that money is not important. In fact, human rights-based development still demands a lot of capital too. But, what concerned us is the over-prioritization of 'special allowance' over other issues, which we strongly feel hold far more importance.

In other situations, whenever there was a problem or conflict affecting persons with disabilities, what did we do? Were we just sitting at the coffee shop and complain about it, bashing those who we deemed as 'failed champions'? Or, did we do something about it? To ensure our rights are protected, citizens (which in this case are the persons with disabilities) also bear a responsibility to fight and ensure their rights are being fulfilled. Though most of us are just ordinary citizens, we still have our space, channel, and capacity to advocate for our rights. If you find yourselves lacking in terms of skills and knowledge, build your capabilities.

Whenever there were opportunities to voice out, did we use them effectively? Did we propose possible solutions to the government and other stakeholders, rather than just complaining? We are pointing out these issues not to say those anecdotes and lived experiences of persons with disabilities are not important for the policymaking process. It certainly is. However, the community of Malaysians with disabilities, especially leaders, must able to provide possible ways to emancipate us from continuous inequality. We argue that the disabled community must attain justice guided by knowledge and adopt effective advocacy as our core tool.

How many organizations for and of persons with disabilities in Malaysia took up the opportunities produced by the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities 2016-2022? How many organizations for and of persons with disabilities thought of and carried out catalytic projects linked to key actions under the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific 2013-2022? These questions were hard and painful to ask, but imperative for us to reflect.

Last year, all ASEAN member countries, including Malaysia adopted a medium-term regional plan called the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Though most of the 76 key actions underlined in the masterplan fall under the jurisdiction of different ministries, we strongly feel there are some key actions that can be transformed into catalytic projects and led by local disabled people's organizations. However, the question remains, are we prepared to take on this responsibility?

To begin, we must strengthen our coalition of persons with disabilities and main allies (e.g. parents of children with disabilities and other civil society organisations) in this country. We must avoid further disconnectedness and segregation among persons with diverse types of impairment and/or chronic illness. Building mutual ownership and partnership are not easy, but we must start now. The leaders of organizations for and of persons with disabilities must be ready to develop and re-develop the necessary skills and knowledge to solve structural and systemic issues affecting the community. Young leaders must also be trained and be given as much freedom to contribute to the advocacy effort.

The whole community of persons with disabilities must also increase their political literacy and awareness about disability issues in general. We must be open to learn and embrace disability studies. This is where academia and civil discourse can collaborate and consolidate the movement towards inclusive Malaysia. We believe political literacy, critical consciousness on disability, and guided advocacy are the true embodiment of human rights-based living in this country. We call all leaders and general population of persons with disabilities to cultivate these three instruments for change.

## FROM SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND IN MALAYSIA:

## 1%OKU DVIPLOMIMITEORIADI

The President of the Society of the Blind in Malaysia (SBM), Tuan Haji Mohamed Nazari bin Haji Othman, made a press statement commending YB. Hannah Yeoh, Deputy Minister of Women, Family and Community Development, for having taken the bold step towards fulfilling the long awaited promise of 1% employment for the disabled in the public sector. Her move has given hope the meaning to the lives of the disabled, particularly the visually impaired, in our country. She has also given confidence to the donors and service-providers of training for the blind who have been constantly equipping the blind with skills to meet the demands of the employment market. She is certainly a source of inspiration to the disabled and the caregivers by providing the truly needed motivation for gainful employment.

Tuan Haji Mohamed Nazari said, "We wish to remind prospective employers that the disabled are individuals in their own right possessing their own strengths and weaknesses just like the so-called able-bodied. In fact, nobody wishes to have a disability but that disability could befall anyone at any time."

According to YB. Hannah Yeoh, the 1 percent OKU employment policy had been established way back in 1987 but enforcement had been weak as no one had been penalised or judged for failing to take action.

She said, "Now we have put the 1% OKU employment under the KPI of the secretary-general of every ministry, which means that the secretary-general now has to make sure that they hire the OKU'S."

YB. Hannah Yeoh also stated that the plus points for hiring the OKU included increasing diversity in the corporation, becoming more inclusive, as well as understanding the needs of the disabled better.

# SPECIAL TERCO DISCOUNTS FOR THE DISABITED BY MAXIS AND CERCOMB

Tuan Haji Mohamed Nazari bin Haji Othman, President of SBM, made another press statement expressing heartfelt thanks to both Maxis and Celcom and all others who had seen the need for inclusion of the disabled in this digital age. This has given great motivation to SBM to encourage and mobilise the blind to take advantage of this opportunity towards their own economic advancement.

He said, "We believe that the visually impaired can go a long way in developing their skills for e-commerce which knows no boundaries or discrimination. We do salute all moves towards enabling and empowering the disabled."

As reported in the press, Maxis would like to be more inclusive for all Malaysians by offering a special lifetime rebate for the disabled. The OKU customers can get RM10 monthly off when they sign up for a Hotlink postpaid flex plan that offers unlimited calls and SMS. With this offering, the OKU customers, can enjoy 5GB of data with unlimited calls and SMS for only RM30 per months. Customers can sign up at any Maxis centre or Maxis exclusive partner and present their original identity Card (MY Kad). and OKU card.

The Hotlink post-paid plan also offers additional unlimited add-ons which include unlimited social communication and music at RM10 per month. There is also an unlimited chat add-on for RM5 per month.

It was also reported that Celcom had announced its initiative to empower disabled customers by providing them priority service at all Celcom bluecube outlets with a lifetime rebate. The blue Telco is taking a step further by offering home visitations as well.

They can request for a customer service representative from Celcom to come to their home by calling in at 111 or 019-6011111. Alternatively, customers can also request via Celcom's website and social media platforms.

According to Celcom's CEO, Idham Nawawi, Telco is honoured to do its part following its customer first pledge that prioritises complaints resolution and customer service quality. He added, "Celcom assures inclusivity for its differently abled customers by empowering them with technology, which has been made accessible with its exclusive priority services."

Similar to other telco's, Celcom also offers RM10 lifetime monthly rebates on the Celcom mobile post-paid, the Celcom home wireless, and the Celcom xpax post-paid plans for all OKU customers.

### COINCIPIED THE DAY IN MILES

by Ivan Ho Tuck Choy

When the Japanese troops landed in Kota Bharu in 1941 and made rapid progress across the country, it took the British forces by surprise as they were expecting the invaders to come from the south by attacking Singapore. The naval base down south was heavily fortified in anticipation of the impending invasion. Thus, after putting up some fierce resistance at the Slim River in Perak and Parit Sulong in Johor, the British and Australian troops retreated to Singapore. Within days, however, Singapore also fell to the invading japs.

The Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) under the leadership of Chin Peng (which was already active in the country) fled into the jungle with his followers in order to carry out guerrilla warfare against the new enemies. Although they were massively outnumbered and outgunned by the japs, the communists, with local resistance and support, managed to inflict some casualties upon the enemy troops and the Japanese-administered civil service and even upon the locals who had to work for the enemy either through fear of death if they refused or just simply for survival. Indeed, the attacks by the communists resulted in harsh reprisals from the japs against the civilian population in those areas where the skirmishes took place.

When Japan surrendered in 1945 after the United States had dropped two atomic bombs, each on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the British returned to reestablished control over the country. However, they found that the situation and the political sentiments had changed and that the desire for self-rule was spreading across the countries of Asia and Africa. The Malay leaders, among whom was Tunku Abdul Rahman, had formed the United Malay National Organisation (UMNO) and they had begun negotiations with the British Government for independence. Later, they were joined by the Chinese who had founded the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA), initially as a welfare body and the Indians with the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) to form the Alliance Party which then contested in the general elections of 1955.

The British asked the CPM to lay down their weapons and to join in the political process. CPM flatly refused, however, insistent on the British leaving the country unconditionally. This was, of course, unacceptable both to the British and the local leaders. And so CPM started attacking the British forces

and to terrorise the civilian population when they refused to support the Communist cause.

Soon the attacks grew more frequent and vicious with the burning of buses and schools. And so in 1948, the British placed the country under "emergency rule" and they introduced several drastic measures in order to cut off contact and support for the communists, now referred to as the terrorists. (Readers who are interested in the happenings of this era can get a good account from the book, "The jungle is neutral" by Spencer Chapman).

Some of the measures taken by the British administration to defeat the terrorists included the mobilisation of eligible men to join the army and in the formation of the local armed force. During this exercise, many of the Chinese migrants opted to return to China.

Another measure taken was the conducting of a census for the purpose of enforcing the food rationing programme. Under this programme, families were permitted to purchase only a certain quota of foodstuffs per week according to the size of each family.

However, the most effective step of all in cutting off supplies to the terrorists was the introduction of the "re-settlement programme". Under this programme, which involved mostly the Chinese and Indian families who did not own any property and who were living in the rural areas, each family was given a plot of land measuring about 35 by 13 metres to build their own houses in fenced-up "new villages". Males above the age of 18 were conscripted into the "home guards" corp and they were divided into groups to patrol the perimeters of the villages at night.

The gates of these new villages were manned both day and night by armed soldiers and home guards, and the perimeters were patrolled at night. People must, therefore, be home by a certain time each day or be interrogated by the police. The people who had to go outside the New Villages to work were checked to make sure that the food they brought along with them was meant only for themselves.

Like the rest of the people selected to join the Resettlement Programme, we were given a plot of land in Pokok Assam New Village. The place was very

well laid out, with electric lighting on every street and public taps located at strategic areas as none of the houses had electricity or running water. We were extremely poor and we built our houses, stage by stage, with planks for the walls and atap leaves for the roofs. Some of the houses used compressed clay for flooring.

The MCA, which had a licence to run a regular lottery, distributed muchneeded cash to help the villagers. The lottery was later taken over by the Government and it was known as the Social Welfare Lottery.

As my father could speak English, he was appointed to help in the affairs of Pokok Assam. This meant that he had to meet often with the local authorities concerning the welfare of the villagers.

One day in late 1952, Mr. Roberts, the British Administrator for Taiping, was on an inspection visit to the village and he was accompanied by the village elders, including my father. When they were near our house and it began to rain quite heavily, my father invited him to our house to wait out the storm. It was then that Mr. Roberts spotted me.

"Mr. Ho, I didn't know you have a blind son. How old is he and how did he become blind?" asked Mr. Roberts.

"About three years ago when he was six," replied my father. "One night when returning from watching and open-air show in town with his brother and sister, his vision started playing tricks with him. Instead of seeing the real object, he saw the shadows as the real thing. Since he was walking very briskly and trying to avoid the "shadows" of the trees, he bumped right into the trunk of one where the Dato' Keramat spirit was residing. Dato' Keramat was so shocked by the intrusion that he struck him in the eyes. When my son woke up the next morning, his eyes were swollen and he could no longer see. We rushed him to the Ipoh General hospital where he stayed for a month at the Children's Ward to recover from the swollen eyes and other health complications. But the doctors could not restore his eyesight. We did bring offerings to pray to the Dato' Keramat to ask for forgiveness but it didn't work."

After listening to the fantastic story, Mr. Roberts suggested to my father that I should be sent to St. Nicholas' School in Penang where blind children could receive education and be trained on handicraft-making such as basket-making, towel weaving and making window blinds with split atap wood. If my father would agree to the suggestion, Mr. Roberts said he would make the necessary arrangements to send me there. My father was quite excited over the idea of his blind child going to school, but he was a bit resistant and requested for a few days to consider the offer.

After a few days, Mr. Roberts came and there ensued a long discussion.

"Mr. Roberts," said my father. "Your offer of help is much appreciated but how could I explain to my relatives and friends the cruelty of sending my young child so far away from home? He is blind and it seems I'm abandoning him because of his blindness. I have decided that it's my duty to keep him by my side, and whatever I can afford, I will give to him."

"Mr. Ho, how old are you," asked Mr. Roberts.

"Thirty-two," came the answer.

"And how old is your son?" Mr. Roberts continued.

"Nine plus," replied my father.

Mr. Roberts then reasoned with my father that if he could live up to 100 years, I would be 68 years old. By then he would most probably not be around and I would be a helpless old blind man and a burden to others. Besides, I was already three years past the age for children to be admitted to school. Finally, Mr. Roberts threw the carrot to my father.

"Mr. Ho, if you will agree, I promise you that I will personally drive to visit your son on week-ends for as long as you wish. And if I can't make it, I will make arrangements for someone to take you."

My father relented and accepted the offer. Arrangements were made and the day came, 28 March 1953, for my journey to St. Nicholas' School. A jeep, accompanied, by a few ladies (most probably welfare personnel) came to our

house to pick us up. My father and brother came along with me on the trip but Mr. Roberts was busy on an official assignment.

When the jeep pulled into the gates of St. Nicholas' School, I heard the ladies that were with us exclaiming in Hokkien how lovely the place looked. There were flowering plants and fruiting rambutan trees lining both sides of the 500-metre long driveway that led to the main building where the office was situated. The ladies said how they wished they could be staying there.

After being introduced to Miss Philippa Kelly, the superintendent, and conducted familiarisation tour around the place - classrooms, handicraft-making section and the living quarters - my father said he would come back the following week-end. The delegation from Taiping then left and I was, for the second time in my life, left separated from my family and I felt most miserable. William Wong and Peter Chin (senior boys) were assigned to help me settle in. and although I did cry for a few days, I soon settled into the routine of a residential school. Actually, I began to enjoy life.

I did look forward to the next week-end, knowing that my father would come to visit me as promised. Sure enough, my father and Mr. Roberts came, followed by two subsequent visits. On the last visit, my father told me that he would not be coming so often as he had to work to feed the family.

Later, Ms. Kelly arranged with the railway authorities to reserve a coach to bring the school-children to and from Kuala Lumpur for the school holidays. A staff would accompany the children on these trips. The parents would pick their children up at the respective train stations and send them back when school re-opened.

I just wonder what I would have been today if Mr. Roberts had not located me on that fateful rainy day. And what would have happened is Mr. Roberts had not "gone the extra mile" to bring my father to his senses by promising to drive him to Penang?

I am most thankful to Mr. Roberts for "going the extra mile" to help me to be a useful person. I hope we will all "go the extra mile" to help someone to leave a meaningful life if and when the opportunity presents itself.

# THE WIBUAR ONKYO WORLD BRATILLE ESSAY CONTEST 2019

The Otsuki Prize 2019 was awarded to Kong Hwei Zhen, 25-year old female from Malaysia, with a score of 83 points. The prize was awarded to her for the following reasons:

- 1. Her description of taking the road less travelled to explore life's opportunities, overcome barriers and embrace reality shines forth with passion and enthusiasm.
- 2. Her perseverance and determination in undertaking the journey full of twisting and turning challenges are most admirable.
- 3. Her resourcefulness and collaborative efforts with other people and organisations in contributing towards the development and well-being of society are very inspiring.

Here is her winning essay:

Having Overcome the Challenges of Blindness, How I Can or Have Contributed to Society By Kong Hwei Zhen.

I was diagnosed with Congenital Glaucoma at birth which resulted in my blindness. Growing up in a dark and colourless world is not an easy situation for me as my blindness prevented me from exploring various opportunities that life has to offer. Nonetheless, I soldiered on as I believe that disability is not a hindrance for me in achieving my dreams.

With this mindset, I accepted the reality of being blind and tried as best as possible to integrate myself into the world of the sighted. My experiences opened my inward eye to the fact that Persons with Disabilities (PWD's) in my country, Malaysia are hampered by various barriers due to the lack of accessibility in several aspects, hence preventing them from living a fulfilling life and achieving their life-goals. PWD's are subjected to stigmatisation

by the society, wherein they are looked upon with sympathy and negative perceptions. This realisation firmly shaped my life's mission. It ignited my passion to be a Community Advocate to champion for the cause of PWD's in Malaysia.

In realising my life-goal, I took the road less travelled by PWD's by pursuing a career in the legal field. I exceeded expectations when I was awarded the Outstanding Cambridge Learners Award in 2013 for A-Levels for being the Top Student in the World for Law, thereby proving to myself and the world that disability is not an impediment to success. With perseverance and determination, I continued my journey by completing my Bachelor of Laws in the United Kingdom and graduated with a First Class Honours in 2016.

My tenacity further spurred me to pursue the Certificate in Legal Practice in 2017. Upon completion of the same, I was honoured to read in chambers at one of the largest and established law firm in Malaysia. It was one of the proudest moments of my life when I was admitted as an Advocate and Solicitor of the High Court of Malaya on 15 February 2019.

Reflecting on my life's journey, I am glad that I managed to overcome the challenges of blindness and achieve the aforementioned milestones. It is now time for me to play my part in contributing something back to society by concentrating my prime focus on the PWD community.

In laying the foundation to further my cause, I joined the Make It Right Movement (the Corporate Social Responsibility wing of the Brickfields Asia College group of companies) as a Community Advocate for PWD's. I feel this is an excellent platform for me to begin my mission. It is my greatest wish to reach beyond the boundaries and transcend disability by promoting an inclusive society, whereby PWD's are recognised as an integral part of the community and their rights are well protected.

As a starting point, I note with sadness that the current law in respect of PWD rights in Malaysia is akin to a "toothless tiger", as it lacks provisions for an enforcement mechanism against discrimination of PWD's. Provisions governing the rights of PWD's to access various life aspects are also vague and

ambiguous. As a Community Advocate, I hope to work together with other platforms which are keen to champion for PWD rights to re-draft the law to be in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to give better protection to PWD's, thus improving their quality of life.

Furthermore, the lack of accessibility, especially in respect of mobility, is a great hindrance to PWD's. Roads and structures in Malaysia are usually constructed without taking into account the interests of the PWD's. Speaking from experience, I find that certain buildings are difficult to navigate as they do not have disabled-friendly facilities, such as ramps and lifts, to cater to the visually challenged individuals and wheelchair users. Unlike other countries such as the United Kingdom, visually challenged individuals in Malaysia do not have the privilege of using a guide dog to assist them in navigating their surroundings, as the society is still not prepared to accommodate such a need due to cultural thinking.

The aforementioned is just the tip of the iceberg, but it is sufficient enough to stress my point that it is time to advocate for change for the betterment of the PWD community. Thus, it will be my duty as a Community Advocate to be the "voice" of the PWD community in raising awareness on the challenges faced by them and in advocating for practical solutions which will effectively cater to their needs.

In addition, I hope to change society's perception towards the PWD's by creating public awareness on the strengths and the capabilities of the PWD's. I hope to achieve this by sharing the journey of successful PWD's throughout my advocacy work. I believe that when the stigmatisation of PWD's ceased to exist, it will open the doors to various opportunities for this marginalised community, thereby enriching the PWD community and transforming their lives in the long run.

Another inherent problem faced by most PWD's today is seeking for employment. Most employers are reluctant to hire them as part of their workforce due to their negative perception or ignorance. As a result, they believe they are unable to cope with the PWD's and to meet their needs.

PWD's also need to prepare themselves for the workforce as most of them have low self-esteem due to society's perception towards them. I hope to bridge this gap by advocating for a diverse workforce. This can only be achieved by educating employers on the needs of the PWD's and the benefits of hiring them via dialogue sessions with potential employers and employees. This I am currently conducting with the support from my company.

Although the road ahead is full of twists and turns, I maintain my optimism as I am convinced that every step I take, however small, will bring me closer to my life-goal. Experience taught me that perseverance and determination will eventually lead to success. I hope that through my work, I will be able to break down barriers and transcend disability in shaping a better tomorrow for the PWD community.



By Lim Teik Hock

Editor's Note: Lim Teik Hock has been visually impaired from childhood. He graduated from the University of East London in 1980 with a B.A. (Hons). Degree in Sociology and Politics and a Diploma in Vocational guidance. He also obtained a B.A. Degree in social work from the University of Sydney in Australia and he served as a community mediator for the attorney-general of New South Wales, Australia.

Having lived in three cultural settings - Malaysia, Britain and Australia -Lim Teik Hock has gone through many different experiences as a person with visual impairment. In the light of these experiences, he looks at the theories expounded by people like Edwin Hoffman, an American psychologist on how society stigmatises people who do not or who are unable to conform with society's expectations.

Hence, some of the themes being explored have to do with the issues of rage, resistance and resilience. Because of some anger, one does not work in conformance with expected norms and one is resentful of the way in which society deals with blind and visually impaired persons through unfair and discriminatory practices. One, therefore, builds up resistance as a direct consequence.

Here is Lim Teik Hock to narrate on his experience of life as a visually impaired person and expounding on related theories, concepts and themes.

### Introduction:

In this presentation, I provide an auto ethnographic account of my life as a visually impaired mad in three cultural contexts - Malaysia, Britain and Australia. I highlight the prejudices and stigmatising experiences that I have encountered and I explore the resistance strategies that I have employed in these contexts. I show especially how early stigmatising experiences in the Malaysian context became the source of a keenly felt and productive sense of anger that had fuelled a critical resistance to disability oppression.

An alignment of class and serendipity factors provided the opportunity for me to go to England in the 1970's to attend university. The volatile and progressive political context in the United Kingdom at the time provided a theoretical frame and focus for my resistance. Later experiences of prejudice and stigmatisation in Malaysia and Australia are explained in terms of this dynamic and productive view of anger and resistance.

All in all, the auto ethnographic portrait drawn up herewith is that of resilience in the face of disability oppression.

### Part I: Growing up in Malaysia

I was born into a relatively bourgeois family with my father as a colonial civil servant at the Penang Municipal Council. In fact, I came out into this world as an unintended consequence, being the last of five children with an age difference of sixteen years from my brother before me.

I was born disabled or visually impaired and mom saw this as a curse upon her. She made it abundantly clear to me, almost on a daily basis, that I must have done something bad in my previous life and now god was punishing me. Just pause and think - how would a growing child feel when he is constantly reminded of such circumstances in his life!

Indeed, my relationship with mum had given rise to a very traumatic episode in my life. Given her middle-class status, mum had never really taken care of me properly on a daily basis. Instead, this task was assigned to one of her less well-off cousins who had been brought into the household for the sole purpose of looking after me. This was very sad but true! - she made it abundantly clear that I was not a welcome addition to the family.

Nevertheless, looking at this dispassionately from the sociological point of view, mum must be given credit as she did not deny me of any material needs. In fact, being the youngest child, there were many servants looking into my needs. Indeed, I led a very protected life and I was never allowed to venture

out on my own in view of my visual impairment. Mum could not trust me to be on my own and her over-protective attitude denied me of the ability to flourish and gain independence on my own volition.

In view of our family status and social class and fearing stigmatisation, going to a blind school was not considered as a viable option for me. So I had to struggle through in an ordinary sighted school where I studied until standard six without much assistance except for my auntie accompanying me to school every day. My father took it upon himself to go through my schoolwork with me.

As I could not read the blackboard, arrangements were made for me to have maths tuition where some of the teachers were rather condescending and patronising. One teacher pulled my ear backwards ostensibly for me not to have my eyes so close to the reading material. She thought my eye muscles would be strengthened if I read further away from the print material.

Where writing was concerned, I could not differentiate between the i and e. so another teacher made me write one hundred lines continuously. Sometimes he would take the ruler and beat me on the head.

Such were the conditions of school life but the ill treatment did not dampen my spirit. I fought with the boys as much as I could, especially after school across the road in the graveyard. I remember very clearly a boy who kept throwing ink at my back every day. One of my aunties got very annoyed and asked why I always came home with black ink on my shirt. And so I decided to retaliate - the next time the boy threw the ink, I took a chair and smashed it upon his head. Consequently, I was called to the headmaster's office and I was given six strokes of the cane on my hand. Nevertheless, I felt a sense of triumph despite the pain.

During the physical education class, I was asked to look after the clothes of the boys. I found this to be most boring and meaningless so that one day when I got so fed up, I decided to mix up everybody's belongings into a ball and I stamped on it. Again I was caned by the headmaster but I felt that I was getting back at the system for the second time.

I was compelled to take up art and woodwork - I was not allowed to opt out on the rationale that the whole class was doing it. In spite of me getting zero for these subjects because of my poor vision, my request to be exempted in favour of other subjects was not entertained. Subsequently, when all the subjects were tabulated, I obtained a very low score and I was at the bottom of the class even though I had scored well in history and English.

On one occasion at woodwork, I was asked to plane a wooden surface by looking at the light to make sure that it was straight. Of course, with my poor vision, I could not do it and the other students laughed at me.

Worst of all was what had happened during the art class. The teacher told me to be the object for the boys to draw. On completion of the drawing, the picture showed me as a one-eye cyclops staring into heaven.

Then when I sat for the Senior Cambridge Examination, I was not given any assistance whatsoever other than extension of time by 1 or 2 hours. Consequently, I failed the examination and I had to leave Georgetown Secondary School in Penang. I decided to take up evening classes so that I could sit for the repeat examination.

Actually, I had been denied any chance of going to the prestigious Penang Free School which had been attended by my father and my brothers. As I did not do well in primary school, I was sent to Georgetown Secondary School which was regarded as a school for failures. I was made to feel rather shameful for not being able to uphold the family tradition. One of my brothers commented that it was because I did not study enough resulting in my not being able to follow the tradition of the family.

Thus, I felt that failure was an inevitable part of human existence. However, I did not allow failure to become an overwhelming experience. Instead, I sought to enhance my resilience by learning to accept failure as being merely part of my everyday encounter. Therefore, I did not feel traumatised at all by failure.

I was not able to enter form six as no institution would accept me. I tried to take up evening classes but I found it very daunting as I lacked any meaningful

assistance. And so at this stage of my life, I felt that my educational pursuit in Malaysia was a lost cause and a dead end. Everything was at a standstill when I landed up at the Gurney Training Centre a Vocational Training Institute for the Blind in Kuala Lumpur, in the year of 1969.

Coming to the Gurney Training Centre, (better known as GTC), was a completely new experience in my life. I had never been in an institution before and I found it to be rather restrictive and authoritarian. Unlike the other in-mates who had been brought up in institutions like St. Nicholas' Home in Penang, I could not get used to the idea of having lights off and the gates being closed at 10 p.m. I did not feel any sense of belonging and I constantly rebelled against the system. And so I got together with some of the students who shared my value system.

I remember pairing up with another chap who was an albino, Tan Keat Aik, and we got on very well together in the centre. Most of the people there saw us as being individualistic, loud-mouthed and unconforming because we had a buck or two more than they. In fact, given our status, we were able to bribe our way around. For example, we would offer cigarettes to raja, the driver, to drive us around and even to wait for us. For a few cigarettes, the security guards would let us out after closing hours to go and see pictures at the Lido Cinema nearby. We would pay some money to the canteen staff to help wash our clothes. We also got involved in forbidden activities like gambling and fighting. We felt that we were unlike the other blind students, who were fearful, institutionalised and who found it difficult to speak out.

As we were argumentative, more assertive and always challenging the staff and the system, and even the principal of the GTC, we were perceived as being "a nasty piece of shit". We brought to the attention of the management authorities concerning financial mismanagement by one of the staff. She was severely admonished and she subsequently lost her job.

Anyway, I felt that coming to the GTC was a real waste of time. The level of training was very low and there was nothing useful at all to help me to develop a professional career. I had no clarity of what direction I should take as the whole centre was like a containment camp or at best a holiday institution. After a few years of drifting in the place, we would simply be

released without having gained very much in terms of the skills needed to enter the working world.

From the sociological perspective, the GTC can be seen as being merely a welfare institution for poor blind people without any meaningful programme. I saw myself as having been thrown into the world of the blind which was very restrictive and where we could only end up as basket-makers and telephone operators or at best as stenographers. I felt like an outsider just simply drifting in the dull currents of the blinds world. After two years of living such an unproductive and meaningless existence, I was filled with frustration as I was not going anywhere in life.

It was at this moment of frustration and despair when I had a sudden prompting to go to the United Kingdom. In fact, this feeling had come at the right time because this was when my father had just passed away. He had left behind in his will a house in Penang, the proceeds of which were to go to my family. Well, I cajoled my family to let me use the money for enhancing my education abroad.

Indeed, I felt that it was the best thing that mother had ever done for me in giving me the one-way ticket to London. It was certainly the right thing that father had done before he passed away in willing the property for sale, thereby leaving behind some money for me to go abroad. And definitely it was the best that Malaysia had done for me by kicking me out of the country because it had denied me any opportunity to gain some meaningful employment.

# TECHNOLOGY UPDATES TEXCHILE GRAPHICS FOR THE BUIND

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

Sighted people generally do not recognise the importance of tactile graphics as vision is their primary means of consuming information. The sighted are able to access most information where their eyes such as painting and sculptures in a museum, the pages of a book on a Kindle Device, graphs and diagrams on a computer or on the page of a textbook, or even a map on their phones. Moreover, when tactile art or graphics are added to the visual representations, the multi-modal experience we enhance their ability to interpret the information.

As for the blind and vision-impaired, tactile graphics are the primary means for consuming information. With tactile graphics, the blind can access the same information as the sighted, thereby being able to experience the arts and culture, to travel independently, learn independently in school, and ultimately live their lives independently.

However, in the digital world of today, there is still a significant gap in solving the accessible needs of the blind for digital braille and for refreshable tactile graphics. Therefore, having a high-quality low-cost and full-page braille and tactile graphic display would revolutionise the world by providing the blind and vision-impaired with instant access to digital tactile content at an affordable price. This would be especially helpful for adults in the workplace and for students needing accessible Stem materials, (i.e. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths materials) that often need multiple lines of braille in order to read complex equations or problems.

Here is the good news-five cutting-edge products either in existence or in development will have the potential of significantly improving the everyday lives of the blind and vision-impaired in travel, education, careers as well as their enjoyment of the arts.

### 1. The Braille/Tactile Graphic Tablet:

This is a Kindle-like device that is being developed by the National Braille Press of USA in collaboration with New Haptics, a company having connection to the University of Michigan. They are working towards the first truly affordable technology that can display multiple lines of braille and/or high-quality tactile graphics in a single format. This Kindle-like device has a tactile surface that can be read by a blind person using braille.

Currently, refreshable braille displays limit access only to a single line of braille, making it impossible to use these devices to show relationships such as columns and indentations, which are particularly important in maths.

The traditional refreshable braille displays rely on piezoelectrics to raising braille lines. As for the new braille tablet, it is driven by microfluidics, which uses fluid (which could be air or liquid) to inflate small bubbles that push the tactile pins up and down. This technology will be more affordable and certainly much more useful in school and in the workplace.

### 2. The Graphiti Tactile Display:

Another ground breaking technology is being developed by the American Printing House for the Blind in collaboration with Orbit Research. The Graphiti is a dynamic tactile display consisting of an array of moving pins of varying heights that can be touched with the user's fingers in order to access graphics such as diagrams, bar charts, floor-plants and topographical maps.

Dr. Gina Spagnoli founder of Orbit Research, explains:

"The variable height-capability of our Tactuator technology will allow blind users to experience and interact with graphics like never beforelive and in three dimensions. For the first time, a blind user will be able to create graphics in digital form, enter them into a computing device, review and edit them, and exchange such graphics with others." With the Graphiti, the users can view and edit graphics by touch, scroll and zoom images, and use the touch interface to draw and erase graphics. By connecting the Graphiti to a laptop, it is possible to create 3D objects using the laptop software. Not only can the Graphiti be connected to computers, tablets, smartphones and the Orion TI-84 Plus Talking Graphing Calculator, but a HEMI port also lets the user connect the Graphiti to any device that has a video display output, which then identifies the Graphiti as a display monitor.

This means that a blind student can connect a tactile monitor, i.e. the Graphiti, to instruments like telescopes, microscopes, computers or talking calculators and see in real time whatever is at the other end of that device, which could be a planet in an astronomy class, a specimen in a biology class, or a graph in a maths class.

The product thus provides blind and vision-impaired people with access to the same information in real time as their sighted peers. By offering real time depiction of dynamic content, students will be able to immediately see the graph or the tactile screen. Indeed, textbooks on maths and science contain thousands of graphics. Now Graphiti can provide a path towards delivering textbooks with graphics electronically.

Other valuable features include a haptic (or vibrating) feedback interface, an SD-card slot, and the ability of the user to "draw" on the display of pins using fingertips, which raise the pins along the path traced, as well as push an object created by raised pins on the display to physically move it.

#### 3. The BlindPad Portable Tablet:

Dr. Luca Brayda, a researcher at the Robotics, Brain and Cognitive Sciences Department of the Italian Institute of Technology is investigating the use of tactile feedback using an array of movable pins to display spatial information to blind and vision-impaired individuals. He presented research at the 2018 symposium on a product in development called the BlindPad, which is a portable tablet that translates visual information into tactile representations using a grid of magnetically controlled bumps that lock in an up or down position which can vibrate or animate.

The tactile display becomes a bas-relief that can be understood using the hands, allowing for both static and moving patterns. Not only can it display spatial information such as the layout of a room, neighbourhood or an intersection, but it also makes accessible through touch such information as in-class diagrams, graphs or geometry problems for students.

During the symposium, Dr. Brayda described recent research investigating the effectiveness of the Blind Pad for blind and vision-impaired persons in orientation and mobility tasks. They haptically explored a pin-array map of a room that marked a target destination. A control group and experimental group then entered the room on three consecutive occasions and attempted to reach the target destination. The control group used a static map, (i.e. the original tactile map) while the experimental group used a changing tactile map that not only showed the original map and target destination but it also showed the position reached by the participant for each prior occasion.

The group using the animated map significantly out-performed the group using the static map, demonstrating "that learning spatial layouts through updated tactile feedback on programmable displays out-performs conventional procedures on static tactile maps. Therefore, this could represent a powerful tool for navigation, both in rehabilitation and in everyday life contexts, thus improving spatial abilities and promoting independent living for VI people."

Although the BlindPad is still in development, it represents an exciting breakthrough in the creation of an affordable and portable tactile tablet for the blind.

### 4. Ultraviolet (or UV) printing:

Another technological innovation that is rapidly improving the accessibility of spatial information to the blind and vision-impaired is ultraviolet (or UV) printing. The raised nature of UV print is making possible low-cost museum and gallery signage, descriptive labels as well as illustrations in Braille books.

During a symposium on tactile graphics in education and careers held by the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) of USA, Steve Landau, president and founder of Touch Graphics Inc., explained how large format flatbed UV printers are replacing vacuum thermoforming as the most efficient way to produce high quality tactile graphics such as raised line and textured maps and diagrams to explain spatial concepts to blind and vision-impaired students.

UV printers can create tactile signage, Braille as well as other raised or textured images by dispensing ink that cures immediately when exposed to bright ultraviolet light, thereby producing precise three-dimensional effects.

Steve Landau says that these printers can produce precise, consistent and durable raised lines, textures and Braille directly on paper or on plastic substrates, rigid boards and on flexible sheets. Most importantly, these printers can make it possible to print over the tactile image with high resolution visuals that are perfectly aligned and registered with the raised lines, textures or Braille.

Since the new generation of UV printers can produce both tactile and visual images on the same machine, the difficult problem of lining up vacuum formed and print images is now solved. This means that universally accessible floor plans, signs and tactile interpretations of visual art can now be used by everyone.

Thus, with the paintings and sculptures becoming more accessible to blind and vision-impaired visitors at museums, techniques are now being developed to increase access to archaeological artifacts in the museums. Advances in 3-Do printing, (i.e. additive manufacturing technology) are making it easier to produce replicas of artifacts that can be experienced through touch as well as vision.

These new digital technologies are profoundly changing the way people interact with ancient treasures. With 3-D scanning, printing and carving technology, it is possible to recreate objects and architecture with a high degree of precision; and yet it is in a form that allows visitors to have a

tactile experience with these materials. These technologies are especially significant for sight-impaired visitors to the museums. For the first time, the artifacts from archaeological sites, both large and small, can now be encountered directly through the sense of touch.

### 5. 'Talking Tactile Templates:

Yet another innovative technology to enhance learning opportunities for the blind and vision-impaired are the talking tactile templates. Now audio-enriched products can be created by combining 3-D printer, 3-D laser-cut and raised line graphic templates with paint.

In 2016, the American printing house for the blind and Orbit Research announced the world's First Affordable Refreshable Tactile Graphics Display.

Updated tactile feedback with a Pin Array Matrix helps blind people to reduce self-location errors. With the help of micromachines, 3-D printers can print objects from a digital template to a physical 3-dimensional physical object. The printing is done layer by layer through adhesive manufacturing, using plastic, metal, nylon and over a hundred other materials.

The application of 3-D printing technology will surely have a great impact on developments in the work for the blind and vision-impaired, particularly in education and employment. With such great possibilities to come, the door to science need no longer be closed to the blind and vision-impaired. Just imagine, with accessible technology, the BVI will now be able to get involved in this interesting field of science.

Indeed, with the five new innovative and cutting-edge technologies coming into the market, the future of the blind and vision-impaired promises to be great and exciting.

# A CHIMPSE OF HOPE WITH THE CONIC LEYED

(From the Independent Newspaper, London)

Partial sight has been restored to six blind people through an in-plant that transmits images from a camera directly into the brain.

In a study by a U.S. team of specialists, electrodes implanted in the brain's visual cortex received footage from a video camera mounted on glasses, enabling the participants to experience some level of vision where none had previously been possible.

The technology entirely bypasses the eye and the optic nerve which normally transmits sensory information to the brain.

University College London lecturer and Optegra Eye Hospital surgeon, Alex Shortt, said, "previously, attempts to create a "bionic eye" focused on implanting into the eye itself. It required you to have a working eye and a working optic nerve. By bypassing the eye completely, you open the potential up to many more people. This is a complete paradigm shift for treating people with complete blindness. It is a real message of hope."

However, the technology has not been proven to provide any level of sight for those born blind.

# APOINT TO PONDERS LAUGHUER IS THE BEST MEDICINE

By Wong Kow

Life is certainly full of ups and downs. So if you feel down or a little dull, some funny jokes from here and there may be able to help brighten up your day.

Here is the first joke concerning Ah Ming attending an interview to seek for employment. The conversation ensues between the boss and Ah Ming.

Boss: Where were you born? Ah Ming: I was born in China.

Boss: Which part of China?

Ah Ming: What? You asked which part?

I mean my whole body was born in China, of course.

### Here is the second joke:

Lim: What is the name of your car?

Wong: I can't quite remember. But I know it starts with t.

Lim: That is very strange. I know cars should start with petrol.

And now comes the third joke.

Four persons found a magic lamp at the same time. However, the magic lamp can grant wishes to only one person and that person should be someone who is not greedy and he should make his wishes as short as possible in one complete sentence.

Robert: I wish that all my family members and friends are safe and sound for 365 days all year round.

John: I wish that all my family members and friends are safe and sound yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Peter: I wish that all my family members and friends are safe and sound today and tomorrow.

James: I wish that all my family members and friends are safe and sound every day.

Can you guess what was the outcome? James, of course, was granted his wishes because he appeared to be the least greedy and he made his wishes in the shortest sentence.

Well, don't you agree? Laughter is certainly the best medicine!

#### TOTIC AVARIAC TOTAVITICAL INCOMPLETE TORING

By Dr. Gordon Tan Tok Shiong

Editor's Note: Dr. Gordon Tan Tok Shiong has been visually impaired from childhood and he was a lecturer on Economics at the University of Malaya for many years. After retiring in the 1990's, he loves to spend his time observing how the blind live and work and he has contributed articles on this theme for the magazine.

Now he has turned his mind to some other interests and has thus come up with a very interesting article on why the apple would fall straight to the ground.

#### Here it is:

When an apple ripens, its stalk will eventually break and the apple will fall from the tree straight to the ground. Now why is it that the apple will fall to the ground?

Indeed, this question has intrigued the minds of the top scientists over the past four centuries, and the search for a better explanation is still going on.

To the people of ancient times, however, the question why the apple falls straight to the ground would have been pure nonsense. After all, they believed that the earth was flat and that heaven was up there above us. For them, therefore, there was no question at all as to why the apple should fall to the ground for us to consume it? After all, the deities in heaven had no need of the apples.

Then with the invention of the telescope in the seventeenth century, human beings were able to peer into the heavens in order to examine the stars and the planets in much greater detail. Hence, the view of human being was dramatically altered as they began to realise that, in fact, the earth was not at the centre of the universe as had been previously thought. With the help of the telescope, they were able to discover that the earth was actually just a planet which was revolving round the sun, exactly like what the other planets were doing such as Mars, Venus and Jupiter.

It was around this time when the greatest mind of the century, Sir Isaac Newton, formulated his Theory of Gravitation. According to his theory, it is the gravity exerted by the sun that forces the planets to orbit around it. Therefore, it is this gravitational force which causes the apple to fall from the tree straight to the ground.

This theory was very powerful indeed as it could explain about 99% of the phenomenon concerning the motion of the physical bodies in the universe; this phenomenon was later known as the Law of Gravity. Nevertheless, the theory was not entirely satisfactory for two reasons - firstly, it failed to explain the remaining 1% of the motion of physical bodies in our universe. Secondly, the theory does not explain why such bodies as the planets and the sun produce gravity.

Human beings had to wait for another three centuries before they were able to find a better explanation, thereby making the theory of gravitation redundant. It was at the beginning of the twentieth century when scientists, after much experimentation and careful thinking, began to realise that space was not absolute but relative. Just as cars travelling on a highway could be going faster or slower, likewise time could be moving at different speeds in different parts of the universe.

Thus, if I were a wizard who could instantaneously relocate you from earth to another part of the universe where time was moving extremely slowly and then return you to earth a year later, one hundred years could have slipped by on earth. Most of the people in your generation would have passed away and you would probably be shaking hands with your great great grandchildren.

Relative to the "starting point" of the universe, which could be the earth, or the sun, or the moon, or anywhere else in space, the apple tree and the apples hanging on the branches are actually hurtling across space at an enormous speed, estimated to be about 2.1 million kilometres per hour or 600 kilometres per second. According to the Theory of General Relativity proposed by Albert Einstein, when an object moves across space, it will always travel along the shortest path in terms of space-time. According to this theory, it is the warping of space and time by the sun that causes the planets such as the earth to orbit round it. Similarly, it is the warping of space and

time by the Earth that causes the moon to orbit around it, thereby causing the apple to fall straight from the tree to the ground.

Using Einstein's theory, one is able to make all the accurate calculations (which have, in fact, been done) by applying Newton's Theory of gravitation. In the year 1919 when scientists were able to conduct experiments in order to verify the Theory of Relativity, Einstein became famous and was recognised as a genius.

Unfortunately, Einstein's theory has been found to be deficient when it was applied to the motion of particles at the atomic and sub-atomic level. Given that the building blocks of our universe are made up of atoms and sub-atoms, it is therefore important for a new theory to be postulated which can be applied both at the macro and micro level. This difficult task is currently being undertaken by a relatively new branch of Science known as Quantum Mechanics.

And so the apple that fell from the tree and struck the head of Sir Isaac Newton four centuries ago has caused intelligent human beings to ponder and to ponder on the question as to why an apple should fall straight to the ground. Well, I believe that this question will go on and on for a long time yet!

## SOME HUMOUROUS THOBUS

#### Rest in peace:

A mother was working in the kitchen. She called out to her daughter, "why don't you come and help me?"

The daughter replied, "Oh mum, why don't you let me rest in peace?"

#### The blind room:

In an integrated programme where the blind would study alongside sighted students in a normal mainstream school, the Government would assign a resource teacher, who is sighted. The blind students would go to the resource-room where they could get help from the resource teacher.

One day a teacher was preparing his class for maths and he started drawing a diagram on the board. However, he did not know what to do with the blind boys who were in the class.

So the teacher said to the blind students, "those blind boys, can you please go to your blind room and see your blind teacher."

#### Eighteen ringgit fifteen cents:

A partially deaf man was having breakfast at the Kopitiam (coffee-shop) in the YMCA in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur. He asked the waitress how much was the bill.

"One egg, one fried," she replied. He asked her to repeat and again she said, "one egg, one fried."

He asked her to say it in figures or in ringgit and cent. She said, "eighteen ringgit fifteen cents."

It dawned on him that she was actually saying, "one eight one five."

#### Excuse me"

The waitress in a Thai restaurant asked the customers to excuse her and let her pass through. It sounded like "squeeze me, squeeze me."

All the man looked up, wondering whether they should go and try it out.



### Dr. Kenneth Jernigan, leader of the blind people's movement in USA in the 20th century:

Dr. Jernigan said that "blindness is not a great tragedy." And that the blind can overcome what he referred to as a "nuisance" handicap.

He said the blind seek equal treatment and an equal share in the rewards of community progress and development. "We have hope for the future and confidence in the present."

#### Dr. Jernigan made another very important point:

It is respectable to be blind. The average blind person, given proper training and opportunity can do the average job in the average place of business as well as his/her sighted colleague.

Martine Abel-Williamson, WBU Treasurer from New Zealand, on the importance of braille:

At the United Nations general assembly adopting the World Blind Union's resolution affirming World Braille Day, she said:

"Braille is the only true equivalent to print. Braille is our touchstone to literacy."

#### World Blind Union, on the importance of braille literacy:

Braille represents competency, independence and equality.

Braille is not a code to be deciphered:

It is a method of reading and writing that is equal in value to print for sighted people.

#### HOMEHENRUHTURS

- 1. Excess salt leads to insomnia.
- 2. f hiccups resist other measures, sniff a little pepper. The resulting sneeze could interrupt the hiccups.
- 3. For a hangover, forego coffee and go heavy on fruit juices.

Excessive alcohol causes dehydration, stomach irritation and interferes with eating. Coffee, acting as diuretic, can lead to more fluid loss, postponing recovery.

Drinking water is fine but supplementing with fruit juices provides needed calories and glucose.

4. If you get tense under the stress of everyday life, raise your shoulders and allow them to drop; then take four or five deep breaths.

Not only your shoulders but also your head and neck muscles will relax simultaneously.

- 5. Hot running water or hot washing-cloth (as hot as you can bear) can give quick relief from insect bite, itch or mild outbreak of poison ivy.
- 6. Refrigerate eye drops so when applying, you can feel whether it gets into the eye or not.

## SOME QUOTATION

#### Maya Angelou:

We may encounter many defeats but we must not be defeated.

#### Will Rogers:

Don't let yesterday take up too much of today.

#### F.D. Roosevelt:

The only limit tour realisation of tomorrow will be our doubts of today.

#### Albert Einstein:

Creativity is intelligence having fun.

#### Anonymous:

Control the way you ressond - that's power!

#### Marianne Williamson:

Joy is what happens to us when we allow ourselves to recognise how good things really are.

#### Roger Caras:

Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole.

In the book, Beacon of Light - Dr. S. Radha Krishnan: Fifty years of Inspiring Service to the Differently abled Communities:

If I consider all my actions are for God, then every task becomes are pleasure to perform.

#### Chinese Proverb:

Light a candle rather than complain about the dark.

#### Anonymous:

We don't grow when things are easy. We grow when we face challenges.

#### Walt Disney:

The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing.

# PRINCIPAL OFFICE-BEARTERS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS OF NOBMIFOR 2013 - 2020

Dato' Dr. Hsiung Kwo Yeun President, NCBM/ President of Sarawak Society for the Blind

Datuk Rosalind Chew Bee Koh Vice-President, NCBM/ President of Sabah Society for the Blind

Rt. Rev. Dato' Dr. Charles Samuel Hon. Secretary, NCBM/ Chairman of St. Nicholas' Home, Penang

Mdm. Jasmine Khoo Khin Sheen Hon. Treasurer, NCBM/ Hon. Treasurer of Society of the Blind in Malaysia

> Dato' Kulasegaran A/L Sabaratnam (2018 - Nov 2019) Malaysian Association for the Blind

Prof. Dr Veera Ramani Ondiveeran Malaysian Association for the Blind, Malaysia

Mr. Charles Chew Malaysian Association for the Blind, Malaysia

> Dato' Dr. Sharom Ahmat St. Nicholas' Home, Penang

Mr. Jimmy Ng Kich Sheng Sabah Society for the Blind

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Mdm. Annie Soon Nyin Yin Sarawak Society for the Blind

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Committee on Employment and Economic Empowerment (CEEE)

Dr Ahmad Shamsuri Bin Muhamad

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Datuk Rosalind Chew Bee Koh

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World Blind Union/ World Blind Union Asia Pacific (WBU/WBUAP)

Dato' Dr. Hsiung Kwo Yeun and Mr Moses Choo Siew Cheong

## EARN SOME EXTERA CASH

Readers are invited to write for our publication, "NCBM Outreach". For articles published, Payment are as follows:

- 1. Original articles on the achievements of blind people or of an inspirational nature (about 500 words) RM80
- 2. Articles containing ideas and suggestions for the improvement of NCBM or its Member-Organisations (about 500 words) RM80
- 3. Articles on funny or unusual experiences (250/500 words) RM40/ RM80
- 4. Articles of an informative nature written in your own words (about 500 words) RM80.
- 5. Poems which are personal compositions depicting experiences of a blind person (about 50/100 words) RM40/RM80
- 6. Interesting tidbits, jokes or other information taken from magazines or other documents of limited circulation RM15

**Note:** Articles submitted by officials of NCBM or its Member-Organisations will not qualify for payment unless the submissions have nothing to do with their daily office duties.

Also, full payment will be made if the article requires little or no editing.

#### NOTES

## NOTES