

Issue No. 5 (February 2009)

samudra

A Bi-Monthly Publication of the Singapore Organisation of Seamen and Seacare Co-operative Limited

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**Always There
to Lend a
Helping Hand**

Issue No. 5 (February 2009)

samudra

52 Chin Swee Road #09-00
Seacare Building Singapore 169875
Tel: 6379 5666 Fax: 6734 5525
Email: sosea@seacare.com.sg
Printed By: Photoplates Pte Ltd

■ www.sosea.org.sg ■ www.seacare.com.sg



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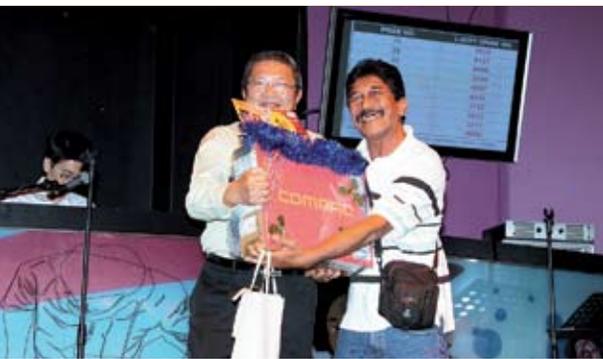
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SOS/SEACARE GIVE DESPITE THE DARK CLOUDS AHEAD



Even with dark clouds ahead, SOS/Seacare are there for the elderly, less able members of the community and the retired seamen.

This New Year, as they ushered in the Year of the Ox, the Union and the Co-operative continue to reach out and extend its help to those in need through the distribution of hong baos and inviting them to celebrate the festive occasion together.

The SOS/Seacare Hong Bao Presentation cum Lunar New Year Lunch was held at the Suntec City Convention Centre on 30 January 2009 with the presence of residents from four welfare homes – Sree Narayana Mission Home for the Aged and Sick, Jamiyah Home for the Aged, Ling Kwang Home for the Senior Citizens and Asian Women's Welfare Association.

Also present was Guest-of-Honour Mr Lim Boon Heng, Minister, Prime Minister's Office, who described SOS and Seacare Co-operative Ltd, as a Union and Co-operative that

exude the traits of the labour movement in Singapore through its initiative of showing care and compassion to those in need of a helping hand. "These people have contributed to the wealth of the country. They too should be given a chance to celebrate," said Mr Lim.

This year, a total of \$38,600 had been put aside to give help to those in need, through the hong bao presentation. President of SOS, Mr Tan Jing Bock said: "In the ongoing economic downturn, SOS and Seacare feel that it is more necessary than ever to care for and share with those in need of helping hand."

Before the lunch commenced, Mr Lim helped to distribute the red packets to the residents and retired seamen along with SOS General Secretary and Seacare Chairman Mr Leow Ching Chuan.

Each retired seamen received a red packet worth \$100 whereas residents of welfare homes received \$50 each.

Eighty-year-old Madam Seethi from the Sree Narayana Mission Home was happy that she had the chance to join in the celebration and be a part of the festive cheer. Also in agreement was Madam Lim Kim Chey, 85, from the same home. "This is my first time here; I enjoy the food and everything is good. I am happy to be here," said Madam Lim.

The sounds of Chinese drums reverberating across the hall as the percussionists delivered a rousing performance, which added to the festivity and auspicious mood.

The lunch was also filled with entertaining acts: from the Chinese acrobatic troupe that kept audience in awe with their flexible moves; and from Mr Jonathan Leong, the Singapore Idol first runner-up.



"This is my first time here; I enjoy the food and everything is good. I am happy to be here."

Madam Lim.



WE COME TO YOU

SOS President Mr Tan Jing Bock went on a home visit to bring the Chinese New Year cheer on 13 February 2009 to five SOS members who are less mobile and were not able to attend the Chinese New Year lunch at the Suntec City Convention Centre.

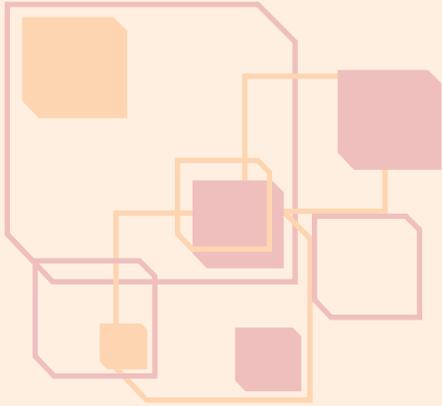
Goody bags consisting of grocery items such as crackers, cereal, oats and cup noodles were presented to these members.

"We want to reach out to our members who were not able to join us for the Chinese New Year lunch. Through the visits, we can share our joy and extend our help in the form of these daily necessities," said Mr Tan.



SOS President Mr Tan Jing Bock handing over Hong Bao and goody bag to SOS member, Mr Cheng Joo Pin

LONG MEMBERSHIP AWARDS RECIPIENTS HONOURED



"I am happy with the benefits the Union has been providing us. I also go for the free medical checkups once a year and the study grant for my son who is in Secondary 4 right now. As far as I know, SOS is the best Union!"

Mr Salim Bin Buang, 56 years old.

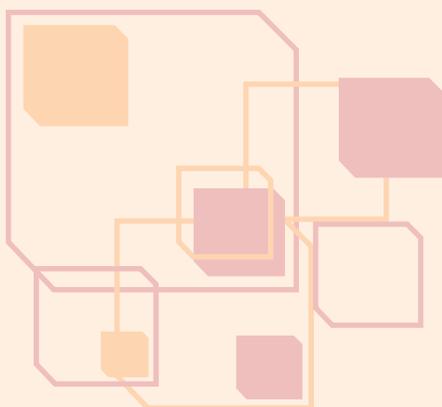


At the Lunar New Year luncheon held at Suntec City Convention Centre, a total of 66 members received their Long Membership Award for two categories – 15 and 30 years.

Their unwavering support and commitment towards SOS strengthen the unity and camaraderie among all our members and encourage the Union to do more for all members.

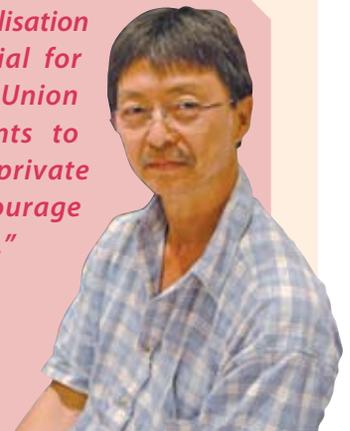
The Awards also show the Union's appreciation of the members' wealth of experience having sailed or still serving on board ships. Their feedback matters and their knowledge of the sea industry is invaluable to the Union.

To all our 15 and 30 year Long Membership Award recipients, we thank you for your support and dedication.



"Areas such as medical, hospitalisation insurance have been beneficial for members. I hope that the Union will extend their study grants to members' children who are in private institution as well, to encourage them to continue their studies."

Mr Wong Tuck Him, 57 years old.



SOS 15th Year Long Membership Award 2009 Recipients

| Membership No. | Name |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 8252 | Musa B Sias |
| 8258 | Roslan B Rahman |
| 8296 | Yong Chiau Suan |
| 8297 | Chan Wing Soon |

| Membership No. | Name |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| 8312 | Shahrin B Hamzah |
| 8313 | Zaini B Attan |
| 8314 | Mohamed Raib B Karmat |



SOS 30th Year Long Membership Award 2009 Recipients

| Membership No. | Name |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 4584 | Subhan B Said |
| 5492 | Loh Koy Hoo |
| 5509 | Abdullah B Hj Ahmad |
| 5515 | Sufa'at B Jantan |
| 5561 | Abd Latiff B Hassan Maricar |
| 5564 | Wong Seow Eng |
| 5569 | Raja Mohd Said B Raja M Shafik |
| 5591 | Loh Kia Fok |
| 5598 | Ramli B Abdul Majid |
| 5615 | Lim Kheng Leong Vivian |
| 5630 | Noordin B Mohd Yasin |
| 5658 | Hasnol B Budin |
| 5662 | Salim B Buang |
| 5704 | Somasundram Ramamoorthy |
| 5741 | Yeo Wee Han |
| 5783 | Lee Thian Poh |
| 5803 | Abu B Keling |
| 5840 | Tan Beng Kiat |
| 5860 | Tan Yong Chew |
| 5865 | Saifulbahri B Nordin |
| 5871 | Mohd B Abu Bakar |
| 5878 | Wong Tuck Him Richard |
| 5879 | Seah Kiang Cheow |
| 5890 | Tan Boon Chai |
| 5893 | Ong Choon Eng |
| 5920 | Kader Maideen B Shaik Dawood |
| 5922 | Foo Wah Chew |
| 5923 | Salaman B Ahwee |
| 5934 | Norani B Mohd Rais |
| 5966 | Ramachandra Balasingam |

| Membership No. | Name |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| 5992 | Kasmani B Juhari |
| 6015 | Tan Ghim Hwa |
| 6034 | Goh Hoon Meng |
| 6040 | Mahmood B Zakaria |
| 6043 | Tan Hai Hock |
| AL048 | Low Yu Hian |
| AL053 | Saw Swee Peow |
| AL054 | Cheng Siam King |
| AL065 | Lim Joo Ling |
| AL074 | Lee Tak |
| AL093 | Ong Hiap Juan |
| AL126 | Mohd Said B Abd Karim |
| AL146 | Chew Wai Seng |
| AL206 | Neo Bock Eng |
| AL211 | Foo Meng Kui |
| AL214 | Long Ah Kheng |
| AL215 | Kung Tai Boon |
| AL242 | Ho Ching |
| AL250 | Foo Heng Boon |
| AL254 | Phua Eng Hong |
| AL277 | Aw Kee Loke |
| AL288 | Koh Hak Soi |
| AL313 | Goh Mai Kiang |
| AL326 | Law Siew Hock |
| AL338 | Abd Rahim B Mustajab |
| CD06 | Wang Phut Phar |
| CD25 | Wong Sin Yeh |
| CD28 | Phua Kia Kheng |
| CD44 | Yeng Yin Leong |

BRINGING TRAINING TO FILIPINO MEMBERS' TURF

SOS Filipino members take note! Besides the extended Seacare Medical Scheme, another benefit is coming your way on home ground.

Following the successful pilot run in equipping Chinese national ratings to communicate better in English, SOS is looking into embarking on training projects in another major crew supplying country, the Philippines.

Speaking to Samudra, Mr Kam Soon Huat, SOS Executive Secretary, highlighted: "We received favourable feedback for our SOS/Seacare Maritime Training Scheme (SMTS) programme in Wuhan. The affirmation from the shipping companies assures us that we are meeting relevant needs in the industry."

SOS is now looking at broadening the SMTS scope to cover the training needs of Filipino seafarers by offering relevant courses in their home country.

"This is our social investment in the lives of our Filipino members. We are doing this for the industry."

Through the SMTS, SOS will offer scholarships and sponsorships in maritime-related courses; conduct study missions; invest in training projects in Singapore and overseas; step up partnerships or have a stake in training centres; among other activities to be approved by its Executive Committee.

For the training programmes in the pipeline, the Union is looking into offering culinary skills courses to train Filipino crew cooks to not just prepare tastier meals and offer wider spread of cuisines but also be just as adept in budgeting, planning healthier meals, looking into hygiene issues and more.



Other possible courses include specialised courses for crew working aboard tankers and for ratings intending to upgrade to officers. These suggested courses came from the SOS CBA companies themselves.

"We find out what the ship owners require via our informal consultation process with them. After evaluating their needs, we work out how viable the course is and determine how much benefits can be derived from it. We also research on the courses offered by reputable training schools in the Philippines and check out how relevant the course content is and more," said Mr Kam.

"It is a rather long process but we believe that lives of the Filipino seafarers will be enhanced with the training; and ship owners get to employ quality Filipino ratings."

SINGAPORE SENDS LANDING SHIP AND TWO SUPER PUMA HELICOPTERS TO GULF OF ADEN

Mr Teo Chee Hean, Singapore's Defence Minister has announced that the nation will be sending a landing ship tank with two Super Puma helicopters for three months this year.

Along with the newly formed multinational Combined Task Force 151, the landing ship will be deployed to safeguard the trade in the Gulf of Aden which has been the hotspot for piracy attacks and hijacks over the last year, by Somali pirates.

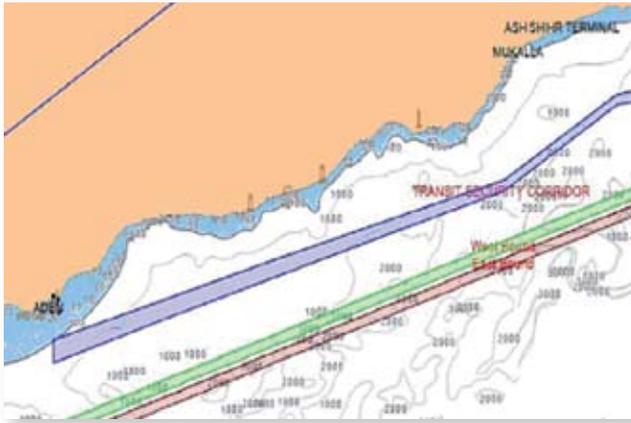
Minister Teo was quoted as saying: "No state is immune from transnational security threats such as terrorism, piracy or natural disasters. Neither is any state able to tackle such complex challenges on its own. Collaboration at the policy-making level must be complemented by operational-level dialogues and exchanges."



The Singapore Shipping Association (SSA) applauds the decision by Singapore Government to commit a naval ship and two helicopters from the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) to join in the ongoing multinational efforts to suppress piracy in the Gulf.

The SSA President, Mr Teo Siong Seng said, "I am proud as a Singaporean and a Singapore shipowner that Singapore is able to do its fair share in providing protection to international shipping, including Singapore ships passing the Gulf of Aden. As SSA, we strongly welcome Singapore's decision to join the multinational effort to suppress piracy in the Gulf of Aden. Not only is this an indication of Singapore's commitment to international efforts protecting vessels passing through the region, but a strong measure of reassurance to owners, shippers and seafarers alike."

This decision shows that Singapore, a small island state with very limited resources, is strongly committed to play its due role as a maritime nation and act in concert with other maritime countries to contribute to the ongoing efforts of the broader international community to fight the scourge of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Gulf.



At least 40 merchant ships from various countries have been hijacked by Somali pirates with the aim of soliciting high ransoms from shipowners. This stretch of waters is currently being patrolled by one of the largest anti-piracy flotillas in modern history. Organised as the Combined Maritime Forces, the United States – led coalition features warships from at least 20 different navies from around the world.

This move is a welcoming one for SOS, given how seafarers have been risking their lives at sea. The Union is in support of this decision.

“We at SOS applaud the government’s decision to extend help to the Gulf of Aden. As a seafarers’ union,

we are greatly concerned with the welfare and safety of seamen and with this initiative, it is indeed an important move for Singapore, towards curbing piracy. The Union hopes that we can all work together to manage this international issue,” said General Secretary Mr Leow Ching Chuan.

Nonetheless, Mr Teo added, “While the commitment of naval forces is hugely important, the Association further acknowledges that the long-term solution to the problem still lies onshore within Somalia itself. Only by bringing stability to Somalia, which has not had a functioning central government since 1991, will it be possible to find a long-term solution to the threat of piracy in the waters surrounding Somalia.

I would take this opportunity to seriously urge the United Nations to make strong efforts to resolve this problem as soon as possible. In view of the economic crisis which are affecting many countries around the world today, the heavy commitment of naval forces in the Gulf would cause unnecessary drain of financial resources which would otherwise be ploughed back to revive the global economy.”



“No state is immune from transnational security threats such as terrorism, piracy or natural disasters. Neither is any state able to tackle such complex challenges on its own. Collaboration at the policy-making level must be complemented by operational-level dialogues and exchanges.”

– Mr Teo Chee Hean, Defence Minister, Singapore



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– Mr Teo Siong Seng, President, SSA



“We at SOS applaud the government’s decision to extend help to the Gulf of Aden. As a seafarers’ union, we are greatly concerned with the welfare and safety of seamen and with this initiative, it is indeed an important move for Singapore, towards curbing piracy. The Union hopes that we can all work together to manage this international issue.”

– Mr Leow Ching Chuan, General Secretary, SOS

INDONESIAN MEMBERS DELIGHTED BY WELFARE HIGHLIGHTS



The Sari Pan Pacific Hotel in Jakarta was filled with some 120 curious and appreciative SOS Indonesian members, their spouses and representatives from manning agents who were there to learn more about the SOS welfare benefits scheme.

SOS representatives – Vice-President Mr Mohamed Idris Bin Mohamed Ibrahim and Manager for Seacare Medical Scheme, Ms Mariana Amad were there to conduct the presentation on the welfare benefits available to SOS members.

Held on 26 December 2008, the presentation led by Mr Mohamed Idris highlighted the various benefits and received useful feedback from those who attended. SOS was very honoured to have a Special Guest Capt. Indra Priyatna, Deputy Director from the Department of Transport, Indonesia, present at the seminar.



Special Guest Capt. Indra Priyatna and SOS President Mr Tan Jing Bock at the Welfare Benefits Presentation



The presentation delved into four schemes available to foreign members of SOS – the Seafarers’ Provident Fund (SPF), Seacare Medical Scheme (SMS), Seacare Maritime Training Scheme (SMTS) and Seacare Sailors’ Home Scheme (SSS). The presentation got members acquainted with the various details of the schemes. Currently, both SPF and SMS are already introduced and made available to SOS members in Indonesia.



“The schemes will increase the trust of seafarers to their Union, and therefore will improve their loyalty to the company as well as SOS,” said Capt Priyatna.

Members also encouraged the Union to organise similar talks twice a year to keep them in the loop of changes and revisions of the various benefits. They were also appreciative of the Union’s initiatives to hold talks and discussions to keep them updated on the activities and benefits available for them.

The SOS Welfare Benefits Seminar not only refreshed the members, their dependants, guests and associates of SOS on the revisions done to the schemes, but also reaffirmed the Union’s commitment to all its members in Indonesia.

More information on the various benefit can be found on SOS website at www.sea.org.sg.



SOS Vice-President Mr Mohamed Idris and SMS Manager Ms Mariana Amad sharing the SOS Welfare Benefits with Indonesian members



SPF TO GO ONLINE

Connectivity, efficiency and environmentally-friendly. The Seafarers' Provident Fund takes on technology to provide an improved way to manage the SPF.

SPF was first established in 2001 as part of SOS welfare scheme for its members and acts as a "shelter during the rainy days". The Fund serves as an umbrella for members' retirement as well as acts as a platform whereby seafarers can grow their savings and safeguard their future needs.

Come third quarter of 2009, transactions and management of the SPF will get a new lease of life – on the internet. The Internet Seafarers' Provident Fund (iSPF) system will manage the contributions and withdrawals of SPF and is a joint initiative of SOS, Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU) and NTUC Thrift and Loan Co-operative Limited. The new system will be beneficial to SOS, SMOU and NTUC Thrift members as well as shipping companies as a one stop shop for data entry, searches updates and the overall management of the SPF.

A paperless and functional system that acts on a highly interactive platform, the development of iSPF as an e-system has been tasked to the M/s Info Lab Pte Ltd. While the system is still under construction, exciting plans are on its way. More information about the system will be made available for SOS members and shipping associates as soon as the iSPF is operationally ready.

SOS TOUCHED BASE WITH 117 SEAFARERS

A different ship visit, a different experience. SOS Industrial Relations (IR) Officer Mr Mohamad Abu Bakar meets different kinds of seafarers each time he goes on his ship visits.

Members who portray excellent hospitality, welcoming him to their ships; individuals who communicate in different languages; or seafarers who highlight to him their appreciation towards the Union or distress on certain issues pertaining to their work.

In the months of December 2008 and January 2009 alone, the SOS IR Officer has met some 117 crew members while their vessels came to Singapore waters. These seafarers came from 10 different vessels of five shipping companies. With a duty that requires him to look into the needs and difficulties



seafarers face, the IR Officer takes on his job seriously. Each visit offers him an insight into the current issues seafarers face and as a former seafarer himself, Mr Mohamad knows the ins and outs on what it is like to be working on board.

The December – January 2009 rounds of ship visit also saw the IR Officer handing out towel sets and posters for the seafarers aboard.

“The welfare of seafarers is of utmost importance to us at SOS. Ship visits enable me to gather a first hand account from the seafarers themselves, on their current needs and concerns,” said Mr Mohamad.

ENHANCED SMS BENEFITS FOR SOS INDONESIAN MEMBERS

SOS expanded the Seacare Medical Scheme (SMS) for its Indonesian members, adding six more benefits covering health checks and introducing reimbursements for purchase of medication to cater to a wider range of needs of members and their dependants.

The SMS for SOS Indonesian Members was introduced on 1 December 2006. Since then, the Union and Seacare have been continuously looking into ways to improve the benefits under this scheme for the Indonesian members and dependants.

Now, with the revised SMS that commenced on 1 December 2008, members and their dependants are entitled to six additional medical benefits covering:

- 1 medical consultation and fasting blood sugar check
- 2 medical consultation and total cholesterol check
- 3 pap smear
- 4 dental consultation
- 5 tooth filling
- 6 extraction without surgery



Also newly introduced with effect 1 December 2008, qualified SOS Indonesian members and their dependants are able to claim up to Rp100,000 per person each month, for the purchase of medicine.

"We realised that not everyone is happy to visit a doctor or dentist. The SMS can be a part of their lives as preventive efforts to be aware of their health and lead a healthy and quality lifestyle. With the additional free benefits and medicine reimbursement benefit, we hope members and dependants will visit the SMS-appointed clinics and utilise the SMS," said Ms Mariana Amad, Manager for SMS.

For more information on the revised SMS, SOS Indonesian members can contact:

Mr Sonny Pattiselanno
SMS Liaison Officer
c/o Kesatuan Pelaut Indonesia (KPI)
Jln Cikini Raya 58 AA/BB
P.O. Box 30871
Jakarta 10330

Tel: (62) 21-3141495
Fax: (62) 21-3141491
Email: sms@seacare.com.sg



For more information on the SMS, SOS Filipino members can contact:

Ms Aimee Sañosa
Manager

Seacare International (Phils.) Inc

911 San Andreas St
Corner Leon Guinto St
Malate, Manila
Philippines

Tel: (63) 2 521-6839
Fax: (63) 2 521-7170
Email: smsph@seacare.com.sg

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS AND CLINIC FOR SOS FILIPINO MEMBERS

First introduced in March 2005, the SMS was extended to SOS members as a form of welfare benefit from the Union to reach out to its members overseas. The SMS is a special scheme to provide free basic medical examination and dental benefits.

From 1 December 2008 onwards, SOS Filipino members and their dependants will be able to enjoy more benefits from the expansion of free medical benefits under the revised Seacare Medical Scheme (SMS). These include three additional benefits; pap smear test, dental consultation and simple tooth filling.

SOS Filipino members can also claim up to Php 500 per person on medication fee. The reimbursement benefits enable each family comprising of qualified SOS Filipino members and dependants to claim up to four reimbursement benefits per month, limited to one per person. This benefit is only valid with prescription issued by SMS-appointed clinic.

In addition to that, members will also get to patronise an additional clinic, the CMDC Diagnostic Centre located in Cagayan de Oro City. This is to ensure that members and dependants who are residing in the Misamis Oriental and nearby provinces will be able to access the clinic and benefit from the medical scheme.

"We feel heartened to be able to provide more benefits to our members in the Philippines as well as Indonesia.

Despite the challenges that we face, such as the residence of members in different provinces and unfamiliarity with the healthcare needs in each different country, we at SOS and Seacare will strive to find ways to improve the benefits and welfare of our members wherever they are," said Ms Mariana Amad, Manager for SMS.

The Benefits Under the SMS for Filipino Members are now as follows:

Medical Benefits

- Medical Consultation
- Complete Blood Count (CBC)
- Stool Examination
- Urinalysis
- ECG
- Chest X-ray
- Fasting Blood Sugar (FBS) check
- Total Cholesterol check
- Pap smear

Dental Benefits:

- Dental Consultation
- Tooth extraction without surgery
- Tooth filling

Reimbursement Benefit:

- Medical reimbursement

WRAPPING UP 2008 IN JAKARTA

An SOS delegation was in Jakarta, Indonesia together with 175 SOS members, ship owners and shipping associates as 2008 drew to a close.

Sari Pan Pacific Hotel was the location where the Year-End Reception for SOS Indonesian members was held on 26 December 2008. SOS delegation includes Vice-President Mr Mohamed Idris Bin Mohamed Ibrahim, President Mr Tan Jing Bock, Senior Manager Ms Jacquelyn Lam, Assistant Secretary Mr Mohamad Abu Bakar, Welfare and Community Services Administrative Secretary Ms Nur Adila Juman, Seacare Medical Scheme Manager, Ms Mariana Amad and SOS Welfare and Community Services Committee Member Mr Abdul Rahim.



Mr Mohamed Idris in his speech said that members and friends in Indonesia have long demonstrated their support and encouragement towards the Union's activities and initiatives. It is the spirit of unity that brought SOS members from different geographical areas together.

"It is clearly shown in our members and their families the belief in solidarity, tolerance and understanding. Therefore, I would like to urge our union members and their family members to continue with that kind of spirit so that our organisation will stay strong and confident



SOS Vice-President Mr Mohamed Idris delivering his address to members and guests at the Year-End Reception in Jakarta

to meet the needs of the future," said Mr Mohamed Idris.

The members and guests were entertained with live band performances, traditional dances and stage games while they tucked into their sumptuous dinner spread. A lucky draw was also held with the first prize being a one night's stay at a deluxe room at Sari Pan Pacific Hotel. Second prize was a "SHARP" one door refrigerator and a SANYO 21-inch coloured television for third prize. Door gifts in the form of a 'Miyako' iron which runs on a suitable voltage for homes in Indonesia were also given to those who attended the year-end dinner.



The year-end dinner has brought each and every member, partners and staff of SOS closer, through the interaction, exchange of ideas, shared views and time spent together throughout the reception, putting a special end to a memorable night in Jakarta.



SOS MEMBER SHOWS POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS TRAINING

“So far, it’s been good. I’ve been in the job for about eight months now. I want to continue to upgrade myself and that is why I have chosen to take up these courses.”

Mr Rahim Abdul Rahman



Fifty-two year-old Mr Rahim Abdul Rahman is a determined boatman who hopes to land a permanent shore job through the skills he acquires.

For Mr Rahim, who is a member of SOS since 1981, upgrading is the way to go to bring him to the next level and secure a job for his future. Last year, he completed two courses which equipped him to take on his current job.

The first course, a seven-day Port Limit Helmsman Course which was held from 13 to 30 October 2008, was an upgrading programme conducted by STET Maritime Pte Ltd. Following that, Mr Rahim also attended a one-day course on Oil Spill Control which also helped him in his job. The two courses were sponsored by the SOS Training Grant Benefit.

“So far, it’s been good. I’ve been in the job for about eight months now. I want to continue to upgrade myself and that is why I have chosen to take up these courses,” said Mr Rahim.

The drive to pursue more skills upgrading courses does not stop short at just these two programmes. The Union is proud to have members like Mr Rahim who is going strong on his pursuit for more improvement programmes to enhance his skills set and better position him for more jobs out there.

LUNCH AND LEISURE TOGETHER WITH AWWA RESIDENTS



Over 38 elderly residents from the Asian Women's Welfare Association (AWWA) visited the Club@52 on 9 December 2008. They were there to answer SOS' invitation to have lunch and engage in some social activities.

This is not the first time that the Union has organised such an activity for the Home residents. SOS President Mr Tan Jing Bock said: "SOS is proud to have played an active role in supporting the cause by organising visits, donations in kind and extending our help to the AWWA residents. Today is the day for them to sit back and enjoy themselves through the entertainment we have prepared for them."

Each resident was given a goody bag filled with basic necessities such as biscuits and cereals. As they were enjoying their lunch, two singers performed for the residents before they took over the microphone and partook in their own karaoke session, covering songs from the classics in various languages.

"They are all happy and enjoying themselves here. We are glad that SOS invited the AWWA residents here today," commented AWWA Nursing Aides, Ms Khin and Ms May Thu.

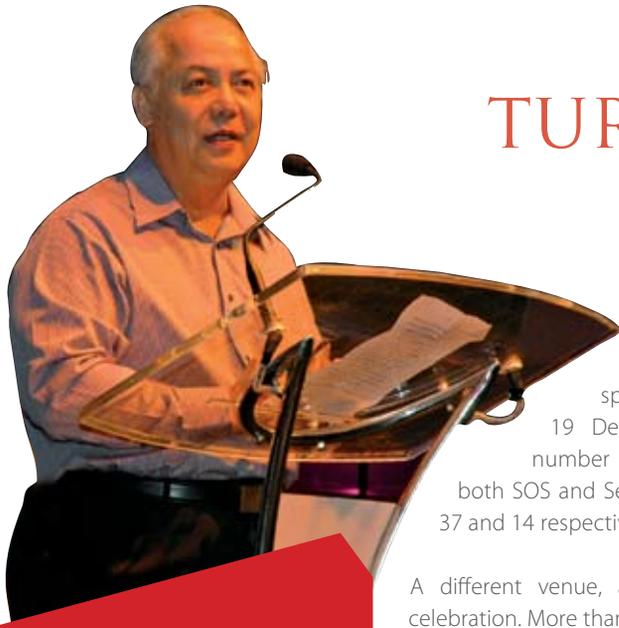


"SOS is proud to have played an active role in supporting the cause by organising visits, donations in kind and extending our help to the AWWA residents."

Mr Tan Jing Bock, President, SOS



SOS AND SEACARE TURN A YEAR OLDER



"All of our members and staff here tonight can be assured that SOS and Seacare will take all necessary steps to help you cope with the downturn."

Mr Leow Ching Chuan, General Secretary, SOS

The number '3714' received several special mentions on 19 December 2008. This number reflects the ages of both SOS and Seacare which turned 37 and 14 respectively in 2008.

A different venue, a different kind of celebration. More than 500 members were present at one of the NTUC Clubhouses, DXO - Colours by the Bay, to bring cheer to the anniversary celebration and immersed themselves in the different setting and atmosphere, with mouth-watering food served buffet style.

In his welcome speech, General Secretary of SOS and Chairman of Seacare Co-operative Ltd said that the difference in venue and setting of the anniversary celebration was not due to the onset of economic downturn, but a refreshing change that would get members together to experience something new. In view of the slowing economy, Mr Leow also commented that the Union and Seacare would try its best to help their members to deal with its effects.

"All of our members and staff here tonight can be assured that SOS and Seacare will take all necessary steps to help you cope with the downturn," said Mr Leow.





Quotable Quotes:



"Seeing that the economy is not doing too good, I wish that the Union can help more seamen remain in their jobs." – Mr Soon Kian Kah, a member of SOS for over 30 years.



"May SOS continue to encourage all the existing members to upgrade their skills and to promote some engaging courses for its members." – Mr Abdul Kahar Othman, a member of SOS for 15 years.



"The venue here is slightly different from the past ones. I like the ambience here." – Mr Abdullah Salleh, who has been an SOS member for more than 25 years.

Performances from the live band, "Passionista", and daredevil Danny Koh who stunned the audience with his fire starter performance as well as a number from singer Wendi Koh kept the entertainment level on a high throughout the night. The Union and Seacare also received some special company as they enjoyed the performances. These special guests were members from the Hong Kong Union who joined in the toasting ceremony to commemorate the anniversary.

An engaging emcee, fun stage games and attractive lucky draw prizes kept the SOS / Seacare spirit alive amongst all who were present at the club. Lucky draw prizes included an HP Compaq notebook, an optical mouse and a carrier for the first prize, a 32-inch Panasonic LCD HD television for second and an Apple iPhone for the third placing.

Certainly, the night ended with many enjoying themselves, keeping lasting memories of the day they celebrated the Union and Seacare turning a year older.

BEING THERE FOR OUR MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Three families who are grieving over the tragic news of the deaths of their dear ones received much-needed help from the labour movement.



Ms Nur Adila, Mr Tan Jing Bock and Ms Mariana Amad pay Mrs Arifin a visit

73-year-old Mr Deng Boon Giap, an SOS member for 36 years, met with a fatal accident on his way to work as a security guard at a neighbouring school. His wife, Madam Foo Kwee Fung, who is now living on her own is appreciative of the Union's visit and care. SOS President Mr Tan Jing Bock and SOS Welfare and Community Services Administrative Secretary Ms Nur Adila Juman presented a cheque of \$30,000 from the NTUC Gift Extension payout to the widow to support her daily needs.

The SOS welfare officials also called on Madam Ng Siew Moi who was mourning the demise of her husband, SOS member Mr Teo Chin Chye. Mdm Ng received a cheque of \$5,500 from the NTUC Gift Extension.

Another member, Mr Arifin Bin Ahmad, a member for 30 years passed away leaving behind his wife and children. A cheque of \$5,500 from the NTUC Gift Extension and another cheque of \$8,000 from the NTUC Unit for Casual and Contract Workers were presented to the family. Seacare Medical Scheme Manager Ms Mariana Amad joined both Mr Tan and Ms Adila in the visit.

UPCOMING EVENT



DIALOGUE SESSION WITH
GENERAL SECRETARY

Date: 8 April 2009

Venue: Club@52



Seacare Focus





SUNSHINE GARDEN 2 HEATS UP

Favourable response was received at the Sunshine Garden 2 soft launch which was held in Manila, Philippines on 19 December 2008.

The project, which is still underway, has caused many to take deep interest in the property despite the global impact from the sub-prime crisis in the United States. Seacare Properties Pte Ltd General Manager, Ms Gillan Teo credited this to the Condominium's ideal location and proximity to an array of facilities for the residents. The quality of Sunshine Garden 1 project also got buyers sitting up to take notice.

"This shows that we have been successful in creating awareness and building a reputation as a developer in Manila. We have earned the confidence of the purchasers via our first housing



"Our marketing colleagues are confident that the project will be well-received as they have already received potential buyers expressing their interest in the units."

Ms Gillan Teo , General Manager,
Seacare Properties Pte Ltd

project – Sunshine Garden 1. It also helps that the project is situated in a convenient location and the attractive price offer a quality finish to fuel the buyers' interest," said Ms Teo.

The condominium, an addition to the "Sunshine Family", is located in the Mandaluyung district, a perfect spot for city lovers. Seacare's marketers in the Philippines are hopeful on the sale prospects of the Sunshine Garden 2 Condominium.

"Our marketing colleagues are confident that the project will be well-received as they have already received potential buyers expressing their interest in the units," added Ms Teo.

A LUNAR NEW YEAR REUNION

WITH JALAN KUKOH RESIDENTS

There was one common thread that took center stage at the Lunar New Year lunch for the Jalan Kukoh residents – and it was family. No matter what age, religion or race; it was a time for reunion, reflection and reaffirming bonds.

There comes a time of year that members of Jalan Kukoh Residents' Committee (RC) Zone C look forward to.

For the past eight years, during the Lunar New Year, the senior residents from the Jalan Kukoh together with members of the Residents' Community have benefited from the hospitality showered upon them by Seacare. This act of kindness is what the Co-operative does without fail every year, with great passion, fervour and style.

This year, the LNY lunch, held on 6 February saw more than 100 senior residents treated to an afternoon of festive food and entertainment at Club@52, Seacare Building. The atmosphere set the stage for an auspicious occasion which included lunch, entertainment, hongbao presentation and lucky draw.

While declaring wishes of prosperity and abundance, residents and representatives from SOS and Seacare tossed yu sheng in the





Since Seacare started inviting us to celebrate Lunar New Year, I have not missed a single year. This is the eighth time I'm attending the event. We look forward to the programme organised for our members. On behalf of Jalan Kukoh RC Zone C, I would like to thank Seacare and its management for remembering us every year and wish them prosperity.

Mr Ong Keng Chong, Chairman of Jalan Kukoh RC Zone C

spirit of togetherness. With well wishes on everyone's heart, the act of sharing a meal made everyone feel part of a big family. Seacare Chairman, Mr Leow Ching Chuan proceeded to bless the guests with hongbao and later, did a noble thing of personally carrying birds' nest hampers to the lucky draw prize winners.

Selvi, a resident of Jalan Kukoh for four years, was attending the LNY lunch for the first time. Although she was an ethnic minority at the function, she hardly felt out of place. That was because the repertoire of songs from the entertainers covered more than Chinese dialects but included Bahasa and Tamil as well.

NO SHORTCUTS TO STAYING RESILIENT

KEY BUDGET INITIATIVES INTRODUCED TO HELP EMPLOYEES AND COMPANIES



To give support to the maritime industry, the Government will extend the withholding tax exemption on interest payable on qualifying loans taken by shipping enterprises to acquire vessels which are registered with the Singapore Registry of Ships under the Block Transfer Scheme, subject to conditions. This extension will be for a further period of five years with effect from 1 January 2009.

Withholding tax exemption for the maritime industry is one of the key budget initiatives announced by the Minister for Finance, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, on 22 January 2009.

The Resilience Package, totalling \$20.5 billion, aims to save jobs and help viable companies stay afloat. It also prepares Singapore to emerge with strength when the global economy recovers, and enhance our capabilities and competitiveness for the long term.





There are five components to the package.

- First, jobs for Singaporeans. A total of \$5.1 billion will be spent to help preserve jobs.
- Second, stimulating bank lending. \$5.8 billion will be extended in government capital for a Special Risk-Sharing Initiative (SRI).
- Third, enhancing business cash-flow and competitiveness. The government will implement tax measures and grants for businesses that will cost \$2.6 billion.
- Fourth, supporting families. \$2.6 billion will be put aside to support Singaporean households this year. This is on top of the benefits they will derive from the measures to preserve jobs.
- Fifth, building a home for the future. \$4.4 billion will be invested in developing first class infrastructure for the island and on expanded provisions for education and healthcare.

To the Labour Movement, the Resilience Package is "a strong display of commitment by the government, and reinforces the trust and unity forged over many years among the tripartite partners".

"It gives us tremendous assurance, encouragement and confidence to stay the path of tripartism, a unique advantage has over other nations."

In a media release, the NTUC highlighted that the core priority for the labour movement is to avoid massive retrenchments and guard against a rapid rise in the unemployment rate.

"We will help businesses and Singaporeans with their immediate needs, so that they can stay afloat in the recession and look towards the future. But even as we deal with the immediate problems, this cannot be a Budget that is only about the short term. We should take the opportunity of this downturn to build up our capabilities and infrastructure, and position Singapore for its next phase of growth."

– Minister for Finance, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam



Three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been identified to Upturn the Downturn:

- Avoid exceeding the high retrenchment of 29,000 recorded in 1998;
- Avoid exceeding the high unemployment rate of 5.2% recorded in 2003;
- Strive for a faster recovery than the global economy during the eventual upturn.

The Labour Movement is calling on tripartite partners and union leaders on the ground to fulfil four commitments:

- Most pro-business economy in the world
- Most pro-worker nation in the world
- Most united tripartism in the world
- Most caring Labour Movement in the world.

"In conclusion, there will be no shortcuts to upturning this downturn – the Labour Movement will have to work through company by company to help businesses survive and upgrade so that more jobs can be saved for workers. With clear focus and strong alignment, we are confident that the tripartite partners will stand in unity to rally ground support. Together, we will get through this crisis with confidence and a positive attitude, and reach the finish line of global recovery as a stronger economy and a more resilient nation."



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