

Past Events

7. **Launch of "Shattered, We HEAL"**
(11 October 2014, 2.30 pm – 5.30 pm, Jurong Regional Library)



About 100 people turned up for the launch, which showcased the touching and inspiring book *Shattered We HEAL* featuring 15 people whose lives were touched by mental illness. The book, published by Club HEAL and written by Ms Yohanna Abdullah together with Dr Radiah Salim, shows how debilitating mental illness can be and how it wreaks havoc in the individual and the family. Yet it also shows that recovery is possible and recounts how these individuals came out stronger and able to benefit others through the wisdom gained from their own journeys.



Club HEAL's patrons, Mdm Halimah Yacob and Mr Zaqu Mohamad, as well as community leaders, health care professionals, and friends of CLUB HEAL graced the occasion. The programme was spectacular and very moving. Guests were entertained and enlightened by a monologue – "Life is a rollercoaster, you've just got to ride it" written by Yohanna and performed by Dalifah from Teater Kami. Not a few eyes teared over the journey into madness, all the more because it was a real story written by a real person who was right before their eyes. Even so, it elicited much laughter.

There was also a beautiful Malay poem performed by Mr Yazid entitled "Persona Grata Kehidupan". Guest singer Suf Supiani was truly delightful to listen to, as he delivered songs that were raw and real, including Michael Jackson's "Heal the World" and a Suf Supiani original, "Solitude". His song "Wounded" featured lyrics written by Ms Yohanna Abdullah and he also set Mr Yazid's "Persona Grata Kehidupan" to music and sang it out.

Copies of "Shattered, We HEAL" are available at Club HEAL at \$20 only. Get your copy today!

8. **"Healthy for Life" – health carnival**
(12 October 2014, 8am – 12 noon, BBE CC)

Basitah Zulkifli, Club HEAL's programme executive and Nabilah Bagarib, Club HEAL's clinical psychologist led brain gym at the unearthly hour of 8am on the wet Sunday morning. Club HEAL also contributed a booth offering mental health screening at this health carnival that was graced by Mdm Halimah Yacob.

9. **World Mental Health Day 2014 by Silver Ribbon Singapore**
(12 October 2014, 8.30 – 11.30am, Geylang Serai CC)

Our book was featured in our booth and created some interest, but while it was on sale for \$20, many were expecting free copies and some almost walked away with them.



10. **Singapore Mental Health Conference 2014**
(17 – 18 October 2014, Max Atria @ Singapore Expo)

All nine staff of Club HEAL along with our president attended this thought-provoking and heart-warming event, which made us think of better ways of doing our job to provide services to the mentally ill and their families. There was much food for thought at the conference, which was packed to the fullest with many standing without seats.

11. **Mental Health Carnival @ Punggol CC**
(19 October 2014, 8am – 12 noon, Punggol CC)

Club HEAL took part in this carnival with a booth to share on the work we do at Club HEAL. The event was very happening and attracted a lot of visitors. We were glad just to share.



Upcoming Events

- 1. Suf Supiani Album Launch "Solitude"**
15th November 2014, 2.30 pm – 5pm
Lee Foundation Theatre
- 2. Healing Friends Training**
22nd November 2014, Jurong Green CC
13th December 2014, AMP Auditorium
- 3. Rock Climbing at OBS (Outward Bound School)**
4th December 2014



Donations & Sponsorships

As Club HEAL is an Institution of a Public Character (IPC), all donors will be eligible for 2.5 times tax reduction. Donations can be made by cheque to 'Club HEAL' or by GIRO – form available at our website.

Please contact us at 68993463 for further details or email us at admin@clubheal.org.sg.

Be A HEALing Friend

"You see, the *Mu'min* in their mutual piety, love and affection, are like a (single) body. When a part (of it) has a complaint, the whole body is united with it in wakefulness and fever." – (Bukhari and Muslim).

As a member or a volunteer, you can contribute in a variety of ways, from assisting in Club HEAL events to conducting rehabilitative activities! We need people from all walks of life who can contribute their time and skills to fulfil our cause.

To become a member, please fill up the membership form available at our website (under Resources section) and email it to us at admin@clubheal.org.sg or mail it to: Club HEAL, Blk 244, Bukit Batok East Ave 5, #01-02, Singapore 650244. We look forward to hearing from you!

Contact Club HEAL

Office: 6899 3463
(9am – 5pm weekdays)
Email: admin@clubheal.org.sg
Website: www.clubheal.org.sg
FB: Club H.E.A.L
Registration No: T12SS0028K

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HEAL

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Without a dedicated and capable staff, Club HEAL's lofty mission and vision would be nothing more than castles in the air.

Loyalty
Empathy
Versatility
Optimism

President's address

"Staff" – "something that sustains or supports".

Indeed, the staff of Club HEAL are not just paid employees, they are the ones who sustain and support the work of Club HEAL. Without a dedicated and capable staff, Club HEAL's lofty mission and vision would be nothing more than castles in the air.

Club HEAL is not just a voluntary welfare organisation but one that deals with an issue most people want to steer clear off, namely mental illness, because of the stigma attached to it. As such, we do have great difficulty attracting suitable staff. Further, not many want to work with us as we cannot offer the perks that larger and more established organisations can afford.

Yet we have been blessed with a core group of extremely dedicated and capable staff. So what is it that attracts our staff to come work for Club HEAL?

Money?
Glamour?
An easy job?

If these were the main pull factors of a job for every job-seeking individual, Club HEAL would certainly have

About Club HEAL

Club HEAL is a charity that aims to assist and empower persons with mental health issues (PMHI) to regain confidence in themselves and others in their journey towards community reintegration. It also aims to eradicate the stigma surrounding persons with mental health issues thereby breaking unnecessary barriers to their recovery process. Services provided by Club HEAL include psychiatric rehabilitative services, home visits, public education, caregiver support groups and volunteer training.

ended up with a staff count of zero. But our staff – I believe they join us because of an unshakeable belief in the mission and vision of Club HEAL. It attracts them to be part of the Club HEAL family and makes them want to stay on.

Indeed, the fact that they stay despite the absence of big fat salaries proves that the staff of Club HEAL remain because they want to, not because they *have* to.

In Club HEAL, we leverage on each other's strengths. No one person can do everything. However, by knowing

how each can contribute his or her best to the club, we continue to grow in strength.

Likewise, each staff member has the opportunity to grow personally from working in Club HEAL. Through the many challenges that we face, each of us develop skills and knowledge that help us mature as individuals and build Club HEAL as an organisation.

Loyalty, Optimism, Versatility and Empathy (LOVE) characterise this special group – and in this edition of our newsletter, I'd like to applaud them all, the devoted staff of Club HEAL.

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Not heart attack but anxiety attack



At his lowest point, Mohamed Ismail Bin Abu Bakar, 55, used to wake up in the middle of the night perspiring profusely and feeling intense chest pain. He thought he was having a heart attack and saw doctor after doctor, even a heart specialist who declared a clean bill of health for him. He was finally referred to a psychiatrist.

While apprehensive about the stigma of mental illness, he was determined to seek help for his debilitating condition. As it turned out, the painful sensations and his overwhelming fear were due to a mental health condition - anxiety and panic disorder.

Today, Ismail is a mental health advocate at Club HEAL and feels passionately about Club HEAL's mission to wipe out the stigma surrounding mental patients and their illnesses. "I speak to the public on behalf of the mentally ill. I hope that one day the public will accept who they are and acknowledge that they [the mentally ill] are a part of them [society] - that they are our friends, and, like normal people, deserving of love and friendship."

But having mental illness hit him hard at first. "At first, I was impaired in my daily life, I felt scared, I felt shame and I felt fear." He fell ill in 1999, 10 years into his marriage. He suffered alone until 2002 when he was diagnosed as having anxiety disorder and panic disorder.

Broken glass

"I was like a broken glass, I was so shattered and confused, I did not know what was happening to me," said Ismail.

First he experienced stress as a webmaster. Then retrenched and unemployed for about eight months, he worked at six different jobs to survive, including that of cleaner, security officer and store keeper. The breakthrough came with an offer as healthcare assistant at a nursing home. "It opened new doors. After working for ten months, I was offered the position of therapist assistant at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH). It was a very fulfilling job and I worked there for nearly four years. Now I realise all my jobs were stepping stones. They have led me to where I am now." While at TTSH, he attained a diploma and advanced diploma in counselling. These were subsidised by his company through Courage Funds - a fund for healthcare workers.

"I have not had a relapse for about seven years now. But I am still vigilant, still take some medicine and am very careful not to be triggered." He feels ill about three or four times a year but manages his symptoms without being absent from work or taking medical leave.

Masters in counselling

After taking his various diplomas, in 2011, Ismail went a step further by taking a Masters in Contemporary Therapeutic Counselling from the University of Hertfordshire. "It was timely - when

Club HEAL was formed, I felt ready to contribute with my experience, training and passion. I had two options - working in a hospital or working at Club HEAL. I chose Club HEAL because it has more focus. Club HEAL is serving a niche population with niche services."

At that time, Ismail was working at SAMH, but had his heart set on Club HEAL. "Club HEAL was new and I felt it had a lot of potential," he explained. Ismail finally started work at Club HEAL on 1 September 2014. He does counselling, facilitates caregivers and anxiety/depression support groups, and educates the public at booths at various community events.

"I decided to work for Club HEAL first and foremost as I felt it was timely after my experience at TTSH and SAMH for six years. Secondly, my qualifications are relevant to what I am doing now. Thirdly, my mother had passed away and I needed some closure by doing more for the community."

How has he found working at Club HEAL for two months? "I find it very fulfilling, as I am able to help the PMHIs and their families. Families play a pivotal role in recovery. And family members themselves may fall victim to stress and depression if they are left alone with caregiving. The whole family should be involved in helping the PMHI. The extended family must be involved in the recovery process," emphasised Ismail.

A Memorable Road Trip

Yohanna Abdullah

Three big girls (girls at heart) and a road trip make for interesting memories. One day, the president of Club HEAL, Dr Radiah Salim, announced to our peer specialist, Kak Jun (Junainah Eusope), and me that we were going on a road trip to Malaysia to buy handicrafts and craft materials for our second pushcart at Yishun Polyclinic, to be opened on 7 October 2014.

I felt privileged by the invitation to accompany my sisters on this amazing trip on Dr Radiah's 12-year-old silver Toyota Corolla. Despite the fact that Dr Radiah had several times gotten lost in Singapore itself, she was cheerfully confident about making the road trip.

Kelantan and Terengganu

Our first stop was Mersing, where we stopped over for a yummy kampung lunch at her sister's house. Mersing was a piece of cake for Dr Radiah as she drives there regularly. But we had set our eyes on two markets, one in Terengganu and another in Kelantan, to stock up on our wares. We spent four days and three nights at Terengganu, Kelantan and Kuantan, taking our chances at three different hotels which yielded nice and comfy rooms and offered great Malay, Chinese and Western breakfasts. The last of these was at a lovely rooftop cafe. As Dr Radiah noted, "we took our chances, tikam-tikam, and we were lucky to come across good hotels at reasonable prices."

Shopping until I have a hole in my pocket

As my colleagues browsed and haggled over the handicrafts at the big market in Terengganu, I did my personal shopping. I bought batik silk cloths with 'bling bling', baju kurung tops for the two men in my life, kain batik, butterfly batik dresses, a tiffin carrier, a wind chime, keropok (crackers), fish and chicken serunding (floss), a songkok (traditional Malay hat for males), table mat, and other odds and ends. I spent RM750 at one place and left with glee mixed with trepidation, aware that I had no more money to spend in Kelantan the next day. I made my travel mates promise not to not lend me any money even if I begged to buy something I liked. As it turned out, I still bought a picnic basket the next day; I just couldn't resist.

Great food for foodies

The food on the entire journey was scrumptious - on the way back, we ate at a roadside cafe and got to choose from some 30 dishes. I took the

siput sedut in lemak cili padi (sea snails in spicy coconut gravy), urap (grated coconut vegetable salad) and terong sambal (chilled brinjals) and was satiated. Dr Radiah and Kak Jun ate to their contentment as well, but we only spent a total of RM18.

The night before at Kelantan, we had gone to a more posh restaurant for dinner and we were more than satisfied with the Tom Yam Soup and Nasi Goreng Urap (salad fried rice) at the well-patronised and noisy restaurant. Sorry, names elude me, so I cannot now remember the specific names of any of these hotels and restaurants. Nevertheless, the memory of the great food will always remain.

Sharifah Aini

Among the highlights of driving home together were the beautiful songs by Yusof Islam, Sami Yusof and others. The most memorable was the album by the late Sharifah Aini.

Poetic and deep, it mesmerised me although I had never been a fan. Only that day I understood why Kak Pah (Sharifah Aini's nickname among her fans) is a legend among Malays.

Mood meter

Ahh ... my mood was a 6 upon 10 although I was tilted towards euphoria. Six is perfect for bipolar 1 persons like me, stable but fun. We made a lot of jokes and sang songs together in the car and in the hotel rooms. I did not know then that my two travel mates were carefully monitoring her royal highness. Alhamdulillah, I have remained at level 6, which is happy, productive and active for the past two months. Making it through a happy long distance travel without tilting to craziness is an achievement. It will probably make my parents less wary of my travelling without a caregiver in the future.

At Club HEAL, we are all caregivers for we care for one another, be it as colleagues or persons sharing a common mission. While we are all individuals with our own idiosyncrasies, on the road to recovery, we share one car.

Long-stay Ward Raya

It was a beautiful Saturday morning and the smiles that greeted us at Buangkok Green were warm and welcoming. Club Heal staff and volunteers were at the Multi-Purpose Hall, Institute of Mental Health on 23 August 2014 to celebrate Hari Raya with some 50 patients in the long-stay ward, along with their families, friends and nurses.

A nurse welcomed the show of love and support by Club HEAL; apparently the Malay/Muslims patients do not frequently receive visitors, compared to patients belonging to other communities.

Saidi (not his real name), 48, said that this was the first time in his 11 years at the long-stay ward that such a Hari Raya event had been organised. He was excited, and joined eagerly in the singing and dancing and the game of musical chairs.

The families of the patients were happy because the Hari Raya celebration by Club HEAL helped them enjoy activities together at IMH in a merrier setting. Maya (not her real name), 62, said she enjoyed the food, which included fried satay and roti kirai with chicken curry.

One amazing thing that happened was that our counsellor Hamidah Bahashwan recognised one of the long-stay patients as the sister of a friend. She had apparently been missing for several years. The sisters were reunited on the same day after the function.

There were smiles and sometimes tears too as Sufyan Aidli Supiani, our guest singer, regaled us with many Hari Raya songs, happy and sad. The audience connected with our handsome singer who confessed that he had also been an IMH patient.

Dr Radiah Salim, President of Club HEAL said, "These people are the forgotten ones. It was touching to see them enjoy the refreshments and the fellowship. I hope more people will come forward to visit them and plan activities for them so they will feel they belong to the community."



Recent Developments

1. Club HEAL Pushcart @ Yishun Polyclinic

Club HEAL has started operating a pushcart at Yishun Polyclinic since 7 October under the guidance of Kak Jun, our Peer Support Specialist, thanks to the wonderful cooperation of NHG Polyclinics. The pushcart serves as a platform to empower our participants with occupational and entrepreneurial skills.

We sell hand-made products, overseas products and donated items that range from paintings to women's accessories. Sales have been encouraging and more of our beneficiaries are slowly but surely becoming adept at entertaining customers and making sales. Volunteers



are needed to help man the pushcart alongside our beneficiaries. Please contact us if you are interested.

2. Adoption by Berita Harian

It was wonderful news indeed when Berita Harian decided to adopt Club HEAL as their charity - and timely indeed in our huge battle against stigma. We thank Berita Harian for their kind and dedicated support.

Past Events

1. Club HEAL Hari Raya Lunch Gathering and Volunteer Awards (16 August, Pavilion BBE Zone 2 RC)



About 100 guests of Club HEAL were feted to a special Aidil Fitri lunch featuring fried satay and dry lontong, rendang and other traditional Malay dishes. Our participants sang for the appreciative audience who had come in all their finery. Mdm Halimah joined staff and Exco in belting out Saloma's classic Hari Raya song and Club HEAL's

volunteers were presented with tokens of appreciation for sharing their time, money and effort. The occasion brought the Club HEAL family closer.

2. Club HEAL Booth under MINDSET (13-15 August, NTU)

Our Peer Specialist, Kak Jun, and participants Adila and Aidil minded our booth during NTU's freshmen orientation. We did not do too well on the sales front but our Club HEAL banner stood tall and proud.



3. Healing Friends Training (21 August, 9am - 4pm, MKAC)

Dr Radiah and counsellor Nabila conducted the HFT for the beneficiaries, volunteers and staff of MKAC. The topic of depression struck a particular chord with the kidney failure patients on dialysis as they face challenges on all fronts - physically, financially and emotionally.



4. Joint National Day/Hari Raya celebrations with SACS and SAMH (27 August, CRSS BBE)

The folks from all three mental health organisations of BBE had a roaring good time playing games which broke the ice and singing Hari Raya and National

Day songs. Singing our National Anthem Majulah Singapura as one people gave us the goosebumps. Mdm Halimah graced the event as guest of honour.



5. ComChest Orange Day TGIF Bazaar (6 September, Sentosa Boardwalk)

The beautiful display of our Club HEAL booth attracted many buyers among the picnickers at Palawan beach.

6. Mental Resilience Week with BBE Grassroots, Jurong Health, SACS and SAMH (9-10 October, Thye Hua Kwan Social Service Hub and BBE CC function room)

It was like a hen talking to ducks when Dr Radiah Salim presented her talk "Healthy Mind in a Healthy Body" in English to a mostly Chinese audience. An interpreter, Justin, thankfully managed to help them understand the presentation clearly. The 40 participants warmed up to Dr Radiah's occasional phrases and comments in Mandarin and Hokkien.



Creative Corner

Mr. Softee

My God
What a soft sensation
Thank you for enchanting
my life
Dose of chendol topping,
my favourite
Where are you, Mr. Softee?
I just wanted one last lick
And I watched you leave
Without saying anything



by Anuar Zainal,
participant of
Club HEAL

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