

Volunteer report in silver ribbon singapore

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Volunteerism

Volunteerism has been around for a very long time. It comes from the root word Volunteer, which means someone who willingly works for an organisation or take up a task without being paid. Initially used in the army to represent soldiers who willingly put themselves in the army without having to be called to service, the idea of the word radically shifted in the 1800s, when people started using it for volunteers who gave their time to helping others without any sort of monetary gain. One of the first few charity organisations that had volunteers or volunteering programmes was the Salvation Army, and they have helped and are continuing to help many thousands and even millions of people in the world today. Currently in Singapore, volunteering rates are on the rise. In fact, from 2014 to 2016, volunteerism rates have increased from 18 to 35 per cent according to surveys conducted by the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC). With the increase of volunteers in Singapore, how can volunteers help the mental health sector?

Silver Ribbon Singapore

Silver Ribbon Singapore was founded in 1993 by Ms Jean Singleton Liechty, J. D., which was later launched in 2006 by late Former President of Singapore, S R Nathan. According to them, mental health is the foundation for the well-being and effective functioning of individuals and communities, making it very crucial for our society to have positive mental health, because our society is driven by our people. But because of the stigma surrounding mental illness, people are afraid of seeing help from trained professionals. This could lead to suicide if not properly looked at. These stigmas remain the

most important reason why people don't want to look for help, because most of them are afraid to bring shame or disgrace upon themselves or their families. Hence, Silver Ribbon works with schools, religious organisations, governmental organisations to support and promote positive mental health, and to extend a helping hand to the society through different means. Their vision is " positive attitude towards mental health among the community", and their mission is " To combat mental health stigma, encourage early treatment, and facilitate integration of people with mental illness within the society through innovative means of promoting mental health literacy." Silver Ribbon Singapore offers workshops, counselling, and even offer to support ambulance fees for those who need it. People who want to support them can either volunteer their time and energy by supporting their events, or by donating to their cause.

For our mid-term project, we have decided to volunteer our time to raising funds to support the Silver Ribbon Singapore, as we believed in their vision and mission, and that more awareness needs to be spread about positive mental health, in order to prevent people from judging others, or for those who are affected, to prevent them from feeling held down by the stigma surrounding mental illnesses. There is also an increasing number of people in Singapore who are suffering from depression, and with the stigma surrounding this, they are unable to seek proper help, and they end up feeling helpless. They start to claim that they have no reason to live for, and they tend to take their own lives. According to Samaritans of Singapore, suicide is the leading cause of death for those aged 10-29. The thing about suicide, is that it is preventable, and hence more awareness on depression

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leading to suicide is needed, and Silver Ribbon Singapore was one of the best organisations to help us with this cause.

Method

In order to raise awareness for Silver Ribbon Singapore, my group and I (consisting of 4 people) decided to raise funds by going around our school, East Asia Institute of Management (EASB), and targeting students and staff for cash donations. We decided to do this by going from room to room and perform at least one song using the guitar and a tambourine, as we thought of spreading not just awareness but joy to the staff and students as well. We planned to do the fund raising from 5: 30pm to 7: 30pm on Monday, 20 August 2018.

Before that, we emailed the Head of School, Mr Reinaldo Wong, to seek for his permission in playing our instruments during school hours. After meeting with our lecturers, he kindly agreed to let us play, and we went ahead with our project.

Process

During our project, we performed acoustic renditions of pop songs, while explaining to the students and staff that we were performing to raise funds to support Silver Ribbon Singapore, and collected the donations from them.

Results

At the end of the project, we managed to collect a total of \$122. 20 in cash. Many people donated across the schools, even though there were not many people around in school at that time. After collecting the funds, we donated to Silver Ribbon Singapore.

Discussion

As the purpose of Silver Ribbon Singapore is to raise awareness about mental health, and to encourage positive mental health, my group and I were very encouraged to see that many people were willing to donate and show their support for this cause, although, some people weren't very supportive. However, I think most of the staff and student were very friendly and were very interested to find out more about Silver Ribbon Singapore, and they were very open to understanding that we were raising funds for a good cause.

Personally, I thought that this was a very interesting way to collect donations, as this was my first time doing something like this, likewise for my group. It was a very enjoyable project, because I've learnt a lot on how to work with my group, and how to delegate duties and to step up and take initiative. I've also learnt to deal with rejection, and to understand why some people were not willing to donate to our cause. Without my group, we wouldn't have been able to do this well, and I think the this whole project would't have been possible without them.

Issues

However, there were a few issues we faced as a team. One such issue was that this project was quite a last minute project as our initial project idea was not approved and supported by the higher ups that we had approached. But i was quite proud of my team, as we were able to adapt really quickly and get to work to prepare for the change in project.

Another issue we faced was coordinating the time in which we could meet. This was because, as all of us are working, we found it difficult to find a time in which we could meet to prepare for the event, and it was also quite difficult to start on time with all of us present, as all of us got off work at different timings. Hence, we decided to start with those who could be there by 5: 30pm, and the rest would join us when they could during that 2 hours.

One other issue we faced was the date and time when we carried out our project. As we carried out our project on a Monday, it was when the school had the least number of classes going on that day. Also, from 5: 30pm to 7: 30pm, it was the time where most Full-time programme classes were ending, and when the part-time classes were starting, and it was really difficult to catch people who were leaving, as we had gone to their classes and the staff rooms in order to collect donations and perform. But in the end, the project went well, and we managed to collect \$122. 20 in total.

Possible Improvements

In future, there are a few things that could be improved when doing this project. Firstly, we could have tried to conduct the project on another day and timing, so that we can get access to as many students and staff as possible, expanding our target pool. This will then allow us to reach more people and more people will be aware of Silver Ribbon Singapore, hence they might be more willing to help support positive mental health. Secondly, i think we can expand this further, by taking this fund raising project outside of the school, and spreading awareness to Singaporeans on positive mental health. We could get a permit in advance, and do this project more

frequently, to ensure that people recognise the importance of positive mental health on society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this project was extremely exciting, and it was particularly fun going around EASB and spreading joy to the staff and students, while at the same time helping to raise awareness on the need for positive mental health in our society today, and receiving support from the staff and students. It was encouraging as we saw how people were willing to contribute for a good cause, and some of them did not even think twice before donating. While I'm glad that this project was a success, more awareness needs to be spread for positive mental health, as what we've done isn't enough to help the people who really need mental health support. More can definitely be done to support these organisations that seek to help promote positive mental health, especially by volunteering and joining them in personally helping those who need support in the area of mental health. It is through this that the community around us can learn and understand why people are suffering, and they would be aware on how they can promote positive mental health within their own families, and even within their own community.