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The ABCs of having clean public toilets

I REFER to the letter, 'Upgrade toilets of all eating places' by Mr Yap Swee Hoo (ST, Oct 24), and 'Clean loos? Stress upkeep and enforcement' from Mr Tan Thian Poh and Mr Koh Geok Beng (ST, Oct 26).

The Restroom Association (Singapore) or RAS is glad to receive such responses from the public. At RAS, we believe in the A (for Architecture), B (Behaviour) and C (Cleanliness) to achieve clean toilets.

One instance whereby RAS has made an effort in toilet Architecture: We have worked with the National Environment Agency to come up with COPEH (Code of Practice on Environmental Health) whereby the ladies restroom of all new buildings have been increased according to their area and location.

Cleanliness-wise, RAS also provides the training of cleaners under the National Skills Recognition Scheme and the Restroom Specialist Training Course. Cleaning contractors are strongly advised to send their cleaners for the above professional training courses.

Taking a holistic approach to upkeep and maintain clean toilets, RAS has initiated the Happy Toilet Programme - a star-grading system whereby public restrooms are evaluated according to design, quality and maintenance. Public toilets with three stars and above are allowed to carry the 'Happy Toilet' logo. Renewal is also carried out on a yearly basis to ensure sustained maintenance. This is to provide assurance to the public that these restrooms have attained a satisfactory standard set by RAS. Some of such food centres with star-rated toilets include Market Street Food Centre, Amoy Street Food Centre and Tampines St 11 Round Market.

RAS strongly encourages all public toilet owners to take up the challenge to participate in the Happy Toilet Programme as a commitment to provide clean restrooms for their patrons.

User behaviour is another important component in ensuring clean toilets. RAS has been implementing the Happy Toilet School Education Programme for preschools, primary and secondary schools and has received positive feedback. Hence, we will be rolling out a toilet campaign focusing on public education next year, whereby users are encouraged to be considerate for the next user by treating public toilets in the same fashion as their personal home toilet.

Besides continuing to work with the relevant authorities to improve our public toilets, we would like to encourage like-minded members to join RAS in our effort towards a gracious society with clean public toilets for everyone. Please visit www.toilet.org.sg for more information.

Other than highlighting dirty toilets and poor toilet user behaviour, RAS would also like to encourage the public to give recognition to good toilets and our unsung heroes - the toilet cleaners. Please continue to share your opinions about local public toilets via e-mail to mysay@toilet.org.sg or SMS to 9770-LOOS (9770 5667).

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