Alumna’s Quest for Knowledge

Win!

UniSIM Cap

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2014 – Celebrating Aspirations and Inspirations

At the recent Chinese Lunar New Year dinner for alumni volunteers, Professor Cheong Hee Kiat, President, SIM University (UniSIM) announced two milestones; firstly, that SIM Group will be celebrating its 50th anniversary this year and secondly, UniSIM will be celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2015.

This two-fold celebration in the SIM community is indeed significant as the SIM entities have progressively become “household” brands to a credible extent. The SIM group has strived to ensure integrity in delivering quality education whilst being agile and adaptable amidst the crossroads of change and innovation.

For UniSIM, it plays a dual role as a private university for part-time students and as a public-funded university for full-time undergraduates. Our alumni have experienced the University’s role as a beacon that has guided many of us through our studies while balancing work and personal lives. The University can also be viewed as being an erstwhile institution for adult education in particular.

Many wonderful success stories have been written in this newsletter about the dreams and aspirations of alumni who strived to achieve them and are a testament and inspiration to the full-time students. Incidentally this issue of the newsletter is our 25th edition and is also a milestone to be recognised.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank past and present volunteers, and the Alumni Relations Department for their energy and directions from the driver’s seat. So, anniversaries are a time to celebrate accomplishments, take stock and re-connect so as to build camaraderie and to bond. Success and satisfaction by alumni volunteers for completing any event lead to greater satisfaction and, hopefully, more peer referrals and invitations for getting involved.

2014 can be a year of change, hope and perhaps fruition.

“For last year’s words belong to last year’s language And next year’s words await another voice.”
– J.S. Elliot, Four Quartets

Gregory Athastaraj Francis | Editor (Alumni Volunteer) | Newsletter Editorial Group

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Celebrating Chinese New Year with the Added Spirit of Volunteerism

By Daniel Koh

As a child, I always looked forward to Chinese New Year. The meaningful reunion dinner, ang pow and New Year delicacies have never failed to attract me. I was like a pampered boy, always asking for more food and ang pow money from my parents! However, I celebrated my Chinese New Year differently this year. While I reminisced my past and upheld tradition by gathering for the reunion dinner, I celebrated it with a new family – the family of volunteers.

On Feb 7, the Alumni Relations Department organised a Chinese New Year dinner for its family of volunteers which saw close to 40 attendees comprising alumni, UniSIM faculty members and staff. Our emcee, Ms Denise Ong, BA English Language and Literature, Class of 2008, welcomed everyone before inviting Professor Cheong Hee Kiat, President of UniSIM, to address the group. Professor Cheong highlighted the recent developments at the University including UniSIM College and encouraged volunteers to take on the role of mentors to its full-time students. Immediately after that, an award ceremony took place to honour those who had volunteered fervently to the good cause of the University. We then had our usual lo hei – Teochew-style raw fish salad – coupled with segments of photo-taking and catching.

Alumna Ms Serene Ong, Master in Technology and Entrepreneurship, Class of 2009, believes that volunteerism is a worthy cause as it is a form of giving back to those who had given to us. To her, it is a joy to help organise events for students, and finds the interaction with students and alumni meaningful. Another alumnus Mr Harold Lim, Graduate Diploma in Human Resource Management, Class of 2006, volunteers as a mentor and finds meaning in sharing his experiences with students.

Celebrating Chinese New Year and volunteerism brings to mind a quote by Confucius – “He who wishes to secure the good of others has already secured his own.” Although the good of others may not be the prime focus in our daily lives, a tint of encouragement to volunteer and be of help to others serves as a good reminder for us to secure the good for ourselves by securing the good of others.

The family of volunteers calls for more alumni to step forward and embrace volunteerism. Remember, a bunch of thread tied together is tougher than a single thread.
Pre-CNY
1 Day Trip to Johor
By Janet Yong

Spring had arrived, and we were in sight of the approaching Lunar New Year. Aimed at assisting our alumni and guests prepare for the festivities, UnisIM organised a goodies shopping trip to Johor Bahru (JB) on Jan 18.

Filled with the promise of bargains and excitement, about 80 alumni and guests eagerly set off on their shopping quest from UnisIM early in the morning. After clearing immigration, the first stop on our map was Gelang Patah, for breakfast. The seemingly laid-back coffee shop we ate at is actually a full-fledged food court that sells familiar local fare such as kway chap, roti canai and dim sum.

After having our fill, we spirited on to the first highlight of our expedition, the eagerly awaited shopping at Layang Layang, a small town about an hour’s drive up north of Johor. We visited a tapioca chip factory that has been producing goodies such as tapioca chips and muruku for many years and continues to attract many Singaporeans. Once the coaches pulled over, we wasted no time in snapping up the snacks with the shelves cleared out in no time. Satisfied, we set off for the next destination on the itinerary.

Widely touted as the holy grail of discounted shopping in Malaysia, the Johor Premium Outlet houses various boutiques such as Prada, Gucci and Versace, which carry many off-season items with huge discounts of up to 80 per cent.

Everyone went into a frenzy with their shopping here. One alumni member happily displayed her purchase of three beautiful pairs of high-heel sandals for RM110 from Charles and Keith, which she considered a bargain. Famished after the shopping, many of us had our lunch at either the food court or restaurants such as Kampachi Japanese Restaurant, Starbucks or Absolute Thai.

Next on the itinerary was shopping at KSL City Mall in Taman Century. This complex is home to about five hundred retail stores including food courts, apparel, shoes, spas, Cinemas, supermarket and even a hotel cum resort.

Located at the basement of the mall was a shop selling the “highly” recommended Penang Laksa. With its aroma pervading the air, we were not surprised to see a group of alumni who quickly queued, waiting patiently to be served. Another place that attracted many was Discovery Walk. Located at Level 2, it comprised smaller stores selling souvenirs, videos and accessories catered for the young.

From here, we proceeded to our fourth shopping destination, Yee Siang Confectionery Shop and Yong Sheng Confectionery Shop. Located at Taman Sentosa, the former is famous for their tau sar piah while the latter is known for its Swiss rolls and cream puffs. Many bought boxes as gifts for relatives and friends back home.

Before departing for Singapore, we tucked into a sumptuous seven course Chinese halal dinner at Restoran Sin Hui Bin, located within the Permas Jaya Sports Complex.

In all, the shopping trip organised by the Alumni Relations Department was a fruitful and fun trip. Our alumni were treated to a wide array of shopping of items ranging from food to designer wear at mega discounted prices.

On the humid Saturday afternoon of Feb 22, more than 50 alumni streamed into one of UnisIM’s air-conditioned lecture theatres to listen to the “hot” topic “Trading & Investing”.

The speaker was Mr Thomas Saw, the founder of Traders Round Table – a community of traders and investors. A jovial personality who dispenses his trading philosophy like a doctor dispensing sound medical advice, Thomas is also the Founder and ex-proprietor of Online Trading Academy Singapore.

From the outset, Thomas stated that his objective was to share his knowledge on prudent investment with the participants. He also advised that trading was not for the faint-hearted because of the high risks involved. He warned that one must take full responsibility for his/her actions in any investment.

The participants particularly liked his analogy of investing being equivalent to driving a car, the more knowledge and skills you have, the safer a driver you are. He said that one cannot drive a Lamborghini the same way he drives a Honda as these characteristics require specific handling.

Alumnus Mr Nityanandran Sivakumar, BSc Computer Science, Class of 2005, who came with his young son shared that he is a cautious buyer who had just started to trade. He laughed when we teased him about introducing his son to trading at such an early age.

Business Development Manager Mr Joseph Wong, BSc Marketing, Class of 2012, came with his wife, who is currently studying at SIM Global Education. They said that they hoped to learn as much as possible and gain more insights before taking the plunge.

By the end of the session, the participants generally felt that they had already made immediate “gains”, thanks to Thomas’ open and detailed sharing.
Stop...to take stock

Dear Alumni,

We are already well into 2014 and the first quarter will soon come to a close. Have we been slipping back into our usual routine and maybe, even unconsciously been running on auto pilot? Well, perhaps, it’s time to pause and take stock of the many aspects of life and living. Like the PRISM with its multiple facets, I urge you to:

P - Plan
Have you taken time to plan where you are going, what you want to achieve and for what purpose? If you have, is it time to review those plans? If you have not, it’s still not too late to start.

R - Reflect
Are you satisfied with your progress and the direction of your life journey to date? Are there things or habits that you can change, tweak or do away with?

I - Imagine
The power of envisioning outcomes and achievements is a strong motivator to pursuing your goals. When was the last time you allowed yourself to imagine success and how YOU can make it happen?

S - See
Planning, reflecting and imagining success are all well and good, but these often need to be tempered with a dose of reality, an oxymoron you may think. Be open-minded and receptive to see what is really happening around you and adjust your actions, as necessary to achieve your goals.

M - Move it
Finally, it should not be all talk and no action, or it will just end in wishful thinking. So move it! Start with baby steps if you must to make those great strides into the next quarter of 2014 and beyond.

Let the PRISM bring you to new heights in 2014! Here’s wishing you a fulfilling and brilliant year ahead!

Best wishes,

Evelyn Chong
Director, Office of Student and Alumni Relations

Launch of MGER Alumni Committee at Year-end Gathering

Students from the Master of Gerontology (MGER) programme, industry partners and stakeholders in the eldercare sector were brought together on Nov 21 for a small and informal gathering. Its aim was to explore career prospects, future trends in policy and services in the eldercare sector, as well as to celebrate the launch of the MGER Alumni Committee.

During the gathering, Associate Professor Gerald Koh, Chairman of the MGER Advisory Panel, shared his insights on current developments in the eldercare sector. Five organisations, viz., National Council of Social Service, Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities, Council for Third Age, YAH! Community College and Tsao Foundation, shared about their companies including future developments.

The MGER Alumni Committee, with Associate Professor Ms Kalyani Mehta, Head of Master of Gerontology Programme as advisor, was then launched with 13 members – five from the pioneer batch of graduates and eight from the current cohort of students.
Ms Andrina Tan believes in lifelong learning. Despite graduating with a UniSIM BA English with Psychology in 2007 and a Master of Counselling in 2013, Andrina – a counsellor with the Serangoon Moral Family Service Centre – is currently taking short courses to further enhance her counselling skills.

“UniSIM was the natural choice for me as the courses are specially tailored to working adults like me. Besides having useful self-study DVDs, there are also passionate lecturers who often go the extra mile to help students,” says the satisfied Andrina. As she progressed through the courses, she saw the value of her studies as she benefitted from them on a personal basis.

Andrina confesses: “Most of what I have learnt at UniSIM is directly relevant to my current work. It is really exciting to see the theories come alive in practice at work.”

Such pleasant experiences in UniSIM have contributed to Andrina becoming an outstanding student.

She is the recipient of three awards, SIM University Outstanding Achievement Award, Yeung Ching Foundation Gold Award and SIM University Social Resilience Enhancement Fund Sponsorship.

How did Andrina manage to achieve so much and yet strike a good balance between work, social life and studies?

According to Andrina, socialising with friends and family is important in helping her re-energise. She shared: “Taking time to go out with friends and family, especially over the weekend, helps me to re-charge. However, I do make my assignment deadlines known to them so that they could understand my need for time to catch up on my studies when required.”

“Doing Bodycombat and RPM (rotations per minute) exercises are also highly important in managing my stress level,” she adds.

Other than a well-managed social life and healthy lifestyle, Andrina also credits her success to her fellow course-mates who often encouraged one another to persevere in meeting assignment deadlines and facing examinations.

Despite her busy schedule, Andrina maintains her passion in painting, an interest which started during her primary school days. Over the years, Andrina has developed a flair for abstract painting as it allows her to express her heartfelt feelings into visual images. She would often give away her artworks to friends whom she feels would benefit from it.

Andrina also strongly believes in anchoring meaning to whatever one does in life. She feels that such meaning will lead one to develop a greater sense of motivation, and spur one to become even more successful in life.

She further encourages fellow alumni to align their chosen academic or career paths with their life pursuits so as to improve their academic knowledge, as well as to enrich their lives.
From our early days as a fledgling institute providing short courses to upgrade the skills of professionals and managers, to becoming today’s leading provider of lifelong learning—SIM has fulfilled its own aspirations. More importantly, it has been 50 years in the making, and SIM continues to tell the story of numerous individual aspirations dreamt, pursued and fulfilled.

If you too have an SIM story to share, please post it on our anniversary’s Share a Memory page (hyperlink: http://www.sim50.edu.sg/category/share-a-memory/) and stand a chance to win in our contests. Find out also about our anniversary events, SIM50 Faces and SIM’s history on sim50.edu.sg (hyperlink: http://www.sim50.edu.sg/)

Join us as we celebrate 50 years of “Fulfilling Aspirations” and more.

**Here are five tips to prepare you for the next festive season.**

**1. Delete the Calories Calculator App**
You cannot get in shape by remaining sedentary and be disillusioned by the numbers displayed on your mobile gadgets. So, delete those apps and start devising an action plan.

**2. Plan for Success**
A well-known adage goes “Failing to plan is planning to fail”. Success is not readily sold over the counter like instant re-heat food packs in convenient stores. Be realistic and not too ambitious. Jumping headlong into a marathon, while one is struggling with a 2.4km run, will do more harm than good.

Instead, be progressive with your training plans. This will enable your body to adapt and respond better to the demands of a workout.

There are many fitness resources in the market. However, they are written according to the principles of general science. If you have no prior experience in fitness planning, it might be prudent to engage a trainer. Our needs differ at various life stages and lifestyles.

**3. Stay Motivated**
Write your desired outcome on a piece of paper and stick your plan in a prominent place. This will urge you to persevere on low and painful days.

You may also consider joining a group of individuals with common goals. Social fitness groups offer camaraderie and motivation lifts which will help you to train better and decrease the probability of you bailing out on a challenging workout.

**4. Variety is Spice**
It is said variety is the spice of life; kudos to exercise. We need some fun and variety to keep us going while working hard. Where possible, incorporate an assortment of exercises in your schedule. For example, cardio on Monday, aerobics on Tuesday, weight-lifting on Wednesday. This way, it will uplift the monotony of a regime and give every part of your body equal development and recovery opportunity.

**5. Livin La Vida Loca (Livin’ the Crazy Life)**
Embarking on a fitness journey does not require you to starve yourself. It is fine to indulge in “sinful delights” or even take a day off when you reach a milestone. Recharge and do the things you enjoy. After all, great results are achieved in a less stressful environment. Remember that diamonds are forged from carbon under high pressure. Some fun is needed while staying on track of one’s fitness plans.

Enjoy these great tips and stay in shape while preparing for your next festive feasting season!
Flash Your Alumni Card to Enjoy These Special Deals:

The Nail Shoppe
Blk 34 Whampoa West #01-33 Singapore 33003

Enjoy the following discounts:
- 20% discount for all à la carte services
- 10% discount for all nail care and products

Promotion is valid till January 15, 2015.

Faith Music Centre
“Learn in Faith, Serve with Love”

Enjoy 15% discount off any music package at Faith Music Centre.
- 15% discount off all music courses
- $80 off second instrument signed up

Promotion is valid from April 2014 to April 2015.

UniSIM shall not be held responsible for any changes in the promotion or quality of the products/services offered.

CONTEST GIVEAWAYS!

We are giving away 10 exclusive UniSIM Caps. Simply SMS the answers to the two questions below to 9113 6795 in the following format:

Example: Newsletter 51234567X alumni@unisim.edu.sg Answers for Q1 and Q2.

QUESTIONS

Q1 What are the two exercises Ms Andrina Tan does to manage stress?

Q2 List down the four shopping areas covered in the alumni trip to Johor Bahru.

Closing Date: April 21, 2014

Congratulations to the Contest Winners of Issue 24!

ANG DING CONG (WENG DINGCONG) SXXXX856G
CHER KIM SENG SXXXX632B
ENG HOCK KEAN SXXXX862I
KOH JYE WEI SXXXX628J
LIM FONG LIAN SXXXX279F
SIM CHIA WAY TELLY SXXXX907H
SIM CHIA YEONG KELVIN SXXXX471B
TAN SUAN BOON SXXXX060Z

For advertising enquiries, call 6248 9245 or email alumni@unisim.edu.sg
Foot Care Seminar

By Arch Angel & Owen

Date: April 12, 2014
Venue: LT 4.16, Blk A, SIM Headquarters
Time: 2:00pm to 5:00pm
(Registration will start at 1:30pm)
Fee: *S$5 per Alumnus/Guest
(Each alumnus can register for a maximum of two pax)
*Price is inclusive of a tea reception and 7% GST

Registration: www.unisim.edu.sg/alumniportal

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UNWIND SATURDAY

STAY TUNED!
Coming soon in May

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