

the older workers explore the various employment options.

The programme helps older workers live, work and play by focusing on four key areas: Assessment and management of personal finances; understanding the ageing process; preparation and adaptation for re-employment; and social engagement.

To be eligible for this programme, workers must be a Singapore citizen or Permanent Resident aged above 50.

Since its launch in April this year, the programme has had three successful runs to help 71 older workers understand their strengths and skills to live a more fulfilling life.

Besides, the programme is modified for organisations to have a better idea of the needs, issues and concerns of older workers and more importantly, to recognise the importance of adopting age-friendly practices and be better equipped to facilitate the re-employment transition of older workers.

To date, a total of 107 participants from 32 organisations including Tien Wah Press Private Limited have benefitted from the half-day programme.

NTUC Surrogate Employer Programme

The NTUC-SEP provides assistance to NTUC Members who are keen to upgrade their skills without the support of their employers. NTUC helps employed NTUC Members by giving training assistance through the Skills Development Fund. This subsidises up to 90 per cent of the course fee for those aged 40 and above, with GCE 'A' Levels education and below. All NTUC Members, who must be Singaporean citizens or PR and gainfully employed, are eligible for training awards from the NTUC Education and Training Fund.

Since its inception in 2001, more than 100,000 workers have benefitted from the programme. Among them, 1,752 workers attended training under the programme in the last five months. Ninety four of the learners are aged 55 and above. ■

Understanding Them Better

SEG Company Participant: Tien Wah Press Private Limited

TIEN WAH Press Private Limited is committed in its efforts to re-employ older workers. The company works in tandem with the Singapore Industrial and Services Employees' Union in redesigning job processes and using more sophisticated machinery to have a conducive working environment for older workers.

With a high retention rate of workers, Tien Wah Press views its older workers in high regards. Its Senior Human Resource Manager Mrs Poh-Low Aye Lan gushed about the value of older workers. She said: "We believe that older workers can continue to contribute to the company as well as the society. We hope that they can pass on their useful experience to the young ones and leave a legacy for the next generation and to society."

With 30 per cent of its staff aged 50 and above, the company certainly knows a thing or two about employing older workers.

After attending the half-day SEG programme recently, Mrs Poh-Low felt that the company would be better prepared to devise age-friendly practices for its older workforce and "unlock the potential for the senior workers within our organisation." She added: "The programme has deepened my knowledge of how seniors work. It has helped me understand the physiological and psychological aspects of seniors as well as insights into ways of creating opportunities for them." ■

“We believe that older workers can continue to contribute to the company as well as the society.”

Poh-Low Aye Lan



Redesigned job processes and more sophisticated machinery have made light work for the older workers at Tien Wah Press Private Limited.



Older workers have a wealth of experience to share.



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Staying The Course

SEP Participant: Madam Fong See Nui

WHEN asked how long she intends to work, Madam Fong See Nui, 62, answered breezily: "As long as the Bureau wants me." Madam Fong has been a Corporate Support Officer at the Central Narcotics Bureau for almost 20 years. She and her husband, Mr Leong Tak Him, 63, intend to continue to work to support their only daughter, Xing Ru, 17, through university.

Madam Fong is currently attending

the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Advanced Book Keeping course, having completed the basic and intermediate levels. These courses were mostly funded under SEP. Madam Fong decided to take up the course to upgrade herself after realising how bad the economy was. She revealed her motivation for upgrading herself: "It's for survival purposes: I want to make myself more employable. The cost of

living has gone up, medical fees are increasing and my daughter is still very young."

Her current course runs for nine months, twice a week during weekday evenings. "It takes a lot of perseverance, hard work and sacrifice.

"I have slightly neglected my family because of my studies. However, my family has been very supportive of me and they all help out at home. My husband would take care of the housework and my daughter runs errands for me."

Her advice to older workers who are thinking about upgrading themselves: "If there's a will, there is always a way to do it."