

## **From SASW President Long Chey May's Desk 3<sup>rd</sup> message**

Dear SASW Family,

First, I would like to thank members and fellow social workers for your positive responses and encouragement to my efforts to reach out to you. As promised, I will continue to use this channel to engage, encourage, enlighten and examine key issues, challenges and opportunities faced by our profession. As President, it is also my duty and obligation to enforce professional standards and code of ethics and I have been seriously thinking about this aspect. As such, I have asked Chair, Professional Ethics, Mr Alvin Chua to examine the possibility of a platform to allow members to seek clarification on ethical practice. I await his proposal and attempt to develop something useful and feasible in the next few months. If any of you have any views or want to extend a helping hand, do drop him an email @ [Alvin@childrensaidsociety.org.sg](mailto:Alvin@childrensaidsociety.org.sg). I have special concerns for Social Workers in small teams or solo practitioners working independently without guidance from Senior Social Workers. How can we create a support structure or framework to empower them? Within my workplace, I have decided to emulate how hospitals have Clinical Ethics Committees to deliberate on ethical dilemmas faced by clinicians. For my Medical Social Work department, I have also convened a small internal panel to discuss complex cases with ethical concerns as a way to learn and arrive at better decision making.

### **Introducing the Team**

I realised members read my message but did not recognise me as I attended various seminars and networking sessions. After half a year at the association, I am ensuring it is not just me but the team behind SASW that is trying our best to serve SASW members and at times we include accredited members. Here's a photo taken at the OSWA event on 1 December 2017 at the Istana, as well as a retreat where I administered MBTI for the team comprising EXCO members, Chapter Chairs and the diligent administrative team supporting social workers and members. With a clearer profile of the team, I can better understand and assign tasks and teams towards better output and outcome.

If any agency is keen to explore and have SASW/FRTC conduct team bonding through MBTI workshop, please write to SASW for enquiry. This will be a fun way to get to know yourself as well as your colleagues.



SASW EXCO members at Istana on 1 Dec 2017 and with Chapter Chairs and Admin Team at Retreat on 19 Jan 2018 at SSI for Team Bonding and self-awareness (MBTI). President SASW to the left of the President of the Republic of Singapore, Mdm Halimah Yacob.

### **Engagement efforts and initiatives**

On 1 Dec 2018 at the OSWA event, I reported to the audience that since the inception of OSWA, we have recognised more than 40 outstanding social workers and promising social workers, plus many more nominated who were interviewed. It is time to engage these past winners and nominees to tap on their expertise and leadership for the sector. I challenge my EXCO members to seek them out, rally them and invite them to be mentors to young Social Workers or social work leaders, take on cross sector projects or specialised areas to elevate the professional status. They can also lead or mentor project teams for the PSW seminars held by Office of DSW, MSF. In addition, they can also drive various interest groups with a view to develop and galvanize social workers pursuing particular areas of clinical interest.

At the next OSWA, I hope to be able to report that we have matched several pairs of mentors and mentees, or to proudly announce that past winners have responded to SASW's call for action to step forward and led in various projects or initiatives. Together we can let our President of the Republic of Singapore and donors know that even as we are recognised, we continue to elevate our profession. For me, I worked harder after receiving

the OSWA in 2008. I am already looking for successor to take over as President at the next election and continue to establish a good system and structure that future Presidents of SASW can benefit from. Social work leaders must grow more leaders and succession planning starts the moment we become leaders. Talent management is key to ensure we have renewal of staff. Having spent 33 years in social work, I recently experienced a sense of satisfaction as I sit in tandem with my ex-staff who have been appointed as Heads of Departments, deliberating directions for the sector or discussing issues of concerns for MSWs. Heads of Departments are younger and will benefit from mentoring and coaching. DSW Ms Ang Bee Lian (OSWA winner 1999) and Ms Julia Lee from TOUCH Community Services (OSWA winner 2014) have acquired coaching qualifications and will be sought to give us pointers as we assemble likeminded veterans with outstanding achievements to be potential mentors and leaders to help SASW grow social work leaders.

### **What defines Us?**

### **What defines Social Worker as a Professional?**

Every professional usually wants to have affiliation to a society or an association with a view to self-regulate and advance its profession. Each professional group usually shares a code of practice, is guided by a clear code of ethics and differentiates itself distinctly. I always tell my staff and colleagues that it is easy to be affirmed and get compliments from clients and other discipline colleagues like Doctors, Nurses and Teachers, but it is most difficult to be acknowledged by our own professional colleagues because we know and judge the desired competence and behaviour standards. All professional groups also have its own disciplinary structures and processes.

I also recently learnt that currently only five groups of Allied Health Professionals are under the Allied Health Professions Act (2011) and that out of the close to 30 allied health professional groups, there is different risk tolerance and practice plus cost involved, these are key considerations to decide which profession is to be included under the Allied Health Professions Council. In a recent lunch with Minister of MSF, Mr Desmond Lee, we are reminded that whether we should move towards mandatory regulation or not requires careful consideration and largely depends also on us Social Workers. When a Social Worker resigns from his/her work place, who can he/she turn to for support and get professional updates? SASW is home to all qualified Social Workers. Even for retirees, there is so much more a retired Social Worker can contribute. I am inclined to start a group of retired Social Worker group and I hope to grow this group to be pursued by younger social workers. This group can contribute much to SASW. I just need a few to come forward and my EXCO and Chapter Chairs will surely tap on them for the various exciting events under SASW. Next time you hold a cup of Starbucks in your hand, know that that is the cost of monthly subscription fee needed to be part of the Association which will acknowledge you as a professional and will engage and keep you updated on happenings of the profession. If you are one of those who ask, "What can the Association do for me? I hope you will begin to ask: "What difference can I make to my profession?", and begin to act and shape what we want for ourselves, regardless of which organization you are from, even if you are a homemaker, you can stay connected, interested and the place to go to is SASW.

### **Special Focus on EXCO Member: Honorary Treasurer Ms Hayley Chau**

Hayley is Deputy Director in charge of various operations in Tan Tock Seng Hospital. A long serving member at SASW and she chose to stay in touch with social work and the Association via being an active member and EXCO member in SASW. I observed that many of our experienced Social Workers move on to do higher level, macro or non-direct practice and we no longer see them in the field. I would like to invite these veterans to volunteer with us in various capacities or to take on positions in SASW. I am open and creative enough to find new portfolios or projects to have these experienced Social Workers stay engage and contribute in the development of the profession and sector standards. We welcome you to be part of SASW family and contribute in other sub committees or guide younger EXCO members in the discharge of their duties. Association provides you a platform to stay connected, draw upon your wisdom and to mentor the younger Social Workers who clearly needs to hone operational, administrative skills as well as experience you in various strategic thinking and leadership knowledge and behaviour and be inspired!

### **World Social Work Day**

Social Work Day – A time to be recognised, to rejuvenate and to reflect and recharge. SASW has sent out a call for Social Workers to celebrate World Social Work Day on 24 March 2018 at the Promontory, Marina Bay Carnival. This event allows members to come forward and celebrate another year of hard work and we encourage you to also create awareness of World Social Work Day to your employers and supervisors who may not belong to the same profession. Increasingly we hear of generations of Social Workers of various types of relationships (siblings, couples, parent-child) working hand in hand within agency or in various sectors. I know of families of social workers and it will be interesting to find out how they spread and influence, interest family members to choose this wonderful profession. Whether you have a family member who is a Social Worker or not, my team and I look forward to meeting you and your family to thank them for the wonderful support they have rendered for you to continue in this amazing social work journey. Do join us!

### **Teaching and Sharing moments**

My new year wish for SASW is to grow **STARS** Social Workers in the sector in the next five to ten years. Social Workers who are good in **S**ervice, **T**eaching, **A**dministration, **R**esearch (includes being reflective and with an inquiring mind that looks at quality improvement and evidence-based practice) and **S**upervision. Initially, I am aware not all have similar gifts and will be satisfied if Social Workers are strong in two to three of these domains, for example in Service and Administration. However, we need to engage in life-long learning and hone these few domains in our career. Only then will our younger Social Worker benefit from good teaching, administrative and supervision skills. Social work has a science and ART to it. If we do not teach, or hone Administrative skills, our clients are not getting the most from us. Soft skills and practice wisdom are valuable and staying relevant ensures our practice wisdom gets translated and diffused to a wider audience. Having innovative practices are crucial for us to be future proof and knowing what to **control**, find **alternate** ways and **delete** irrelevant practice will ensure we remain sharp and useful to our service users. (Borrowing Permanent Secretary Mr Chan Heng Kee's quote and speech phrase of control, alternate and delete). Social Workers exist to serve the vulnerable and those in need of support.

We have embarked on organizing a series of dialogue sessions for members primarily, starting with Permanent Secretary (Health) Mr Chan Heng Kee on 10 April 2018. You should have received the EDM on 1 Feb 2018. Priority is given to SASW members and I look forward to an engaging and stimulating discussion as we draw on his wisdom on role of Social Workers in care transformation as Singapore tackles the new trends of a growing class divide, ageing and economic disruption.

Mr Chan, now Permanent Secretary (PS) in MOH has stressed that to steer us towards successful transformation in healthcare, we will need to make three important leadership shifts:

- i. Shifting from Expert as Leader to Expert Leader
- ii. Going beyond Developing Individual Leaders to Developing Collective Leadership
- iii. Moving from Leading Institutions to Leading in Eco-systems (Reference: HLC Newsletter)

Is this relevant for social services leaders? Let's hear from him on 10 April 2018. Remember to sign up to avoid disappointment.

### **Cross Sector Project – Hear your voice, share your views**

SASW took on the task and partner MOH to plan and initiate at least 3 cross sector projects. Our project administrator would like to hear your views and will compile your responses and input on the various gaps and potential areas to plan and implement suitable and feasible projects that will benefit our clients and service users. We hope you will spare some time to complete the survey (last page) and email your returns to Ms Faezah Salliman by **28 Feb 2018**. Alternatively, you can also access the survey at the following link ([https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/sasw\\_x-sectorsurvey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/sasw_x-sectorsurvey)) For clarifications, please contact Faezah at 98798952.

### **Come connect with me and my Team**

I welcome your feedback, thoughts and responses to my message (email: [president@sasw.org.sg](mailto:president@sasw.org.sg) or [chey\\_may\\_long@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:chey_may_long@nuhs.edu.sg))

For now, I look forward to meeting you and your family and colleagues at the World Social Work Day on 24 March 2018 at the Marina Bay Carnival.

On behalf of SASW, I would like to wish our Chinese colleagues a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous Lunar New Year and for our non-Chinese colleagues may you have a restful holiday!

Long Chey May  
President, SASW  
15 February 2018

