

# A sense of belonging

# Sense



**SGS CO-OP**  
*A sense of belonging*

**SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT STAFF CREDIT  
CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED**

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**SGS CO-OP**  
A sense of belonging

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Photograph: Sinnathamby  
Memorial Bursary Awards 2016  
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**FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

# ALWAYS

*Since the successful conclusion of AGM 2016, the Committee of Management and Secretariat team have been working hard to improve our governance model, operational efficiency and membership services.*



## STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE

At the behest of the Registry of Co-operative Societies, we accepted a rigorous risk control audit by KPMG earlier this year. The auditors

have since presented their findings on our compliance, internal controls and corporate governance. With their help, we have identified areas of improvement in our IT system, membership processes as well as loan and procurement processes.

# IMPROVING

To share an example, our loan repayment schemes are now structured between 12 and 48 months but in our Bylaws, this is limited to 36 months. This tells us that it is perhaps time to review our Bylaws to ensure that they remain relevant to the Co-op and our members' needs.

In the next six to nine months, we will be looking into strengthening our risk controls based on KPMG's recommendations. Overall, I am pleased to share that the Co-op has, to some extent, passed the audit with flying colours. This speaks well of our diligence, prudence and integrity in our daily operations. We will continue to manage ourselves well so that you benefit from being part of a strong and secure Co-op.

## GROWING OUR FAMILY

Membership recruitment continues to be a priority for us. The Co-op recently organised a gathering of Recruitment Champions — members who are actively identifying and introducing new members to us — to equip them with the information they need to spread the word about SGS. Please read about this on page 9 and join the movement to grow our membership to 10,000!

At the annual Sinnathamby Memorial

Bursary Awards in August, we also took the opportunity to introduce the benefits of an SGS membership to our young bursary recipients. We hope that, in the future, they will choose to join the Co-op that has supported them and their family. Learn more on page 6.

## SERVING YOU BETTER

Having received feedback from members about the Co-op's telephone efficacy, we formed a Telephone Review Panel chaired by Committee Member Mr S Mohan and supported by Assistant Honorary Secretary Mr Lim Hee Joo to study our existing system, conduct market sourcing and make recommendations.

We have moved quickly on this matter and a new five-line telephone system will be operational by October. In addition to infrastructure enhancements, our staff have also received telephone handling and etiquette training. I hope members will understand that our staff are trying their best to serve 7,000 members professionally and promptly.

## IN MEMORIAM

This issue of SENSE also includes a special tribute to the late Mr S R

Nathan, who passed away at the age of 92. The former President of Singapore is remembered as a decorated public officer who devoted his life to the betterment of his country and fellowmen. At SGS, our relationship runs deeper. We journeyed with him during his early days as a civil servant. When he needed financial support, he turned to our Co-op and we were there for him.

To honour him, we share memories from just four years ago, when Mr Nathan gave an interview to SENSE and graced our 87<sup>th</sup> Gala Dinner. Please turn to page 4 and join us in honouring this luminary. May he rest in peace.

Finally, I would like to wish our Hindu members a Happy Deepavali.




**John Raghavan PB, PBS**  
Chairman

# Saying goodbye to MR S R NATHAN

*"Over the years, co-operatives have distinctly helped improve the lives of Singaporeans. My experiences serve as a reminder that the co-operative value of 'self-help' is real and empowering."*



**- The late Mr S R Nathan, during a 2012 interview published in SENSE**

**T**he management and staff of SGS Co-op are deeply saddened by the passing of former President of Singapore and fellow SGS member Mr S R Nathan. We take consolation in the fact that he left peacefully on 22 August 2016 while being surrounded by family and loved ones. Mr Nathan, aged 92, suffered a stroke three weeks prior to his passing. He is survived by his wife, Urmila Nandi. They have a daughter, a son and three grandchildren.



*Mr Nathan meeting the SGS Committee of Management in 2012.*

## A LIFE OF SERVICE

Long before he became the President of the Republic of Singapore, Mr Nathan was a young public service officer. He began his career as a medical social worker in 1955. Shortly after, he was appointed Seamen's Welfare Officer and later, seconded to the Labour Research Unit of the Labour Movement. He went on to hold appointments in the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, at different points in time, served as Singapore's High Commissioner to Malaysia and Ambassador to the United States of America.



Mr Nathan gracing the SGS Gala Dinner in 2012.

On 18 August 1999, Mr Nathan was sworn in as the sixth President of the Republic of Singapore. By the end of his second presidential term in 2011, he had become the country's longest-serving president.

## A CO-OPERATIVE MAN

Even as a young public service officer, Mr Nathan was familiar with the co-operative concept, having helped establish a co-operative consumer society in Johor before moving to Singapore. Three years after joining the public service, Mr Nathan was ready to wed his wife but he needed some financial support.

"I did not have much money then to get married and I applied for a loan [from SGS]. I could pay back monthly. I remember taking three loans from the SGS Co-op since those who ran the co-operative movement were known to me and I had no problems getting the loans," he once shared in an interview with SENSE in 2012.

"The second time I borrowed money was to buy a house. The third was when I wanted to return a \$200 monthly special allowance, which I received over 10 months from the NTUC. I borrowed \$2,000 from the co-operative to pay back NTUC."



Mr Nathan was featured on the cover of the November 2012 issue of SENSE.



Even in his later years, Mr Nathan was a keen supporter of SGS, joining the Co-op in celebrating its 87<sup>th</sup> anniversary at a Dinner & Dance event in October 2012. Thank you, Sir, it has been a true honour.



The event was graced by Guest-of-Honour Dr Chia Shi-Lu, Member of Parliament for Tanjong Pagar GRC.

# SUPPORTING THE EDUCATION JOURNEY

On 20 August 2016, Saturday, SGS celebrated the academic and non-academic achievements of its members' school-going children at its annual Sinnathamby Memorial Bursary Awards. This year, a total of \$53,600 was handed out in bursaries to 248 students, of which 86 from the tertiary levels were invited to receive their awards in person. The younger recipients had collected their bursaries earlier.

The event, held at Civil Service Club, Tessensohn Clubhouse, was hosted by SGS Chairman Mr John Raghavan and graced by Guest-of-Honour Dr Chia Shi-Lu, Member of Parliament for Tanjong Pagar GRC. In his

welcome address, Dr Chia applauded SGS members for supporting their Co-op's Bursary Awards by contributing \$5 from their annual dividend payouts to this worthy cause. He also had encouraging words for the recipients: "I hope you will continue to strive for excellence in everything you do."

Mr Tan Pin Cheow, who serves as Chairman of the Co-op's Education Sub-Committee, also shared his delight over members' overwhelming support this year.

"We received 261 submissions, of which 248 applications have been successful. This is a 95% success

rate. I wish to acknowledge the student applicants who have not been able to receive the award this year. They have done remarkably well in school as well, but competition for the bursaries was stiff this year. I am confident that they will continue to do well in school, and hope to receive their applications next year."

The Sinnathamby Memorial Bursary Awards was started in 1974 by the late Mr S Sinnathamby, after whom the awards are named. Between 2011 and 2016 alone, SGS has distributed over \$354,000 in bursaries to support its members' children in their education journey.

## Hear what this year's recipients have to say!



*"This is the RST time I'm receiving this award. It makes me feel like studying hard has paid off! When I was younger, I studied hard to get good grades but now, I do it because I'm really interested in liberal arts and in understanding the world. I'm grateful for the bursary because it'll allow me to participate in the overseas study trips that my college organises without burdening my parents."*

**- Goh Rui Zhe, 21,  
Yale-NUS College**

*"I'm really happy to win this bursary. It motivates me to keep studying hard hopefully I'll win again next year! I think that when you enjoy a subject, you will naturally do well in it. My favourite subject is Geography so I hope to major in humanities. I'm aiming to get into Nanyang Technology University!"*



**- Sheetal Nair, 19,  
Millennia Institute**



*"This award is like a personal achievement for me because it's the second time I'm receiving it. I'm really proud of myself! I think that I'm not a naturally academic person. I have to push myself to study bit by bit because I take time to absorb new concepts. But when I put in the effort and good grades, there's a huge sense of satisfaction."*

**- Nur Shamira Binte Shakil  
Ahmad, 18, Temasek Polytechnic**





# HELLO, HONG KONG!

A short four-hour flight from Singapore brought 60 SGS members and their loved ones to Hong Kong for an exhilarating summer break. Members took in the majestic views of The Peak, marvelled at Hong Kong's glittering nightscape from Victoria Harbour and enjoyed the rustic charms of Repulse Bay. True to Hong Kong's reputation as a gourmet and shopping paradise, the food was as varied as the

shopping options, leaving members spoilt for choice.

The itinerary also included a free-and-easy day. While some chose to continue exploring Hong Kong on their own, others took the opportunity to visit Macau and Shenzhen. What a wonderful summer getaway!

For more photos, please visit [www.sgs.coop](http://www.sgs.coop).





# EMPOWERING OUR Recruitment Champions



While SGS is working hard to achieve its recruitment target of 10,000 members, it firmly believes that the best recruitment ambassadors are its own members. After all, members are most familiar with the Co-op's commitment to supporting their long-term financial stability and have personally experienced the wide range of benefits that come with an SGS membership.

The Recruitment Champion programme is an initiative to actively involve SGS members in membership recruitment. A select group of 18 Recruitment Champions

were invited to a networking reception and briefing session hosted by the Co-op on 16 August 2016.

They were welcomed by SGS Chairman Mr John Raghavan, Membership Sub-Committee Chairman Mr Abdul Alim Karim and other Committee Members and received an information pack to help them in their conversations with potential members. A presentation by Ms Prabha Seth, Manager, Business Development and Marketing & Communications, also proved to be very insightful.

The Recruitment Champions took the opportunity to discuss membership recruitment strategies and offered some creative suggestions to attract more members. They also gave good feedback about the event, with many indicating that they now feel better equipped to talk to their friends and colleagues about joining the Co-op.

## Want to find out more?

If you're interested in learning more about the Recruitment Champion programme and how you can play a part in driving membership growth for the Co-op, call **69336779** (Membership) or email us at **admin@sgs.coop**.



# Upgrading our Telephone System

SGS Co-op is implementing a new telephone system to serve members better! The new system, which is expected to be fully operational by October 2016, enables members to direct their enquiries to five dedicated telephone lines for loan applications, membership matters, savings deposits and withdrawals, account matters and Co-op activities. The new system also allows Co-op staff to track missed calls for better follow-up action.

This call centre approach replaces the Co-op's existing hotline system where members' calls are directed to a virtual voice assistant before being transferred to the respective staff. The new system allows staff to attend to members' queries concurrently, thereby reducing waiting time. The Co-op has also introduced a feedback channel (thc@sgs.coop) to encourage more members to share their thoughts and ideas.

The SGS Committee of Management hopes that the new telephone system and feedback channel will enhance communication and strengthen the sense of belonging that members feel.



## New Ways to Contact Your Co-op!

<b>Feedback Channel</b>	<b>thc@sgs.coop</b>
<b>Loan Applications</b>	<b>69336775/69336776</b>
<b>Membership Matters</b>	<b>69336779</b>
<b>Savings (Deposits &amp; Withdrawals)</b>	<b>69336778</b>
<b>Accounts</b>	<b>69336775</b>
<b>Co-op Activities</b>	<b>69336779</b>

.....

*"The Co-op continues to look for new and innovative ways to meet the changing needs of our members."*

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## Addressing Members' Concerns

The Telephone Review Panel was set up to assess the Co-op's existing telephone system after receiving feedback from members that they faced difficulty getting through the Co-op's single hotline number.

The Panel was chaired by SGS Committee Member Mr S Mohan and supported by SGS Assistant Honorary Secretary Mr Lim Hee Joo. They reviewed the existing system and assessed new options while considering feedback from members and the operational challenges that staff face.

"Our existing telephone system was implemented about three years ago," shared Mr Mohan. "Since then, our membership has grown significantly. The Panel concluded that the new system of directing specific queries to dedicated telephone lines would be a more efficient approach to serving members."

# Quiz Time!

**Prizes await 10 lucky submissions!**  
*Multi-purpose mini rice cooker  
& steamer worth \$50!*



Submit your answers by **18 October 2016**:  
- Fax to **6339 6772**  
- Email to **admin@sgs.coop** or  
- Post to **1 Sophia Road #05-21 Singapore 228149**

*Multiple entries will not be accepted. Winners will be announced in the next issue.*

## Congratulations Jul/Aug Quiz Winners!

**Chin Seo Kiat, Benjamin** SXXXX097E

**Irene Choo Pei Wen** SXXXX865A

**Felicia Lim Jing Yi** SXXXX088C

**Malkit Kaur** SXXXX722H

**Mohamed Shafik Bin Ramli** SXXXX236H

**Sinadoray Meenachi** SXXXX882F

**Siti Aminah Binte Safari** SXXXX461D

**Tam Lap Tak** SXXXX104G

**Tay Thiam Teck** SXXXX939J

**Wong Mei Mei** SXXXX604I

*Please collect your prize from SGSCC office by **28 October 2016**.*

1. How many students received the Sinnathamby Memorial Bursary Awards this year?

2. On which dates did SGS members visit Hong Kong?

3. What role does an SGS Recruitment Champion play?

4. SGS members who refer a new member are rewarded with \$20 credited to their Specific Deposit account. True / False

5. State any three of the five new telephone numbers that SGS members can use to contact the Co-op.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

NRIC: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact No.: (M) \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_

(O) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Three easy ways to track your spending, brought to you by SGSCC

- 1 **Have an envelope or folder** for each expense category (like groceries) and place your budgeted amount inside.
- 2 **Ask for a receipt** every time you buy something, and tally them at the end of each month.
- 3 **Use a free mobile app or a computer spreadsheet** to record your expenditure and find out where you've been overspending.

With a compulsory savings account, like your SGS Subscription Account, you can rest assured that you are setting aside some money every month. To understand how SGSCC can further support your financial stability and security, please contact us at **69336778 (Savings) or 69336775/69336776 (Loans)** or email **admin@sgs.coop**.



*Photo: 123RF*

**Be Money  
Smart!**

**Tips from SGSCC**

# TRY YOUR HAND AT RECRUITING!

Introduce your colleagues to an SGS membership by sharing these benefits with them! Every member you refer earns you \$20, credited to your Specific Deposit Account.

## ENJOY RETURNS ON SAVINGS

Fixed Deposit Account	Subscription Account	Specific Deposit Account
12 months with attractive interest rate (quoted on enquiry).	Attractive interest rates according to the Co-op's financial performance.	Attractive interest rates according to the Co-op's financial performance.
<b>Optional saving scheme</b> Minimum deposit of \$1,000.	<b>Compulsory saving scheme</b> Contribution rates based on monthly gross salary, ranging from \$10 to \$40 a month. Contributions are capped at \$50 a month.	<b>Optional saving scheme</b> Minimum monthly contribution of \$10.

## ENJOY LOAN FACILITIES

Unsecured Loan	Surety Loan	Subscription Loan
Reasonable interest rate. No surety required. Nominal administrative charge.	Reasonable interest rate. Requires two sureties from members. No administrative charge.	Reasonable interest rate. No surety required. No administrative charge. Loan amount shall not exceed subscription savings.

## ENJOY OTHER PRIVILEGES

<p><b>Hospitalisation Benefit</b> \$30 a day, capped at 15 calendar days a year.</p> <p><b>Insurance Coverage</b> Free insurance coverage for members on accidental death or permanent disability.</p> <p><b>Death Benefit</b> \$300 upon death of member after at least 15 years of membership. \$200 upon death of spouse.</p>	<p><b>Loyalty Benefit</b> Members with at least 15 years of membership with the Co-op receive \$200 upon cessation of membership.</p> <p><b>Bursary Awards for Members' Children</b> Bursaries of \$100 to \$1,000 are awarded to members' school-going children. Subject to application and assessment.</p>	<p><b>Extended Membership</b> Members who resign or retire from their current employer can continue their membership if they have been a member of the Co-op for at least 10 years prior.</p> <p><b>Family Membership</b> Members may enrol their family as Co-op members to enjoy privileges.</p>
<p><b>Highly subsidised overseas tours and annual Gala Dinner with lucky draw prizes.</b></p>		

Information is correct at time of print and may be subject to changes. For details and updated information, please visit [www.sgs.coop](http://www.sgs.coop).