

No Pain, No Gain

A Message from Mr. Harry To Ha Tang,
Chairperson of the Building & Construction Committee (2003-2004)

As the 2004 Moon Festival is fast approaching, I am being reminded that our aged hostel was built and operational for almost a year now. It is the right time to publish a Special Edition, documenting the whole process and to thank all of you in supporting the construction of this hostel where I was the chairperson.

I hereby would like to add a few words to this Special Edition.

In 1999, the Commonwealth Department of Aged Care and Health gave us a final notice to complete within a certain period or else cancel the funding because it had taken too long to complete. As you aware, the funding was approved-in-principle in 1989 when Mr. Phuoc Thang TRAN was then the President of the NSW Indo-China Chinese Association. For 10 years nothing significant had happened except a number of fundraising dinners and support from the Australian Chinese Charity Foundation and the purchased of a piece of land, the current site, in 1993 under the then leadership of Mr. Van Thao CHUNG. We did not raise adequate funds to commence construction until in 2000.

The impending final notice was an impetus to spur our former Presidents and us on anxiously to do something as soon as possible. Friends like The Hon. Dr. Peter Wong, Mr. Henry Ngai, Mr. Oai Trieu, Mr. David Nguy, Mr. Lim and Mr. Somsak Ma, who became the frontline people, calling on the Chinese community to fully support our worthwhile project. The support was overwhelming and a new foundation was formed to solely ensure the building of this aged hostel.

I was so overjoyed when 31 kind individuals were willing to become members and trustees to establish a foundation to complete this project. At the same time, with the support of friends and members of the Foundation, I was appointed as the chairperson of the Building & Construction Committee. Though I was inexperienced in matters of construction, I was willing to face the challenges with the valuable assistance of people like Mr. Sean Ngu, our Project Manager, Mr. Lim Kian Seng and Mr. Louise Chow, our Project Architect. I visited the construction site in the morning and evening to oversee the works and ensure the process was done accordingly to the plan and on the set schedule. I felt the burden fell from my shoulders once the building was done!

I have no doubt that the time spent to finish this was a memorable event in my whole life. It was also a trying period for all around me. I have times of joys and pains together. Thank goodness I have lived through it and found it bittersweet because of the joy of completion.

I have taken this as a great learning experience for me and hope that others would follow suit when opportunity arises. May I encourage you all to actively engage in charity works.