

# SAMUDRA

A bi-monthly Publication of the Singapore Organisation of Seamen and Seacare Co-operative Limited

MCI (P) 162/08/2015

*Keep on*  
***Growing;***  
*Keep on*  
***Caring***



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## SOS/SEACARE KEEP ON GROWING; KEEP ON CARING



SOS was commended by Manpower Minister Lim Swee Say for its contribution and the role it plays in taking care of the welfare and interests of the workers in the maritime industry. He also applauded the Union's efforts in making every job in the shipping industry a better job and creating a better working environment for seafarers here and abroad.

Mr Lim was speaking as the Guest of Honour at the SOS/Seacare Hong Bao Presentation cum Lunar New Year Celebration on 12 February 2016 held at Fairmont Ballroom, Raffles City Convention Centre.





Among the many ways that SOS and Seacare have taken care of workers' interests was the presentation of red packets amounting to a total of \$27,900 benefitting 279 retired seamen.

"This is our way of saying thank you to our seamen for their support to the union and contribution to Singapore's trade and economy in the pioneer years," said Mr Mohamad Abu Bakar, President of SOS.

On top of that, the Union and Co-operative also presented red packets of \$50 each to 80 residents from four welfare homes - AWWA, Jamiyah Home for the Aged (Darul Takrim), Sree Narayana Mission Home for the Aged Sick and Ling Kwang Home for Senior Citizens. Some of the beneficiaries were wheel-chair bound.

Mr Mohamad announced to the some 1,000 guests who attended the annual celebration lunch that as of 31 January 2016, SOS has a registered strength of 26,603 members and expressed confidence that the membership will "keep on growing stronger".

He, however, cautioned the maritime community to take safety "very seriously". He pointed out that recent cases of negligence onboard passenger and merchant ships have resulted in heavy and unnecessary losses. Those incidents could have





been averted if proper measures had been taken by shipowners and operators.

“The protection of the seamen is paramount,” he added. “As a union representing local and regional seafarers, SOS will keep working with the MPA, ILO and ITF to enhance the living and working conditions of our seafarers.”

“We continue to work with our regional affiliates to put in place more apparatus to enhance the safety of seafarers working onboard. We hope the working and living conditions on board ships will become better and better for seafarers.”

The event highlights included the traditional “Lou-Hei”, sumptuous lunch, lucky draw, performances by string quintet, wushu and more. When the eight “god of fortune” mascots made their appearance, they were enthusiastically welcomed by all.







# THANK YOU, LONG MEMBERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS!

This year's SOS/Seacare Lunar New Year Celebration turned out to be extra special for nine union members, with them receiving the SOS Long Membership Award. Two of them have been with the Union for 15 years, while the other seven, 30 years each.

The memorable moment was sweetened by the presence of Manpower Minister Lim Swee Say who presented the awards to them in front of about 1,000 guests at the luncheon on 12 February 2016 at Fairmont Ballroom, Raffles City Convention Centre.

Thank you for your faithful support to the Union all these years!

## 15 Years Award Recipients

Aw Heng Boon Jackson

Foo Phang Loon

## 30 Years Award Recipients

Roslan Ahmad

Kiam Long Jong

Raj Moham

Mohammad Kodrasono

Chew Koke Lee

Han Heng Kuang

Wood Ah Jee

SOS is really a good Union and I know that the seafarers are satisfied and very happy to receive the care and concern. I love meeting my brothers during this annual Lunar New Year event, Deepavali, Members' Night and more. Such occasions allow us to go back to those days when we were still on board the ships. Member care is number one in SOS and I hope it will stay this way for a long time to come.

– **Raj Moham**

One of my most treasured moments is the opportunity to give back to the Union and serving my fellow friends and members, first as a standing committee member, and now in the Exco. I am happy to contribute as much as I can to the Union. SOS helps seafarers from the beginning to the end of their career. Even when we are no longer sailing, SOS is there looking out for us and our welfare.

– **Mohammad Kodrasono**



I have benefitted so much from being a part of SOS - from having heavily subsidized overseas trips to getting study grants for my children, celebrating the annual Chinese New Year, and receiving this long membership gift.

– **Kiam Long Jong**

We really hope that SOS can maintain all the good work and continue to offer such quality service to the members.

– **Haslina Abd Kadir, wife of Roslan Ahmad**

I am happy to get the award. As a SOS member, there are many privileges. One of the welfare benefits which I treasure is the training grant. Because of SOS, I managed to get a taxi license and also pursued further studies at the Building and Construction Authority (BCA). Now, I am working in the construction industry. It is good to be part of SOS. My daughter and son have both been receiving SOS Study Grant since they were in primary school. We enjoyed the family gatherings in KL and the durian trips.

– **Roslan Ahmad**



# APPRECIATING FRATERNAL CO-OPERATION WITH FKSU



**S**trengthening bilateral relationship brought delegates from the Federation of Korean Seafarers' Unions (FKSU) and SOS team together at Seacare Building for a heart to heart dialogue. Joined by SMOU officials, the meeting of minds on 16 December 2015 and sharing of experiences and perspectives on regional maritime development resulted in a deeper appreciation of the fraternal co-operation.

Before this meeting in Singapore, SOS had taken pragmatic steps towards building up bilateral ties, paving the way for deeper fraternal engagement in recent years. Both parties resolved to look for more opportunities to advance their regional operations in the interests of their members.



## SOS AND SMOU STRATEGIC PLANNING DIALOGUE IN HK

**S**OS and its sister union, SMOU, got together under one roof to have a strategic planning dialogue. Held in Hong Kong from 29 November to 2 December 2015, the dialogue enabled the two Singapore maritime unions to identify strategic challenges, opportunities and collaboration ahead.

Matters pertaining to members' welfare and benefits, enhancing bipartism and building the Singapore core in the maritime industry were discussed at length. While in Hong Kong, the Singapore teams attended a networking dinner hosted by the Merchant Navy Officers' Guild. Another highlight of the trip was the visit to Hong Kong Seamen's Union (HKSU) office and a tour of their training facilities.

Representing SOS at the discussion were General Secretary Kam Soon Huat, Executive Secretary Daniel Tan, Industrial Relations Executives Chen Chuanyi and Alan Kor.





# MORE THAN US\$388K PAID OUT TO IMBAK CREW



SOS President Mohamad Abu Bakar and IR Executive Alan Kor visited and touched base with the crew members who were left stranded on the Malaysian-flagged chemical tanker Imbak since the vessel's arrest in March 2015.

In the preceding months, the two, together with officers from SMOU, have been monitoring the case and updating the vessel's 22-member crew of the legal proceedings that entailed.

"The number of personnel onboard was eventually reduced to a skeleton crew. It was a difficult time for them," said Mr Mohamad.

"They were worried about their future. They had not received their wages since April last year, and we wanted to help them as much as we could," he added.



SOS delivered the good news to the crew when Imbak was sold off on 15 October 2015. That same morning, the remaining crew disembarked the vessel and was repatriated.

In January 2016, the High Court of Singapore ordered that USD388,649.68 be paid out of the sale proceeds of the vessel to the crew.

The amount covered their unpaid wages and employment compensations. The payment would be remitted to their bank accounts.



# TRAIN TO BE READY FOR FUTURE

In keeping with the Government's push to foster a culture of lifelong learning, Singaporeans aged 25 and above will receive \$500 credit in their SkillsFuture Credit (SFC) account.

For NTUC members, SFC can be used in conjunction with the NTUC Union Training Assistance Programme (UTAP) to defray the training costs. Read on to find out how you can maximise your training subsidies today.



## What is UTAP?

UTAP (Union Training Assistance Programme) is an individual skills upgrading account specially for NTUC members. As a member, you enjoy UTAP funding at 50% of the unfunded course fee capped at \$250 every year. This is only for courses supported by e2i.

You can apply UTAP via website at <https://skillsupgrade.ntuc.org.sg> within 6 months after the course ends.

## What is Skills Future Credit?

Singaporeans aged 25 and above will receive \$500 credit in their individual SkillsFuture Credit account, which can be used to defray the costs of courses meant for skills upgrading advancement. These credits will not expire and periodic top-ups will be made by the Government.

You can use your credit to pay for or offset skills related course fees by applying for claim(s). All eligible Singaporeans will be able to access their SkillsFuture Credit account via [www.skillsfuture.sg/credit](http://www.skillsfuture.sg/credit).

## Can I claim both SkillsFuture Credit and UTAP at the same time?

Yes, you can. As long as the course is found on both SkillsFuture Credit and UTAP listing, you may claim both at the same time. Provided you have not offset your course fees in full using your SkillsFuture Credit, you may claim the remaining portion from UTAP.

Kindly note that there is a timeline for claim submission under SkillsFuture Credit, and UTAP can only be claimed after the course ends.

NTUC members are encouraged to claim from UTAP first to optimize the funding options as UTAP is given on calendar year basis.

Refer to the table below for an example of UTAP and SkillsFuture Funding support.

*John, an NTUC member, wants to take up a skills upgrading course that is supported under UTAP. He can now apply for UTAP and his SkillsFuture Credit to defray the training costs.*

Course Fee	\$1,000	\$70 (GST)
Government Subsidy	\$900	N.A.
Course Fee after Subsidy	\$100	\$70 (GST)
UTAP Funding*	\$50	N.A.
SkillsFuture Credit*	\$50	\$70 (GST)
John Pays	\$0	\$0 (GST)

*Course fee is for illustration purposes only.*

*\*Terms and conditions apply.*

To find out more, visit [www.ntuclearninghub.com](http://www.ntuclearninghub.com)





## READY TO WORK ONBOARD

The Singapore (Nantong) International Maritime Institute (SNIMI), a training partner of Seacare Thrift Pte Ltd, successfully concluded the training of 36th batch of Seacare Quality Rating Training (SQRT) and 37th batch of the Seacare Quality Cooks Training (SQCT) courses on 27 November 2015.

Some 50 trainees graduated from the two courses aimed at boosting the technical competencies of sea-going trainees. For two weeks, both groups had to undergo intensive Maritime English training, in addition to the requisite technical syllabus, that helped prepare them to work onboard vessels manned by international crew.

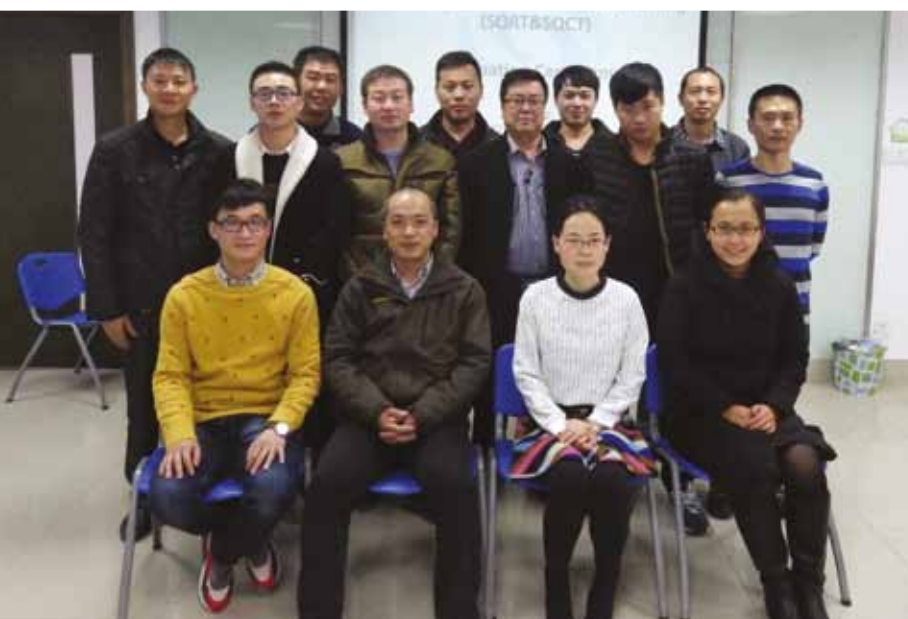
SQRT and SQCT trainers noted that the trainees displayed a positive learning attitude and had a strong desire and passion to work onboard.

"They made huge progress, having overcome their initial shyness and nervousness to now conversing in basic English and using expressive descriptions. They have definitely expanded their conversational and maritime vocabularies and are more confident seamen," said trainer Lilith.

"The trainees are prepared to work on board. Their ability to speak English combined with their professional knowledge makes them qualified seamen."

SQCT trainer Cherry agreed, and said that over the weeks of intensive training, the trainees were still very eager to improve themselves. "I am glad that they had persisted and kept up with the pace of the training. I hope they can continue to polish up on their English and get along well with seafarers from other nationalities in future. I am confident that they are ready to work onboard."





Now I feel I can speak English with more confidence. I am thankful that the trainers here used English as the medium of instructions, rather than our mother tongue. In a way, it forced us to take the first step to speak in English.

**- Xiao Tian Hong, 25, from Hubei**



I felt more confident in introducing myself in English and conversing using maritime English. I still need to further brush up my listening skills. I enjoyed doing group presentations during the course.

**- Zhang ZhiQi, 22, from Gansu**



I enjoyed playing English games and activities in the class. It helped learners like us improve our oral communication in a fun way.

**- Zhang Cong, 21 from Henan**

I learnt the fundamentals of oral English and the requirements for effective communication as a seaman. I like the learning atmosphere in class as we are free to ask questions and to clarify our doubts.

**- Guo Xin Zhong, 46, from Hubei**





# THE FUTURE OF WOMEN

Pertinent issues on advancing women in the workforce were explored at the leadership dialogue on The Future of Women.

Held on 26 January 2016, the “SG Future -The Future of Women, A Women Leaders’ Dialogue” garnered thought-provoking discussions on the challenges in nurturing female talent as well as solutions to level the playing field for women.

Representing SOS at the eventful event were Assistant Treasurer Sharon Li and Manager for Schemes Administration Shirley Lai. The strong representation from women unionists at the dialogue session signalled the interest and growing awareness of reinforcing the development of women leaders and talents in the workforce.

“Over the years, the lives of women in Singapore have changed dramatically, for the better. Women make up at least half the population, and by extension, contribute half of the potential talent pool in Singapore. So the focus on developing women leaders is critical,” said Sharon.

Adding on, Shirley noted: “There is no denying that today’s women are better educated and contribute more to Singapore’s economy. Women have also established themselves in many sectors and their share of professional and managerial roles have also increased significantly. The dialogue was indeed timely.”







## EYE-OPENING TRIP TO SEMAKAU LANDFILL

It was a learning visit like no other. Thirty-two SOS members and staff boarded a ferry at Marina South Pier on 10 December 2015 and headed for the Semakau Landfill, Singapore's first offshore landfill and the only remaining landfill in the country.

The fully guided educational tour was an eye-opener to the efforts taken to create landfill capacity to meet the waste disposal needs of Singapore to 2035 and beyond. From the trip organised by SOS Training & Skills and Leadership Development Committee, members learnt how Singapore deals with pollution and waste management, and how waste disposal needs can be balanced with conserving nature.

During the landfill tour, they also witnessed the two engineering feats, the 200-metre long floating platform and the floating wastewater treatment plant, achieved in the Phase II Semakau Landfill. The trip ended with a scenic stop at the tip of the landfill to take photos and enjoy the sea breeze.







## TO VIETNAM AS ONE BIG FAMILY



The oldest was 84 years old while the youngest, 7. In all, 85 SOS members and 60 dependents including 10 children travelled to Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam for the annual SOS Family Day in December 2015.

The overwhelming response meant that the travellers had to go in four groups at different times. Thus when the time came for all four groups to gather as one for the grand dinner





at the Red House Restaurant, the moment was extra sweet and memorable. The spread of 12 dishes also brought immense satisfaction to the travellers. To top it all, the Union specially ordered a 10kg birthday cake to celebrate with 18 participants whose birthdays fall on that month.

During the four-day tour, the tourists covered the must-see sights in Ho Chi Minh. Over at the Cu Chi Tunnels, the participants crawled through the network of narrow tunnels dug by the Viet Cong during the Vietnam War. At Caibe, they travelled on Mekong sampans and cruised among local barges and houses and visited workshops selling local products. Other attractions covered included the General Post Office, Notre Dame Church and War Museum.

Shopping took place at Ben Thanh Market where items like local handicrafts and products such as cashew nuts, clothing, shoes, bags and more were snapped up. The shopping continued at Saigon Square.

All returned home happy with bags full of memories, souvenirs and local snacks.





## SMASHING TIME AT MEMBERS' NIGHT



The strictly Members Only event brought the house down when SOS members arrived in throngs to party the night away.

It was a joyous time when 169 members gathered at the SOS Members' Night cum New Year Party on 9 January 2016 at Club@52. Emcee Jesson Chng had the knack of getting the members on stage to participate in the games, dance and singing.





The gathering made it possible for the members to trade the latest news on their well-being and have a good time enjoying the buffet dinner and drinks. The ever popular Lucky Draw got everyone keyed up. For those who did not win, there was a Special New Year Lucky Dip just for them. Everyone went home a winner.

What a great way to start the new year! Have a smashing 2016!





# Health Advisory On **Zika Virus**



The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) has issued an information factsheet in a bid to help seafarers around the world to protect themselves from the Zika virus.

The Zika virus, caused by the bite of an infected *Aedes* mosquito, is currently circulating in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific. There have also been reported cases of the virus being spread through blood transfusion and sexual contact.

The health risk is higher for seafarers because they are in transit a lot of the time and there are a number of major trade routes passing through areas impacted by the Zika virus. Particularly dangerous for women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, the virus has been linked to genetic birth defects, with no specific treatment or vaccine currently available.

Follow the advice of ITF if you're on board a ship travelling to countries affected by the current outbreak of the Zika virus disease.

## SYMPTOMS

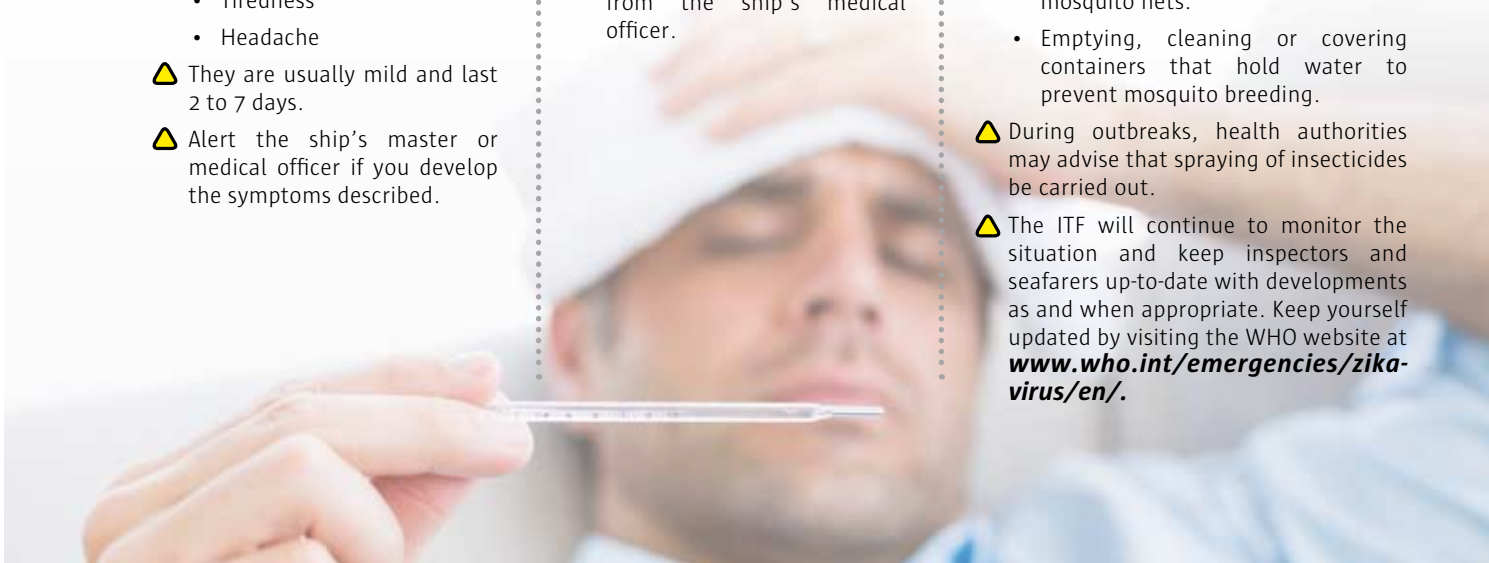
- ▲ The incubation period (the time from exposure to symptoms) of the Zika virus is a few days.
- ▲ Common symptoms are:
  - Fever
  - Skin rashes
  - Conjunctivitis (red eyes)
  - Muscle and joint pain
  - Tiredness
  - Headache
- ▲ They are usually mild and last 2 to 7 days.
- ▲ Alert the ship's master or medical officer if you develop the symptoms described.

## TREATMENT

- ▲ There is no specific treatment or vaccine for the Zika virus.
- ▲ If you get infected, take plenty of rest and drink enough fluids to prevent dehydration.
- ▲ Try treating pain and fever with common medicines.
- ▲ If your symptoms worsen, alert the ship's master and seek medical care and advice from the ship's medical officer.

## PREVENTION

- ▲ The best method is to minimize the chance of mosquito bites when docked or ashore in one of the affected countries by:
  - Using insect repellent.
  - Wearing clothes (preferably light-coloured) that cover as much of the body as possible.
  - Using physical barriers such as closed doors and windows, and mosquito nets.
  - Emptying, cleaning or covering containers that hold water to prevent mosquito breeding.
- ▲ During outbreaks, health authorities may advise that spraying of insecticides be carried out.
- ▲ The ITF will continue to monitor the situation and keep inspectors and seafarers up-to-date with developments as and when appropriate. Keep yourself updated by visiting the WHO website at [www.who.int/emergencies/zika-virus/en/](http://www.who.int/emergencies/zika-virus/en/).





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## CELEBRATING LNY WITH JALAN KUKOH COMMUNITY



Occupying 42 tables at the popular Red Star Restaurant, the Jalan Kukoh Senior Citizens, Members of Residents' Committee (RC) and Seniors Activity Centre (SAC) were in for a good Lunar New Year treat from SOS and Seacare Co-operative Ltd.

Joined by the SOS/Seacare Management and Staff, the celebration on 17 February 2016 did not disappoint. The seniors were delighted by a programme carefully planned for them - songs





in Teochew and Hokkein and the old time hits, the presence of celebrities, and abalone gift packs. Adding a special touch was the hong bao distribution by special guest, Capt Say Eng Sin, Chairman of Seacare Maritime Medical Centre.

A special table Lucky Draw was also conducted at every table. Each winner received a \$50 shopping voucher sponsored by Sheng Siong Group Ltd.

"I am a cancer survivor and every day I look forward to attending this event as well as the Mid Autumn Festival organised by Seacare. We older folks are always excited when we get the chance to go out, have a good meal and entertainment. We are very grateful," said Mdm Kok Poh Yoke, 70.

Looking contented were Mr Sin Yoke Leong, 87 and his wife Yim Ah Fong, 90. "We are very appreciative of this. For many years now, we have been invited to this event. So even though my husband is on a wheel chair, we still come and enjoy," Mdm Yim pointed out.

Another happy person stood out from the crowd - Ms Eunice Goh, RC Chairperson (Jalan Kukoh). She said, "Throughout the years, Seacare has extended the invitation to cover residents from more blocks. For that, we are grateful for the generosity. The elderly are very keen to attend this Chinese New Year celebration as well as the Mid-Autumn Festival organised by SOS/Seacare. They really appreciate the good gesture, the wonderful meal and the fact that they are remembered. On behalf of the residents, I want to thank SOS/Seacare. Your support goes a long way."



# SEACARE MANPOWER SERVICES POWERS AHEAD IN 2016



In the wake of slower economic and employment growth, Seacare Manpower Services Pte Ltd is confident about the job market this year, believing that its manpower resources are well equipped to meet the demands, leveraging on technology to improve productivity.

Seacare Manpower Services Pte Ltd is one of the biggest suppliers of contract staffing in Singapore.

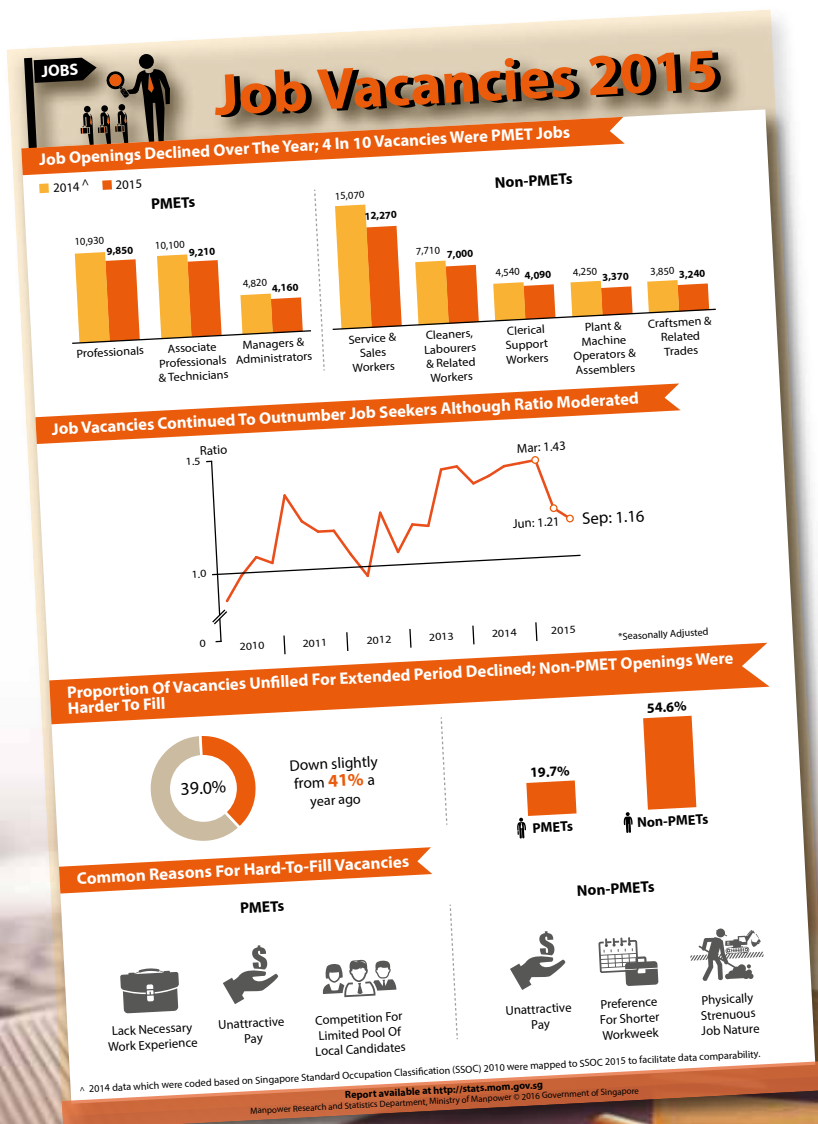
Incorporated in 1995, it started as a human resource agency for placement workers for both maritime and non-maritime personnel.

Seacare Manpower Services's pool of manpower resources range from positions such as AV/IT technician, ICT Executive, Teacher's Aid, Certification Officer, and Membership Service Recruiters, to Office Administrator, Receptionist, Operation Support Officer, and Event Helper amongst others.

Throughout the years, Seacare Manpower Services has built and secured an extensive network of clientele, in the public and private sectors, such as the Ministry of Education, NTUC, Singapore Prison, etc.

It continues to improve on its service through benchmarking its results against industry aligned key performance indicators, targeted to exceed service expectations. Its priority is to deliver tangible cost savings and efficiency gains.

By providing recruitment solutions, Seacare Manpower Services goes the extra mile and beyond. Its mission is to deliver a service that sets itself apart from the rest – a service that exceeds all expectations and enhances success.





Tete-a-tete with Seacare Manpower Services Senior Manager Evelyn Siow

### ***Who forms the majority of Seacare Manpower's job seekers?***

An estimated number of workers based on their age group, that forms the profile of our jobseekers, since January 2016, are mostly below 55 years of age. That said, we have a fairly large percentage of jobseekers above the age of 55 years, who still wish to continue working.



55 yrs and below : 61%



55-60 yrs old : 15%



60-65 yrs old : 12%



65 yrs and above : 12%

### ***What are some trends in Singapore's employment market?***

In the current job trend, many positions have been redesigned to include more multi-tasking roles to further boost the output and productivity. Most industries have also started using automation and even self-servicing machines as a cost saving measure. We have seen this slowly taking place in industries such as manufacturing, banking and service.

### ***Do you foresee machines replacing humans in future?***

There are still deficiencies in the ability of machines and computers to duplicate and mimic human skills. Besides, many customers still prefer human interaction as part of the service rendered. Having said that, you must understand there has always been a

shortage of manpower in industries, where human interaction is traditionally preferred, such as the F&B and service sectors.

For administrative and clerical positions, at least, we believe there is still a strong demand for interpersonal skills and communication, which are difficult for sophisticated machines to replace totally.

### ***What essential skills are required for administrative positions?***

To remain employable, job seekers should have extensive software skills, Internet research abilities, strong communication skills and be willing to multi-task to stay relevant. They must constantly be willing to upgrade themselves. As a matter of fact, the position of an office attendant, who traditionally deals with filing, printing, collection of mails and office support, has become obsolete over the years. Most jobs have been redesigned and re-enhanced to fit the organisation better.

### ***Seacare Manpower also conducts First Aid courses for staff. How is that relevant to their jobs?***

We have received feedbacks from our clients, especially from those in schools, that First Aid skills are relevant and necessary during Disaster Management, where immediate help can be extended to the affected victims.

We thought it is an excellent suggestion as basic knowledge of first aid can reduce fatalities, especially when our staff in school deals with many students everyday. We have recently conducted our 3rd First Aid Awareness course in March and response has been positive. The participants get good knowledge and skills for CPR and AED according to the guidelines set by the Singapore National Resuscitation Council (NRC) and Singapore Red Cross.

Seacare Manpower Services is constantly trying to value add to our clients. We see this as a natural part of delivering customer service excellence.







## AWARD WINNING CONNECT CENTRE - A LIFE CHANGING BUSINESS



Connect Centre will continue in our persistent effort to deliver excellent quality services for our client and continue supporting our Corporate Social Responsibility by helping ex-offenders and inmates.

– **Connect Centre CEO Andrew Leo**

Connect Centre Pte Ltd, set up in 2004, is the first contact centre in the Southeast Asian region that operates within the prison walls. It is an associate of Seacare Foundation Pte Ltd. Established with a Social Enterprise business model, Connect Centre has proven that Corporate Social Responsibility and professional contact centre services can go hand in hand.

Connect Centre started with the first contact centre inside the Changi Women's Prison, employing as many as 60 inmates at one time. One of the social enterprise's first customers was Singapore Prison Service, giving Connect Centre the chance to provide quality telecommunications services with the prison visitation hotline. Till today, almost 12 years later, Singapore Prison Service is still a client of Connect Centre.

In 2008, with the successes witnessed in the Women's Prison, the model was replicated in the Men's Prison of Cluster B at Changi Prisons. The contact centre in the Men's Prison has since serviced major clients from industries such as telecommunications, F&B, financial institutes, healthcare etc.

In 2009, Connect Centre took a step further in its Corporate Social Responsibility by setting up its first 24 x 7 Contact Centre outside the prison.

In 2013, the 24 x 7 centre was relocated to a bigger premises that can accommodate up to 50 agents at a sitting forming the Connect Centre HQ. Currently the agent strength in the HQ comprises at least 70 percent ex-offenders, some of whom have been working with Connect Centre since their prison term. Some have also been promoted to Team Managers and Senior Agents over the years.



Mr Andrew Leo, CEO of Connect Centre Pte Ltd

Mr Andrew Leo, Connect Centre CEO, speaks on

### ***People Connect Centre Hires...***

"We hire not just from the general public but also ex-offenders who were recently released from the prison. In fact some of the ex-offenders we have hired were previously working with us inside the prison.

By providing an 'end-to-end' solution, we are proud to say that we have seen many successful cases where an ex-offender reintegrates back into the society.

We have also since become an award-winning contact centre with our staff winning accolades such as Best Team Leader award. We also won recognition for our staff recruitment and retention programs."

### ***Connect Centre's clients...***

"Currently we have over 100 seats across all 3 centres delivering top notch customer services to clients. We have managed to clinch major contracts from both government and non-government entities pushing the company to a whole new level which was never seen before."

### ***Its future plans...***

"Connect Centre is not only expanding the client base in Singapore but also in the region. A potential expansion into neighboring countries such as Indonesia is in the pipeline. We would like to extend our reach globally and establish ourselves fully in the region in the next 5 – 10 years.

We may also diversify our portfolio by branching out into different types of businesses such as logistics and delivery that will put the contact centre as the central hub of all information flow. We may also partner different companies to expand our range of services in the future. As the contact centre industry evolves, Connect Centre will have to move along and evolve as well to remain competitive in the market."





## CARING FOR CAREGIVERS

### SILVER CAREGIVERS CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED



**T**o Silver Caregivers Co-operative Limited (SCCL), what matters most is the social and emotional challenges faced by caregivers, as well as the essential roles they play in society. And their tagline – “CARING FOR CAREGIVERS” – reflects their passionate stance towards this issue.

Seacare Co-operative Limited is an institutional member of SCCL. As an affiliate of the Singapore National Co-operative Federation since 2013, SCCL gives a voice to family caregivers by offering psycho-social and emotional support, and by empowering them with relevant holistic skill sets in professional care and training services.

Through its integrated resource network, SCCL fosters understanding and bonding between caregivers and the general public by conducting activities like tea sharing sessions, talks, workshops and social networking events. There are also yoga workshops and talks where speakers from different professional fields are invited to share advice with participants, with topics ranging from mindfulness in caregiving, medical issues of caregivers, stress management and effective communication within family caregivers. Such activities are a good opportunity for SCCL to highlight the challenges caregivers face and the resources



that are available to them. In addition, SCCL is actively involved in conducting seminars and workshops at corporate companies to reach out to more caregivers.

The rapidly aging population naturally means a sharp increase in family caregivers, and as these caregivers often juggle work and duty responsibilities, their stress levels will spike. Here is where SCCL comes in - it educates the silver caregivers (who could be spouse, adult child, adult child-in-law, sibling or even a grandchild) and prepares them for the "long caregiving journey." With good preparation, knowledge about diseases and legal issues, resources, and accessibility to support networks, caregivers can walk a smoother journey with minimal impact to their physical and mental health.

Dedicated to its cause, SCCL works closely with various partners to implement measures that will aid its members, such as offering home-based health screening. In many cases, caregivers may regularly bring their care recipients for check-ups, yet neglect to go for a check-up themselves. Taking into consideration the time constraints many of them face, SCCL has facilitated more comprehensive health checks to be done at the caregivers' own homes.

The outreach of SCCL does not end there. When SCCL held its Caregiver's Celebration Dinner on 28 Oct 2015 in conjunction with SG50 celebrations to mark its official launch, it released the book "You are not Alone", which contained the true stories of 12 caregivers and their commendable journeys in caregiving.

SCCL is also proud to launch the Extraordinaire Caregiver Awards during the Caregivers' Celebration Dinner, which honoured individuals for their strength, courage, and resilience in the face of caregiving challenges. This award celebrates the commitment and efforts of the caregivers, and acknowledges their unconditional love and care to their beneficiaries.

### Be A Member

SCCL is going strong with its current pool of 100 members and hopes to recruit many more. Membership, which is open only to applicants aged 21 and above, starts from a minimum one-off payment of S\$ 50/- for one share and an admin fee of S\$10. Join SCCL today to work with other co-operatives and reduce the stress of caregivers through networking, recreational and psychosocial support, as well as being a one-stop resource centre.



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