Serve society, help the poor and needy in distress and thus manifest the human quality of compassion. By doing selfless service to mankind, you are doing service to God. Deserve the grace of God by helping the weak and poor, the diseased and the disabled, the distressed and the downtrodden. Selfless service must be directed towards the removal of physical distress, the alleviation of mental agony and the fulfilment of spiritual yearning.

Selfless service can be identified by means of two basic characteristics: compassion and willingness to sacrifice. Let every action of yours be a prayer to God. Consider every good work as God’s work. Be firmly convinced that what you are doing is something sacred. In service, there is nothing good or bad. Whatever requires to be done to serve anyone, at anytime, in any form – you should do without hesitation. The selfless service that you do, should not be done out of a sense of compulsion or to please others. It should be wholehearted and spontaneous. Develop forbearance, patience, peace and love and you carry on your work. This is your true spiritual discipline. Face whatever problems that may arise with faith and courage and carry out the service activities without fanfare, in a spirit of humility and dedication.

There are many who come forward when there is a call for social service, but most of them crave publicity seeking the camera whenever they help others and very disappointed when they are not mentioned in the newspapers. Such persons push themselves forward and climb into positions of authority, just to parade their importance before the public. They forget that service is worship, that each act of service is a flower placed at the feet of the Lord and that, if the act is tainted with ego, it is as if the flower is infested with slimy insect pests. You should love all and serve all. You should have no distinction of caste or creed or religion. There is absolutely no room for any separatist feelings. You should see the essence of all religions as same. You should foster feelings of brotherhood and consider all as brothers and sisters of the same family.

Instead of saying a hundred things, it is better to do one thing properly. Sanctify your life by doing selfless work. For the person who talks a lot, there is no time for work. For the person who is engaged in work, there is no time to talk. Instead of wasting time in words, use your time in service to mankind which is service to God, all the while repeating the name of the Lord on your lips.
The Sunshine Welfare Action Mission (SWAMI Home) was established in 1986 by a group of volunteers inspired by their spiritual guru, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, to serve the elderly and needy community in Singapore. Over the past 30 years, this non-profit organisation has provided nursing care and shelter for the aged sick and physically challenged who come from lower socio-economic backgrounds in our society.

Today, the SWAMI Home delivers services to about 1,000 elderly in the northern region of Singapore every month. The SWAMI Home is equipped with 242-bed residential geriatric and dementia care services, and provides centre-based services including Dementia Day Care, Day Rehabilitation and Weekend Respite Day Care. It also provides community-based services such as Home Help, Home Medical and Home Nursing. The wide range of integrated services provided by SWAMI Home enables the elderly to age gracefully within the community and their homes.

On this happy occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the SWAMI Home, I would like to commend the directors, staff and supporters for the meaningful work that you have done over the years, and encourage all of you to continue your steadfast service to enhance the welfare of the elderly and needy in our community.
As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of SWAMI Home, we recall with pride its successful developmental journey. We appreciate the admirable efforts put in by the management and staff of SWAMI Home over the years. We note their noble mission to serve the needy and the frail elderly.

On this joyous occasion to mark a significant milestone, we acknowledge:

- the relocation of SWAMI Home, from its initial premises in 19 Kee Ann Road, first to 52 Bah Tan Road and finally to the current premises at 5 Sembawang Walk;

- the beautiful environment that SWAMI Home has, that makes everyone feel it is not just a nursing home, but a home that the residents are happy to live in; and

- the professional elder care and dementia care services that SWAMI Home provides.

Above all, we celebrate how the management and staff of SWAMI Home win over the minds and hearts of the residents, by caring for them with compassion and love so that the elderly can live in this home with peace of mind and happiness.

This is the story of SWAMI Home. It overcame its initial struggles and has secured its place as an exemplary nursing home in Singapore. It does so with humility and a simple desire to help all fellow human beings. Congratulations!
After learning about how the present SWAMI Home started its operations, I am very much humbled by how a group of young and energetic volunteers whom are embodied with the “never-say-die attitude” managed to overcome obstacles during SWAMI Home’s formative and growing years. SWAMI Home grew from having a capacity of 20 beds to 242 beds at present, within a span of 30 years. This cannot be achieved without the inspiration and guidance by our Founder, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

During my earlier years in SWAMI Home, I have witnessed difficulties encountered in managing a nursing home as we have residents and staff of different races, religions and diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, we also faced difficulties with staff turnover rate due to the shortage of local and foreign nursing staff. Nevertheless, we managed to overcome these challenges with teamwork, cooperation, resourcefulness and sincerity. The management has also put in effort to improve staff welfare in ways such as upgrading facilities, improving dormitories, increasing their salaries and introducing more leisure activities to promote team bonding. This has allowed SWAMI Home to remain competitive in comparison to its counterparts. Under the guidance and blessings of our Founder and the practices of His teachings, we have stayed united as a big family through these years. This resonates with what our Founder mentioned during an interview with a member of the management committee in year 1995 when He said “I will bless if there is Unity and Cooperation, no operation.”

We also recognised the increasing demand for dementia beds as the prevalence of dementia in Singapore is steadily increasing. According to statistics, the prevalence of dementia in Singapore for those aged 65 years and above in year 2005 was 22,000. By 2020 it is projected that the figure will increase to 53,000. As such, we are in the process of building another 50-bed dementia residence and this project is slated to complete by the third quarter of 2017. We are also upgrading our existing facilities and have introduced NHELP (Nursing Home IT Enablement Programme) in an effort to improve work processes, to meet the Enhanced Nursing Home Standards introduced this year.

In order to instil and inculcate our core values among staff, apart from our other exemplary actions, we have also engaged the volunteering professional help and assistance from Australia. The team from Australia conducted courses, workshops and have monthly follow up meetings with our key staff through Skype sessions during which staff will gain insight and have better understanding of the core values and the skills of serving the residents with “Open hearts and peaceful mind”. This is currently ongoing, with encouraging results and positive responses from our staff.

On behalf of the Management Committee, we would like to thank all the past Management Committee members, organising committees, government ministries and agencies and our valued staff from SWAMI Home. Our management and staff have worked as a team and displayed a strong sense of camaraderie through these years. We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to our donors and volunteers for their continuous support and contributions all these years. We would continue to work towards providing quality care for our residents and to ensure that dignity and respect are at the heart of our everyday practice.
VISION
A World Class Organisation for Eldercare and the Needy

MISSION
To provide holistic quality care with love and dedication for the elderly and needy driven by teamwork and professionalism.

PHILOSOPHY

SUNSHINE of love and friendship

WELFARE and care for those most in need

ACTION in running the organization

MISSION by dedicated volunteers and staff in service to others

We offer individuals and organisations opportunity to offer their time, talent and resources to care for the less fortunate.

The spirit of TRUTH, RIGHT CONDUCT, PEACE, LOVE AND NON-VIOLENCE is enshrined in the emblem of SWAMI.

SWAMI Home aims to render selfless service in caring for and serving the ELDERLY and the NEEDY.

From left:
Mr Tan Ngian Kwang (Member), Mr Ramon Quek Cheng Lock (Member), Mr Low Chang Yee (President), Ms Wendy Boon (Member), Dr Irene Khoo (Honorary Secretary), Mr Yap Boon Phye (Honorary Treasurer), Mr Kenny Tan Choon Keong (Member), Mr Chong Ah Man (Member).
History of Swami Home

The Beginning

Flashback to Singapore 1979; 14 years after the little island nation gained independence; ten years after man landed on the moon; the era of snail mail, landline telephones and black and white TV. A motley group of 30 odd engineers, accountants, lawyers, property agents, social worker, clerks, taxi drivers, army officers, friends and acquaintances, mostly bachelors in their twenties excitedly gathered together and decided they HAD to do something for the have-nots and have less in society. The group later expanded, taking in students, police officers and even a district judge. They came from various religious backgrounds—Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Taoist, and Muslim. They had however, one common bond - all were spiritual aspirants attracted to and inspired by Global Master, Sri Sathya Sai Baba of India, who used to say, “There is only one Religion, the Religion of Love. There is only one Race, the Race of Humanity. There is only one Language, the Language of the Heart. There is only one God and He is omnipresent.”
8 Love All, Serve All
Visit by some members of the volunteer group to the ashram in India, and SWAMI giving darshan as in the early 1980’s.
Visit to the Ashram

Sometime in July 1981, this spiritually inclined group of friends visited Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s Ashram (monastery) called Prasanthi Nilayam (Abode of the Highest Peace), located at Puttaparthi, a very remote village in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India. Not easily accessible in the late 1970s, a long four hour bumpy journey from Bangalore airport through plains and hills took them to the Ashram. But earlier aspirants would tell them they were lucky; for in their time, they had to travel by bullock carts for days cutting through rivers in order to reach His abode. Nowadays thanks to four lane highways, one can make it from the new International airport in under two hours!
First Interview with Sri Sathya Sai Baba

The group of 29 people was thrilled to be called in for an interview by Sri Sathya Sai Baba very soon after their arrival; they were considered very fortunate by other devotees as there was no way one could fix an “appointment” to see Swami, as Sri Sathya Sai Baba was known; it was all up to His sweet Will; often the ‘nobodies’ of society would get called while the rich and powerful and wealthy waited...; interviews could not be arranged; as it was up to Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself to decide whom He wanted to call.

The interview with Sri Sathya Sai Baba was a life changing event. His Love was palpable and the group became like little children in His Presence. Baba lovingly taught them that the highest spiritual practice was, “Love All, Serve All”; and that “Love had to be expressed as selfless service with no expectations...”His key advice was to expand one’s heart and to do service without any expectation or recognition for any reward or personal gain. “Social service should be carried out not for “show”; nor should it be too “slow”’, He declared, adding, “It is not the number of people you help that matters; what matters is the love you put into the service.” The interview also revealed to the group that their life was an open book for the Master! He knew them all better than they knew themselves! His unconditional love touched them so!

Baba encouraged the volunteer group to engage in regular social work on returning to their own country; and inspired by Him, they now looked for avenues to serve; to make their own lives meaningful. They decided to start with service to others in the family and to others in society; they decided to work on expanding the heart through service, as inspired by Baba.

Service Activities at Nursing Homes, Children’s Homes, Hospitals and Others

On returning to Singapore after the India trip, the enthusiastic group immediately set out to plan community services; the old and ailing were the first beneficiaries. They planned service activities at various welfare homes including Government and privately run nursing homes and hospitals. The Sathya Sai Baba Centre (Everton) was registered as a society in order to formally facilitate the voluntary service activities.

Every Sunday and on public holidays, without fail, three groups, each consisting of about 12 or more volunteers met to carry out service activities. The groups would rotate their visits to different homes every week, starting from 8.30am to late evening. One group would go to 3 or 4 aged homes. They would serve them home cooked food together with pastries, sweets and other tid bits for lunch. The volunteers also brought their musical instruments, serenading the

Everton Centre Celebrating Christmas
residents while they ate; at times even danced with them! Some of the men volunteers, took up regular cleaning and washing of the wards, toilets and corridors as their service; and this was really badly needed in those days as living conditions in nursing homes during those days were not good; stringent rules and regulations had not yet been put in place.

In one private home they visited, the bed-spacing between 2 elderly was less than 2 feet apart. During meal time, they noticed some residents were fed only porridge and soya sauce for lunch. In one nursing home, no sooner did the volunteers sit on the residents’ chairs and beds and begin chatting with them, then they felt bugs crawling up their trousers! Soon they were itching and scratching away as they were bitten relentlessly by hungry bed bugs!! The volunteers got a taste of what the elderly were enduring silently day in and day out!

That led to ‘Operation Bedbug’ at various homes; volunteers would thereafter check each home for bed bugs and take out the old rattan chairs, cots and mattresses and place them under the sun. They would do whatever it took to ‘de-bug’ the place, to the immense joy of the elderly residents and the relief of the operators of the homes who had no time, no manpower or the wherewithal or the energy to battle bedbugs! The group decided to help by doing a big clean-up on all the furniture and beds so that proper living conditions were restored and maintained. The operators were ever so grateful to the energetic young volunteer team for their help.

The volunteer group also visited children’s homes; taking toys and eats for the children; talking to them; giving them love from the heart; singing to them.. helping them with Math and English. The volunteers did all they could to make the orphaned children happy. Yet others regularly visited the Singapore Leprosy Home (Silra) to the great joy of the residents, for people hardly visited them because of social taboos and fear of contracting the disease.

During volunteers’ visit to the opium addict rehabilitation premises, they tried to be true friends. Instead of just saying ‘hello’ from a distance, the young volunteers would usually sit among the residents, many of them hard core addicts with police records, chatting with them. One of the remedial methods employed by the addicts to kick off their drug habits was by rolling their bare bodies on the warm sand pits under the sun in front of the open compound. Primitive though it may seem today, that was the way then; and the volunteers would be their buddies encouraging them.

‘You can!’, was the consistent message from the volunteer team; and by God’s grace many addicts could successfully kick the habit. The volunteers would remember Baba’s words, “To reduce gradually any bad habit and eventually get rid of it, the proper way is to do it step by step. First
drop the “h” of the word ‘habit’; it then becomes “a bit”. Then drop off the “a”, it is now “bit” and finally remove “b” and only “it” is left behind.”

Another group of volunteers visited the Changi medium and maximum security prison once a month to provide counselling and group singing activities for the prisoners. The group of volunteers also visited patients at Government and mental hospitals, giving counselling and solace to their troubled minds. The purpose of these activities and visits was to keep them happy and cheerful.

For more than 7 years, the volunteer team continued with these service activities. It was a most satisfying experience and strengthened their minds and spirits for the bigger service projects that were to unfold.

**Purchase of a 20 Bed Commercial Home**

In May 1986, a 20-bed commercial Old Age Home in the northern region of Singapore was advertised for sale through a local newspaper. It was run privately by an old lady with her son. They decided to sell it as she was getting old and unable to manage it. Why not buy it and try and run an ideal old age home? The courage of youth made the volunteer team plunge into action! The impending purchase meant money had to be raised; the volunteers selected among themselves a small group of dedicated and selfless individuals to form the Volunteer Management Group. They agreed to pay the old lady a sum of S$25,000 which was raised by individual contributions from its 23 members by selflessly pooling together their savings.

The acquired home was re-named as Sunshine Nursing Home and subsequently converted to a non-profit Voluntary Welfare Organisation (VWO). The primary objective of the Volunteer Management Group (VMG) was to cater to the needs of those elderly who could not afford the high fees charged by private homes nor could qualify for admission to Government-run Homes reserved solely for either single, abandoned or homeless cases on public assistance (PA).
Baptism Through Fire - The First Home at 19 Kee Ann Road

The acquired home was located in the kampong (village) within the rural areas of old Sembawang Estate. One could reach it only through a narrow track. The lady who ran the Home had converted a dilapidated one storey old school building into a Home. Built with a corrugated tin roof, the wards were separated by thin wooden walls requiring urgent painting. It housed 20 elderly residents in 3 separate rooms. There was a small separate hut in the front which doubled as kitchen and laundry area. The whole compound was surrounded and secured by wired fencing covered with morning glory creepers and the entrance had rusty iron gates.

The daily operation of the Home was managed by the staff consisting of a Senior Registered Nurse (SRN), an administrator, a cook and one driver cum jack of all trades. The volunteer management soon discovered that the cook went on leave often; and so the wives of volunteers had to step in and cook and serve meals for the 20 residents! It was no ideal Home but the volunteers did all they could with love. However, about three months, after they bought over the Home, a female reporter from the Straits Times landed up. Perhaps to create sensational copy, she took some pictures of the dilapidated exteriors and without bothering to talk to the volunteers or residents, told the staff as she was leaving, that she would be writing about the Home- and the following Sunday, the Straits Times’ front page featured prominently, in bold letters the “WORST HOME in Singapore”!

That was sometime in July 1986. No one in the management knew why she came and what her intention was. The Volunteer Group felt that the reporting was unfounded. Of course they were upset; but they prayed over it and did some soul searching and decided that the best response would be to just do better. The adverse report only enthused the Volunteer Management Group to manage the Home with greater effort and determination.

Managing a nursing home was not an easy task; especially as it was a first attempt. There were operational and financial issues requiring fixing such as balancing and monitoring the cash flow. The monthly collection of nursing fees could barely cover the operating expenses on food, rental and payroll. The financial position was further aggravated by bad debts and most of the time running into cash deficit. Sometimes the staff were overzealous as they wrote off nursing fees without consulting the Volunteer Management Group and again the finances would go into a tailspin! Prayer alone kept the Home afloat; somehow the volunteers would pool in money and the home survived. They were yet to tap subsidies from the Government and had no Institute of Public Character (IPC) status yet, which could attract donors as they could obtain tax exemption for their donation.

In fact, every staff payday was a challenge with insufficient funds in the kitty. The 13th month bonus payment to the staff was often delayed. During the monthly Volunteer Management Group meeting held at Everton Centre, the shortage of cash was discussed and the group requested members to meet up the shortfall. The method of seeking donation from the members was as taught by Sri Sathya Sai Baba; by placing a donation box out of view. The members would generously contribute within their means. The box was later opened in front of all present. In this way, nobody would know how much each person had contributed. No member would know and feel embarrassed if he contributed less. This spirit
of giving helped the members feel comfortable and have mutual respect for one another.

Starting from “volunteering” to “managing” a Home was a useful learning experience for the group. Indeed it was a challenge to move on from being just ‘volunteers’ to becoming good ‘volunteer managers’. They realized from direct experience that there was a big difference between volunteering and managing, although they still served and performed service activities.

In volunteering, they only had to visit, bring cheer and joy. But “managing” was different; they had to take on added responsibilities of managing the Home, taking care of the finances, looking into staff and residents’ welfare, maintenance of the building and equipment, accountability, compliance with rules and regulations of operating a Home…; it was an endless list!

Subsequently in October 1988, the Volunteer Management Group decided to register the nursing home with the Registry of Societies. The home was renamed as Sunshine Welfare Action Mission Home which it is now known by its acronym “SWAMI HOME”. A Management Committee was set up with members being appointed by consensus.

HDB Letter to Vacate
Sembawang in the early 80s was still undeveloped as compared with other parts of Singapore. No Housing and Development Board (HDB) flats were built then and many areas were forested. The Government began its public housing programmes to build HDB flats only in the late 1980s. Two years after the group began Home operations, they received a letter from HDB notifying that the site would be acquired for re-development and that they had to look for premises elsewhere.

Undaunted by the quit notice, the Management Committee made many requests to the Government for alternative sites.

Second Home - 52 Bah Tan Road
Some used and vacant schools in the vicinity of Sembawang were offered to the group for relocation. Unfortunately all required expensive and extensive renovation for use as nursing Home. Besides complying with modification standards, all changes had to meet regulations and rules governing nursing homes. The group was unaware of any Government funding at that time. Finally the old Canberra Primary School at 52 Bah Tan Road was selected as it was in the countryside and had many fruit bearing trees. The high costs of renovation were entirely borne by the Management Committee.

Two single storey blocks and a four storey building previously used as classrooms had to be transformed into a cozy SWAMI HOME. The Management Committee planned to renovate the school in 3 phases. The estimated renovation cost for each block was about $250,000. Each block when completed would be able to accommodate 50 elderly residents. Renovation of the four storey building was estimated at $500,000 inclusive of the installation of a lift. The whole project would cost about a million dollars!

At that time, the newly registered Society did not have sufficient funds to do this project and the members were in a dilemma as they were given short notice to vacate by HDB. The Management Committee decided that the only solution was to go to India to meet compassionate Guru, Sri Sathya Sai Baba for His guidance, advice and blessing.

Second Visit to Sri Sathya Sai Baba
The floor plan of the existing structure and the blue print for the Home-to-be were taken along by the team to Baba’s Ashram, Prasanthi Nilayam, in South India. The team was hoping and praying for an audience with the Master; so that they could show the drawings and plans personally to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
Faith and surrender always draw Grace; and Baba most graciously called the group in for an interview. In the interview room, the all knowing Master asked for the papers and remarked that it was located in the countryside even without the team telling Him that! Baba smilingly told the group that this interview was not a ‘personal’ one (not for attending to personal matters) but for ‘business’; to discuss at length the project they had taken up. He gave specific advice during the interview on various issues relating to the Home; He seemed to be aware of all that was happening to them at Singapore even without their mentioning it! It was obvious that Sri Sathya Sai Baba, though physically in faraway India, was an invisible member of the team!

Baba asked the group, “How are you planning to raise funds?” One of the members told Him that the normal ways of fund raising in Singapore were charity food and funfairs, flag day, dinner and dance etc, He then replied “Approach some rich and kind hearted businessmen and they will help.” The team confessed, “But we do not know any rich businessmen, Swami!”; whereupon,
Baba said, "God will help you find. If you do good work, God will always bless all of you."

That was it! After meeting with Baba, the team was totally charged up! They were full of confidence and very happy. The trip to see the Founder—the inspiration that drove them all, Sri Sathya Sai Baba, was a runaway success! Why did the team consider Sri Sathya Sai Baba to be the “Founder”? His Universal Teachings were the bedrock on which their lives were run; and it was His inward guidance and inspiration that urged the group to work as one egoless devoted team for the welfare of society. To all of them, He was also their spiritual Guru and inner motivator. Indeed, without His motivation, the Home would not even have started.

Some months passed after the India trip. Then Baba’s words came true! A businessman was referred to the wife of one of the Management Committee members by a common acquaintance, as the businessman wanted some help to move his application of employment pass for one of his staff. In the course of the conversation, she brought up the subject of the SWAMI HOME needing funds to get built. She casually asked whether he could help, mentioning about Sai Baba and His teachings. The businessman immediately showed great interest in the project and later met the Management Committee members in his office. Subsequently he visited the Home and donated a generous sum of S$250,000 to kick start the renovation. Keen to know more about Sri Sathya Sai Baba, His Life, His Work and His Teachings first hand, the kind hearted businessman later joined the team on their annual pilgrimage to India. This generous gentleman always wanted to remain anonymous and the Management Committee respected his wishes. From a donor, he became one of the team; later, he was also on the Management Committee for some time.
A Dollar for a Dollar Donation
This donation drive during the year 1990 happened to coincide with the 25th Anniversary of Singapore. The Government led an island-wide campaign to encourage donations. If anyone donated to any charitable organisation, the Government would match the amount, dollar for dollar, and the organization would get double the initial amount! The team swung into action! With the combined funds and other smaller donations raised from friends and well-wishers, their donations doubled to more than $500,000 and the two single blocks renovation of 50 beds each were completed. The Mooncake festival presented another opportunity to raise funds. The mooncakes were supplied by a manufacturer and the sum raised was closed to $40,000. Many volunteers came forward to help in this fund raising project.

During this time the Home obtained the status of the Institute of Public Character (IPC) which enabled donations to be treated for tax exemption. One block was used for male residents and other used for female residents with a total capacity of 100 residents.

The 2 blocks were situated parallel to each other; and the big open space between became a garden. SWAMI HOME was in spacious green surrounding now; and the elderly residents really enjoyed their morning walks and exercises in the sylvan countryside.
52 Bah Tan Road after renovation
One day, an elderly resident saw a man walking in his ward at about 4am, with an Afro hair style, wearing an orange robe.

Later in the day when one of the committee members happened to visit him the resident related this strange and unusual happening.

The resident said that the stranger looked like the man in the prayer room.

In the second building at 52, Bah Tan Road, they did have a small prayer room for all religions and the photographs of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

He also said that Sai Baba asked him, “How are you? Are you happy here in the home do you like the food that is given to you?”

He said that Sai Baba spoke to him in Malay, and he was surprised that our Founder could speak Malay.

The resident said that He seemed a very loving and kind man.

Needless to add, the team was thrilled and the resident too! The team then shared the story of how Sri Sathya Sai Baba, their Master, had been the inspiration behind the home.
Matron Advised by Sri Sathya Sai Baba not to Resign

On another occasion, the matron in charge of the nursing operation wanted to resign from the Home. She was an ardent devotee of Sri Sathya Sai Baba and frequently visited His ashram and was always granted interviews by Him. She told Him during one of the interviews that she wanted to stop working at SWAMI HOME. Sai Baba told her “Stay and look after the Home. This is my Home” And she did!

Third Interview with Sri Sathya Sai Baba

In early 1995, a Management Committee member with a group visited India to see their Founder, Sri Sathya Sai Baba and to attend a religious celebration in His Ashram. They brought a copy of the Home’s booklet on service activities for the Founder’s Blessing and hopefully to get His signature. Every visit was always a unique experience. The group prayed hoping the Founder would grant them their wishes. The Management Committee member also had a book “Language of the Heart” written by him about his experiences with Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and was praying that Swami should bless the book.

The group was called for an interview. The Management Committee member asked Him to bless the organisation and members. The Founder said “I will bless if there is Unity and Co-operation, no operation. He again emphasised the priceless nature of Unity and Co-operation. “Where there is Purity and Unity, there is Divinity, said He emphatically; and inwardly each team member resolved to purify his / her heart and pledged unity to the team! Members of the group wanted Him to sign photographs of Him but He gently told them that He would only sign on TWO ITEMS in this interview. He then signed on the booklet and the book. This was a very important message, a clear mandate was given by Him to the Management Committee. Any decisions taken by the Management Committee had to be based on consensus. Working in the spirit of consensus leads to better understanding among the members. In this way, good and correct decisions taken collectively would benefit the organisation. One had to be constantly wary of self-interest.
SWAMI Home’s booklet signed by Sri Sathya Sai Baba
MRT Letter to Vacate

The Management Committee and the team were in the seventh heaven of delight as they returned from India. But their reverie was short lived. Before they could raise further funds to begin with the renovation of the 4 storey building, a letter was received from MRT notifying them to vacate the premises by end of 1995. The site was earmarked for the proposed construction of the Sembawang MRT station!

The team was shell shocked! In less than two years two phases had been completed and only the third phase remained. So much hard work and hard earned money had gone into the venture! The Management Committee was wondering how to face the donors who had helped out. It was bitter medicine to swallow; again on bended knees they prayed to the Master; and they crossed that bridge. The whole exercise of sourcing for funds, finding a place and planning to run a home had to start all over again from scratch. But the team was clear; the Master had given them a mandate; it had to be done; so with pure hearts and total unity, they marched on.

Welcome and Overcome Obstacles

Such unexpected challenges were great learning opportunities; the team learnt to welcome them; and such hurdles raised the bar as it were, for team work; and in the process they found that personally they had grown. They all had more forbearance, acceptance, and learnt to see the Master’s hand in all events; they practically learnt the lesson—everything happens for the very best! The Management Committee led from the front; they told the team, “Unless we go through the rough and the smooth, how can we be strengthened? We have to accept whatever happens, welcome ups and downs; like welcoming the light and the shade, the sun and the rain. They harden, toughen and strengthen our physical and mental capabilities to overcome and never give up. Challenges are for our growth and improvement.” They drew strength from Baba’s words, “It is undergoing difficulties that bring out the human values in man. You cannot get the juice of the sugarcane without crushing it. You cannot enhance the brilliance
of a diamond without cutting it and making many facets”. They also recalled Swami’s saying: “Life is a game, play it” and “Life is a challenge, meet it”.

The Management Committee members immediately went into action to approach the Ministry of Health (MOH) for assistance to lease a piece of land for construction of a purpose-built nursing home. By that time all nursing homes came under the umbrella of MOH and were well regulated.

In 1970 and late 1980, licensing of homes for the aged was under the Ministry of Community Development (MCD). Of late it has now expanded into two ministries, the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) and Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF).

That a silent dedicated band of volunteers had for over 6 years, run a Home facing all odds, absolutely selflessly, was taken note of, even by the Government Ministry. During one of SWAMI HOME’s annual dinners held at 52 Bah Tan Road, the Minister spoke to his grass root leaders. How was it that he was not aware that such a home existed in his constituency?! He mentioned it twice; repeating it again while dining with the Management Committee. They humbly responded by saying they were a low key organization and preferred to run the Home quietly. He mentioned that he would get the grass root leaders to help them and since they were doing community service, the government would support them. Thus SWAMI HOME received commendable mention from Ministers and other Members of Parliament in the northern region. So when the Managing Committee sought appointments and the members spoke, the Government officials and Ministers at the Ministry of Health, were willing to listen.

Mr Yeo Cheow Tong, then Minister for Health and Community Development, visited in April 1992
The Management Committee members had learnt during their early years that cleanliness and hygiene are of paramount importance. These became top priority at SWAMI HOME. A zero tolerance policy towards stench and dirt was adopted and the Managing Committee spent hours transferring their thought process to the staff. Cleanliness clearly had to be next to Godliness at SWAMI HOME.

With their track record, the team had won its spurs so to speak; and the Management Committee was now confident and approached the directors of MOH to assign a plot of land for a permanent Home to be constructed. The negotiations with MOH took more than a year. Initially they were offered a smaller piece of land and other alternative sites. The Managing Committee kept praying to Baba that a nice big enough plot of land should get allotted for the Home; a plot big enough to build a really nice home with 250 beds to take care of wheelchair bound and other frail elderly residents; and their collective selfless prayers were answered.

In early 1995 a piece of forested land opposite the Sembawang Shopping Centre with a land area of 0.6 hectare or 6,000 sq m was offered by the Land Office with a 30 year lease; enough for a 190 bedded Home. Due to the long negotiation taken causing the delay in granting the land, MRT officials compassionately decided to extend the rental lease for another 2 years until the end of 1997.
Third Home at 5, Sembawang Walk

The undeveloped land offered by the Government then, is where SWAMI HOME now stands; at 5, Sembawang Walk. At that time, the MOH’s capital funding was 80% based on the total construction cost. The Management Committee immediately advertised and invited some well-known architectural firms to tender and design the building. Prior to that, some of the key Management Committee members visited other nursing homes to see and learn the various types of layouts, designs and facilities that were suitable. The Management Committee came out with certain criteria and conceptual requirements that they then put forth to the architects.

The building design had to incorporate an “open concept”. It had to be spacious and airy, with good cross ventilation of air. Important safety features had to be implemented; needless multiple floor levels and unnecessary steps were to be avoided. Design had to ensure easy maintenance and upkeep. All MOH’s rules and regulations pertaining to nursing homes had to be complied with, by the architects.

In addition, SWAMI HOME had to be nature based; with air, water, the earth and plants creating a space of beauty and peace, where elderly residents could spend their sunset years. Within the approved budget, one had to create a resort style of living with dignity—“a loving home within a Home”.

Why was the team so particular about such details?

In those days, the conditions of old aged homes for elderly in Singapore were dismal and local Singaporeans jokingly used to refer to them as “death houses” (“See Lang Choo”) in Hokkien. There was this general public perception that the elderly living there were dying; public perception was that such elderly residents were just unwanted, abandoned, people whom nobody cared about; just waiting to die and be buried! The usual Homes only served to reinforce this negative perception, as they were often smelly, unclean and unkempt; so much so that people hesitated to even visit the Homes. The team strongly felt that this dismal idea HAD to change; and they would do it, come what may, by their Master’s grace.

The team was committed to enabling the elderly live comfortable and dignified lives during their remaining twilight years. They discussed among themselves and decided that given an opportunity to manage a nursing home, they would do something different. They would so care for the elders that they would change the people’s misconception of an Old Age Home; if necessary by revolutionising the whole setting of a nursing home for the helpless elderly in society.

By mid-1997, SWAMI HOME became a reality; construction was completed within the 18 month period in accordance with the planning schedules and the total cost of about S$13 million was well within the budgeted amount approved by MOH.
The forested area in 1995 behind the petrol station where the site of SWAMI Home now stands.
Inauguration of SWAMi Home, 5 Sembawang Walk
Official Opening of SWAMI Home at 5 Sembawang Walk on 16th of May 1998

SWAMI Home staff and Management Committee members
Purchase of Carpets
SWAMI HOME truly looked like a Resort! One day after the Home was in operation the team wanted to buy some carpets for use in the all faith prayer room. One of the Management Committee members took the initiative to go to Sembawang Shopping Centre to buy the carpets. He told the shop owner to deliver the carpets to the newly built nursing home across the road. The owner replied “No, it is a new country club in Sembawang not a nursing Home”. The Managing Committee member corrected him. Both had a good laugh. When he came over to deliver the carpets, the shop owner was stunned to see a nursing home for the forlorn, needy, elderly designed like a country club!

Taxi Drivers
For the first few months of operation, some taxi drivers were also quite confused. When they entered the gate and drove straight to the front entrance of the lobby they were sure that by mistake they had entered some five star building; not an Old age Home! They would hastily turn around and drive off only to return minutes later and drop off the passenger, their jaws agape in wonder, that an Old Age Home for the NOT so rich should be so beautiful! Occasionally even today, taxi drivers and visitors coming for the first time are amazed to see the resort style set up.

Local and Foreign Visitors
In the first few years, there were many prominent visitors both local and foreign. Government officials and foreign dignitaries often visited SWAMI HOME. Most of them heard about the Home from friends and some were recommended by the Ministries. Some tour groups bringing social workers, professors and visitors from Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and Australia came to exchange and share their views and experiences with us on social work and related issues.

In 2001, the mother of the Queen of Swaziland, a country in Africa, came with an entourage made up of princesses, princes, ministers, governors and ambassadors together with both local and foreign government officials. SWAMI HOME laid a red carpet to welcome her and hosted a reception for all the distinguished guests. The Queen’s mother was so impressed and said “This is my dream Home”.

The Mother of Queen of Swaziland with her entourage and Management Committee Members in August 2002
Hong Kong & Singapore Gerontology Exchange Visit on 12 January 2001
The Association for Volunteer Social Service of Macau visited SWAMI Home in April 2010

Appreciation dinner held on 20 April 2002, Guest of Honour, Mayor of North West CDC, Dr. Teo Ho Pin
Founder of SWAMI HOME, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself seemed to like the architecture of SWAMI HOME. The Management Committee came to know of it in 2007. The late Dr V.K. Pillay, a well-known orthopaedic surgeon in Singapore wanted to build a nurses’ hostel in the compound of the Super Specialty Hospital in Puttaparthi in memory of his late wife. Baba graciously granted him permission and asked him which architect he was thinking of contacting for the design of the building. Dr V.K. Pillay replied that he was thinking of engaging an architect from Bangalore whereupon Baba told him “Go and get the Singapore architect.”

Upon his return from India, Dr V.K. Pillay through a Sai brother contacted one of the Management Committee members who then referred the architect of SWAMI HOME, Mr A.M.Chandra to him. The architect created two designs and with the proposed building drawings, the team consisting of the architect, his son and Dr V.K. Pillay went to India to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba; they wanted Him to choose the final design. Swami decided on one. The architect then showed Swami pictures of SWAMI HOME that he had taken along with him, whereupon, the Master said with a knowing smile, “Yes, I know. I know”!! Baba compassionately gave a private interview to both architect and his son. The architect who had been a Sai devotee for more than 30 years had never been called for an interview though he had made many trips to the ashram. He was overwhelmed with happiness! Baba acknowledged the good work he had done at SWAMI HOME and blessed him for the Sai Manonmani Nurses’ Hostel Project. The architect shared this divine experience with the Management Committee members on his return to Singapore to their great delight!

All Faith Prayer Room

Besides the “resort” feel, there is another important feature- the team decided to have an inspiring All Faith prayer room. This was not something new. The All faith prayer room had been created at the Home at 52, Bah Tan Road and a small prayer altar had been set up at a corner space of a corridor even at 19 Kee Ann Road.

Why have a prayer room?

The team’s thought process was that care was not just the physical well-being of the elderly residents, their health, food, comfort and conveniences; there had to be provision for a sacred space for them as well as the staff and all others who visited; a sacred space to nourish and strengthen their mental health and spirit.

Prayer is for the mind, just as food is for the body. Just as the body has to be washed every day to keep it clean and free of dirt and smell the mind has to be cleansed of anger, frustration, and such negative feelings and thoughts. Baba used to put it in simple language- “Imagine if one has not had a bath for 10 days, nobody would even come near one. Similarly if the mind is not purified by cleansing through daily prayers, silent sitting, selfless service and undertaking beneficial activities, the pollution and dirt of hatred, anger, greed, jealousy, ego and other negative qualities
cannot be removed; and people, even close relatives will not come near. Indeed, in this day and age, the greatest disease is the absence of peace. When the mind is pure and peaceful, the body will be healthy.” The team looked at a prayer room as a space devoted to growing peace and harmony within and without.

Everyone has the right to adore the particular Name and Form of Divinity according to the culture he or she has been raised in, was the firm belief of the team. All Faiths lead to the same divine. No conversion or preaching was allowed in the Home. The team respected the beliefs of all residents and staff. Those who are not inclined to use the prayer room are allowed to remain that way; those who choose to pray are given the space to follow their traditions. This is in line with the Government’s guidelines on respect and harmony in a country of multiple faiths and races.
**Elderlink Dementia Home**

In 2000, hardly 3 years since SWAMI HOME was built, the team successfully applied for an extension of an adjacent forested land to MOH through the help of the Minister from the constituency to build a Home for the elderly suffering from dementia. There was and is still an increasing demand for residential care for the elderly with dementia. The original plan was to have a building for at least 200 beds as the team had foreseen an urgent need from these groups of people suffering from dementia. However the team was given a land size of 0.3 hectare after negotiation with MOH which decided to scale down the request to only 50 beds.

The building called the Elderlink, a 4 storey building was completed in 2004. On level 1 is the Dementia Day Care Centre which can accommodate more than 60 day-care demented clients at any one time. Level 2 is used as an administrative office for all the Community based services, Social Workers and Facility Maintenance Departments. Another section was recently used for the Spice programmes sponsored by Agency for Integrated Care. Under this project, day-care elderly are provided daily care services including over weekends. Level 3 is used for the residential nursing care for 50 residents diagnosed to have dementia. Level 4 is the auditorium commonly used to host public talks, in-house training and educational workshops, seminars, staff functions and events.

Sometime around 2013, the Management Committee members were asked to meet up with the Minister of Health to explore the possibility of increasing the capacity of the SWAMI HOME premises to accommodate more beds for the elderly with dementia. Currently construction work is in progress to build a new 4 storey building on the land used previously as car parks. This wing (not yet named) when ready, will house another 50 residents.
Is Dementia a Disease of the Brain or the Mind

This question was put forward to Founder, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, by a Management Committee member and it was beautifully explained by Him. Said He, “Our body is like a machine which gets worn out as it ages over time; nowadays, the tremendous stress - worries, anxiety coupled with unhealthy life style living and bad environment filled with negative activities and feelings - accelerates ageing. A person does not end up with dementia in a short span of time. He or She becomes demented gradually; over a prolonged period. But under very stressful conditions when he is unable to manage and overcome his worries and problems it can happen faster.

If he is properly looked after with loving care and kindness and placed in good environment and peaceful surrounding, the problems due to dementia can improve and he can be nursed back to better health. Good food and a love filled, healthy environment are conducive to a happy and peaceful life. Modern ways of spending one’s time, indulging in intoxicating drinks, gambling and such negative and unwholesome activities day in and day out are sure to agitate and upset the mind; and an agitated upset mind is more prone to problems.”
Setting Goals

Going back to the year 1997, when SWAMI HOME was just completed, the Management Committee’s main focus was on setting goals. Their main concern was how to operate efficiently and manage the Home well.

It was vital to use and apply some management tools to assist in making right decisions and actions.

Before one decides where one wants to go in future, one has to know where one is at the present time. So as step one, the Managing Committee started a self assessment program. Step two would be ascertaining the ability of the organization to change according to the need of changing circumstances. Only after that could big goals be set. SWAMI HOME had started small; the team had not even in their wildest dreams imagined that one day SWAMI HOME would become a trail blazing big Home in terms of hundreds of elderly residents and staff. The team realized that they had a big responsibility now on hand.

6 Ms of Management

The Managing Committee came out with a 6 pronged approach in keeping with the teachings of their Master; the 6 Ms of management- Men, Money, Materials, Machines, Methods and Markets

They began with “Men” as their most important priority. It included ALL people in the organisation residents, day care clients, staff, volunteers, Management Committee members and those directly or indirectly involved in the operation and activities of the Home. In Founder Sai Baba’s words, “Men are more valuable than all the wealth of the world”; He had characterised management as Man management.
The second M was Money which referred to funds from Government subsidiaries, donations, nursing fees, expenditure and control of expenses etc.

The third M was Materials, which referred to food, food products, medicine, medical supplies and diapers, which are used daily in large quantities. Their usage and storage have to be properly monitored and controlled to prevent any possible misuse, abuse and wastage. There is a need to keep a close watch on perishable goods, items with expiry dates and to remove all spoilt, damaged and obsolete items from the shelves and storage when necessary.

The fourth M was Machines, which referred to assets such as building, beds, wheelchairs, computers and other equipment; they had to be properly maintained, safeguarded and accounted for.

The fifth M was Methods and referred to the Rules, Regulations, Standard Operating Procedures, ISO procedures and MOH Guidelines and policies to be complied with and implemented.

The sixth M was Markets; referred to Nursing Services, sharing of values with staff and volunteers, sensitivity and involvement in dealings with residents and their families, highlighting of the Home’s services, transacting information with Government agencies, general public and so on, keeping in mind that one should never compare, complain or criticize.

Whenever policies were formulated and actions taken, the 5 Human Values – Love, Peace, Truth, Right Conduct and Non Violence as laid down by the Founder, became SWAMI HOME’s guiding principles; and they were sincerely put into practice.

These five pillars of universal values are interrelated to one another. At SWAMI HOME they were considered inviolable non-negotiable organisation policy. Whenever decisions had to be taken, the Management Committee used to check whether the decisions were in line with the five cardinal values; that kept the running of the Home on track with Human Values to the great benefit of all. When asked how the five Human Values were relevant in the context of SWAMI HOME, this is what senior Management Committee members had to share; and I quote,

LOVE - As for Love, as the Bible says, ‘LOVE is the greatest!’

Our Guru, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba keeps telling us, “You are in reality God! Cultivate LOVE for God! Everything is God! So love everything, LOVE everyone!” I see God in Baba. And of course I love Baba. It becomes easier for me to LOVE everyone when I see them as Baba in disguise. But it is not as easy as it sounds. I slip often. In modern life, things happen so fast. We seldom live our days mindfully. Very often after I have lost my temper, or after I have made some needless judgemental statement, when I feel bad and reflect, my conscience tells my runaway mind, “Hey! That was Swami in disguise!” And then I am full of remorse. I ask Swami for forgiveness; and it has become easier to ask forgiveness of the brother or sister who was at the receiving end too. Love has helped me chip away at my ego. SWAMI HOME has given me a wonderful chance to practise seeing Swami in others and therefore loving them! I have to learn to extrapolate this to all other areas of my life.”

PEACE - Regarding PEACE, “I learnt from my experience that not only ACTIONS, but THOUGHTS and WORDS need to be watched too, if one desires PEACE. I found that though I could not, there were colleagues who could radiate PEACE. Invariably they practised meditation and never hurried. Those who prayed regularly or were regular with congregational singing seemed to be happy and at peace with themselves. From aspirin prayer, therefore, I have moved on to regular prayers and meditation at least in a small way; and it does help. Our residents can sense it too; they become calm with staff who radiate that inner PEACE.”

TRUTH - To be brutally honest, sometimes even the most courageous among us tend to get deluded and think like the rationalists, who at times, propound euthanasia, when confronted with some of the terrible facets of ageing like extreme dementia. One feels so helpless; and the suffering seems terrible. Why? Why? Cries
out the rational mind; why allow such suffering to continue? At those times it is the Human Value of TRUTH that comes to our rescue.

Swami says the TRUTH is unchangeable; all of this changing world, however appealing or repulsive therefore, is untrue; but the One that underlies this kaleidoscopic ever changing world, is the eternal changeless One Whose nature is Love. We too are constantly changing; from birth to death. So the ever changing Name Form is really NOT who we are. We are in reality the unchanging, unseen One within; in fact it is the unseen One alone that truly exists; and it keeps the changing form filled world going!

When we look at the Resident who is suffering no end due to Alzheimer’s disease and all sorts of problems from THAT perspective, everything changes. Mrs Lim is no more the sad case of Alzheimer’s disease with stroke whom we view with pity and with a frustration and anger at our own helplessness. We are able to see her as an embodiment of the Divine and going beyond the wretchedness of the problems of form, respect her and give her all our love. We do our common sense best for her changing temporary form; but we see her not just as a form with name; we see her as part of the eternal divine One. Suffering and death lose their sting when viewed from this perspective of TRUTH.

“In fact, our Guru wants us also to move ahead and realise our correct identity. He wants us to gradually stop identifying ourselves with our name and form; He wants us to move on to realising our eternal unchanging divine identity. He wants us to truly experience the fact that we are eternal divine beings just temporarily experiencing an ephemeral human existence!”

RIGHT CONDUCT - To my query as to how they would define ‘Right Conduct’, another Management Committee member continued, Right and wrong are never just black and white; they can be so many shades of grey; and again the shade of the grey lies in the mind of the beholder! Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, our Founder simplified this complex topic for us. Said He, “Thoughts, words and deeds suffused with selfless love constitute RIGHT CONDUCT.” He made it so simple! So I try to check myself—am I thinking loving thoughts? Am I speaking softly, lovingly? Are my actions suffused with selfless love? I slip often; but steadily though slowly, am getting there.

Not easy, admitted the Managing Committee member and I remembered Swami’s simple words, “At night in deep sleep you go beyond name and form to your divine identity. Only when you wake up the world returns! Actualize that fact by daily thanking the Divine and praying that the Divine walks with you through the day as you set out, ‘wearing’ the temporary form and ‘bearing’ the temporary name through the day! By practising this day after day, one becomes familiar and comfortable with one’s divine identity. One learns to accept the twists and turns of life a little better as one understands a little better, their transient nature.” In fact, “Passing clouds,” is what Swami calls life’s problems, no matter how big they seem!

NON-VIOLENCE - Coming to NON-VIOLENCE, peace and nonviolence are inseparable, as the Lord Buddha taught us. Without NON-VIOLENCE there can be no PEACE. Anger is the commonest form of violence these days. Ego is what feeds anger. Humility and seeing God / Baba in all others has helped me become more NON violent in my day to day life. I am learning to talk softly. Loud chatter, loose WORDS and disrespectful speech also can cause mental violence. Women seem to be endowed with more forbearance by the Divine. Our nurses at SWAMI HOME are truly embodiments of the divine Mother! They serve the Residents no matter how difficult they are, so cheerfully! I need to learn from them.’, he concluded.

With the rules and regulations in place, tempered by Human Values, it was decided to systematically document procedures and processes on operation, in all departments (Finance, Human Resource, Nursing, Facilities and Maintenance, Food and Beverage, Public Relations, Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy) and community based service centres (Home Help Service, Home Nursing and Home Medical, Rehabilitation, and Dementia Day care etc). This would serve as a useful tool to assess and determine the delivery, performance and quality of work and services carried out by staff.
Certificate 5600/00091

The management system of

Sunshine Welfare Action Mission
(SWAMI Home)

5 Sembawang Walk
Singapore 757717

has been assessed and certified as meeting the requirements of

ISO 9001:2008

For the following activities:

1. Provision of residential nursing care services for the aged and aged sick
2. Provision of community based services:
   A. Home help services
   B. Home nursing
   C. Home medical
   D. Dementia day care
   E. Day rehabilitation
3. Provision of occupational therapy
4. Provision of physiotherapy

Further clarifications regarding the scope of this certificate and the applicability of ISO 9001:2008 requirements may be obtained by consulting the organisation.

This certificate is valid from 24 November 2018 until 15 September 2023 and remains valid subject to satisfactory surveillance audits. Re-certification audit due before 03 September 2021.

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Implementation of ISO

The ISO procedures were introduced in year 1999 and the Home achieved the certification in September 2000. SWAMI HOME was the first nursing home in Singapore to achieve the Certification. It was done not for prestige but to set a benchmark and guidelines for staff to acquire the necessary knowledge on procedures and practical skill in performing of their daily tasks. It took the team more than a year to complete the documentations and obtain the certification. They focused on the major and important procedures and processes.

The Management Committee members were directly involved in the Steering Committee to review and write out the procedures and processes. For instance they would personally interview the nurses, observing how they packed and issued the medication to residents, cleaning and dressing their wounds, etc. Some of the ISO procedures were on the precautionary measures taken in the prevention of falls and the correct methods of bathing wheelchair bound and bed ridden residents.

Annually, internal audit by staff was carried out to familiarise these procedures. Staff from one department would audit the work done in another department to ensure that the prescribed procedures laid down were followed. This helped them understand and appreciate better, the work of their colleagues. It also helped in creating better communication, working relationship and cooperation among departments in the course of their work. The staff involved were also told that this was not a fault finding exercise but a disciplined effort to improve and correct errors before they could turn into a crisis. Corrective and preventive decisions were to be taken by consensus by the concerned departments in consultation with the Management Committee member nominated for the task.

5 ‘C’s of ISO

Through the ISO implementation, the Home also came up with the ‘5 Cs’ of the ISO to emphasise and practise the sub-values of Right Action and Love such as Completeness, Correctness, Consistency, Care and Compassion.

Completeness – Every procedure and process had to have a flow from beginning to end.

Correctness- Every procedure and process had to be carried out correctly. With proper planning processes had to be developed and systems put in place, which when followed would lead to proper functioning.

Consistency- Every procedure and process had to be done consistently right. It was not advisable to try short cuts for most procedures; no deviation from the proper course of action was to be taken.

Care- Every procedure and process had to be done with proper care, concern and patience in order to avoid making errors.

Compassion- Every action had to be suffused with the feeling of love and compassion.

The recent direction issued by Agency for Integrated Care (AIC), an offshoot of MOH, stipulates that all nursing homes henceforth are required to document nursing procedures and processes to meet the enhanced nursing home standards, effective from 1st April 2016. The staff of SWAMI HOME are bound to find the enhanced nursing standards and procedures easier to meet since they are accustomed to such documentations under the ISO standards.

Micro and Macro Management

Although the Management Committee members are primarily involved in the macro management they take keen interest to see that the day to day operations are effectively carried out according to the Management Committee’s direction. They often visit wards and departments, conversing with staff and residents alike and enquiring if there are any problems; whether any improvement was needed in the living conditions. The senior staff do likewise and report their findings for further improvement. The Quality Assurance Subcommittee comprising of senior nurses and Management Committee members meet
monthly to review the findings to assure quality in medical and nursing care are maintained. The moral of the story is, learning to like what one has to do instead of learning to do only what one likes!

Management Committee members were very hands-on volunteers right from the start and their experience had shown that a balance of both macro and micro management is essential. This integration of both micro and macro managements has worked well and had produced the desired results. The Management Committee takes its responsibilities seriously; they believe that it is their duty to manage the Home well by doing things right and doing the right things all the time to the best of their ability, selflessly, and in their Master’s words, “in a detached manner without attachment to the fruit of the action.”

Guiding Senior Staff

Hiring good and honest staff, especially Head of Departments and Executive Director to oversee the Home was not an easy task. Whenever senior staff were employed, the Managing Committee would spend considerable time to guide them in understanding the core values and culture of the organisation. Their performance and attitude had to be in harmony with the core values. The Management Committee looked for staff who possess required knowledge and skills, qualities of honesty, integrity, sincerity and commitment were essential requirements for the position. The past experience with senior staff were eye openers and provided useful lessons in the ways how to help them to fit into the organisation. ‘Mistakes are forgivable; but the same mistakes repeated are deplorable.’ was the guideline used by the Managing Committee.

As this generation of human beings have been raised in a milieu where human values are given short shrift, in spite of being highly qualified, some staff who were selected on academic merit nursed self-interest much more than the interest of SWAMI HOME. They lacked sincerity and interpersonal skills when dealing with staff and donors. Some of them made important decisions without the Management Committee’s knowledge and approval. Despite their shortcomings, they were given ample opportunities to change, but unfortunately, many did not seem to understand in depth the Home’s culture and value based management and were unable to adapt and fit into the organisation.

Staff Training

Proper training is provided by either organising in-house workshops or enabling staff at all levels to attend courses conducted outside. This helps them upgrade their skills and they are able to do a better job at the Home. SWAMI HOME has many foreign staff coming from various countries like China, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Myanmar, Malaysia, India and Bangladesh on the rolls. Most of them work as nurses and nursing assistants.

Nursing aides usually attend to the bathing, cleaning and feeding of the residents. Their abilities to communicate in simple words with the residents every day are important. In-house training in simple and basic dialects usually spoken by residents are taught so that they can understand and know how to satisfy the needs of the residents. In July 2003, Swami Home was approved as an On-the-Job Training institution for nursing by the Government’s Institute of Technical Education (ITE). By 2010, it was accredited as an approved Training Centre to conduct ITE Skill Certification courses in health care.

Regular courses, dialogue and workshops are conducted for senior staff either in the conference room or auditorium on work related issues, dealing with feedback from residents and their families. Talks and seminars are also conducted by Management Committee members on values, codes of conduct and rules and regulations stressing the importance of abiding and putting them into practice in the course of their work.

Staff welfare is well taken care of. Periodically staff are sent overseas to attend seminars and conferences to enhance their practical knowledge and skill. From time to time speakers
who are examples of human values infused work, both locally and overseas, are invited to train them. Dr Ron Farmer, PhD (Psychology) and Ms Suwanti Farmer MA(Psych) both trained psychologists from Australia have conducted courses on Human Values Integrated Caring for the Aged to staff to become role models and trainers for other staff in Swami Home. They also developed a manual for staff in Human Value Integrated Care.
Certified OJT Centre

Certificate presented to

Sunshine Welfare Action Mission (SWAMI) Home

for meeting the requirements of the

Institute of Technical Education, Singapore

since

1 July 2003

1 July 2013 Effective Date

30 June 2016 Expiry Date

Director & Chief Executive Officer
Institute of Technical Education
Certificate presented to

Sunshine Welfare Action Mission (SWAMI) Home

for meeting the requirements of the
Institute of Technical Education, Singapore
since
1 June 2010
to conduct the following course(s)

ITE Skills Certificate in Health Care (Home Care)

1 June 2016
Effective Date

31 May 2019
Expiry Date

[Signature]
Director & Chief Executive Officer
Institute of Technical Education
Celebrations

Celebration is a way of life at SWAMI HOME. During the Nurses’ Week, events and functions are organised for them locally and overseas. Staff are encouraged to give expression to their creative talents. Singing, dancing, acting out skits and dramas—all are encouraged during our various functions like appreciation dinners, Mooncake festival, Hari Raya, Christmas and Chinese New Year etc. They are also given opportunities to cook special food from their respective countries and offer them to residents’ families invited during the Annual Families’ Day in the Home.

As long as they are at SWAMI HOME they have to follow their duties sincerely and performed them sincerely. Duty to work has to come first; rights and benefits come later. Otherwise it would be putting the cart (right) before the horse (duty) situation.

SWAMI HOME gives everyone a chance to transform into better human beings; the team, Management Committee, staff, residents, family members, donors, visitors.
Volunteerism

Volunteerism comes from the heart and the organisation offers opportunities for every one willing to render service and sacrifice the time to serve the community.

Various religious organisations, schools, corporate companies, groups of volunteers, families and individuals have been performing various forms of services over years. SWAMI HOME has been the richer for it.

It is difficult for modern man to think non-commercially; one well-meaning suggestion that a business consultant volunteer put forth, but could not be accepted, was that the organisation should reward and pay well the top 5% of our senior staff. The team valued and treated all staff equally and fairly. In a family even a slow learner sibling has to be cared for just as well as an achiever sibling. The team looks at all staff as family members irrespective of their positions, religions, cultures or race. All levels of staff in the organisation play their specific roles and are vital for the survival and progress of the organisation.

SWAMI HOME’s Founder, Sri Sathya Sai Baba, once narrated a simple story to illustrate this concept; the story about the BODY to illustrate the important roles played by every person in an organisation.

Said He, “One day the head, hands, stomach, legs and heart decided to meet and discuss who amongst them was the most important. The head being the top of the body claimed that he had the ability to think and reason and without him the body was useless. The hands said that without them the body would not be able to work, earn a living and put food into the mouth. The stomach claimed it digested the food and that without it the body would not get the nourishment and energy it needed. The legs argued that without him the body would not able to walk, move around and find food and run away in the event of danger and harm. The heart said that it circulated and pumped blood to all parts of the body 24 hours a day working non-stop.

However the insignificant, little opening at the lower end, listened patiently to all the noisy arguments with no clear winner. It decided not to speak a word and shut itself up. No solid waste could be excreted from the body. After a few days and weeks passed, the head became groggy and unable to think properly. The hands, legs, stomach and heart all became weaker and weaker and the whole body was unable to move and function properly. The argumentative organs soon realized their folly.”

This story demonstrates not just the importance of all the limbs and organs but also the unity and cooperation of working together in harmony.”
Mr Foong Yew Wai doing volunteer work at SWAMI Home for many years.

Ms Joann Leong Lai Heng and her voluntary group doing hair cutting since 1997

Volunteers from Chong De Cultural Society Singapore
Selection of Committee Members

The volunteer must contribute a minimum of 8 hours of service a month for 3 months as stated in the Constitution of the Home to be admitted as a member. Involvement in service does not necessarily mean requiring him to be physical present in the Home all the time. The person, his willingness and commitment to serve is given weightage; not his status or name or fame. The Managing Committee members constantly remind themselves an important lesson that they are here to serve and not to rule, to give and not to take.

The Annual General Meeting held to choose the office bearers is always a peaceful, prayer filled, happy event because there is no conflict or contest; no election, only selection. Selections are made prior to the meeting after consultation and agreement by all members. For complying with the laws of the land, positions were created but all elected members are regarded as equals; like brothers and sisters. It is never “I” or I am the “doer” or we are the “doers”. “We are all His instruments, caretakers in the eyes of our Founder.”- is the mantra. SWAMI HOME is His Home.

Experiences of Residents

Real Life Stories - Gangster Chief

Sometime in the 1990’s, a Management Committee member was asked by the Nurse Manager to address a problem with a very difficult male resident. In spite of being in a wheelchair as both his legs were amputated, he often used abusive and vulgar language to the nurses and other helpers.

On one occasion, a new staff had put some sugar in his coffee without knowing that he was diabetic. He refused to drink it and shouted angrily at the staff until she was so frightened and broke down crying.

The Nurse Manager explained to him that the staff was new and unaware of the colour tag on the resident’s uniform indicating he was diabetic and her action was unintentional. The Committee Member told the Nurse Manager that her supervisor should have trained her staff to ensure she was aware of such an important matter. The resident was directed to the Nursing Office where the Management Committee member could explain and apologise personally to him. When the resident came to the office, he was very agitated and angry. The Committee member tried to explain to him but he refused to accept the explanation and continued to use abusive words to the Nurse Manager and Committee member.

The Committee member was shocked to see that the resident had so much anger. He noticed the resident had several tattoos on his hand and body. He felt that this man must have come from a violent back ground. The resident shouted that he was not happy to be in this Home. The Committee member tried to pacify him that he was being cared for in a five star Home and would do the best to make his stay as comfortable as possible. The resident remained angry and continued to be abusive.

At this stage, the Committee member knew he had to do something as the resident was still being difficult. He feigned anger by pounding his hand loudly on the table to put a stop to his tantrum. He immediately became quiet. The Committee member instructed the Nurse Manager to look for an alternative home for him as he would not accept their apology and explanation.
A few days after the incident, whenever the Committee member or the Nurse Manager walked near the resident, he would stare and give them angry looks. They ignored him and continued to provide him the necessary care and comfort for his stay at the Home.

The Nurse Manager reported to the Committee member that he tried to look for another home for him but other nursing homes would not take him. He had already been a reject case before coming to us. A few weeks later, the Committee member happened to pass by his room. He waved his hand at him to come inside. He felt hot in the room as his bed was far away from the ceiling fan. He requested a table fan and was immediately given one. He was very happy for the quick response.

The next day when the Committee member visited him, he told him, the table fan had helped a lot and he was feeling cooler and more comfortable. He thanked everyone for their help. He mentioned that in his young days he was once a gangster chief and a street fighter. As a result of his bad lifestyle and eating habits, he became a diabetic which led to his amputation and became depressed. He had ended up in a nursing home as he had no one to look after him.

The Committee member told him that he should speak politely to the staff. They would surely help as it was their duty as nurses to take good care of him.

The Nurse Manager later reported to the Management Committee that this resident was behaving well and happy to stay. He continued to live at Swami Home until his demise.

This story is related in detail as even reading it requires forbearance and patience. How much more difficult it must have been to handle such a problem! Patience, Perseverance and Purity alone win in the end.

**Prayers for a Resident**

One of the Management Committee was informed to see a resident suffering from throat cancer. The nurse on duty said that the resident was dying and his family could not be contacted.

The dying resident had a son who was married and lived in the Philippines. The staff tried to contact him on numerous occasions without success.

The Committee member spoke to the resident at his bedside. He could not communicate as he had undergone chemotherapy. He held his hand and asked if he would like to do some prayers. The old Indian resident nodded. As the Committee member knew how to chant Hindu prayers, he asked the resident which Hindu God he prayed to. The resident nodded his head when the name of Lord Shiva was mentioned.

While holding the resident in his hand he chanted and prayed to Lord Shiva to help his soul on his last journey. The resident became emotional and his eyes welled up; tears gently cascaded down his cheeks; and as the prayers were chanted, he became calm and peaceful.

The nurse on duty in the resident’s ward was very happy for him as someone had come to see him and do prayers for him. He passed away peacefully a few days later. The staff caring for him had a clear conscience that they had done their best; indeed it is a clear conscience that gives the highest job satisfaction.

**The Prodigal Resident**

A resident was admitted to SWAMI Home in June 2006. He was a widower with no children. He worked as a mortuary attendant but had stopped work for many years due to his health conditions. His functional status declined greatly after his admission in 2006. He underwent a below knee amputation caused by his chronic diabetic conditions.

During his stay in SWAMI Home, he would verbally abuse the staff and throw food given to him on the floor, or pour water onto the food. Staff were also punched by him when attending to him. On the surface, he appeared to be a rude and unappreciative person.
However, during his last few months before he passed away, he had a spell of hospitalization after which he was back at SWAMI HOME. Sometime in 2012, He said to a Management Committee member and I quote, “I thank God that I am able to come back to SWAMI Home. What I underwent in the past one month when I was hospitalized has made me realize just how much SWAMI Home had done for me. I really want to say sorry to the staff for the way I have treated them and hope they can forgive me” and started crying.

Leaving with Dignity

A female resident was admitted to SWAMI Home in 2013. She was diagnosed with end stage renal failure, but she refused to go through any treatment/ dialysis and she was on palliative care. She also had a history of Anxiety Disorder with depression.

She was very fastidious about what she ate. Sometimes, she would only eat a few spoons of rice in a day when she did not like most foods. Her body had become weak and she had stomach discomfort. Arrangements were made with a social worker to buy her outside foods twice a week, upon her request.

The Home's social worker also took her to market to buy her favourite “angkoli fish” or snapper which she had chosen. Special arrangement was made by the kitchen staff to cook the fish in the way she liked.

Towards the end of her life, arrangement was made to cook for her at every meal whatever food she requested.

Special attention was also given to her during the last few weeks of her life; she was assigned one to one care; with a nurse and supervisor in constant attendance.

And Love is the Greatest

There was a female elderly resident diagnosed to be suffering from Alzheimer's dementia while her husband had heart disease. They were admitted together in SWAMI Home for respite stay. Reason for them staying in Swami Home under respite care was that the couple's domestic helper was going back on home leave for 2 weeks and there was no suitable care giver for them during this period.

This case was assessed within short notice as the couple’s daughter had to fly off to Australia and had to settle the administrative matters with SWAMI Home as quickly as possible. No other nursing homes were able to have special arrangement for the elderly to stay together.

SWAMI Team allowed both of them to be admitted to the same room as the couple was very attached to each other, The wife suffering from Alzheimer's disease, had to see her husband every moment; for otherwise she would get agitated.

Special arrangements were made to make the room as homely as possible. Information was gathered from the family about their likes and dislikes and their religious practices to ensure that their stay during the respite period was just like at home.

Experience of the Family of a Handicapped Resident

One day the Executive Director (ED) and a Management Committee member both visited the home of a handicapped resident to speak to his parents. The mother related the heart rending story of her worries, troubles and difficulties in looking after him and her agonising search for a nursing home.

The resident, her son was born in 1962, as the youngest of triplets. His two brothers were born normal but he was underweight, weighed just 4lbs 12ounces and his development was slow. They thought that given time, he would be able to catch up with his two brothers. They had a shock when at the age of one, they took him to a child specialist who diagnosed his case and she told them the devastating truth.

He was diagnosed to have a small brain box called microcephaly in medical terms. The doctor said he would be handicapped for the rest of
his life. The concerned parents were anxious to send him overseas for treatment but the doctor advised against it- heart can be replaced but not brain. She told them that he would be the baby of the family. “Give him all your love” she said.

She said to us “My worries began. The family had to reorganise their lives.” The parents, their three normal able bodied children had to make adjustments. Their daughter was only 2 years and their triplet boys were one year old. Too young to understand, why their mother had no time for them and why she was sometimes impatient with them. The mother said “Our lives had to revolve around him and his needs. We were teachers and later promoted to principals. We also had our students and their needs to take care of.”

The mother volunteered to teach in the afternoon and the father taught in the morning to take turn to take care of their kids though they had a part-time maid to help out. The mother and their three children had to move to neighbourhood schools to cut down on travelling time.

He was later sent to a Day Care Centre for disabled children until he was 12 years old. As the centre accepted children only up to the age of 12 after that he was sent home.

The parents made a number of trips to India to visit Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

In one of those trips she was lucky to be called for interview. Sai Baba spoke to each and every one of the 13 people in the group. She talked to Baba tearfully about her son. Baba told her “You don’t worry”, and looked lovingly, deep into her eyes. When she was out of the interview room, her friends comforted her that Baba would surely take care of him. She said “I was on Cloud Nine when the meaning suddenly dawned on me”.

Life went on fairly uneventfully until 2002. During the Sars epidemic period, her son had a fall and fractured his hip bones and could not walk. Her husband too had shown signs of physically slowing down. She asked her husband what would happen to the boy and who would look after him if anything should happened to both of them. They set up a trust fund and started to look for a good nursing home though her husband did not evince much interest. Within her, she believed she must look for a Home for him. One had to be practical and not sentimental, she decided. She was determined to see him settled and properly provided for, while she and her husband were alive and well. She did not want his future to be left uncertain and in the hands of other people.

She went to 8 nursing homes over a period of 3 years from 2009 to 2011. She said “Each home I went to, I would see the rooms, toilets, the sitting rooms, the residents in the Home, the people managing the Home. Each time I was not happy with what I saw”.

“In year 2011, a friend recommended SWAMI Home so I went with my husband to see the place. And what I saw, I felt happy, I felt safe to leave my son here. When I saw Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s picture at the lobby, His words “You don’t worry” flashed across my mind’s eye.”

“I saw the cleanliness of the place, the friendliness of the residents and the caregivers attending to them, the bedrooms and the orderly arrangements seen at all levels in the Home, was just what I was looking for.” She told herself “The search is over. This is the
Home.” The son was admitted on 23rd June 2011 and is currently staying in a room on the ground floor; and the elderly parents finally have peace of mind.

**From Street Fighter to a Drummer**

SWAMI Home usually admits problematic residents that other nursing homes are unable to look after. In 2005, there was one such resident, a street fighter, very aggressive and demanding, always pounding, banging tables and kicking chairs uncontrollably. In spite being visually impaired, he continued to behave violently in this manner and used to verbally abuse the nurses. He was later sent to the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) for assessment on the recommendation by the psychiatrist. He was discharged and came back to Swami Home. There was no clear care plan and it seemed as if the stay in IMH did not help much.

Soon he began to display violent outbursts. Our social workers decided to try something different. They gave him a set of drumsticks and drum, to vent his anger and frustration. He appeared to like his new found toy very much and this music therapy, if one may call it so, seemed to work like magic!

He would play the drum daily for a few hours depending on his mood. His behaviour vastly improved, he became more polite and in one discussion with the social worker team he really opened up his mind. He shared this thoughts and feelings with them.

He sincerely apologised to the team. He realised that he should not have behaved like that; he was reflexly behaving just as he used to when he was a violent street fighter. He also shared that he wanted to forget his past and to be a changed man.

Somehow the IMH sojourn did not suit him, he said. He could not rest as other patients kept shouting and he felt that the routine there was boring. He longed to come back to SWAMI Home and missed the life in the Home, the staff, and the food. He also said that he really appreciated the hard work of SWAMI Team especially the nurses and social workers who used to take such good care of him.

To cut a long story short, he is now the “official drummer” of SWAMI HOME; and a proud member of the Home’s music team, gladly performing at the Home’s events when called upon.

**Adorable Resident Leaving Sweet Memories**

SWAMI Home has a good mix of residents. Not all are difficult; and some are kind, loving and often share their past experiences with the staff, leaving behind sweet memories of them after their passing. This is one of them.

This loving resident loved to share his stories with the staff especially his experiences during the Japanese World War Two and how he partnered with the Japanese after the war and set up a successful watch business in Singapore. He also taught Japanese language and valuable life lessons to the staff. He enjoyed singing and often sang together and laughed together with the staff who loved him very much. The staff affectionately dubbed him “Daddy” and remembered that he loved eating and sharing Ferrero Rocher chocolates which was his favourite. There were also times when “Daddy” joked with them and made their days easier. Whenever anyone visited him in his room, he was the perfect host, offering them a seat, exchanging pleasantries and so on. He was truly a good will ambassador for the Home when guests or visitors landed.

When he passed away, many staff including the Executive Director and Management Committee members attended his wake. This act of paying respect is often carried out by the staff when residents left their mortal coils. One of the staff representing the Home delivered a touching eulogy of their beloved Daddy and I quote, “…It is sad that Daddy has left us physically, but the sweet memories that we had with Daddy and life’s lessons that he had
taught us, will stay forever in our hearts and minds. Daddy, you will be missed and we all love you”

From Service to Transformation

A Managing Committee member had this to say when asked about how SWAMI HOME had helped him transform. He said and I quote,

“Through service activities with a limit on desires I could gradually transform at least a little bit, at three levels of growth-physical, mental and spiritual.

Personally, our Founder’s directive on ‘Ceiling on Desires (Wants) on Food, Money, Time and Energy’, played a very important role in my transformation.’

Food

“I learnt not to waste food, money, time, energy. It helps to control and set a limit on these desires. I slip often even now; but slowly and steadily I am getting there!”

The Food and Beverage Subcommittee reviews the food menu on a monthly basis to ensure that food served to both residents and staff are wholesome, appetising and have healthy variety of dishes to choose. Every week, different foods are served and rotated so that residents and staff will not be bored.

When serving the residents, staff are also often told and reminded not to give too much when the residents appeared unwell and had still food left on their plates. Surplus food can feed another stomach.

Eat as much as it is necessary to eat and not to throw away food by taking too much on the plate. Do not take more than we can eat and waste the rest. Food is the main source of man’s life, body, mind and character, as Baba says.

Money

‘The Management Committee members are always cautious of how funds or donation are spent. Earning money the right way and using money for right activities- SWAMI HOME teaches this constantly. In personal life, the team practises a ceiling on unnecessary spending. I have learnt a lot from all my team mates at SWAMI HOME.’

Time

‘The most important factor in service activity is time. Time should be used in a useful manner because everything in this created world, depends on time. The main reason for man’s birth and death is TIME. Working at SWAMI HOME has made me understand the value of TIME. Though even now, I fail often, I try my best to use time productively.

Giving the time, skill and energy that we have and can afford, means ‘service’ to me. Time means availability to serve. None of us really have spare time to give away. Time given for service is taken out of quality time that we need badly for our personal and family needs. This is true sacrifice to render selfless service. The key is there should be a healthy balance of time; time for our work, time for family and time for service. Work life balance that we talk about so much these days, should include time for service; not just work and family life.

My brothers on the Management Committee realize that it can never be one size fits all. All have to feel comfortable according to their availability
to serve. Some can give more than others. Each one has his / her own problems and priorities.’

‘Most important, the team follows the Master’s teaching of not wasting time in unnecessary conversations, chatter and gossiping about others people’s personal matters. Time is life; growth occurs over time. Time wasted would be life wasted with no time to grow. SWAMI HOME has helped me become more conscious of the value of time’.

**Energy**

‘The practice in the Home is never to waste water, electricity and other resources. For instance, we ensure that steps are taken in monitoring lighting and air-conditioners in rooms are switched off when not in use.

We have also learnt that our physical, mental and spiritual energies should not be wasted. What does one mean by ‘wasting our energies’? When we see bad things, our energies are wasted. Hearing bad things, speaking evil, thinking evil thoughts and doing evil deeds waste our energies. Conserving our energies in all these five areas of seeing, hearing, speaking, thinking and doing will make our life more peaceful and meaningful. Less talk and more work is the motto. I am continuing to learn all this!”

**Transformation**

“The process of transformation to be a better human being involves taking care to avoid unnecessary wants or desires. For one desire, when satisfied will fan the thirst for ten more. Although it is absolutely true that there is no person without desire, and it is difficult to live without desire in this world.

We all try to ensure that we do all actions to the satisfaction of our conscience; that keeps our hearts happy.

If there is no transformation in our way of life over the years, it will really be life wasted! So though I stumble and falter, I try my best to follow these principles; and I think SWAMI HOME has helped me become a better human being.’

**Control our Mind means Control our Thoughts**

SWAMI HOME’s Founder, Sri Sathya Sai Baba used to teach, that in order to control the mind which creates desire, one needs to control one’s thoughts first. One should discriminate as soon as the thought arises: that is the moment to decide and cast bad thoughts away.

This is the way of controlling and cleansing the mind. Baba, used to say, ‘When a thought arises, ask yourselves: “Is it good or bad? Right or wrong?” Then decide what to do. If you are not sure, do not do it.’ The Managing Committee practises this concept in management and all the team try to practise this in personal life. Working as a team trying to practise these simple but lofty principles has been an amazing blessing, shared the Managing Committee member.

**How to attain Purity**

Swami had also told the team that all one had to do in order to attain purity of thought, word and deed was to:-

*Think no evil, think what is good. See no evil, see what is good
Hear no evil, hear what is good
Talk no evil, talk what is good
Do no evil, do what is good
Difficult to practise!- admits the team; but they are trying...*

**Philosophy of Care**

The philosophy of SWAMI HOME is a simple one. Be happy and make others happy. They learn to look upon residents as their important guests; as their own kith and kin. They go all out to treat them with love, care, dignity and respect. The team’s dream is that SWAMI HOME becomes the gold standard in service and care for the elderly.

On a spiritual plane, SWAMI HOME is a living example of the Joy of selfless Service.
A Brief Fact Sheet of SWAMI Home

... The Present ...

Sunshine Welfare Action Mission (SWAMI HOME) caters for the following integrated eldercare services to benefit around 1080 elderly

1. Residential Care
   i) Geriatric Residence 190 Beds
   ii) Dementia Residence 52 Bed

2. Centre-Based Care
   i) Dementia Day Care 70 Clients
   ii) Day Rehabilitation 50 Clients
   iii) Singapore Programme for Integrated Care for the Elderly (SPICE) 50 Clients
   iv) Weekend Respite 8 Clients

3. Home Care
   i) Home Medical 110 Clients
   ii) Home Nursing 170 Clients
   iii) Home Help 380 Clients

1. Residential Care
   i) Geriatric Residence 190 Beds

Service Targets:
- Frail with medical needs, physical disabled, mentally challenged, who require a high level of long-term care
- Elderly whose caregivers need a respite

Service Model:
- Nursing and medical care
- Rehabilitation through physiotherapy and occupational therapy
- Specialized care through visits by geriatrician, psycho geriatrician, resident medical officer, rehabilitation specialist, pharmacist, podiatrist, speech therapist and dietetic services from dietician
- Holistic care that involves community outings and activities
SWAMI Activities

Outing

Residents Birthday Celebration
Joyful wellbeing through dental treatment

Scaling & polishing, extraction & denture review
Dementia Residence 52 Beds

Service Targets:
• Elderly with dementia

Service Model:
• Nursing and medical care
• Rehabilitation through physiotherapy and occupational therapy
• Specialized care through visits by geriatrician, psycho geriatrician, resident medical officer, rehabilitation specialist, pharmacist, podiatrist, speech therapist and dietetic services from dietician
• Holistic care that involves community outings and activities
• Reminiscence therapy, reality orientation, sensory stimulation
• Pet therapy

2. Centre-Based Care

i) Dementia Day Care

Service Targets:
• Mild to moderate dementia patients who need assistance to optimize a sense of control, usefulness and sociability

Service Model:
• Social interaction through games and activities
• Reminiscence therapy
• Reality orientation
• Rehabilitative care through physiotherapy and occupational therapy

Operating Hours:
• Weekdays from Monday to Saturday except Sunday and Public Holiday

Capacity: 70
ii) Day Rehabilitation
Service Targets:
• Elderly with conditions such as stroke, Parkinson’s disease, post fracture, post amputation, total hip replacement, knee amputation, deconditioning due to medical issues, osteoarthritis, etc, requiring follow up in rehabilitation

Service Model:
• Rehabilitation through physiotherapy and occupational therapy
• Social interaction through recreational activities

Operating Hours:
Weekdays from Monday to Saturday except Sunday and Public Holiday
Capacity: 50

iii) Singapore Programme for Integrated Care for the Elderly (SPICE)
Service Targets:
• It is an integrated model of care to enable frail elderly to be cared for in the community

Service Model:
• Nursing and medical care
• Assistance with personal hygiene
• Physiotherapy and occupational therapy
• Counselling and social service
• Recreational and social activities

Operating Hours:
• Weekdays from Monday to Saturday except Sunday and Public Holiday
Capacity: 50

iv) Weekend Respite
Service Targets:
• Adults or elderly whose caregivers require weekend day respite

Service Model:
• Provide caregivers respite from caregiving duties during weekends and in doing so, supporting caregivers who choose to care for seniors at home.
• Provide a supportive environment for adult/elderly clients to be cared for.

Operating Hours:
• Saturday and Sunday
Current Muster (2016):
• 8
3. Home Care

i) Home Medical
Service Targets:
• Homebound patients who need a doctor’s medical intervention

Service Model:
• Regular medical review and prescription of medication.
• Management of uncomplicated medical problems
• Referrals to other relevant health care professionals as necessary

Current Muster (2016):
• 110

ii) Home Nursing
Service Targets:
• Homebound patients who need nursing intervention

Service Model:
• Monitoring of medical conditions (e.g., blood pressure & blood sugar checks)
• Post-surgical management
• Care of tracheostomy or drainage tubes
• Maintenance & change of urinary catheters
• Supervision of medication
• Wound management
• Caregiver education & training on nursing care

Current Muster (2016):
• 170
iii) Home Help

Service Targets:
• Elderly aged 55 and above living alone or with another frail caregiver or without daytime caregiver to aid in their activities of daily living

Service Model:
• Meals-on-Wheels
• Medical Escort
• Personal Hygiene
• Housekeeping
• Laundry

Current Muster (2016):
• 380

Meals On Wheels

Laundry Service
House keeping

Escort service to hospitals or clinic appointments
Swami Staff Activities & Celebrations

Appreciation Dinner

Appreciation Dinner, Guest of Honour Dr Lim Wee Kiak (Member of Parliament)

Appreciation Dinner 11 October 2014 – Guest of Honour Dr. Lee Bee Wah (Member of Parliament)
Nurses Day Celebration
Founder’s Day Celebration
Presentation of Long Service Awards and Gifts to staff on Founders Day
Chinese New Year Celebration

Mr. Khaw Boon Wan, Coordinating Minister for Infrastructure and Minister for Transport
Dr Lim Wee Kiak (Member of Parliament)

Mr. Chang Meng Kiat and his volunteer group giving Ang Pao (Standing fifth person from left)
Ms Christina Oh sponsored dinner at Intercontinental Hotel for residents (standing second person from left)

Ms Christina Oh, our volunteer receiving plaque from Dr Lee Bee Wah (Member of Parliament)
Vesak Day Celebration
Hari Raya Celebration
Mid-Autumn Festival
Deepavali Celebration
Christmas Celebration

[Images of people celebrating Christmas and assisting in a hospital setting]
Staff Outing

84 Love All, Serve All
SWAMI Staff - Volleyball Competition

SWAMI HOME COOKING COMPETITION 2008
Judges and Winners Sat 1 November 2008
The Future…

In line with the national policy of expanding aged care, the management has mapped out strategy and action plans for SWAMI Home to grow in the many years to come.

Extension of Existing SWAMI Home Building

The extension of SWAMI Home’s building is to cater for the accommodation of additional beds to house more seniors or elderly. The plan of extending the existing building to cater for the addition of 50 beds for dementia residence is in the pipeline. The project is expected to be completed in the last quarter of 2017 and the admission of residents has been scheduled to be in October 2017.

Extension of Community - Based

One of the options for the continuous grow of SWAMI Home is the expansion of the existing community-based services, in particular, the home care services. The home care services provide greater opportunity for the seniors or elderly to be cared for at home and in the community.

Setup of Satellite Centres

Due to the rapidly ageing population, SWAMI Home must be able to provide the whole range of services required by the seniors or elderly.

To support these building extension and service expansion, the management is always giving priority to enhance the quality of care in SWAMI Home.

a) to promote learning and innovation
b) to practice the core values
c) to boost care with technology
d) to invest in staff training in clinical skill, awareness and “expansion of the heart” so that the head, heart and hands can work in harmony.

With the emphasis of ongoing enhancement in the quality of care coupled with the creation of values in the organization, SWAMI Home will be able to scale greater heights in future.

The Team’s Biggest Challenge

- to transmit to next generation who are the caregivers at SWAMI HOME, the values and teachings that the core team was fortunate to learn directly from their Master, Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Human Values can only be transmitted by direct example and individualized care and love for the person concerned. As SWAMI HOME enters its fourth decade of existence, the team and Managing Committee are giving top priority to ensure that the core values of SWAMI HOME are transmitted to the staff and residents so that they too, like the team, can learn to go inward, realize their own divinity and tap into the bliss of divine love that is within us all.
Food for Thought…

Unity of Head, Heart and Hand can result in happiness OR unhappiness!

Function from the heart! Be heart driven!
(that is what SWAMI HOME teaches…)
Head and Hands follow the heart!
End result = HAPPINESS

Function from the Head! Be cerebral!
(that is what the world teaches…)
Heart and Hands follow the Head!
End result = Unhappiness

THE CHOICE IS YOURS!!!

The Road Map of Life

By age 20 - You have to develop Faith and Devotion

By age 30 - You have to purify your thoughts, words and deeds. Practise harmony of thoughts, words and deeds.

By age 40 - You should have 4 objectives, being to earn Wealth through Dharma ie Righteous means and you must have the Desire for Liberation.

You have to dwell in a home built on the four strong pillars – Righteousness, Wealth, Desire and Liberation. Righteousness should be the means to acquire Wealth; and Liberation should be the only Desire.

By age 50 - You have to learn the control of the 5 senses - sight, hearing, smell, touch and speech.

By age 60 - You should have faced and conquered the six foes of man: Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment, Pride and Hate.

By age 70 - You must be ready to merge with the 7 sages, the seven seas and the seven colours of the solar ray. That is you must be far, far above mundane desires and ideals, and as near the point of mergence as possible through spiritual practice.

By age 80 - You should become like the 8 guardian angels. Eighty must see you in line with the deities that preside over the eight cardinal points which are more or less Divine in attributes and characteristics.

By age 90 - You should move to the realm of the 9 Planets, and into the realm of the Super. You must be like the 9 planets revolving around the Sun which is God.

By age 100 - You must be One with God, indivisible. You become God. You reach the hundredth mark; living out ten decades, you must become the master the 10 senses ie; the 5 senses of action and the 5 senses of knowledge; you then become wisdom incarnate, with no trace of action or the consequence thereof or the desire for it.
Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s short sayings on HAPPINESS

1) The secret of happiness is not in doing what one likes but in liking what one has to do. Whatever work you have to do, you should do it with pleasure and liking.

2) Remember 3 things to be happy -
   A) To do good to others and make others happy.
   B) To do what you have to do and share your love
   C) To look forward to what you do and have faith in God. Where there is Faith there is Love. Where there is Love there is God. Where there is God There is Bliss.

3) The best way to be happy is to be near and dear to God

4) Make everybody happy. Only then can you attain happiness. It is impossible for you to attain happiness without making others happy.

5) In this world, the gain from sorrow is more than that out of happiness. The saints and sages of yore, who have become immortal in history, aspired for hardships rather than happiness.

6) The joy that arises out of overcoming hardships is more lasting than that gained from happiness. Hence, we should not be averse to sorrow nor should we look for happiness alone.

7) You become prosperous when you control your desires. You attain happiness only when you conquer greed.

8) If a man wishes to be happy, the first exercise he must do is to remove from his mind every bad thought, feeling and habit.

9) Grief and joy are obverse and reverse sides of the same experience. Joy is when grief ends; grief is when joy ends.

10) Lasting happiness can come only by the discipline of the mind and faith in the Lord which cannot be diminished by good or bad fortune.

11) Man will never gain happiness by giving a free rein to his senses.

12) The greater the number of desires, the lesser the happiness you will experience. Be contented.

13) Real and lasting happiness cannot be won through physical happiness.

14) The happiest people on this planet are not those who live on their own terms but are those who change terms for the ones whom they love.

15) Your happiness and good fortune lie in your own hands. If you decide, you can gain happiness and good fortune. Unless you yearn, you cannot earn.

16) The happiness that you want to seek is present within you. You can have happiness only when you love God wholeheartedly.

17) Without reforming one’s conduct and little acts of daily life, happiness will be beyond reach.

18) The secret to true happiness lies in detachment.

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