

# AKTIVITI ACS

*For Private Circulation Only*

*February 2012*

## ***Election Year***

2012 is going to be yet another election year, not just in Malaysia but Myanmar, South Korea, Egypt, France, United States etc.

It is said that politicians are involved in a dirty profession as politics is usually associated with unethical conducts such as lies, graft, corruption, power control etc. Were they dirty before they became politicians or has the job made them so? Is it true that pure and clean politicians do not last in their jobs as they will eventually have to conform to perform?

There is so much in-fighting amongst our political parties and even within the parties. What happened to their pledge of serving the nation? Do they not care about the nation's agenda, economy and the people's welfare?

One would have thought that they should garner their strength together and fight common enemies such as poverty, human trafficking, crime, inflation etc. But no, they seem to be promoting their own interests.

How can we remove the impurities of this world? I am compelled to share with you an article I came across, which is written by Dr Dennis McGuire from Illinois – *“If people with Down syndrome ruled the world”*. For those of us who have friends with Down syndrome, we can chuckle with delight as there is so much truth in this imagination. I think it is good for us to reflect on it; and visualise what a wonderful world it would be.

*Please see insert for the paraphrased version.*

## ***First Step Early Intervention Centre***

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We held the biggest graduation ceremony in the 14 year old history of First Step Centre last November when we bid farewell to 19 of our five and six year olds. Thirteen children were from the Gelugor centre and six others came from the Seberang Jaya centre. This was also the first graduation for the SJ Centre since we started this branch in 2008.

This grand party was organised by the parents of the graduating children in the ballroom of Copthorne Hotel with almost 200 family members and friends in attendance.



## ***Respite Care Support Centre***

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We held a successful holiday programme last November for 13 children (10 special needs plus three siblings) with the help of nine volunteers on rotation basis. Activities such as bread making, art and craft, gardening, water play and a visit to the nutmeg factory, kept the children occupied and the adults on their toes!

Starting 2012, we have decided to offer full day respite care on Saturdays to enable parents to have a longer break. However the number of children that we can take will depend on the number of committed volunteers that we can get.

Please do let us know if you can give us some time on Saturdays on a regular basis, even if it is just a couple of hours. Parents, particularly those who have children with severe disabilities need a break for them to regain back some energy.

## ***Jom Mobile Toy Library***

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This mobile toy library project has enabled us to reach out to approximately 200 children with multiple disabilities in the rural community. The grant that we received from Sejati and Bakti early last year in supporting the visits has run out. We are seeking for sponsorships and financial support to enable us to continue our activities; otherwise we may be forced to scale down the project.

Play is so vital for all children. Everybody enjoys fun times. At one of the places that we go to, some of the young adults with severe disabilities just enjoy the human touch. So our team provides amateurish manicure, pedicure, facial and massage services too!!



Come and join us in the visits if you are able.... It can be quite an eye opener but we assure you that it is a lot of fun!!

## ***Stepping Stone Work Centre***

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The centre's pineapple cookies and peanut cookies were so popular that we had to reject some last minute Chinese New Year orders. Our bakery is usually super busy during festive seasons, even though we would have preferred for the orders to be spread out throughout the year.

So do take note that our cookies are available all year-round and now that we have added an experienced baker to the team, we can also supply bread on a regular basis.



## **Members Update**

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We rejoiced in November when one of our members at the Stepping Stone Centre, Diana Mariawa got married.

Diana started work with us as an apprentice in 2004. Due to her diligence, she was promoted to be the in-house trainer of the weaving section three years ago. At one point, Diana was also the President of the Mutiara Self Advocacy Club.



We miss her as she moved to Perlis and wish her and Zulkeffli well in their newly married life together.



*People with disabilities can work*

Our members have flourished and blossomed over the year. Izwan and Izzudin have both found jobs in open employment – one in a hotel and the other in a canteen.

Keeping them successfully in open employment requires a liaison person or a job coach. There are many still sitting at home that we are challenged yet again to look into this needful area. However we can only do so with additional human resource. So do contact us if you know of any suitable or interested person who would like to join our team.



In July, five Mutiara Voice Self Advocacy Club members with one supporter travelled by public transport to Teluk Intan to participate in the 4<sup>th</sup> National Self Advocacy Conference. Shahell, the current President of Mutiara Club has started travelling outstation on his own to give talks and challenge other groups to start their own self advocacy clubs.

I must admit that five years ago, it would have been difficult to stretch our imagination to the events described above. When they become a reality, you suddenly realise that the seeds planted years ago have not been in vain. This transition to adulthood is exciting. Such encouragement is what keeps us going.

## ***Merdeka Charity Carnival***

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Our Chairman Dato Gillian Teh helmed the organising of the massive Merdeka Charity Carnival 2011 which was held in the concourse of the Penang International Sports Arena on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2011.

We organised this in partnership with Engtek Community Service and JCI Pearl. With the good support from Hong Leong Foundation and the generosity from the public, we raised almost half a million ringgit. One third of it was further distributed out to bless 13 other NGOs and schools in Penang.



The Chief Minister of Penang honoured us with his presence and he even took part in the CEO's Rat Race by 'running' in wooden clogs.

## ***Support from MNIs***

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**Flextronics** has made it possible for us to go over to their plants in Bukit Minyak on a regular basis to sell our goods.



**Dell** fulfilled our request for toys at the recent Christmas collection.

We also wish to congratulate Dell for the launch of the True Abilities programme which aims at developing consciousness of PWDs and their needs.

**Seagate** has pledged to give us used cooking oil from their canteen. Their green initiative will allow us to have constant supply of oil for our soap making.

**Intel** sends their volunteers occasionally to toil with us.

**CIMB Foundation** bestowed us an honour during a Hari Raya celebration in KL by recognising us as one of their seven successful Community Link partners. We were rewarded with a cheque of RM5,000.

## ***Training***

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We played host to two groups of psychology students from the United States last December and January: seven students from Idaho State University and 11 from University of Wisconsin. In return, their lecturers Dr Thana Singarajah, Dr Kelli Saginak and Ms Jennifer Kerner ran several training workshops for the people in Penang.



*Thana, Kelli & Jennifer conducting their respective workshops.*

## ***Events***

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Our team continues to participate in community events such as various environmental green carnivals, artisans market and an accessibility tourism event in KL.

We are glad to have had Nicholas Forster, a GAP student volunteer from Melbourne stay with us for two months from July-Sept last year. Last September was a hospitality month for us as we hosted 15 Occupational Therapy students from Yonago, Japan for a week's placement; a group of 40 delegates from the YMCA Asia Pacific Region; as well as welcomed individuals and busloads of visitors during our Open House.

Last December, we hosted and organised a four-day regional meeting for 20 social welfare workers from South East Asia.



*Visitors enjoying the long batik painting activity during our Open House*

## ***Terima Kasih***

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We are indebted to many of you who have supported our work over these past years. There is even a team of ladies who enjoy toiling over hot barbeque stoves in mid-day to make *kuih kapit* for Chinese New Year just to raise funds for our activities. As they say, work is fun when passion is involved.



*Having fun raising funds by  
reviving the traditional art of  
making kuih kapit  
(Chinese love letters)*

Together with Music Sinfonietta, we will be holding a musical evening on April 21<sup>st</sup> 2012 at the new Penang Performing Arts Centre in Straits Quay to raise funds for both our organisations. Call us at 012-4324230 if you would like to purchase tickets or if you can assist us in any way.

Thank you and we look forward to your support for the years to come!

Warm Regards,

***Khor Ai-Na***  
CEO

***We all do better when we work together.  
Our differences do matter, but our  
common humanity matters more.***

- Bill Clinton, 18 November 2004 -

## RESPONSE SLIP

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- I would like to be a volunteer.
- I would like to make a general donation of RM \_\_\_\_\_ towards the activities and running expenses of ACS.
- I would like to donate via credit card auto billing transaction. Please send me details.

Postal Order/Cheque No: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please make all cheques payable to Asia Community Service or direct bank transfer to Maybank Account No 507040213362; CIMB Account No 07390000784053 or log into [www.cimbclicks.com.my](http://www.cimbclicks.com.my). All cash donations are tax-exempted).*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel No: \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (O)



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**A Non-Profit Organisation Providing Services to People with Special Needs, in particular reference to those with Disabilities**

**Incorporated in Malaysia. Reg. No. 403709K**