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RESTROOM ASSOCIATION (SINGAPORE) NEWSLETTER - April 2004

Contents

1. Happy Toilet Seminar – first ever forum on keeping public toilets clean
2. A Clean & Well Designed Toilet projects a Positive Corporate Image – what are the aspects that makes a well designed toilet, and clean too
3. News Bites
 - Singapore OK – Our Town Sparkles Survey Findings (excerpts)
 - RAS' other Non-Profit Organisations' Partners – doubly good efforts
 - Toilet Songs Volume 1 – do you sing or write songs?
4. Show me the money – Dr Mechai Viravaidya, or Mr. Condom was speaking at the NVPC Conference in October 2003.

Happy Toilet Seminar

This was the first Happy Toilet seminar organized by Restroom Association of Singapore (RAS) and Federated Merchants Association (FMA). It is supported by the National Environment Agency (NEA). It was held on 31 March 2004 at SPRING Singapore.



Cleaning & Maintenance of Public Toilets were identified as crucial issues for retail businesses. While the issues were not new, RAS and FMA wanted to highlight the importance of Public Toilet

cleanliness and its impact on business; and finding maintenance solutions and sharing its benefits.

It was held as dialogue session between community leaders, members of the restroom industry and representatives of various merchant associations in Singapore. Amongst the businesses that the merchants ran are coffee shops and eating houses.

Some of the issues raised were how to participate in NEA's Toilet Upgrading Programme, which will end by 31 December 2004; enforcing the level of cleanliness and collective cleaning for the food & beverage outlets; finding solutions if the plumbing breaks down; sharing of best practices by facility managers that had an immediate impact on the business.



Speakers included Mr. Ang Mong Seng, MP for Hong Kah GRC; Mdm. Cynthia Phua, MP for Aljunied GRC, Chairman of Our Town Sparkle campaign; Mr. Chua Ser Keng, FMA Chairman; Mr. Seng Joo How, adviser to RAS; and Mr. Jack Sim, President of RAS. Other speakers came from NEA and experts from the facility management, professional cleaning services and sanitary equipment sectors.



There was also an exhibition, with participants from Altimate Envirocare Services, CPG Facilities Management, ISS Servisystem, Kimberly-Clark Singapore, Maxibit Singapore, Mitsubishi Electric, Nan Wah Marketing, Sinn Singapore and Venus Technology.

RAS aims to hold more Happy Toilet Seminars. The format remains similar to this one i.e. interactive dialogue sessions and accompanying exhibitions. The topics will include focusing on Restroom Designs, Health Issues, Public Education etc. Each seminar will have a specific target audience e.g. designers, facility managers. Companies in the restroom industry will also be invited to participate in the exhibition.

A Clean & Well Designed Toilet projects a Positive Corporate Image

The best toilets need not be luxurious, but functional, clean and well-maintained.



The best toilets deliver more to its users, rather than just looking good. The primary factor is the social responsibility of the users. However, in this regard, it often said that 'cleanliness begets cleanliness'. Therefore, the first thing that needs to be addressed is the design of the toilet itself. A well designed public toilet, remains clean, will allow ease of maintenance as well as proper ventilation. Thereafter, it should also be pleasing to the eye and be a positive experience.



Users of public toilets have started to pay attention to the design of toilets in their home with elaborate details and careful consideration paid to layout, etc. However, not enough attention is being paid to the design of public toilets.

Awareness for better standards are also being set for different categories of toilets i.e. Shopping Centres, Parks, Hotels, Hospitals, Coffee Shops, Food Centres, Commercial Buildings etc. Toilet owners, managing agents and

cleaning contractors have started realizing the benefits and positive returns of having better designed and maintained toilets.



Every aspect of the toilet caters to the need and comfort of the user. Besides having adequate space and good layout, consideration must be given to the fixture and fittings. For example:

- Good Directional Signage: having multi-directional signage at critical junctions leading up to the toilet of enables a person can find his direction to the toilet easily. This

is particularly important as looking for a toilet is often accompanied with a sense of urgency.

- Having a wash basin outside for those who do not intend to use the toilet but just need to wash their hands. Many do not need to relieve themselves.
- Taps and soap dispenser are positioned directly above the basin to eliminate unnecessary splashing.
- The number of W.C. (water closet) in the Female toilet has to be increased, to address the inadequate ratio vis-à-vis Male toilet. On one hand, the urinal is equivalent to a cubicle, and on the other hand, women spend more time in the toilet.
- Toilets should be designed with an 'Open Concept' which is ideal for getting rid of odours, and no-touch for hygienic reasons.
- The ambience can be enhanced by using plants, and installing iron grilles, to aesthetically camouflage for privacy. At the same time natural day-light comes into the toilet. Not only it does not give any claustrophobic feeling, there is natural ventilation to keep the floor dry.



HAPPY TOILET RECIPIENT
Kovan Hougang Market and Food Centre
Blk 209, Hougang Ave 1
Rated: August 2003
Period: Sep 03 – Aug 04

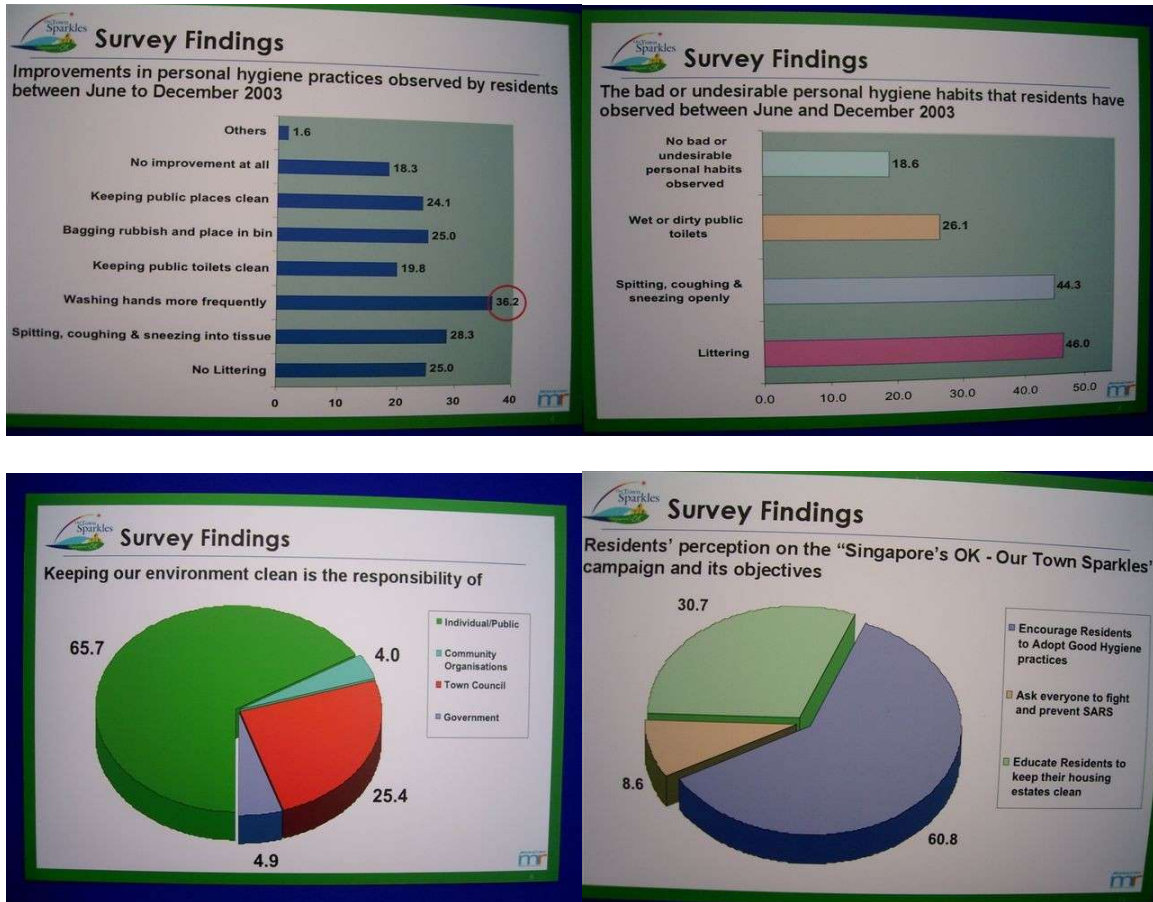
“Hawkers have already noticed a big change in their business because of the new toilets. Some have reported that sales are up by 20 to 30 percent.”

- Channelnewsasia, 6 Sep 2003

News Bites

Our Town Sparkles

RAS is privileged to be a partner in the 'Our Town Sparkles' campaign. Recently, it published a survey this month on what people think of their estate in terms of hygiene & cleanliness. Excerpts of the survey:



When public toilets are singled out, HDB residents has observed improvements in personal hygiene like 'keep public toilets clean (19.8%)'; on the other hand, 26.1% observed others wetting or dirtying public toilets; 65.7% said that 'Keeping our environment clean is the responsibility of the individual'; and 60.8% said that this campaign is to 'encourage residents to adopt good hygiene practic

RAS' other NPOs Partners



**SOCIETY FOR CONTINENCE
(SINGAPORE)**



The toilet affects many aspects of our lives. RAS has partnered other non-profit organizations (NPO) for 'toilet matters', besides being involved in last year's Inter-generational Sports Day. Currently, they are the Society for Continenence (SFCS), Heartware-Network (HW) and Lion Befrienders (LB).



RAS hopes to create mutual benefits with these respected NPOs. In a nutshell:

1. Incontinence can happen with dirty toilets. How? If one keeps avoiding dirty public toilets and holding their urine, incontinence can result many years later – RAS promotes clean toilets with SFCS
2. HW holds Making a Difference (MAD) days, so if our young people will make a difference by washing the toilets of the poor & old, wouldn't it be great? – RAS promotes social graciousness with HW
3. LB has been involved with the elderly for many years, and one of the challenges for the elderly is to be able to visit the toilet safely – RAS promotes toilets with sufficient provisions for the elderly, and training to navigate the toilet safely.

Community

Contribution

Commitment

Compassion

Cohesion

Heartware's '5 Cs'

RAS is grateful to its partners for its initiatives. Please refer to the end of this newsletter for more information and contact details for these NPOs.

Toilet Songs Volume 1: Toilet Song Idol

Calling all song writers and aspiring singers! World Toilet Organisation (WTO) is starting a 'Toilet Song' album. WTO has started the ball rolling by composing one called 'Secret Garden'. This song can be downloaded for free at

www.worldtoilet.org



Verse one of the song – “ *Secret Garden out in the open, somewhere my heart runs free, deep down burning, forever yearning, always there*”; verse two – “*Where I care for, nature’s therefore, tend to your every leaf, private moment, Secret Garden is where my heart runs free.*” Song was sung by the City Harvest Youth Choir, Singapore. Guaranteed to relieve constipation!

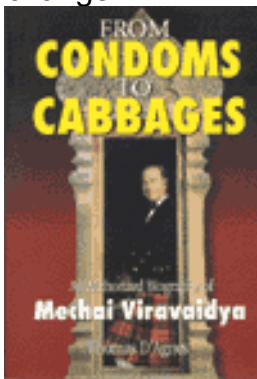
Submit your song or lyrics to info@toilet.org.sg or fax: 65 68412891.

Show me the Money

This and other topics were presented at the National Volunteers & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) Conference ‘New Realities in the New Normal’ on Social Enterprise, Volunteerism & Philanthropy on 28 to 29 October 2003.

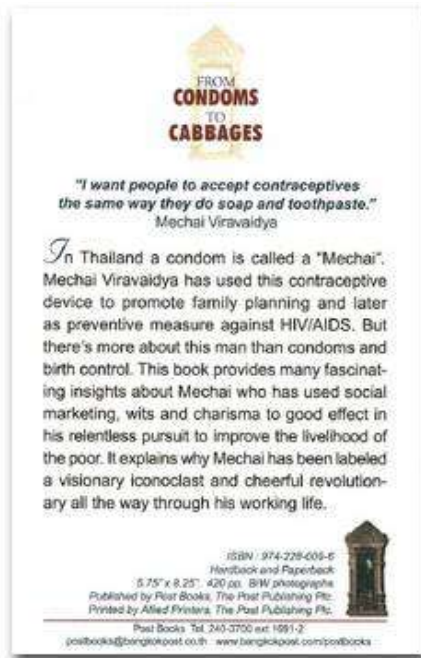
The following keynote address is by Dr Mechai Viravaidya, Founder, Population and Community Development Association (PDA), Thailand.

Known affectionately as "Mr Condom", Dr Mechai Viravaidya is a former Cabinet Minister who devoted his life to improve the well-being of the less fortunate. To sustain PDA's work in rural development, family planning and AIDS prevention, he started numerous income-generating businesses. Dr Viravaidya won the Magsaysay Award in 1994 and was hailed by Asiaweek magazine as one of the "Twenty Great Asians". He shared his learning on NGO sustainability, and PDA's creative collaborations with businesses, volunteers and funders to drive social change.



“The government cannot do everything, and hence, the need for the civil society. Non-profit organisations (NPOs) can do business to generate profits for social progress. While NPOs can get help from the government, it is important that they be financially independent in the long run. If one is dependent only on donors, one will be subservient to the donors' agendas. Hence, NPOs can do for-profit business to ensure their programmes' sustainability. For example, Girl Guides get 84% of their income by selling uniforms.

NPOs must have two arms; one is their vision related to social progress and the other is the business arm where the NPO generates their own income.



Population and Community Development Association (PDA) has been around for 30 years and it has 16 business arms to generate income. The principle is to work with a NPO for the first five years to overcome poverty. Thereafter, the NPO will graduate to form a business arm. PDA gets the poor to learn how to do business better so as to generate surplus and use it to buy basic needs.

In the area of family planning, people have pay for the contraceptive pills. If they do not have the money, they will need to perform a public duty as payment for the pills. PDA encourages people to work for and help themselves, thereby discouraging the dependency syndrome.

PDA looks for creative ways to promote its causes, from visiting red light districts and schools to fight AIDS, and organising beauty pageants - Miss Condom - as a form of public education measure. The winner is the one who is most knowledgeable of HIV and AIDS. PDA also has a Family Planning buffalo that provides ploughing services at half price for families who practise family planning. Families with no pregnancies get pigs as an incentive.

PDA practises the privatisation of poverty reduction. PDA has Nike shoe factories, of which the NPOs become investors. Nike gets 40%, and the NPO gets 60% of the profits. This is social capitalism. PDA does a variety of businesses to generate income, e.g. making Thai silk for flags, silk cotton to make clothes and scarf, restaurants, rice-planting, X-rays and health examinations for students. Donors should give financial support as well as financial advice to help NPOs learn how to sustain themselves. Donors give one money, but businesses give one ideas and money to help one become self-sustainable. All the profits PDA get from the businesses will feed the organisation and the causes PDA supports.”

Please visit www.nvpc.org.sg for other insightful articles.

More information about NPOs mentioned above:

Society for Continence (www.sfcs.org.sg) – one of the objective of SFCS is promoting the education, training and rehabilitation of the incontinent and their general interest, well-being and welfare. They want to share this with us:

- Do you get up at night to pass urine more than once?
- Do you leak urine before reaching the toilet?
- Do you leak urine when you sneeze, laugh or jump?

Help is available by calling SFCS helpline at 67870337 during office hours.

Heartware-Network (www.heartware.org) - The Making A Difference or MAD Movement is a celebration of volunteerism without the use of goodie bags or lucky draws.

The MAD Movement is an on-going volunteer movement set in place by Heartware Network to galvanize the youths of today to make a difference in the lives of others through active community service out of their heart's passion.

MAD Movement has been held thrice, in December 2001, 2002 and last December 2003 @ Orchard Park. Bringing volunteerism to the community, we want to challenge the younger generation to make their presence felt, it aims to inspire and to nurture stronger feelings in the youths for their community.

Lion Befrienders (www.lionsbefrienders.org.sg) - The Lions Befrienders is a Voluntary Welfare Organisation(VWO). The programme has a long history in caring for and assisting the elderly to cope with the demands of daily living, enabling them to continue living in a familiar environment for as long as possible. From a pilot project in June 1982, it has evolved over time and today the Lions Befrienders oversees lonely elderly in every constituency.

Your Help Is Needed

Restroom Association of Singapore is a non-profit organization and we need YOU! We need you to give public toilets a voice to tell the public that their simple but good toilet behavior such as “flushing the toilet after use, and not flicking excess water off their hands onto the floor” can facilitate and convert dirty public toilets to clean public toilets.

BE OUR VOLUNTEERS

Just call 65 6841 1621 to register personally! OR: Obtain a form from our website at www.toilet.org.sg and email it to info@toilet.org.sg or fax to 65 6841 2891.