Investing in Corporate Philanthropy

Corporate citizenry is one of SPH’s core values because we believe that we have a responsibility to do our part in the community we operate in.

To demonstrate its corporate citizenry efforts, SPH set up the Singapore Press Holdings Foundation in 2003 with a seed contribution of $20 million. Although it is a registered charity and an Institution of Public Character (IPC), SPH Foundation does not solicit for public donations, but relies solely on the returns generated from investments to support a wide array of activities.

Building a Vibrant Community through the Arts

In the financial year under review, SPH’s contributions to the Singapore arts scene were once again recognised with the Distinguished Patron of the Arts Award from the National Arts Council. SPH has received this prestigious award consecutively since 1993, which is a testimony of our commitment to nurture local talent and to boost Singaporeans’ appreciation of the arts.

SPH also sponsored Quest, the opening performance at this year’s Singapore Arts Festival which was one of the better-received local productions. Quest marked the first collaboration between Singapore’s two flagship arts companies – Singapore Dance Theatre and Singapore Chinese Orchestra.

Back for a second season, the SPH Gift of Music (GOM) tied up with the Singapore Chinese Orchestra’s Caring Series to bring concerts to the hospitals and a hospice for the first time in 2006. Patients and caregivers from Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Kwong Wai Shiu Hospital and St Luke’s Hospital were treated to light Chinese classical music.

The SPH GOM series also brought the renowned Singapore Symphony Orchestra (SSO) to the heartlands. The SSO played their popular classics to the delight of residents at Seng Kang, Geylang Serai and Tampines. An outdoor concert featuring local bands and foreign acts was also staged at the Singapore Botanic Gardens.

The Company’s support for the local arts scene is also evident from its sponsorship of the annual 24-Hour Playwriting Competition and Singapore Young Dramatists Awards which are part of the Writers Laboratory by TheatreWorks providing a platform for aspiring scriptwriters to showcase their creativity.

Loving and Protecting the Environment around Us

SPH supports wildlife conservation through the adoption of endangered animals such as Inuka, the polar bear and sponsorship of the SPH Conservation Centre at the Singapore Zoo which houses the endangered Proboscis Monkeys from Borneo. SPH also adopted the popular Birds n Buddies show, the Caribbean Flamingos and Samson the Golden Eagle at the Jurong Bird Park.

As part of its conservation efforts, the SPH Conservation Ambassadors and Wildlife Buddies programme initiated in 2004 trains students as guides to introduce selected exhibits to zoo visitors. Through this programme, both visitors and student guides get a chance to learn more about the importance of conservation and protecting endangered animals, and help guides boost their self-confidence in public speaking.

Other conservation efforts also include sponsorship of SPH Foundation Solar Innovations 2006, an annual competition for primary, secondary and tertiary students to promote and build a more environmentally-friendly Singapore through projects, prototypes or proposal papers as well as partnership with National Parks to devise tailor-made nature appreciation projects for children with special needs.
Supporting the Community and the Underprivileged

To promote and encourage reading, SPH set up dedicated reading corners in tertiary institutions, and organised a conference for parents on how to develop a love for reading from a young age.

For the third consecutive year, SPH made a group donation of $200,000 to charity. Unlike the past two years, SPH chose to focus on charities serving the disabled community as it believes disability does not mean inability. In addition, SPH Foundation has also been extending its support to children from low-income families as well as those with special needs with an annual donation of $200,000 for the last two years.

Besides appealing for blood donations for the Singapore Red Cross, this year’s Red Apple Day included a call for bone marrow donors. While more than half of the participants were SPH staff, the event also drew encouraging response from companies and residents operating and living in Toa Payoh.

As a strong believer of leading by example, SPH continues to match its employees’ monthly contributions dollar-for-dollar for the Community Chest SHARE programme since it was introduced in 1988. SPH and its employees contribute more than $120,000 to the SHARE programme annually.

Rallying Support for Worthy Causes

Recognising the need to increase social awareness in the community, SPH leverages on its media reach and network to raise funds for the President’s Challenge every year to support needy individuals through events such as the iconic The New Paper Be Yourself Day and zPop Charity Concert.

Apart from the contributions made at its corporate level, our newspapers and subsidiaries initiated and executed their own innovative philanthropic activities to support worthy causes.

For example, the inaugural ChildAid concert in December 2005 was a concert with a difference. In support of The Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund and The Business Times Budding Artists Fund, the two newspapers rallied young performers to volunteer and raise funds for needy children through the concert, which received overwhelming response.

Organised by SPH’s three Chinese-language newspapers, Lianhe Zaobao, Shin Min Daily News and Lianhe Wanbao, the Singapore River Hongbao continues to be an event to look forward to by many Singaporeans, old and young, where one can learn about the Chinese language, arts and culture.

Riding on the World Cup fever this year, The Business Times partnered Philips to organise the BT-Philips World Cup Fund where senior executives from 32 organisations helped raise funds for the programme, Food from the Heart.

Staff from Orchard 290, the owner and manager of Paragon, became “Staff for a Day” with one of their key tenants, Marks & Spencer, to raise funds for victims of the earthquake in central Java in May this year.

In its pursuit to generate better returns for its shareholders, SPH is equally aware of the need to develop the heartware of the Company and its staff. With this in mind, corporate citizenry will always remain a core value for SPH because we believe that it is only when the community benefits, that the Company can continue to thrive in the highly-competitive and fast-paced Singapore.