MALAYSIA INDEPENDENT LIVING ASSOCIATION FOR DISABLED (MILAD)

JANUARY - MARCH 2021

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VAN

From the bottoms of our hearts, thank you to everyone who has supported our Van Fund. Through your generous contributions, we have raised RM 137,747.88, all of which help uphold the rights to freedom of mobility; equip and empower the disabled by attending the training and other services we provide; enable full inclusion and participation of the disabled in the community.

(continued on next page)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Wheelchair Accessible Van

Lunar New Year Celebration

Third Community House

Workshops on Independent Living Centre Project

The Search For Love

Independent Living Programme

Wheelchair Repair Service

New Team Players

About Us

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VAN

(Continued From Previous Page)

All this worked out together for the good of the disabled community. And you make everything we do possible. The fight for inclusion doesn't just stop here. We will continue to advocate until all are equal and all are free.

Once again a big thank you to all these hearts of gold:

Stephen Leong, YB Yeo Bee Yin（杨美盈）, Dr. Koh Keng Hee, YB Pua, YB Lim Yi Wei 林怡威, YB Ng Sze Han, Alice Sim, Gift Of Life Society, BAKTI, Persatuan Peniaga Dan Pengusaha Kirara Puchong, TG Group, Chieng Eng Lee, Chong Yee Sum, MBPJ Councillor (Terence Tan, Ong Swee Long, Billy Wong), Yayasan Gerak Cinta Hati - AOL Kuala Lumpur, Lee Kok Hing, Teh Yen Huat, Loo Lai Toh, Loo Thiam Seng, Wong Poh Leng, Lee Swee Yong, Wong Yew Fui, Goh Kin Moon, Lim Thung Chuan, Goo Swee Hean, Tan Ban Leng, Ho Kah Beng, Ooi Lee Cheng, Ho Ka Chan, Kan Yew Hoong, Emily Meng, Chin Chee Wei, Chui Kok Hong, Wan Lai Sim, Law Seong Heng, Lee Kok Fui, Pua Jayson, Yong Yik Kwong, Gunn Jorid Roset, Chong Kuah Yee, Mah Ai Bing, Phan Hong Huei, Soon Peng Guan, Yap Kian Loong, Phoon Wan Hoong, Ng Meng Hai, Teng Yew Yong, Debbie Tan, Tan Chee Beng, Chong Tien Song, Tan Kee Hong, Ng Guat Ngoh, Liew Lee Phing, Gan Ee Leng, Maureen Anne Muthu, Soh Teck Leong, Ricky Ng, Vincent Ong, Wan Azri Sufyan, Gan Min Shun, Lee Yoon Mun, Chan Ying Ying, Herley Bin Abdul, Yeong Wai Kit, Lee Lee Ping, Lau Yen Ling, Leong Su San, Ong Siew Chun, Hong Kok Hor, Boon Siew Geok, Yee Yun Siong, Loke Hon Wai, Agnes Lim, Pek Ruck Sun, Sim Joo Kee, Phormphikon, Lai Cheng Yook, Chong Ai Hua, Chong Kwee Lian, Chong Chin Lee, Wong Lee Nam, Chang Chen Piau, Ng Yan Rong, Chong Ai Moi, Ng Kar Leong, Peh Tian Cheong, Cheong Soh Wan, Michael Yong , Tan Kar Peng, Lee Chung Wah, Beh Sok Kee, Chee Foo Keong, Kwong Yew Cheng, Tan Siew Kuan, Chun Qeng Seng, Loi Tuck Chow, Lee Ming Li, Mah Hon Chan, Kenneth Chew, Tong Be Xin

LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

In the early 2021, Covid 19 pandemic ravaged on bringing all celebrations do a temporary halt

This year we were not able to host a Lunar New Year celebration in MILAD to bring everyone together. However, the pandemic will not stop us from celebrating the coming Lunar New Year.

Not all celebrations need to be a grand affair. This year, our dedicated PAs helped us to decorate our centre. We too hosted a zoom-party to spread positive vibes and feel a sense of celebration while everyone was in lockdown during the new year. It is the time to send out positive messages to our OKU community, letting folks know we're in this together.

THIRD COMMUNITY HOUSE IN PARAMOUNT, PJ

Community house for disabled people is crucial to promote the philosophy of Independent Living. Our community house serves as a safe space where disabled people learn how to live in the community. Hence, they move forward towards Independent Living and be fully integrated into the mainstream of society.

This year, MILAD is very proud that we have set up our third community house in Petaling Jaya. Kudos to all the staff who work throughout the day and night to make this come true. And we would not be able to reach this far without the caring hearts of society.

WORKSHOPS ON INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTRE PROJECT

MILAD was honoured that JPOKU appointed our organisation to conduct a series of workshops on the Independent Living Centre Project from January - March 2021:

1. Workshop on Peer Counseling and Independent Living Programme.
2. Workshop on Independent Living Centre and Personal Assistant Service Management
3. Workshop on Independent Living Programme.

It was our great pleasure to welcome participants from all over Malaysia to this year's event. For the first time, MILAD innovated and conducted this training in a full digital format. The set-up was in line with previous physical training but still enabled full and effective participation despite the current travel restrictions due to the pandemic.

Our interactive sessions of the workshop has allowed fruitful dialogues between the participants, the speakers, the teams and the organisers. We believe that this ILC project has greatly uplifted the disabled persons in society and help support them towards independent living.

In her closing speech, our Secretary General Sia Siew Chin, made 2 recommendations to JPOKU for consideration and further actions:

1. Conduct Weekly Follow-up Training

This is to assist ILCs which have not commenced their ILP programme with their respective OKU community. We understand that the ILP is a new programme in Malaysia that may be initially difficult for some ILCs to fully comprehend. However it is a very vital program for empowering PWDs through a variety of essential topics and engaging them in impactful discussions.

2. Publish key supporting materials and distribute them together with PA training videos recorded in Bahasa Malaysia.

The PA Training videos are currently in English. This initiative ensures that new ILCs can conduct their own PA training in the future. Hence the production of this video is very crucial to the community

THE SEARCH FOR LOVE

WRITTEN BY PETER KHOR

Many of us can associate with this search for love, especially my disabled friends. When we are hit with a crisis in life resulting in physical disability and find our world around us collapsing, the understanding ,concern and care shown by our loved ones is the primary motivation for the disabled person to move on in life. It usually takes a period of time to recover and the crucial acceptance of the situation. The stroke victim asks "can I walk again?". Victims involved in severe accidents with many broken bones in his body , wonder whether he would be able to get out of his hospital bed. Love is the catalyst,empathy,actions of comfort given by caregivers and especially family members speeds up recovery both physically and emotionally. A word of hope and encouragement fitly spoken brings joy and healing.

What happened in my situation when all around me was darkness, losing almost all my sight , save 6% in one eye due to glaucoma diagnosed albeit a little bit too late. I too searched for that love from my immediate family members. However from the onset I decided to set lower expectations of my family members so that I would not be too disappointed. That worked well for me during my period of recovery. Yes, there were obviously challenges and disappointments . I took it all in in the right stride that we are human. I was confident that I could turn to my God who loves me. Miraculously within 3 years, I learnt and developed new living skills to live independantly and managed to avoid any undue strain to family relationships. It has been almost 10 years.

THE SEARCH FOR LOVE

As I wrote this , I remembered a movie I watched way back in 1968. The movie ' The Heart is a Lonely Hunter' adapted from an acclaimed book by Carson McCullers. Carson was only 23 years old when she wrote this book. Set in a small town in the middle of the deep South, it is the story of John Singer, a lonely deaf-mute, and a disparate group of people who are drawn towards his kind, sympathetic nature. The owner of the café where Singer eats every day, a young girl desperate to grow up, an angry socialist drunkard, a frustrated black doctor: each pours their heart out to Singer, their silent confidant, and he in turn changes their disenchanted lives in ways they could never imagine.

John Singer represents a disabled person who lived in society and could change society , a basic principle of independent living. Amazingly able bodied people were drawn to a gentle, sympathetic deaf mute, whose presence changed their lives. The story has a tragic end. John committed suicide due to his own lack of communication with the outside world when the one person with whom he could communicate died.

Moving, sensitive and deeply humane, The Heart is a Lonely Hunter explores loneliness, the human need for understanding and the search for love. The search for love is a continuous travel of making friends along the way, keeping relationships meaningful and fruitful in this journey called life.

9 January 2021

*Peter Khor is one of our Peer Counselors who believes in walking the journey together into independent living with our ILP participants, encouraging, training, mentoring and coaching them. Most importantly to be their friend.

INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAMME

MILAD as an organisation has fully embraced the principles of Independent Living as laid down by the father of independent living, Mr Ed Roberts.

When the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development launched this program on 5 September 2019, we took off on high gear to actively promote independent living program (ILP) movement for the disabled community. We have not looked back since October 2019.

We started our peer counselling, coaching and training in the community making home visits to promote the ILP. We developed trained Personal Assistant (PA) to fully be in tandem with ILP. We were delighted to know that after one year of effort and hard work, MILAD now has five training groups of ILP meeting weekly, conducted in three languages viz Bahasa Malaysia, English and Chinese languages.

What was most rewarding was to see the change in the lifestyle of our ILP participants. Lives in bondage as a result of their disability was transformed as they understood and practised the principles of independent living.

We are so thankful for technology. We started with physical classes at our Centre since late 2019, only to be rudely disrupted by the pandemic and MCO. The participants with our facilitators quickly learned new skills and conduced virtual online classes. *(continued on next page)*

INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAMME

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Most ILP participants have this to say:

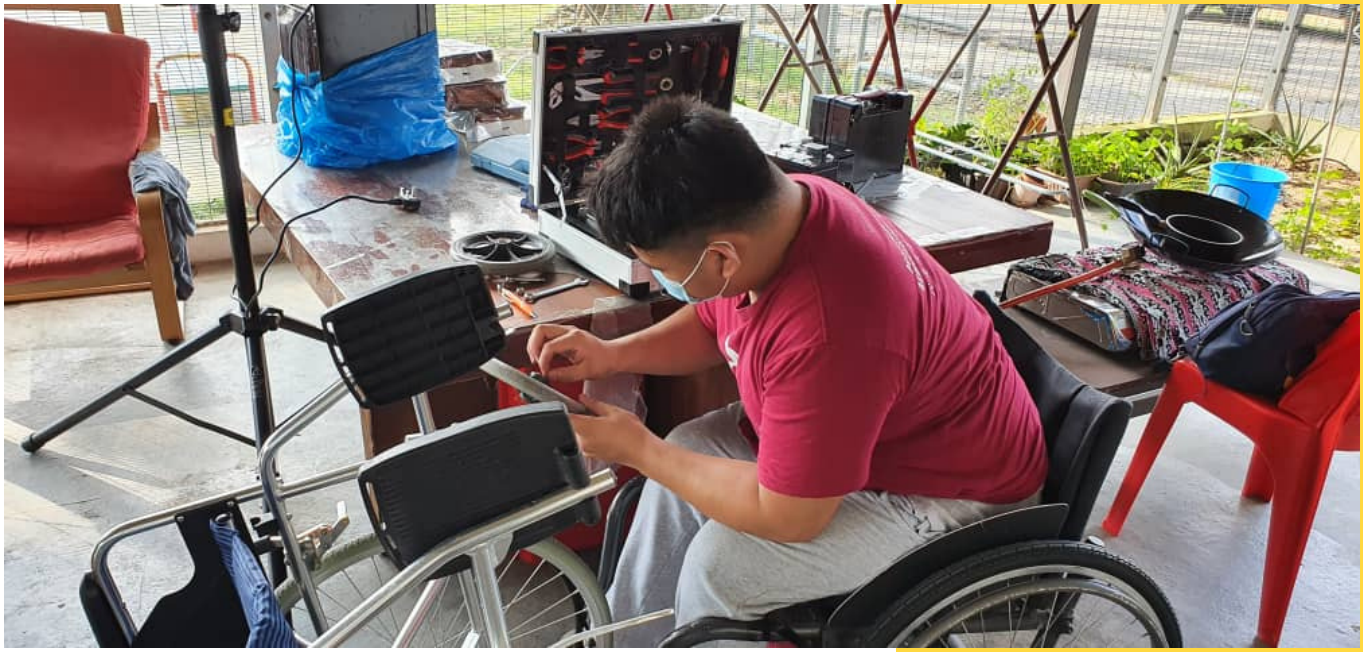
"I look forward to my weekly ILP session. I learnt so much from ILP and from my peers and made new friends."

A B1 visually impaired participant, a single mother, shared that before she knew of ILP, she just stayed home, fearful of going outdoors. She relied heavily on friends to assist her to do most things. She now wants to learn more and actively participate in the development programs that will help her to be independent. She learnt new skills, acquired an iPhone and able to attend online meetings independently, after a short period of guidance from a friend. They say that necessity is the mother of invention. Another participant, a stroke victim found that with this program which encourages participants to set goals, she was able to be more disciplined in her lifestyle and see her goals for health improvement fulfilled.

Another participant, a B1 visually impaired person, realised that he was going into depression after long periods of staying home. He discovered that the ILP has encouraged him to embrace a healthier lifestyle. Goals fulfilled and lives are changed for the better.

We will continually bring you testimonies and success stories to further encourage you on the impact of ILP to the disabled community. This is just the tip of the iceberg as participants journey with their facilitator's guidance and peer support to bring them to greater heights of success into independent living. MILAD has the vision to continue this vital work with the correct principles to serve and benefit the disabled community.

WHEELCHAIR REPAIR SERVICE



Many people with disabilities rely on a wheelchair to perform daily activities efficiently. Wheelchair mobility opens up opportunities for people with disabilities to lead full and active lives in their communities.

MILAD provide wheelchair repair service to wheelchair users. Our technicians are disabled persons yet skillful in all makes and models of wheelchairs, and specializes in all major and minor repairs .

Our wheelchair user, Marie Antoinette dropped by recently with her wheelchair that had a loose foot rest.The problem gave her inconvenience and distress. She met our Operations Manager, Peng Wai who immediately fixed the problem for her. Marie was thankful and left our Centre rejoicing.

Please contact us at 018-281 3178 if you require repair service to your wheelchair or wish to donate one to us.

EVERYONE, MEET SAMUEL AND UNCLE GEORGE

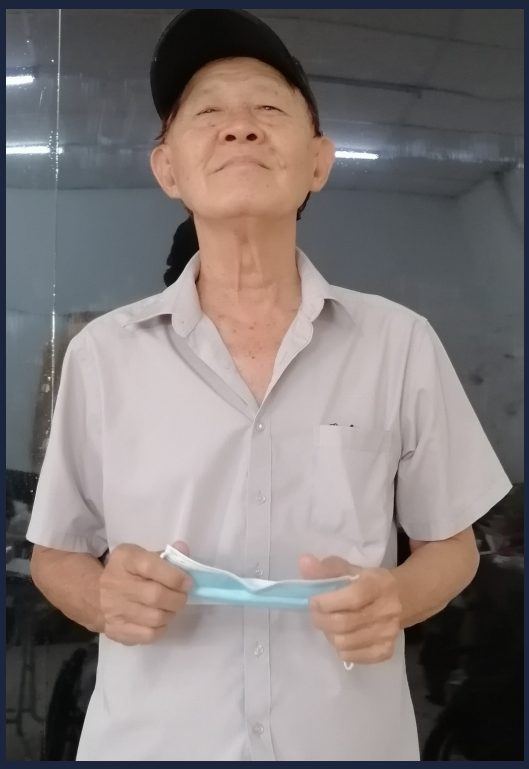
We are pleased to announce our new team players, Samuel Wong Thin Choy and George Ng Kar Siong to the position of Office Administrator and Driver in MILAD.

SAMUEL WONG THIN CHOY

Samuel is an old and good friend to many of us in MILAD. Samuel has years of experience in the hotel and hospitality industry.

Despite his condition with Osteogenesis Imperfecta, Samuel learned how to adapt to all the challenges and not just survive but to thrive.

MILAD would like to welcome Samuel Wong as our new office administrator.



GEORGE NG KAR SIONG

Uncle George has been a long time friend of many OKU users of MILAD. He began his Journey with MILAD in November 2020 and serves as our driver for the OKU community in Klang Valley.

We are delighted to have a joyful and caring Uncle George on board.

DONATION PLEDGE FORM

I (WE) WOULD LIKE TO PLEDGE TO MILAD

NAME(S) MAKING PLEDGE: .....

TOTAL AMOUNT OF PLEDGE: .....

ADDRESS: .....

.....

.....

PHONE: ....

EMAIL: ....

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WHO ARE WE?

Malaysia Independent Living Association for Disabled ("MILAD") is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation run by a group of people with disabilities, to help people with disabilities toward Independent Living, regardless of their background, race and religion.

OUR VISION

It is our vision to establish a society that embraces the concept of Independent Living which promotes the disabled peoples full inclusion and participation in the community, wherein the disabled people are given the same life opportunities and the same choices in everyday life that the non-disabled people take for granted.

OUR GOAL

Our goal is to train, equip and empower the people with disabilities to live independently, and at the same time advocating for equal rights and opportunities for them. We strive toward creating awareness so that the general public will have the right perspective toward disability and people with disabilities, and hence able to help transform the society to allow full inclusion and participation at every possible level by the disabled people.