Cheering on the Champs!

BCAM 2010
NHGD’s Honour
HMDP Award Winner
Diagnostics On The Fast Track

There aren’t many cities in the world more widely celebrated as a premier Business and MICE (Meetings, Incentive Travel, Convention and Exhibitions) destination than Singapore. With the hosting of the inaugural 2010 Youth Olympic in August, the world has come to discover another facet of Singapore – as a fully integrated sports, cultural and educational centre. NHG Diagnostics, being a leader in the diagnostics field is most honoured to participate in this national pride event, providing screening to both the local and international athletes at the Youth Olympics Village. Our participation marked another milestone for NHGD as it was the first time NHGD sent diagnostic images via virtual access, making live diagnosis possible!

As the Chinese saying goes, “good things come in pairs”, following close behind is the 2010 Formula 1 Singtel Singapore Grand Prix where NHGDians rendered their professional services to the Formula 1 drivers and the race teams.

As we strive towards our goals, let us not forget about the community and our family. This quarter of the year saw NHGDians sharing their joy with the residents of the Moral Home for the Disabled, as well as our families who remain our sounding board every night, as every one of us return to their warmth.

Here’s a toast to a job well done NHGDians!

Alvina Neo

Knowledge Enrichment

The SACB Education Programme

Each day brings us a new opportunity to learn. With new methods and advancements in technology happening almost daily, it is important for us to stay updated. From 11 August to 27 October 2010, ten of our colleagues from NHGD were doing just that by taking courses in the 12th Module of the Singapore Association of Clinical Biochemists (SACB) Education Programme. In the ten weekly courses held at the Pathology Lecture of Singapore General Hospital, they explored topics that included an introduction to chemistry and immunoassay analysers, biochemical tests of renal functions, urine and fluid biochemistry, as well as quality and laboratory accreditation. They also discussed recent advancements in clinical medicine, such as stem cell technology and personalised medicine. Their studies were kindly sponsored by NHGD.

At the end of this programme, not only will our colleagues have an update on the recent developments in these areas, they will also be able to consolidate their clinical biochemistry knowledge for their laboratory duties. Well done participants! We know you have enjoyed the classes and have gained every bit of knowledge to contribute to our society!

Articles by Alan Tang

Biochemistry Analyser for Choa Chu Kang Polyclinic

On 28th October 2010, NHGD installed its first Cobas c 311 Biochemistry Analyser at Choa Chu Kang (CCK) Polyclinic, which serves as a mini backend lab for the northern region of Singapore.

The Biochemistry Analyser is capable of running up to 300 tests an hour and conducts up to 22 different biochemistry tests, including cholesterol, electrolytes etc., thus making a vast range of tests available for patients on-site. Besides improving patient management, it also offers fast turnaround, delivering results in just 2.5 hours. This value-addition renders doctors’ consultations with results within a single day! Critical results can also be handled by the clinic doctors spontaneously.

At Choa Chu Kang laboratory, patients’ specimens need not be sent to a backend laboratory anymore, thus enhancing quality and accuracy of every test result. Besides mitigating shortcomings resulting from specimen transportation, the Biochemistry Analyser also meets the increase in demand for laboratory requests with hospital integration and primary physicians taking on specialist functions.

This very first Biochemistry Analyser at CCK Polyclinic has undeniably streamlined daily workflow in the laboratory and proved to be a resounding success. We look forward to having this project rolled out at the remaining NHGD laboratories in 2011!

Articles by Serene Kho

Greetings
October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month (BCAM). This month-long campaign aims to stress the importance of regular breast screening and encourage more women to go for regular mammograms.

On 2nd October, the Breast Cancer Foundation and Watsons flagged off the Pink Ribbon Walk and Run 2010 at 8am.

East Coast Park was swelling in a sea of pink as early as 7am. Women, children, men and even pets dressed in myriad shades of pink and gathered for the event. Almost 2000 runners and 4000 walkers turned up for this event! Ms Grace Fu, Senior Minister of State - Ministry of National Development & Ministry of Education - was the Guest of Honour to flag off the event.

NHGD collaborated with the BCAM Committee to bring the Mammobus to East Coast Park. NHGD initiated a sponsorship of $10 for every Mammogram performed onboard the Mammobus. A total of 100 vouchers with a validity period of one month were given to participants who were keen to have a mammogram done. The participants could use this voucher to enjoy a special rate on their appointments made at any of NHGD’s centres islandwide.

In addition, NHGD co-sponsored the printing of thirty thousand ZOcards aimed at encouraging women to be more proactive when it comes to performing regular self-breast examination, rather than being caught up with everyday activities. Fifteen thousand of these ZOcards will be circulated islandwide via ZOcard stands, so do keep a look out for these creative art pieces.

Remember ladies, early detection save lives and breasts! Men, play your part and remind the women of your life to go for regular screening!

Article and photos by Alvina Neo

Did you know that Breast Cancer Awareness Month 2010 marks its 25th anniversary? It was first launched in 1985 in the United States of America and has since evolved. Today it is observed by many countries the world over.
NHGD’s Honour

Over 40 NHGDians turned up at the Moral Home for the Disabled on 21 August 2010 – NHGD’s adopted home located at Jalan Eunos. Many of them had rushed down after work just to share their hearts and take part in the Mini Olympics organised by NHGD for residents of the Home.

At the Home, NHGDians joined the residents in a mini torch relay, taught them our unique Singapore YOG Cheer and guided them through some tele-matches. It was definitely fun-filled fulfilling afternoon for all. Some call it Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). I say it is service from the bottom of every NHGDian’s heart.

Kelvin Tan

F1 Thrills

With NHGD’s participation, Singapore Grand Prix has a fully lead-lined service at the tracks for the first time in history. Doctors at the Medical Centre could now view images instantly before deciding if administration of further treatment was needed. The short turn around time also enabled patients with severe injuries to be sent to the Singapore General Hospital with their x-ray images downloaded into a DVD as DICOM format coupled with a DICOM Viewer for convenient diagnosis.

Did You Know?

F1 is the highest class of single seater auto racing sanctioned by the Fédération Internationale de l’Automobile (FIA) and the “formula” in the name refers to a set of rules with which all participants’ cars must comply.

Passing on the cheer

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Kelvin Tan

We were indeed glad to have partnered NHG Diagnostics for the 2010 Singapore Grand Prix. The service provided by the Mobile X-ray Unit was efficient with quality diagnostic capabilities.

Dr. Kelvin Chew
A “Dope” Experience

I was posted to be a volunteer under the Doping Control Department of the games. I was stationed not only in the Youth Olympic Village (YOV), but also on many various fields of play throughout the competition.

Many of the athletes would later affectionately call me the “official bloodsucker” or “vampire” as my role was to draw blood from them for doping control. Being part of the doping control team raised my awareness of how important drug testing is to ensure that everyone had equal opportunities in the sport they played. Initially, I was rather sad that I could not be amongst fellow NHGDians from the laboratory situated in the Medical Centre at the YOV in NTU. However my role as Blood Collection Officer gave me a few advantages over my colleagues as they did not have the chance to interact with the International Doping Control officers from all around the world. I even got to meet medalists from the different countries and had the honour of shaking their hands.

Nur Ashikin Kamil (Medical Technician)

Foreign Buddies

YOG was definitely different from all the other projects we had ever covered. There were quite a few challenges at first. In order to get into the venue I had to undergo a thorough security search which included a thorough body and bags scan. We also got to experience a whole new workflow. It was the first time that we had to send images from the site directly sent to the PACS. Despite these challenges, I will not trade this experience for anything. We had an exciting and exclusive opportunity to mingle with people of different nationalities. We even get to learn a bit of their language through an interpreter. Nonetheless it made me a little sad as we didn’t witness all the victories and winning moments. We saw much of the other side of the coin, the injured athletes.

Thanks to NHGD, taking part in the first-ever YOG is an experience I will cherish for the rest of my life.

Ferdinand Alcantara and James Agraviador (Radiographers)
A high-tech experience

4th IPTS - Bangalore, India

I had the opportunity to join the radiologists, system engineers, radiographers as well as IT specialists who converged from all over the world at the 4th International PACS and Teleradiology Symposium (IPTS) held in Bangalore, India. They updated us on the latest technology used to aid diagnoses of X-ray images.

In those 2 days, I got a gist of how technology directly or indirectly affects patient care in the aspect of radiology. I also had the opportunity to learn how the Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS) functions in India.

It was a great experience to understand more about the workflow of one of our 4 reading centres - the Teleradiology Solutions. The founder and Chief Radiologist, Dr Arjun Kalyanpur was indeed knowledgeable and receptive towards me. I also met up with the team (Mr Vijay and Ms Sumathi) who manages images sent from NHGD.

Lastly, I seized this great opportunity to go for a half-day tour around Bangalore before I returned to Singapore. India is indeed incredible with all the magnificent sights and breathtaking views. This trip was really fruitful and I definitely look forward to the next IPTS.

Article and photographs by Benny Tan

An Educational Trip to LA

American Association for Clinical Chemistry Conference 2010
25 – 29 July 2010, Los Angeles, USA

The American Association for Clinical Chemistry 2010 conference was held for five days at the Anaheim Convention Centre in Los Angeles. There were plenary sessions helmed by experts, clinical sessions and an expo. During the plenary and clinical sessions, experts shared their experiences, research findings and the latest updates in clinical laboratory practices throughout the world. The selected speakers not only graciously shared their mistakes but also suggest what practices to avoid, thereby helping the participants gain practical knowledge of the field.

The most fruitful part of the experience was the clinical expo. Besides the various freebies from the booths, the clinical expo was definitely an eye opener to the ever changing, ever upgrading technologies all around the world. There were about 8,000 booths displaying different types of lab equipment and consumables. There were impressive equipment innovations such as the phlebotomy cart, biohazard bag holders and portable phlebotomy tray. A lot of attention was given to the Point-of-Care Testing (POCT) and biochemistry analysers. POCT is now available in pocket sizes for cardiac markers, ECG, etc. Even a glucometer could be worn on a lanyard. Experts held demonstrations of various biochemistry analysers that helped us select the best one for the newly renovated Choa Chu Kang laboratory.

Indeed, this was a worthwhile and fruitful trip.

Article by Serene Kho
It is not uncommon for patients to grumble about services at Polyclinics, particularly having to wait before being attended to. In fact, complaints have become part and parcel of our daily working life at the Polyclinics. However, one must always adopt a positive approach to complaints. After all, complaints are a form of feedback and an opportunity for us to improve our shortcomings and make this place a better place for both our patients and colleagues.

NHGD Jurong Laboratory was chosen as the pilot site for the Value Stream Mapping (VSM) project. The project involved implementing lean initiatives that will improve the laboratory processes. I took the opportunity to be part of the VSM team led by Dr. Tung. Little did I know this move would yield wonderful results. Through the team’s efforts and endless dedication, we managed to reduce the patients’ waiting times, quicker turn-around time for laboratory tests and increased overall service standards. The staff also benefited through the improved productivity on their end.

This project was a success on all fronts and I was honoured with the Human Manpower Development Plan (HDMP) Award. I am very grateful to receive this award that was set up in 1980 by the Ministry Of Health to develop our healthcare manpower capabilities. The award gives me the opportunity to go to the University of Michigan Medical Centre to learn about LEAN Healthcare and hospital attachment.

I could not have achieved this prestigious award without the support and co-operation of my team as well as that of the NHGD management. I share this achievement with them and hope that it would inspire my colleagues to constantly embark on new initiatives and projects to improve our healthcare system.

Ms Dhanam Raghupathy, winner of the Human Manpower Development Plan (HMDP) Award, shares how customer feedback benefits both NHGD and the customers themselves.

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NHG Polyclinics embarked on a journey of discovery and fun on 25 Sept 2010, as hundreds of staff and their families journeyed to the Singapore Discovery Centre in Joo Koon for the NHGP Family Day 2010. The slight drizzle could not dampen the spirits of an animated crowd who arrived as early as 2:30pm!

The guests were greeted by fun-loving robot mascots as they made their way to the main foyer. Tickets and goodie bags were distributed to everyone at the entrance and once inside, staff were treated to an amazing exhibit of Singapore’s highlights, from racial harmony to the strength of its armed forces and inspiring future plans. Guests were also treated to three afternoon movies: “Grown Ups” starring Adam Sandler, “The Last Airbender” and “Africa”. The free flow of food kept everyone going as guests had their fill of cotton candy, popcorn, burgers, hotdogs and other goodies. Sidewalk games also proved to be a big hit amongst young and old alike, with guests queuing up to try their hand at mini golf, mini basketball, hit the bottles and mini fishing. Two tele-match games were also held midway into the event and staff took turns to outwit each other in a water-and-pail relay race as well as a balloon tossing competition.

“My children thoroughly enjoyed themselves during the bean bear making session, and the paintings on display. An educational and fun trip indeed”, said Ms Tan Yee Fong, accounts assistant with NHGD.

The main highlight of the event was indeed the grand lucky draw when guests walked away with fabulous prizes such as iPad, iPhone 4, Osim chair, laptops and netbooks, Blu-ray players and many more.

It was truly an afternoon of family fun and discovery as NHG was treated to a delightful afternoon at the Singapore Discovery Centre.

Written by Dr Gabriel Gonzales, Woodlands Polyclinic