

Christian Outreach to the Handicapped

annual report 2008





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OUR VISION & MISSION

To be outstanding in providing acceptance and hope for people with special needs in Singapore through God's love.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Each and every one of us, including persons with disabilities, has unique God-given:

- Worth that needs to be recognised and appreciated, and
- Potential that can be identified and developed.

OUR CORE VALUES

Christian Values

- The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;
- What the Lord requires of us (Micah 6:8) – justice, mercy, humility.

Organisational Effectiveness

- Teamwork;
- Professionalism;
- Quality;
- Cost-effectiveness.

Hope

- Discontented with the status quo, we look forward to a better future for everyone within our circle of influence.

OUR SERVICES

COH serves individuals:

- who have an intellectual disability (IQ below 70);
- who are between 16 and 55 years old;
- regardless of race, religion and financial background.

Many of the people we serve also have one or more of the following accompanying conditions:

- Down syndrome
- Cerebral palsy
- Autism spectrum disorders (ASD)
- Speech impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Physical disability
- Epileptic fits

COH runs Day Activity Centre (DAC) programmes in a caring environment to promote a more fulfilling life for our clients (people with special needs under our care) through achieving the following outcomes:

- Integration into society
- Greater independence to function in different aspects of life

Activities and training include:

- Activities of Daily Living (ADL) e.g. personal grooming, feeding, mobility, toileting
- Community Living Skills (CLS) e.g. social skills, community mobility, community activities (include music & song, art & craft), home living skills
- Holistic and spiritual development
- Physiotherapy for those who need it

We also provide other practical assistance and support to our clients who come from disadvantaged families.





BRIEF HISTORY

Christian Outreach to the Handicapped (COH), an interdenominational not-for-profit organisation, was founded in 1979 by Rev. Alice Shae, an American Baptist missionary who was unable to find services in Singapore for her own daughter who had an intellectual disability. As one of the early pioneers in Singapore to set up care services for people with intellectual disability, COH has contributed significantly by providing the impetus for the inception and growth of similar type organisations that care for Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) in our society.

Our Status

27th March 1987	Registered as a society
1st August 1987	Became a full member of National Council of Social Service (NCSS)
1st November 1987	Registered as a charity
27th July 1993	Attained status of Institute of Public Character (IPC), which allows us to raise funds from the public

COH has never been funded by the Community Chest from the beginning. We have been relying heavily on donations from individuals, churches and companies to support our day-to-day operations, and to provide fee subsidies or waiver, and other assistance to our beneficiaries from disadvantaged families.

Our Milestones (1979 – 2008)

1979	COH founded by Mrs. Alice Shae
1983	Set up Children’s Activity Centre in Ang Mo Kio Social Service Centre
1987	Relocated to Seng Poh Road
1988	Started Emmanuel Activity Centre for adults with intellectual disability
1989	Relocated to Owen Road
1995	Started programme for teenagers with autism spectrum disorders
2000	Relocated to Jalan Tembusu
2001	Started programme for adults with autism spectrum disorders
2002	Started programme for adults with cerebral palsy
2004	Started programme for elderly clients with intellectual disability
2005	Started Community Integration Projects with various community partners
2008	Classes which homogeneously grouped clients according to disability types were restructured into clusters made up of clients with different disability types
2008	Part of COH, including the headquarters, relocated from Jalan Tembusu to a HDB void-deck at Block 414 Tampines Street 41



Mrs. Alice Shae

COH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & MANAGEMENT (2008)

Advisor	Mrs. Patricia Sabapathy
President	Mr. Brian Jenner
Vice-President	Mrs. Lois Goh
Hon. Secretary	Mr. Benny Lim
Hon. Treasurer	Ms. Ivy Goh
Hon. Chaplain	Rev. Dr. K. Steven
Member	Mdm. Elizabeth Tan
Executive Director	Mr. Samuel Koh



Group photograph of COH Executive Committee & Management taken with Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan (Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports) and Mr. Ong Kian Min (Member of Parliament for Tampines GRC and Adviser to Tampines Grassroots Organisations) at official opening of COH Headquarters and Emmanuel Activity Centre – Tampines

From left to right:

Rev. Dr. K. Steven, Ms. Ivy Goh, Mr. Benny Lim, Mrs. Lois Goh, Mrs. Patricia Sabapathy, Mdm. Elizabeth Tan, Mr. Ong Kian Min, Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Mr. Brian Jenner, Mr. Samuel Koh



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I would like to thank all Clients, Donors, Caregivers, Volunteers and Staff for their support and effort during the year.

The main event of the year has been the move from the former Haig Girls School to two purpose built centres at Tampines and Toa Payoh. I must thank our dedicated Staff for their selfless dedication to making the transition a success. Can you imagine how daunting a task it was? But now we have done so much work to create the two centres.

I must also thank our Government for its support and funding and the trust in COH.

Our focus over the past year has been on two processes, namely nurturing our dedicated Staff, and promoting cohesion within our community. We have made a good start but must always be on the lookout to identify how we can improve and to make changes as necessary.

When I look back over the past year, I see that we have made some very good achievements and met many of our expected goals. All the while, we have trusted God to support us and we have been blessed again.

There is still much work to do.

The move to two centres, enlargement of our client base and also the demands of the social service sector make it very important that we become more structured in the management of the organisation. We have identified areas where we must make changes to meet the increasing guidelines of NCSS. In order to achieve this, we will set up subcommittees this year. This needs more Volunteers and Committee Members from all walks of life - old and young. We know that it is difficult to find such people and I take this opportunity to appeal for Volunteers!

Support from our Community and wider Singapore is very important. We want to spread

awareness about the disabled and gain support, not only financial but also goodwill. Goodwill is reaction to Love. We must make it a priority to love the members of our Community through our lifestyle, without imposing our religious beliefs. The goodwill will grow.

As we look to our future, we are aware of Members' visions and consensus to outreach to more disabled people and their care givers. We will be planning, this year, towards this end and have some ideas in mind. We have and will continue to speak to NCSS to identify needs in the social service sector.

We have done well and achieved significantly this year. Let us continue to seek and identify more opportunities and continue, with utmost humility, to let good things happen. God Bless.

Brian Jenner

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

Restructuring of Emmanuel Activity Centre

The year started with great anticipation of the changes that were going to take place as we braced up for part of COH, including the headquarters, to be relocated from Jalan Tembusu to a HDB void-deck at Block 414 Tampines Street 41.

The following table summarises the restructuring of the Emmanuel Activity Centre that officially took place on 1st April 2008:

Before	After
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients in one centre segregated into seven classes based on disability types and functioning levels, with between eight to sixteen clients per class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients organised into two future centres (Tampines and Toa Payoh) depending on where they live. Each centre to be organised into two clusters. Each cluster has up to a maximum of twenty-five clients with different types of abilities and functioning levels.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients of each class divided into an average of three groups, with each group of clients under the charge of one teaching staff who may not have certified training in special education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each client under the charge of two teaching staff and a cluster leadership team with at least one staff with certified training in special education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each class was made up of clients from different chartered transport groups, which created a less than ideal situation whereby clients were put under the care of different groups of staff at different parts of the programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each cluster organised primarily by the chartered transport that the clients take to and from the centre. This streamlines staff duties and responsibilities for more effective care of clients.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The class arrangement did not fully model an inclusive society – clients were segregated within the centre based on disability types and functioning levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This new arrangement supports and reinforces the message of inclusion – to be a model for society to be more accepting towards persons with disabilities (PWDs) regardless of their functioning levels and perceived ability to contribute.

Inspired by the four Gospels of the New Testament, the two clusters at Tampines centre were named Matthew and Mark, and the clusters at Jalan Tembusu centre (to be relocated to Toa Payoh in 2009) were named Luke and John.

Relocation to Tampines



The 7th April 2008 marked the first day that part of COH, including the headquarters, started operating at Block 414 Tampines Street 41.

It did not take the clients long to adapt to the new environment. They started participating in the usual day activity programme within the first few weeks of operation. The clients could now be trained to use conveniently located public facilities such as a big park (Sun Plaza Park) with exercise equipment, a public library, shopping malls, coffee shops, an MRT station and a bus interchange, all within walking distance from the centre.

Caregivers and clients' family members also provided positive feedback about the new purpose-built centre. Responses from the

residents in the neighbourhood has been encouraging, with one of the residents becoming a regular volunteer at the centre.

An open house was organised in partnership with Singapore Anti-Tuberculosis Association (SATA) on 24th May 2008. Caregivers and family members of clients, as well as residents from the neighbourhood were invited to a health talk, a healthy cooking workshop and a health check-up conducted by SATA, which also provided an opportunity for our guests to visit our Tampines centre.

Meanwhile, the clients at Jalan Tembusu centre continued to participate in the day activity programme at the existing old school building until the relocation to Toa Payoh in 2009.

Official Opening of COH Headquarters & Emmanuel Activity Centre – Tampines



COH Headquarters and Emmanuel Activity Centre – Tampines were officially launched on 1st November 2008 by our Guest-Of-Honour Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports.

The welcome address by Mr. Samuel Koh, Executive Director of COH, was followed by a speech by Mr. Brian Jenner, President of COH. The purpose of COH was summarised in his speech, “We do not wish COH to be isolated. We aim to encourage understanding and acceptance of our clients in the community, by the love that we aim to give to clients and the community around us. We aim to work with all sectors of society that are interested in social service and we aim to benefit our community.”

After the unveiling of a plaque, Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan was presented with a token of appreciation by a client. This was followed by a performance of songs by our clients and staff, and a tour for our guests around the centre and a buffet lunch. Although the weather had prevented the planting of the Tembusu tree by our Guest-Of-Honour, it was planted later by our Executive Committee members, staff and clients.

The various guests who attended the official opening ceremony include:

Mr. Ong Kian Min, Member of Parliament for Tampines GRC and Adviser to Tampines Grassroots Organisations

Ms. Tina Hung, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, National Council of Social Service

Rev. Dr. Patrick Lau, General Superintendent, The Assemblies of God of Singapore

Rev. Alfred Yeo, President, The Assemblies of God Community Services Society

Mr. Albert Ching, General Secretary, YMCA of Singapore

Mr. Dennis Lim, Chief Executive Officer, Bishan Home for the Intellectually Disabled

Rev. Patrick Koh, Pastor-in-charge, Special People Ministry, Faith Community Baptist Church

Mr. Lee Chong Kai, Chief Executive Officer, All Saints' Home

Rev. Henry Seow, Senior Pastor, Faith Sanctuary

Pastor Freddie Ong, Pastor (Pastoral Care), The Bible Church

Mr. William Tng, Centre Head, Centre For Adults, Association for Persons with Special Needs

Mr. Koh Guan Hoe, Consultant, Centre For Adults, Association for Persons with Special Needs

Mr. Alvin Lim, Chief Executive Officer, Bizlink Centre Singapore Limited

Mr. Gilbert Tan, Vice-President, Disabled People's Association (Singapore)

Ms. Nancy Chia, President, Handicaps Welfare Association and Vice-President, Singapore Disability Sports Council

Mrs. Tham Min Tay, Executive Director, Sun-Dac Centre For The Disabled

Mr. Ron Pereira, Past President, Rotary Club (Raffles City)

Mr. Christopher Sum, Property Manager, Tampines Town Council

Mr. Vincent Yeo, Treasurer, Tampines North Citizens' Consultative Committee

Mr. Alan Ho, Chairman, Tampines North SunPlaza Residents' Committee

Mr. Andrew Koh, Chairman, Tampines North Zone 3 Residents' Committee

Mr. Loy Chee Hiang, Chairman, Tampines North Community Club Management Committee

Mr. Ahmad Khusairi, Tampines Neighbourhood Police Centre

Dedication Service

The 8th November 2008 was chosen as the date for the dedication of COH staff to God's ministry in serving people with special needs. This took place shortly after the official opening of COH Headquarters and Emmanuel Activity Centre – Tampines. COH staff had also invited their church pastors and leaders to attend this significant event.

The dedication service started with a speech by Mrs. Lois Goh, Vice-President of COH. Sharing from Psalms 34, she reminded us that we all have experienced the goodness of God and spoke of the need to bless God and praise Him for all He has done for COH. She went on to give thanks for all who had contributed in one way or another – the staff and volunteers for the time and love shown to our clients, the churches and donors for the contributions of prayer and finances, our community partners for unearthing opportunities.

After an intimate time of praise and worship, our honoured guest, Reverend Aow Kwong Bu gave a message entitled “Serving The Lord Through Your Clients” and shared from Matthew 25:34-40 to exhort us to serve our clients with these three words: Help, Heal and Hope.



This was followed by a meaningful time of prayer. Pastors and church leaders prayed for the staff, dedicating them afresh to the service of the Lord.

Reunions of Clients & Staff from Tampines & Jalan Tembusu

Since Emmanuel Activity Centre has been operating at two separate locations, intentional efforts were made for clients and staff from both locations to gather and reconnect as one big COH family throughout the year.



The first reunion happened when COH celebrated National Day on 7th August 2008 at Jalan Tembusu, and clients and staff from Tampines centre revisited their old territory and friends with a sense of nostalgia.



The next reunion took place at the Annual Staff Dinner on 26th October 2008. Staff from both centres, members of the Executive Committee and volunteers had the opportunity to catch up with each other over a sumptuous meal at Feast @ East restaurant situated in Grand Mercure Roxy Hotel.



COH is grateful to Living Hope Methodist Church for allowing us to organise our Christmas celebration on 17th December 2008 at their premises in Tampines where clients and staff from both centres came together to celebrate the birth of Christ.

Staff Training & Development

COH believes in building the professional capabilities of our staff through training and development. The table below highlights some of the staff training that took place in the year 2008:

Staff Training	Training Provider	Date(s)	Number of Staff who Participated
Creative Therapy for Working with People with Special Needs: The Use of Drama in Therapy – Introduction	National Council of Social Service – Social Service Training Institute (NCSS – SSTI)	31/1/08-1/2/08	2
Certificate in Autism	Autism Resource Centre (ARC)	12/2/08-30/5/08	3
NITEC in Social Service	NCSS – SSTI & Institute of Technical Education (ITE)	1/4/08-31/3/09	1
Certificate in Education Studies (Special Education)	NCSS – SSTI & Flinders University	Module 1: 26/5/08-27/5/08 Module 2: 14/7/08-15/7/08 Module 3: 4/9/08-5/9/08 Module 4: 20/11/08-21/11/08	2
Meeting Student Learning Needs Through Dynamic Assessment	TOUCH Community Services	26/5/08-30/5/08	1
Coaching Skills	ITE	7/7/08-10/7/08	2
Autism Forum	Disability Information and Referral Centre (DIRC)	12/7/08	12
Planning & Implementing OJT	ITE	15/7/08-16/7/08	2
Epilepsy Forum	DIRC	26/7/08	8

Train the Coaches (Sports)	Bishan Home for the Intellectually Disabled	26/7/08	2
Activity Therapy - Introduction	NCSS – SSTI	11/8/08	4
Job Redesign for NPOs	NCSS – SSTI	15/8/08	1
Creative Therapy for Working with People with Special Needs: Art Therapy – Introduction	NCSS – SSTI	1/9/08-2/9/08 & 6/10/08	4
Volunteer Service Management Programme	YMCA & NUS Business School	3/9/08-29/10/08	1
Workshop on Environment Friendly Practices	Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS)	11/9/08	1
37th VWO Therapists Network (Adult / Eldercare Sector) – Conducting Research in Therapy Practice	NCSS	17/9/08	1
Communication & Relationship Management (Operations)	NCSS – SSTI & NTUC LearningHub	9/10/08-10/10/08	3
Positive Behaviour Support and Management for People with Disabilities	NCSS – SSTI	22/10/08-24/10/08	3
Job Coaching Skills: Finding & Keeping a Job for People with Disabilities	NCSS – SSTI	3/11/08-5/11/08	1
Fundamental Course in Assistive Technology	Singapore Therapeutic, Assistive & Rehabilitative Technologies (START) Centre	19/11/08	2
Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) Workshop	Bridging Talents	24/11/08-25/11/08	1
Workshop on Taking Special Seating into the Next Level	START Centre	26/11/08	2

Collaboration with Other Organisations & Community Groups

• Public-Speaking Course

Some of our clients attended an on-going course conducted by Mr. Ernest Chen, author of "Earnestly Speaking: How to Achieve Success in Public Speaking". The weekly sessions provided a platform for them to practise speaking in front of their friends and build up their confidence and self-esteem. Besides imparting public-speaking and communication skills, the sessions also created a conducive environment for our clients to meet new friends from other organisations and develop their social skills.

• Visits & Outings

Throughout the year, various groups of student volunteers organised visits to COH and outings with our clients. These include Telok Kurau Secondary School Interact Club (visit to COH – Jalan Tembusu on 20th February 2008), St. Andrew's Junior College (visit to COH – Jalan Tembusu on 28th February 2008), Millennia Institute (visit to COH – Jalan Tembusu on 20th March 2008), and Anglo-Chinese Junior College (outing to a park and visit to COH – Tampines Centre on 5th June 2008 and 20th June 2008 respectively).

• Outing to Singapore Flyer

On 28th March 2008, a group of corporate volunteers from Ascendas brought 26 clients for a ride onboard the Singapore Flyer. Organised jointly by YMCA, Ascendas and COH, with full sponsorship from Ascendas as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme, the outing not only provided a first-time experience onboard the Singapore Flyer for almost all the clients and the volunteers, but also created a rare opportunity for many of the corporate volunteers to get to know people who have an intellectual disability.

• Citibank-YMCA Youth For Causes

COH was privileged to be chosen by two teams to be the beneficiary of the joint community initiative by Citibank and the YMCA of Singapore, sponsored by the Citi Foundation, which aimed to cultivate a culture of social responsibility and build community leadership among youths in Singapore.





Team Gaia, which consisted of undergraduates from Nanyang Technological University (NTU), aimed to create publicity and raise corporate sponsorships for the Christmas Tree of Life Project.

Team Utopia, which was made up of students from Macpherson Secondary School, raised funds for COH through the promotion of sponsored products as well as artworks made by our clients.

Although the project was officially carried out from 1st June 2008 through to 21st September 2008, participants from both teams also volunteered after that to assist COH in the Christmas Tree of Life Project.



- **Abilities Road Show**

Organised by Disability Information and Referral Centre (DIRC) on 20th July 2008 at the National Library, the Abilities Road Show provided COH an avenue to showcase the abilities of our clients. Two of our clients demonstrated recycled art at the booth, which was visited by Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports.

- **The Assemblies of God 80th Anniversary Community Dinner**

Our clients and their caregivers were treated to an evening of stage performances and sumptuous dining on 26th July 2008 at Roland Restaurant in celebration of the 80th anniversary of The Assemblies of God in Singapore.

- **NCSS 50th Anniversary Carnival**



COH joined National Council of Social Service (NCSS) in its 50th Anniversary celebration in various events, the most notable one being the NCSS 50th Anniversary Carnival organised at the Esplanade Park on 23rd and 24th August 2008. Thousands of visitors came to the event, and we had the opportunity to create awareness of our organisation and persons with disabilities as well as to raise funds through craft sale.



- **Computer Fundamentals Course**

Six clients from Cluster Matthew had the opportunity to learn some computer fundamentals at three sessions held in the month of October 2008. At the Infocomm Accessibility Centre managed by the Society for the Physically Disabled (SPD), the clients tried their hand at basic tasks such as surfing the Internet and creating simple presentations.



- **Bishan Home 10th Anniversary Games Day**

Seven clients from all the clusters took part in the Bishan Home 10th Anniversary Games Day on 18th October 2008 and participated in various games such as basketball, walking race and wheelchair race.



- **Bowling Competition**

Five clients from various clusters took part in the bowling competition organised by Special Olympics on 8th November 2008. Wong Jun Xiang (from Cluster Matthew), Crystal Teo (from Cluster Luke) and Shaun Chui (also from Cluster Luke) won silver in team event; Valerie Wong (from Cluster Luke) and Nicholas Chiu (from Cluster John) won 5th position in team event. For male individual placing, Jun Xiang was placed at 3rd position, Nicholas at 4th position and Shaun at 5th position; for female individual placing, Valerie was placed at 4th position and Crystal at 5th position. Kudos to our clients!

- **Conclusion of Community Integration Programme with Tanjong Katong Primary School & Cornerstone Community Church**

To prepare for relocation of COH (Jalan Tembusu) to Toa Payoh, our clients' participation in Community Integration Projects (CIPs) at Tanjong Katong Primary School (involving seven clients since 2005) and Cornerstone Community Services Centre (involving nine clients since 2006) was concluded in November 2008. COH is appreciative of these two organisations for letting our special people be useful contributors in the community as they performed various tasks such as library and cleaning duties at their premises.

Christmas Tree of Life Project

In 2008, COH increased its efforts to empower people with an intellectual disability by supporting our clients to carry out educational outreaches and conduct recycled art workshops, engaging and rallying thousands of student volunteers from a total of 18 educational institutions which include:

- Seng Kang Primary School
- Qihua Primary School
- Anglo-Chinese School (Barker Road)
- Anglo-Chinese School (Independent)
- Ang Mo Kio Secondary School
- Balestier Hill Secondary School
- Beatty Secondary School
- Coral Secondary School
- Geylang Methodist Secondary School
- Junyuan Secondary School
- Kuo Chuan Presbyterian Secondary School
- Macpherson Secondary School
- North View Secondary School
- Victoria School
- Anderson Junior College
- Hwa Chong Institute
- Nanyang Technological University
- Singapore Management University

Furthermore, COH also had many other opportunities to feature recycled art pieces and organise recycled art workshop conducted by our clients, which include the following events:

- Community Life Arts Programme (CLAP!) organised by Central Singapore Community Development Council (CS CDC) on 3rd May 2008 at Toa Payoh HDB Hub
- Abilities Road Show organised by Disability Information and Referral Centre (DIRC) on 20th July 2008 at the National Library
- Philips Eco Lighting Seminar organised by Philips Lighting on 5th November 2008 at HortPark

The aim of the project was to create awareness of persons with disabilities (PWDs) and their ability to contribute to society by doing their part in caring for the environment. We wanted to encourage people in our society not to write off seemingly “useless things” such as used plastic bottles and PWDs. The project showed that these used plastic bottles can be reused to create something useful and beautiful. Likewise, when given a chance, PWDs can learn recycled art and contribute something beautiful to society.





Furthermore, by doing their part in caring for the environment (i.e. creating awareness through recycled art), these PWDs would be an inspiration for those without disability. If they can do their part, a strong message would be sent to the rest of society that they have no excuse not to do their part.

With the support of venue and corporate sponsors such as Tanglin Mall, Tuas Power Ltd and National Environment Agency (NEA), COH is also privileged to participate in the Christmas event at Tanglin Mall from 14th November 2008 to 31st December 2008 to showcase recycled art pieces produced by PWDs and educating the public about environment issues and their responsibility to care for the environment through recycled art workshops conducted by PWDs. Other partners that worked with us to engage the public through various performances include:

- Special People Ministry of Faith Community Baptist Church
- Bishan Home for the Intellectually Disabled
- Teen Challenge
- Hope Presbyterian Church

The event has generated considerable interests from the public and media, which served as an endorsement for the continuation of the project in 2009 and beyond.



In The News

COH was mentioned in The Straits Times on 13th May 2008 as one of the few centres that admits adults who have autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

The Christmas Tree of Life Project organised by COH at Tanglin Mall was also featured in various local newspapers such as Shin Min Daily News (14th December 2008), The Straits Times (16th December 2008) and Lianhe Zhaobao (21st December 2008).

智障人士手工真巧

用塑料瓶制作灯饰 有人出价500元要买

陈盈之报道
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智障人士用塑料瓶子制成的灯饰精致漂亮，虽然都是非卖品，但有人却出价500元想买它做圣诞树。

由新加坡基督教智障人士协会发起的 Tree of Life Project (生命树计划)，让智障人士用塑料瓶子，来制成一个个精美的装饰灯。他们努力多时的成果，目前正在东陵坊外的一个小亭前展出，时间是每天傍晚6点半到晚上10点，直到12月31日为止。

其中一个佳作，就是用上万个塑料瓶子制成的巨型圣诞树。

展出的装饰灯超过12种款式，其中包括桌灯、吊灯和吊灯。这些作品虽高似模似样，但却还没有正式推出市场。协会的工作人员，现阶段还在向消费者了解他们购买灯饰的愿望，以及愿意出的价钱。

据了解，到目前为止，接受问卷调查的公众，反应都良好，有人甚至表示要出价500元来购买。

协会发言人吴先生说，这个计划的目的是提高人们对智障人士的认识，同时也为环保尽一份力。

超过2000义工 为环保出力

吴先生说，灯饰展由一名专业设计师负责，制作每个装饰灯的时间因款式而异，所使用的瓶子介于30到100个不等。从瓶子的收集、洗刷和制作都由义工和智障人士一手包办。制作灯饰的过程，就像工厂的生产线那样，不同的部分由不同的人负责，最后再把全部装置放在一起。

这项计划自去年便开始，他们曾在牛车水、宏茂桥和大巴窑等地方举办展览，结果得到出乎意料的热烈反应，公众纷纷询问是否可以购买灯饰。

吴先生说，公众良好的反应让他们感到鼓舞，因此决定延长计划，让更多人能一睹智障人士和义工们的手艺。

除了展览之外，协会的智障人士也到不同的学校为学生们示范装饰灯的制作法。每堂课长达两到三个小时。参与这项计划的义工人数超过2000名，包括来自16所不同学校的学生。吴先生表示，为了安全起见，他们在展示这些作品时运用了节省能源的灯泡和LED灯泡。他说，若协会决定售卖作品，则必须先经产品送到有关当局做检测。



THE STRAITS TIMES - 16 December 2008

The disabled help turn trash into Xmas tree

By SHOBANA KESAVA

DISCARDED plastic bottles have been turned into a Christmas tree now on display at Tanglin Mall.

The creation was made by a group of 10 adults with conditions such as autism, Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities, with help from Christian Outreach to the Handicapped (COH).

COH enlisted students to help, blending two of its causes into one: first, that those with disabilities have skills to offer society and second, that what seems like rubbish can be recycled and put to good use.

Since January, young adults with disabilities have been spreading the green message to schools, teaching students how to recycle and produce art from discarded plastic water bottles.

"We wanted to show students that people with disabilities have skills to share," said programme manager Julius Koh.

The idea of recycled art came from one of its volunteers, Mr Khor Tuck Kuan, a creative director with Timmermann and Tan Advertising.

COH, the only voluntary welfare organisation that actively cares for adults with autism, showed 10 of its members how to teach students to cut and weave lampshades from plastic bottles.



The Christmas tree at Tanglin Mall is made of plastic bottles. It was created by 10 adults with disabilities, with help from students. ST PHOTO: CAROLINE CHIA

Schools were happy to take part because it supported their lessons on climate change.

About 10,000 bottles were piled up in 18 educational institutions from primary to university level for the project.

Despite their social impairment, the creators reached out to 2,000 students. At Victoria School, teacher Peh Siew Kuan took on the project because she said "it was ideal for our community involvement programme".

"Although they can't communicate using words like us, they can find a way to show us what to do," said Aravind Seeralan, 12.

Classmate Jeremy Chew added: "I didn't know something so beautiful could be made from mineral water bottles."

COH raised about \$10,000 in sponsorship from Tuas Power and the National Environment Agency for the project, while Tanglin Mall provided a spot for the Christmas tree.



COH Flag Day

COH had its flag day on 31st December 2008. Although it was a challenging time with the global economic situation, we are thankful to God and our supporters for the total amount of \$251,804 raised through written appeals and public collection.

Muster

We started with 79 clients at the beginning of the year. Three applicants on our waiting list were admitted as new clients to our programme, and four clients were discharged upon request by their parents or guardians. We ended the year with 78 clients in our care.

	Tampines Centre		Jalan Tembusu Centre		Total
	Cluster Matthew	Cluster Mark	Cluster Luke	Cluster John	
Start of 2008	21	15	19	24	79
Admission	0	2	1	0	3
Discharge	2	0	1	1	4
End of 2008	19	17	19	23	78

RESERVES POLICY

Our reserves position:

	Current Year \$	Previous Year \$	% Increase / (Decrease)
Unrestricted Funds (Reserves)	1,361,006.00	1,166,169.00	16.71
Restricted / Designated Funds:			
- Benevolent Fund	44,905.00	45,107.00	(0.45)
- Building Fund and Expansion Work	770,178.00	571,625.00	34.73
- Renovation Fund	13,089.00	13,809.00	-
- Deferred Capital Donations / Grants	360,450.00	-	NA
- Total Funds	2,509,628.00	1,795,990.00	39.74
Annual Operating Expenditure	1,748,404.00	1,427,956.00	22.44
Ratio of Reserves to Annual Operating Expenditure	0.78	0.82	(4.88)

Our current reserves are considered very low. For better financial stability to run our programmes effectively, we aim to slowly build up our unrestricted reserves to achieve a ratio of unrestricted reserves to annual operating expenditure equal to 2.

As we are very heavily dependent on public donations, we need this level to cushion us against periods of prolong economic downturn.

In determining this ratio, we are also guided by the Flag Day balloting eligibility criteria set for NCSS members (like ourselves); one of which stipulates that our accumulated reserves does not exceed 5 times the total operating expenditure.

This criterion is also used in the assessment of applications for 'Institutions of a Public Character' (IPC) status of which COH is one.

Our reserves will be used in the following manner:

1. To cover any deficit in the current year of operation
2. And to top up shortfalls in the various funds under the restricted/designated funds.

The Executive Committee will review the amount of reserves regularly at least once a year to ensure that they are adequate to fulfill our continuing obligations.