

Courts raises \$290,000 at annual charity event

By AUDREY TAN

TWO Singaporean charities each collected cheques for \$145,000 last night - the proceeds of a 1980s-themed annual charity party held by electronics and home furnishing store Courts.

Staff and guests dressed as stars of the time such as Madonna and Super Mario and were joined by Liverpool football legends Dietmar Hamann and John Barnes. The latter performed an impromptu rap in front of 400 guests at last November's bash.

Courts Asia group chief executive Terry O'Connor handed over the cheques to non-profit youth organisation Heartware Network and charity group We Care Community Services, which runs an outpatient facility for the treatment of addictive diseases.

Heartware Network founder Ray-

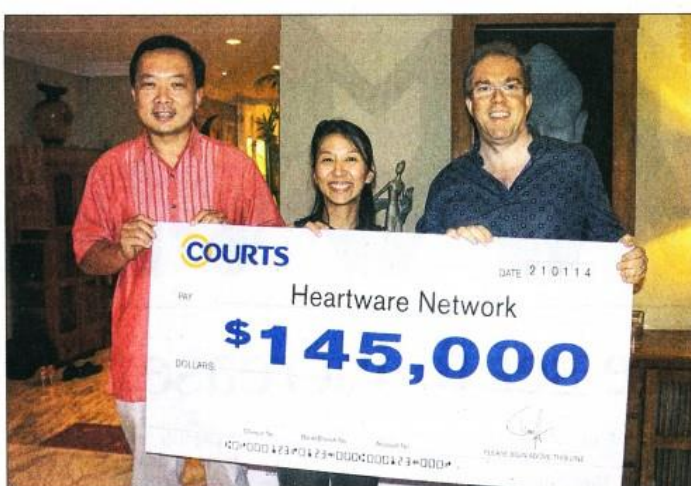
mond Huang told last night's event at The Wilshire condominium in Farrer Road that the funds raised were "very important" for the charity, adding that the organisation requires about \$800,000 to run its programmes for one year.

These include a leadership scheme for less academically inclined students and a tuition programme for children whose parents are incarcerated or those from lower-income families.

Ms Eugenia Gajardo, representative of We Care's board of directors, also said the charity was "grateful that Courts recognises the... impact of addiction as a disease in the society and an individual's life".

She said that the "generous donation" would "go a long way" to fund educational programmes to help de-stigmatised addictions and recovery programmes.

The \$290,000 total is the highest



Mr Terry O'Connor (right) presenting a cheque to Heartware Network's founder Raymond Huang (left) and executive director Tan See Leng (centre). PHOTO: COURTS SINGAPORE

amount raised at the annual Courts event since it started in 2001.

Mr O'Connor added: "It has been heartening to see support for the charity party snowball through the

years, as our friends, sponsors and business partners share our motivation to positively impact the community."

audreyt@sph.com.sg

志愿组织与私企合作 弱势青年获实习机会

更多私人企业愿意支持非盈利组织，为弱势青少年提供职场实习机会，协助他们实现理想。志愿组织如新加坡基督教青年会和学生辅导会等都与私人企业合办学徒计划。

胡洁梅

ohkm@sph.com.sg

共和理工学院生陈凯微念中学时在一项学徒计划下到圣淘沙名胜世界实习。实习结束后，她过去两年来继续到那里打假期工赚取工作经验，希望以后能从事向往的旅游行业。

如今，更多私人企业愿意支持非盈利组织，为弱势青少年提供职场实习机会，协助他们实现理想。志愿组织如新加坡基督教青年会（YMCA）和学生辅导会（Student Care Service）等都与私人企业合办学徒计划。

基督教青年会在2011年推出职业与软技能培训计划，协助已辍学或边缘青年掌握一技之长。参与计划的企业从2011年的六个增加至目前的27个，包括餐饮、服务与美发业。

圣淘沙名胜世界与志愿组织心件工程（Heartware Network）合办的aRWSome学徒计划则针对低收入家庭或学业成绩一般的学生，这些学生大多来自普通源流。

计划推出至今四年，共有98名学生获益。今年获得实习机会的学生是历史最多的，达31人。

圣淘沙名胜世界企业传播助理副总裁林顺华指出，计划旨在培养学生对款待行业的兴趣与技能，启发他们加入款待行业。学生在学徒计划中的表现可算入课程辅助活动的成绩，因此对他们的学业也有帮助。

培训内容每年不同

aRWSome学徒计划针对15岁至18岁、家庭收入少于2500元的学生。心件工程执行主任陈玲诗说：“我发现，学生在实习后更有自信和学习动力。圣淘沙名胜世界能提供的范围更广，工作性质比较有趣，能吸引青少年。”

这项计划每年的培训内容不同，首届学生在2011年学习烹饪。前年，另一批学生在环球影城参与表演，去年参加的学生则在



陈凯微向往在旅游景点工作，有机会与各国游客交流。她趁学校假期回环球影城的餐厅打工，累积经验。（郑福梁摄）

环球影城与S.E.A海洋馆实习。今年参加的学生在圣淘沙名胜世界的酒店实习，学习酒店管理。这批学生刚在6月学校假期完成两周实习。

17岁的陈凯微是学徒计划的首届学生，她就读后港中学时由教师推荐参加烹饪课程，课程由圣淘沙名胜世界厨师指导。完成烹饪课后，她获选到环球影城餐厅实习，尝试收银、招待顾客与清理等工作。

她受访说：“我一直向往在旅游景点工作，与不同国家的游客交流。完成实习后，我趁学校假期回餐厅打工，累积工作经验。每个学生都应获得平等的学习机会，学徒计划帮助我们这些来自普通源流的学生，我觉得对我们是一种肯定。”

余俊霖（19岁）几年前就读瑞士村中学时参加aRWSome学徒计划，他目前在南洋理工大学选修营养学课程。他说，他在实

习后对餐饮业有进一步认识，期间也赚点零用钱，减轻母亲的负担。

聘请学徒为全职员工

意大利餐馆Garabaldi是另一个支持青年学徒计划的企业，它同基督教青年会合作，已为四名青年提供实习，接下来将录取另三名学徒。餐馆老板兼主厨加莱第（Roberto Galetti）受访时说，他想为这些青年提供向上的机会。他对学徒的表现相当满意，还聘用其中一些为全职员工。

基督教青年会总干事罗志文指出，至今已有190名青年参加为期六个月的培训，80%受训后找到工作或继续深造。这些介于15至21岁的青年在完成所选择的美发、烘焙或烹饪等课程后，会获得职业培训证书。社工也会给予青年所需的支持。

Poly lecturers create app for faster seating at parade

By LEE JIAN XUAN

THE crowds at this year's National Day Parade (NDP) could get to their seats faster with help from a new seating management application designed by lecturers from Republic Polytechnic's School of Infocomm.

"The ushers at the platform can continually update the app as people filter in, so the ushers at the concourse know which seats are occupied. Then they can direct the crowds accordingly," explained Mr Tan Kok Cheng, programme chair of the Diploma in Mobile Software Development, who led the team of four lecturers to develop the app.

The app, which took about four months to create, has been deployed at weekly rehearsals since July 5, and results have been encouraging, said lecturer Jason Lim, 33, one of the team members.

"We have received positive feedback that the flow has been smoother," he said.

Mr Victor Huang, assistant project manager at non-profit organisation Heartware Network, which provides ushers for the parade, estimates that the seating time for each spectator has been cut by five to 10 minutes.

Traditionally, Heartware has managed crowd flow using pen and paper as well as walkie-talk-



Republic Polytechnic lecturers (from left) Jason Lim, Magdalene Lim Siok Hoon, Tan Kok Cheng and Shannen Ang Yen Hua took about four months to create the seating management application. ST PHOTO: CHEW SENG KIM



check it for updates."

Heartware has been providing volunteer ushers at the NDP for the past 15 years, and will supply about 650 ushers this year, he added.

About 27,000 spectators are expected at this year's parade.

Heartware is also exploring future tie-ups with the polytechnic so the app can be used to direct crowd flow at other mass events.

Undergraduate Goh Chia Hui, 21, an usher at this year's parade, said the app was user-friendly.

"It helps us take note of the exact locations that are filling up quickly, so we can redirect people," she said.

jianxuan@sph.com.sg

ies, he said.

"This app is useful because the two groups of ushers at the platform and concourse cannot always see each other, so they can

Try over 50 hairstyles with 3D app

By DANSON CHEONG

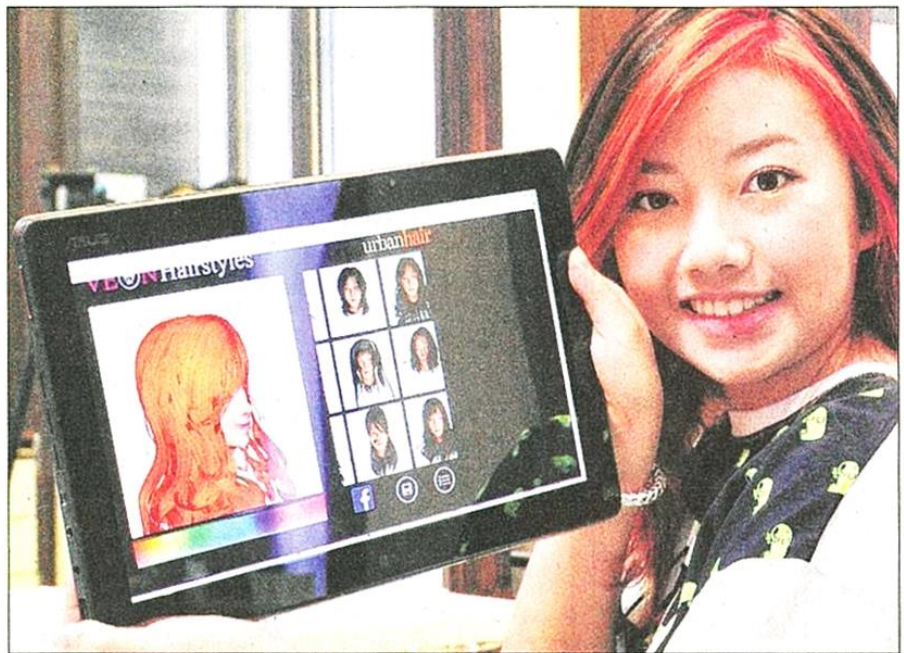
A LOCAL start-up company has come up with the ideal invention for a bad hair day: An app that lets you try out more than 50 different hairstyles in less than half an hour.

Gamurai's Web application, called VEON@HairExperience, is based on 3D-modelling technology licensed from the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*Star).

It allows hairstylists to take a single frontal photograph of a customer and create a virtual 3D avatar on which different hairstyles can be superimposed.

Gamurai co-founder Woo Sze Ming said: "This consultation can last 15 to 30 minutes, depending on the salon and customer."

For under \$10,000, a salon would receive tablet devices containing the app for three to five stylists. The app also has features allowing salons to track



Hair model Lin Ting holding up a tablet with the software and her 3D photo against the finished hairstyle. Gamurai's Web app is based on 3D-modelling technology licensed from A*Star. PHOTO: DIOS VINCOY JR FOR THE STRAITS TIMES

their inventory, appointments and customer information.

After a week-long trial, it has been made available to the industry. "My customers like that they can (use) the device and try on different styles," said Mr Eugene Ong, managing director of urbanhair, one of the three salons in the trial. All his staff mastered the app within the week.

Mr Woo said interested salons can apply for subsidies from

Spring Singapore's Collaborative Industry Projects initiative aimed at raising small and medium-sized enterprises' productivity.

Meanwhile, the Hair and Cosmetology Association of Singapore, an industry body for hairstylists and make-up artists, was officially launched yesterday. It has 70 members, and aims to "give young make-up artists and hairstylists a sense of direction".

dansonc@sph.com.sg