

In December 1999, when the world was filled with all kinds of activities to usher in the new millennium, Ring 115 decided to mark its arrival by launching a charity project known as "Healing of Magic". We ordered the manual and video package from Healing of Magic in Lynchburg, USA, and soon found a partner for the project, the Occupational Therapy Department of Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

Healing of Magic

a Charity Project

Tan Tuan Seng

But what is "Healing of Magic" in the first place. Let me quote the Introduction from the manual by Cindy and Kevin Spencer, the couple who have been spreading the concept of Healing of Magic since 1984:

"The Healing of Magic program involves the teaching of simple magic tricks to people who have been the victim of stroke, accident, spinal cord and head injuries, development disabilities, and other diagnoses. By learning to perform magic, individuals achieve new skill levels which enhances their rehabilitation progress as well as develops and improves their self-image. It is a carefully designed, systematic approach that has gained widespread support from therapists as a viable treatment modality. It combines the skills of entertainment professionals (magicians) with those of the medical field (therapists) to provide a quality of therapeutic training that exceeds the limits of traditional rehabilitative techniques and programs."

On 22nd March 2000, Ring Secretary Tan Tuan Seng started the first Healing Magic session in Tan Tock Seng Hospital for a group of memory patients under the charge of occupational therapist Miss Florence Cheong. Since then, Tan visited the hospital fortnightly, and was joined later by two other members Madrandia Lam, Wee Kien Meng and ST Tang. There were five patients at the beginning, all senior citizens, mostly female. One or two stopped the treatment later, and some newcomers joined in. It was quite encouraging to see that they are all receptive to the program, although they keep forgetting how a trick is done. The tricks we have taught them include: Linking Paper Clips, Hopping Rubber Band, One-hand Knot, Instant Double Knots, Dissolving Knot, Top to Bottom Wand and Straw Penetration. Of course, to them the learning curve is extra long, and the magicians must have extra patience in coaching them. But, for one thing, they have learned not to give up. One of the ladies, I was told by her family member accompanying her to the therapeutic session, even practiced everyday until she could perform the one hand knot. The family member is very impressed with her progress and also perceives that rehearsing the rope trick was a very healthy exercise for her hands and arms.

The patients have been given a challenge: any one who can perform three tricks or more at the forthcoming Christmas party, will be awarded a certificate.

The group has grown recently to more than 10 people. Therefore, from the middle of November, it will be split into two groups, meeting on different days of the week. We will have one session on Thursday afternoon 2:30pm to 3:30pm, the other on Friday, the same time. This would mean that we need more magicians to help out in this project. Dear members, this is a great project to share with your love for magic and learn to love people. Won't you sign up?

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