

Living in the North East

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IRON WOMEN

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The 'Dirty Green' Job

While many people would raise an eyebrow at her job, Susan Pereira loves the 'eco' challenges that her role as office manager of the Restroom Association brings.

BY AILEEN LAI PHOTO BY EALBERT HO

“Sorry, what association again?” This is the first reaction that Susan Pereira gets when she tells people that she works at the Restroom Association Singapore (RAS).

“After explaining more about what I do, some people break out into a loud laugh,” says Susan, who is the Office Manager, Special Projects Division.

The 33-year-old has dabbled in various fields including public relations and insurance since 2001. Though she has transitioned smoothly up the rungs of the corporate ladder, she felt a calling for something more meaningful.

“At some point in your career, everyone tends to seek a higher level of fulfilment in their jobs besides putting the bread on the table,” says Susan. “Public relations is all about persuading and influencing attitudes and I hope to use my skills in this area to improve the well-being of the community in some way.” This is exactly what prompted her to take up the post of Outreach Education Executive at RAS back in February 2008.

QUEST FOR HAPPY TOILETS

The Restroom Association is a charity started by Mr Jack Sim, also founder of the World Toilet Organisation. The association serves to fulfil its mission of providing clean public restrooms for everyone through holding educational talks as well as training programmes on restroom cleanliness and hygiene. The RAS also provides the nationally recognised Happy Toilet Rating programme for businesses and offer consultation services for restroom planning and education.

As Office Manager, Susan assists Ms Tan Puay Hoon, President of RAS, to fulfil the association's mission of providing clean public restrooms for everyone. She also oversees projects in the North East district including sharing the importance of clean public restrooms during the 5th North East Environmental Health Regional Workshop co-organised by the North East Regional Office National Environment Agency in March last year; educating residents on the 10-step hand washing exercise last November; and working with student volunteers to get residents to pen down their '2010 Toilet Wish' at the North East Challenge Walk in the same month.



Her next focus will be the LOO Campaign finale which will take place in November this year. “We aim to mobilise a Restroom Cleanliness taskforce in the GRCs and restrooms that achieve our 3-star Happy Toilet Rating will be featured on our LOO Map, grouped according to the 5 CDCs.” Another objective on her to-do list is to share good water saving tips with the North East residents, through entertaining road shows.

Though her present role is hardly as glamorous as her previous undertakings, Susan finds that it brings her extreme satisfaction because she is able to pick up the concerns of cleaners, parents and students. It's a skill and she relishes the challenge of being able to capture the views of the different groups.

So what's her response to people who still think that her job is “dirty and unglamorous”?

Her answer: “If you complain, make sure you do something about it.”