



## Editor's Note

*"How wonderful that no one needs to wait a single moment to improve the world." – Anne Frank*

Our volunteers, young and old, come from various domains, professions and backgrounds. Yet, they all possess a singular motivation when it comes to volunteering – passion. And with that passion they readily share their knowledge and expertise to transform Singapore and to improve the lives of Singaporeans. This issue, we bring you a special feature on the MND Huddle 2013, at which we presented awards to our volunteers in celebration of their selfless giving and countless years of service to the MND family.

On behalf of the MND Volunteer Engagement team, I wish you and your loved ones a joyous and fruitful year ahead, and we look forward to a new year of partnership with our dedicated volunteers.

Happily yours  
Editor, HAPPY HANDS



### Special Feature



Programme (AVA)

### Featured Volunteers



Programme (NParks)

### Meet our Volunteer Manager



In the News



# Recognising our volunteers at the MND Huddle 2013

Ministry of National Development honours sixty MND volunteers for their unwavering dedication and contributions



Volunteers from diverse professions and domains gathered at the Gardens by the Bay for the annual MND Huddle, hosted by Minister for National Development, Mr Khaw Boon Wan on 8 November 2013.

The evening began with an exclusive guided tour to the Cloud Forest Conservatory where the volunteers strolled amidst plants and flowers in the tropical montane environment. Inside the Flower Field Hall where dinner was held, the volunteers had the opportunity to catch up with old friends and network with new ones. Indeed, the room was filled with warm smiles and hearty laughter.

The first item was a video put together by the MND Volunteer Engagement unit which allowed a glimpse into the varied contributions of our more than 8,000 MND volunteers. The nine inspiring stories of our volunteers in the video were like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle: seemingly disparate on their own, but collectively, they told the story of MND's ongoing journey to create the best home for Singaporeans for all ages and through the ages.

The evening continued with a live sand art animation performance by students from ITE College East, titled "Transforming Lives, Changing Landscapes", which depicted how Singapore has flourished over the years through a series of images created with fine sand.

The highlight of the evening was the awards presentation ceremony, where a total of 60 outstanding volunteers received awards from Minister. The first award presented was the distinguished MND Medallion which recognises

the sterling contributions of volunteers including Board Members, Advisory Panel and committee members who have stepped down in the past year, as well as retired staff. This year also saw the introduction of the inaugural MND Dedicated Service Award, which recognises the unstinting commitment and contributions of our volunteers who have rendered at least 10 years of service across the MND Family.

Dr Liu Thai-Ker, Chairman of the Centre for Liveable Cities, and Mr Tan Lian Ker, President of the Strata Titles Boards, were among MND's dedicated volunteers who were recognised for 25 years of outstanding service within the MND cluster. All the award winners were congratulated with a rapturous round of applause from their friends for their unwavering dedication and significant contributions in making Singapore an endearing home and a distinctive global city.

To our volunteers, we thank you for all your contributions and look forward to growing our partnership with you. [H](#)



- 1 MND Huddle participants enjoying the feature video on MND volunteers
- 2 Er. Lee Chuan Seng, former Deputy Chairman of BCA Board, receiving the MND Medallion for Distinguished Service from Minister. Er. Lee also received the MND Dedicated Service Award (10 years)
- 3 Dr Liu Thai-Ker, Chairman of Centre for Liveable Cities, receiving the MND Dedicated Service Award (25 years) from Minister
- 4 Sand art animation performance by students from ITE College East

# Promoting harmony through mediation

**President of Strata Titles Board Tan Lian Ker uses his legal knowledge to help others**

Mr Tan Lian Ker's legal career spans half a century – his experience and expertise in this field is only matched by his passion to help others. Since graduating from the University of Singapore in 1964, Mr Tan has served in numerous appointments in the public service. During this time, while semi-retired, he also set up a law firm in 1985. Mr Tan remains active and is currently President of the Strata Titles Boards (STB), a position which he has held since 1993. STB comprises members who are volunteers appointed by Minister and drawn from various professions, including accountants, architects, engineers, lawyers and land surveyors.

Mr Tan feels it is important for residents to live together harmoniously and at STB he uses his legal knowledge to help them achieve that in a fair and appropriate manner: "Whenever any disputes come before us, we try to mediate for them (and) explain to the parties, 'You have to learn how to live and stay together in a harmonious manner, so that you find your life more meaningful and happier.'" In complicated cases, panel members sometimes even go round to the residents' homes to assess the situation. Yet for the past 20 years, despite the heavy workload, Mr Tan and his fellow panel members continue to derive satisfaction from their roles. He shares, "When the parties come to an amicable settlement, you find that you have achieved something, and that is why we are prepared to spend our time to do mediation."

At the MND Huddle 2013, Mr Tan was honoured with the MND Dedicated Service Award (25 years). [H](#)



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You find that you have achieved something, and that is why we are prepared to spend our time to do mediation.

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**Tan Lian Ker**

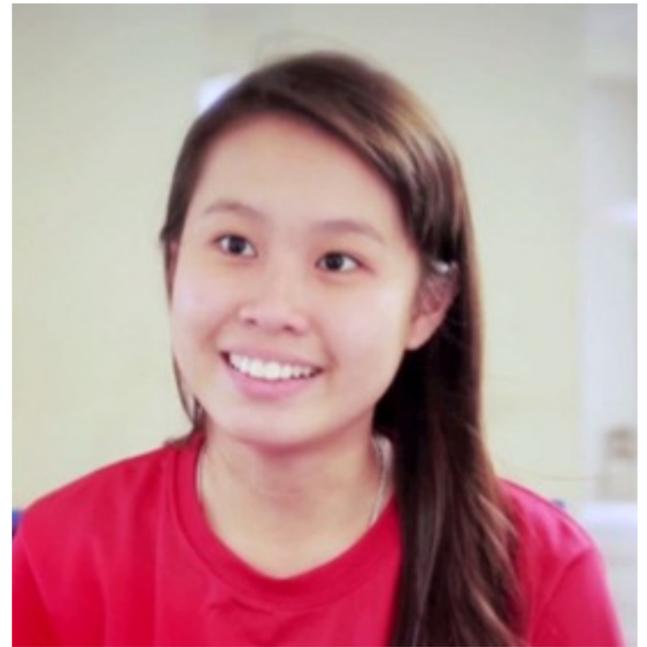
President, Strata Titles Boards

# An Ambassador of Smiles

**Alicia Lim shares tips on how to create a more meaningful heartland living experience**

Inspired to give back to the community, Ms Alicia Lim, a budding 20-year-old student from Ngee Ann Polytechnic, signed up as a Heartland Ambassador two years ago to share tips with residents on how they can be more gracious and responsible neighbours. With the communication and leadership skills she picked up from her volunteer training, Alicia gained confidence in stepping out of her comfort zone to communicate with people of different backgrounds. She led younger ambassadors on visits to HDB households, sharing tips on neighbourliness and responsible heartland living. Visiting the residents personally also help them to better understand the messages that the ambassadors bring with them.

On how to be a better neighbour, Alicia has this tip to share: “We can take the initiative to build better relationships with our neighbours through the smallest action – a smile.” Alicia believes that having neighbours who help and look out for each other helps build a more cohesive community. She reflects, “If we can live together in harmony, it will make living in heartlands more meaningful, more special; (this) is something unique to Singapore...and contributes to the unique experience of being a Singaporean.” She sums up her volunteering experience thus, “Volunteer work gives me more satisfaction in life because my time is better spent (and) if I did not participate in the Heartland Ambassador Programme, I would be missing out on all these events that make me a better person.” 



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**Volunteer work gives me more satisfaction in life because my time is better spent**

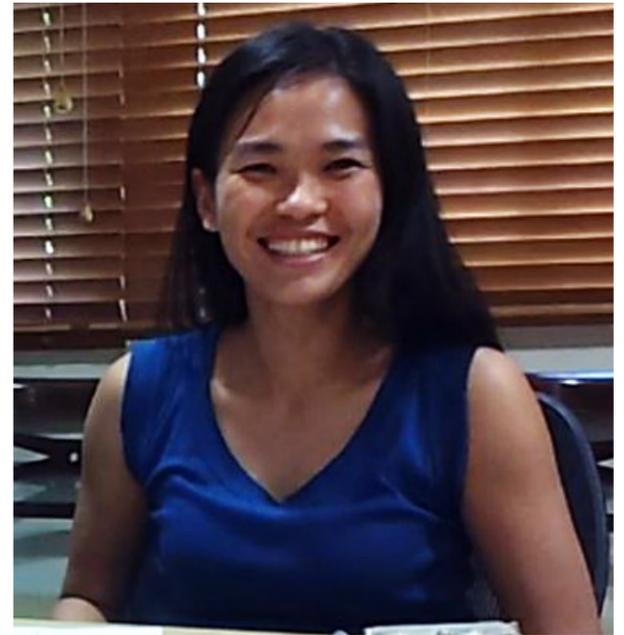
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**Alicia Lim**

**Heartland Ambassador**

# Moving people towards a common vision

Gardens by the Bay volunteer manager Woon Ling Ling is as passionate as the volunteers she meets



It is often said that if you choose a job you love, you will never have to work a day in your life. Talk to such a person, and his or her passion is immediately noticeable, even contagious. Ms Woon Ling Ling is one such person. Beneath the calm and measured replies on her motivation as a volunteer manager, she does not need much coaxing before her passion in sharing with others about Gardens by the Bay (GB) and meeting and interacting with people becomes apparent.

**Q: How did you start out as a volunteer manager?**

**A:** I am a horticulturist by training and had no prior experience in volunteer management. However, I had the opportunity to gain the relevant experience when I was with the Centre of Nature Reserve at NParks for four years, where my role in education and outreach also involved volunteer management.

**Q: How many volunteers do you work with, and what is your experience with them?**

**A:** We have about 500 volunteers ranging from students to working professionals, seniors and retirees. They bring different things to the table. For example, the youths are full of energy and get excited if you get them on the right stuff; for seniors and retirees, they share their life experiences. I enjoy the conversations because I get to meet a range of people with different expectations, needs, dreams, and learn their reasons for volunteering with GB.

**Q: What are some of your memorable moments as a volunteer manager?**

**A:** I once worked with a student who had a keen interest in plants, and a high point for me was when I was able to play a part in cultivating her passion to be a botanist by trying to adopt some of the ideas she proposed. Another memorable encounter was a father bringing his daughter to volunteer at the *Tulipmania*. It was really encouraging to see the girl getting into the spirit of volunteering. I just love the positive energy of the volunteers here!

**Q: What motivates you in your role as a volunteer manager?**

**A:** Managing volunteers is a team effort, because you are moving people towards a common vision which is a garden for all to own, enjoy and cherish. To do that, volunteers need to understand and appreciate the Gardens. My colleagues in the various programmes play a great part in this as they share with the volunteers their experiences and knowledge with the volunteers in their daily interactions. We also share with them that regardless of the roles they play, they are helping people and themselves to take ownership of the Gardens ultimately. [H](#)

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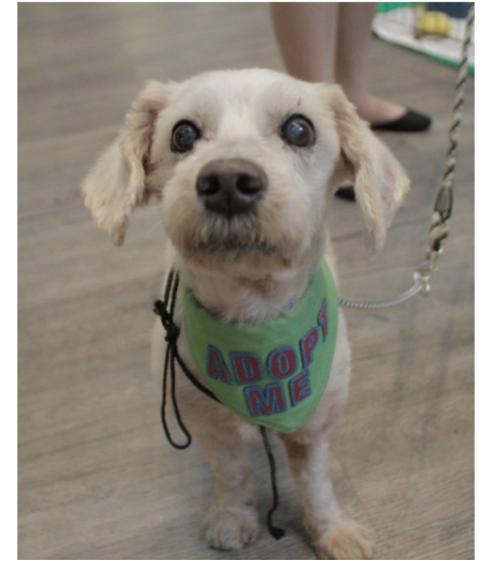
I just love the positive energy of the volunteers!

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**Woon Ling Ling**

Volunteer Manager, Gardens by the Bay

# Better care and welfare for our animals



*Popeye was one of the animals adopted at the roadshow*

### Animal welfare initiatives announced at the tenth Responsible Pet Ownership roadshow

Held from 9 to 10 November 2013 at Changi City Point Mall, the Responsible Pet Ownership (RPO) roadshow brought together 16 partners including animal welfare groups, the pet industry and polytechnics.

Speaking at the roadshow on 9 November 2013, Minister of State (MOS) for National Development, Mr Desmond Lee, provided an update on AVA's animal welfare initiatives following the recommendations made by the Animal Welfare Legislation Review Committee (AWLRC) in March 2013. The AWLRC, comprising community grassroots leaders, representatives from the animal welfare groups, pet industry and the veterinary profession, was set up to review and recommend amendments to strengthen current legislations on animal welfare, as well as recommend approaches to strike a balance between animal welfare, safeguarding of public safety, and other competing interests. The initiatives include setting up of a Multi-stakeholder Collaboration Committee to set standards and promote animal welfare, new licensing conditions for pet retail and waiver of first year of licence fee for stray dogs suitable for rehoming. MOS Lee's speech can be viewed at <http://app.mnd.gov.sg/Newsroom/Speeches.aspx>

One of the highlights of the roadshow was the pet adoption drive, which was first featured in AVA's RPO outreach events in 2004. This year, 28 animals were put up for adoption by six animal welfare groups. 10-year old dog named Popeye, which arrived at the Causes for Animals Singapore (CAS) shelter with severely infected ears and in extreme pain, was successfully adopted.

Ms Christine Bernadette, a long-term volunteer at CAS who facilitated this adoption, considered this an inspiring experience in knowing that senior or sick dogs still have an opportunity at a home. She added that the roadshow was a good platform, without which they would not have met Angel and the family who adopted Popeye. 

### About Responsible Pet Ownership

AVA initiated the Responsible Pet Ownership Public Education Programme in 2004 to pave the way towards a society that cares for the welfare of its animals. AVA adopts a multi-prong approach to spread the message of 'A Pet Is For Life' to the public. This includes the organisation of responsible pet ownership events and roadshows and mass media efforts such as advertorials, radio advertisements and television commercials. AVA will continue to work closely with animal welfare organisations and other like-minded organisations to create greater awareness on animal welfare. For more information, visit AVA Responsible Pet Ownership at [www.petsforlife.com.sg](http://www.petsforlife.com.sg)



# The birth of Singapore's community gardening

### The Seed

Singapore's efforts in planting trees and developing parks in the city had its roots in the 1960s. In 2004, the Garden City Action Committee was set up to oversee greening activities of the island. It saw that a strong partnership between the people and the private and public sectors was vital to create a gardening culture in support of greenery development in Singapore. This realisation coincided with growing enthusiasm from some residents who expressed interest in nurturing their own gardens, even though they had almost no knowledge of gardening.

### The Flower

Following the residents' request, NParks officers met up with the residents to provide them with horticultural tips. This initiative grew and evolved into the Community in Bloom (CIB) programme a year later in 2005. NParks galvanised the support of partners from all walks of life, and together with those who were on board, established a support structure to make it easier for groups to set up community gardens. To provide knowledge on community gardening, talks were held in public libraries. As the number of CIB gardens multiplied and the programme became more established, CIB Awards were also given out to recognise exemplary CIB gardens and to further motivate the gardeners.



**A CIB staff helping a resident to identify problems with her community garden plants**



**Teck Whye Primary School students gardening after school hours in their award-winning school garden**

### The Fruit

Since the launch of CIB, over 600 community gardens have been started and some 20,000 residents are involved in the programme. At a societal level, the gardens have fostered community bonding among the various groups. The CIB programme has also cultivated a network of partners to help spread the word as appointed CIB Ambassadors. Corporations, too, are contributing to the Garden City Fund to help start CIB gardens in orphanages, reformative homes and special needs institutions. Over the next few years, NParks hopes to nurture 1,000 CIB gardening groups with many more thousands of gardeners. 

*This is an abridged version of the article first published in Issue 3 of the Centre for Liveable Cities' Urban Solutions. For the full article, visit <http://www.clc.gov.sg/Publications/urbansolutions.htm>.*

### About Community in Bloom

The Community in Bloom (CIB) movement is a national gardening movement that aims to foster a gardening culture among Singaporeans. Launched in 2005 by NParks, there are 600 community gardening groups today. The CIB team facilitates and guides residents, students and workers in setting up and sustaining their community gardens where they can plant and care for their shared gardens together. CIB aspires to connect all gardeners and community gardening groups islandwide and create a self-sustaining National Gardening Movement. For more information, visit <https://www.nparks.gov.sg/cib>.



### Building An Inclusive Singapore, One Step At A Time

The Building and Construction Authority (BCA) launched the InClUDed Movement earlier this year, a nation-wide initiative aimed at encouraging industry stakeholders to incorporate Universal Design (UD) concept in their projects.

In the broadest sense, UD refers to "design for everyone". For the built environment, it focuses on creating an inclusive society, where the young, elderly and persons with disabilities can continue to enjoy living in familiar surroundings with their loved ones. Examples include ramps, handrails, lifts with Braille, nursing rooms, etc.



*Minister of State for National Development Desmond Lee (right) and BCA CEO Dr John Keung (left) enjoying the Parade with some of the participants from the Society for the Physically Disabled*

To enable a greater appreciation of the role that UD plays in helping to build an inclusive Singapore, BCA held its first ever UD Parade on 9 November 2013 at the Sentosa Boardwalk. Mr Desmond Lee, Minister of State for National Development was the Guest-of-Honour and flagged off the Parade. The event attracted over 200 participants from the private and public sectors, including several voluntary welfare organisations. While walking along boardwalk, participants had the opportunity to understand the importance and benefits of UD, to identify UD features that are found in public (built) spaces, and to experience how UD works. To learn more about UD, visit <http://www.bca.gov.sg/friendlybuilding>. 

### Save Our Street Dogs Flag Day

On 10 November 2013, Save Our Street Dogs (SOSD) organised a flag day to raise funds to build a larger sanctuary, housing up to 200 dogs, to finance its operating expenses and a nationwide sterilisation project that SOSD initiated, as well as to create awareness for the organisation and its causes. The full-day activity-filled roadshow was held at \*Scape, and included a mini-adoptive drive, sale of pet merchandise, photo-taking sessions with the dogs, islandwide fund raising drive and several awareness talks.



*The SOSD flay day raised more than \$130,000*

The event raised more than \$130,000. Founded in Jul 2011, SOSD is a charity organisation managed by a group of volunteers who came together with the purpose of pursuing change and advocating better welfare for street dogs. Read more about SOSD at <http://www.sosd.org.sg> 

### Rejuvenation of Geylang Serai

Look forward to the new Wisma Geylang Serai in 2017! Construction is expected to start this year, and when completed, the new civic centre is envisioned to be culturally distinctive, celebrating the heritage of Geylang Serai, while serving the needs of all Singaporeans with the continued collaboration from the public, private and people sectors. To find out more about the Wisma Geylang Serai project, visit:

<http://www.mnd.gov.sg/makingofWGS> 



*Artist impression of the winning design for the Wisma Geylang Serai Design Competition*

*Credit: Wisma Geylang Serai Facebook Page*



## Share A Story

Share a story with us today! We love to hear inspiring stories and personal journeys about volunteering with the MND Family. Whether in an article, an illustration or a photo, we welcome your contributions. Please drop us a note at [happyhands@mnd.gov.sg](mailto:happyhands@mnd.gov.sg)!



## Feedback

We are keen to hear your thoughts on what we could do better. All suggestions are welcome as we strive to make this newsletter interesting and relevant to you. So keep them coming – contact us at [happyhands@mnd.gov.sg](mailto:happyhands@mnd.gov.sg)!



## Editorial Team

### Editor

Yeon Wen Cong (MND)

### Contributors

Chua Yi-ling (AVA)

Serena Kong (AVA)

Chew Wen Jing (BCA)

Chia I-Ling (CEA)

Jean Wee Shi-Wan (HDB)

Gina Leong (NParks)

Vivian Tan (URA)

Mark Goh (MND)

Jeanine Tan (MND)

Kriss Neo (MND)

Michelle Soh (MND)



