

Any volunteers?

Let's face it – everyone gets down from time to time. If you're lucky, you have a network of friends and family to help you; if not, you can always count on the **Samaritans of Singapore (SOS)**. Then again, they need your help too.



Founded in 1969, SOS provides a listening ear to anyone who needs one – especially the severely depressed or suicidal. According to executive director Christine Wong, the group began as a response to an increase in the suicide rate in Singapore, attributed to the mass move from traditional housing to HDB flats. 'In the 1960s, Singapore's rapid development from dwellings in kampongs, rubber plantations and swamps was replaced by the concrete slabs of high-rise flats,' she says. 'Extended families were broken up, neighbours scattered, and urbanisation and industrialisation would change the colour and rhythm of communal living.' Shortly after this shift, suicide rates rose from just under 10 per cent in the '60s to 13 per cent in 1995.

The Samaritans fight this growing trend not only by running a **24/7 free hotline (1800 221 4444)**, but also face-to-face counselling; dispatching an emergency squad to suicide attempts in progress; reaching out to those left behind in the wake of a suicide through on-site counselling and support groups; and maintaining an email-befriending service at pat@samaritans.org.sg.

As SOS receives more than 45,000 calls each year, they need people to work the phones. Volunteers must be at least 23 years old (to ensure emotional maturity) and take part in an extensive nine- to 12-month training programme. They need to commit to the organisation for two years, working an average of 3.5 hours a week. The training includes the development of listening skills, supervised phone work, suicide-intervention preparation and methods of supporting suicide survivors. According to one volunteer who, like all SOS participants, needs to remain anonymous: 'My time with SOS has been fulfilling, if also emotionally draining. I've become a better listener, more patient and less judgmental of others.'

Currently, the need is greatest for people who can man the phones during daytime and overnight shifts; but SOS would be grateful for help in any time slot. If you are interested, call 6221 2122 or e-mail pv@samaritans.org.sg. For more information, go to www.samaritans.org.sg.
Michael Franco

Listings

How to use the listings

This section consists of the month's events listed by genre plus a selection of the island's many visitor attractions. For current exhibitions and events at Singapore's cultural and history museums, see **Museums**; details of fine-art institutions and art galleries are in **Art** listings. ☉ Denotes an event for which tickets are available through Sistic (6348 5555, www.sistic.com.sg).

* Denotes an event we particularly recommend.

► Before a day denotes a closing date; after a day denotes a starting date.

How to be listed

Listings must arrive in writing by the **Monday five weeks** before publication. We need the following details: address, phone number, nearest MRT, dates, times, prices and details of the event. Listings can be sent by post or emailed to listings@timeoutsingapore.com. Listings are free but, as space is limited, inclusion is not guaranteed.

Events

* FREE The Food Safari 14-16 Nov; 11am-10pm. Suntec City Convention Centre, Halls 403-404, 1 Raffles Blvd (www.thefoodsafari.com). ☉ City Hall. On most safaris, you may have to worry about becoming the food. But at this 'food theme park', you just have to worry about not eating too much of it. Wander trails where you can sample food from around the world, and meet culinary experts and local chefs who will inform and entertain you while vying for the title of 'King Safari'.

* **FREE Responsible Pet Owner Roadshow 7-9 Nov; 11am-9pm. Singapore Expo Centre, Hall 6B, 1 Expo Dr (6403 2160, www.singaporeexpo.com.sg). ☉ Expo.** It's a story told time and again: family gets a cute, fluffy puppy. Cute puppy grows into a big and hungry dog. Family gets rid of dog. Find out how to break this vicious cycle in your community while enjoying pet-care talks, games, quizzes and obedience-training demonstrations.

FREE Singapore Teddy Bear Show 9 Nov; 10am-5pm. The Arts House Gallery, 1 Old Parliament Ln (6332 6900, www.theartshouse.com.sg). ☉ Raffles Place or City Hall. The cuddly stuffed animal named after former US president Teddy Roosevelt has touched people's hearts for more than 100 years. Admire dozens of cute teddy bears created by award-winning designers from around the world.

* **FREE SITEX 2008: Digital Playground Is Back! 27-30 Nov; 11am-9pm. Singapore Expo Centre, Halls 5 & 6, 1 Expo Dr (6403 2160, www.singaporeexpo.com.sg). ☉ Expo.** Singapore's longest-running



Odissi through a continent Watch talented traditional Indian dancers as the 'Asia on the Edge' festival explores self-identity through cultural heritage

IT event celebrates its 20th anniversary this year with a huge selection of consumer electronics, which includes newly added digital sports, art and musical instruments. Expect bargains and crowds galore.

Christmas in the Tropics 15 Nov-2 Jan 2009. Orchard Rd (www.visitsingapore.com/cit08/). ☉ Orchard. If you're feeling the Christmas spirit already, you might as well go with the flow and enjoy it. To help you warm up and get even more into the season, check out this year's display of lights, decorations and window displays at Orchard Road. The stores will be offering extended shopping hours, so be ready with your wallet.

Festivals

* **Asia on the Edge 28 Nov-6 Dec; various times and locations (www.asiaontheedge.com).** Co-sponsored by The Arts House and PICO, this festival trains the spotlight on Asian thinkers, writers, artists and culinary greats as they ruminate and celebrate their heritage and homelands. The theme this year is 'Origins', which focuses on what it means to be Asian in the 21st century.

* **Korea Festival 2008 1-18 Nov; various times, locations and prices (www.koreafestival2008.com).** Familiarise yourself with all things Korean at the first ever Korea Festival, which features a Korean Flavour Fiesta at the VivoCity Amphitheatre, a K-Pop Concert, a film festival, traditional dance performances and taekwondo demonstrations. Go to the website for details.

Talks and walks

Food and Culture Series

The Salon, National Museum of Singapore, 93 Stamford Rd (6332 3659, www.nationalmuseum.sg). ☉ Dhoby Ghaut or City Hall. This series of talks and interactive events celebrates the joys of eating and drinking well.

• * 6 Nov; 7pm: **Brew It On** Learn about the history of beer and its evolution in Asia. And if you're a good student, you'll be rewarded with a tasting of beers that have regained popularity thanks to the burgeoning microbrewery scene. \$35.

• 21 Nov; 7pm: **Beyond the Sling** Singapore might be most famous for its Sling, but there are many other cocktails that can be enhanced and personalised with dozens of other flavours. Learn how while you sip and nibble at this classroom cocktail party. \$35.

• 30 Nov; 3pm: **Wartime Kitchen: Stretching the Culinary Imagination** Wartime cuisine may not sound very appetising, but you'll be amazed at the ingenious ways housewives dealt with shortages and infused flavours into bland foods during wartime Singapore. So which dishes today were concocted during our turbulent past? \$15.

Critics' choice



Korea Festival 2008

Various locations, 1-18 Nov
Celebrate your love for their food, films and brand of taekwondo. See Festivals.

Brew It On

National Museum of Singapore, 6 Nov
Drinking in the name of education? We'll toast to that. See Talks and walks.

The Food Safari

Suntec City Convention Centre, 14-16 Nov
A gastronomic journey around the world. See Events.

SITEX 2008: Digital Playground Is Back!

Singapore Expo, 27-30 Nov
Buy a toy or gadget from tomorrow's world, today. See Events.

Asia on the Edge

Various locations, 28 Nov-6 Dec
What does it mean to be Asian in the 21st century? Come find out. See Festivals.

Red Clogs Down the Five-Foot Way

Every Tue; noon. \$25; children \$15. Meet at Tanjong Pagar ☉ outside Exit B. Dive into the rich cultural offerings of Chinatown with this walk to Thian Hock Kheng Temple, Ann Siang Hill, a traditional Chinese medicine shop, an ancestral worship shop and more. The excellent narrative will reveal the stories behind the places you'll be visiting.

Zoos and gardens

Jurong BirdPark

2 Jurong Hill (6265 0022, www.birdpark.com.sg). Daily 9am-6pm. \$18; children \$9. ☉ Boon Lay, then bus 94 or 251.

• Daily; 10.30am & 2.30pm (Bee-Eater and Starlings), 10.30am & 3.30pm (penguins), 2pm (pelicans): **Feeding Frenzy** Birds (like Singaporeans) are at their happiest when eating. Time your visit to the park and you'll get to see a variety of birds catching their meals – literally (Waterfall Aviary, Penguin Expedition, Pelican Cove). Free.

• Daily; 8.30am (breakfast), 9.15-9.45am (show): **Early Bird Breakfast Show** They say the early bird gets the worm, and you just might want to let them have it at this interactive breakfast. Instead, you can choose from a variety of delectable dishes off the Bongo Burgers Terrace menu while you make new feathered friends like Big John, the park's oldest cockatoo, and Merlin, a yellow-naped Amazon who tells fortunes. Various prices (breakfast, free (show)).

• Daily 2pm: **Be a Falconer** For more information, go to TimeOutSingapore.com (Fuji Hawk Walk).

• 11am-3pm: **Birds 'n' Buddies**