

AKTIVITI ACS

For Private Circulation Only

January 2003

Moving from Charity-based to Rights-based

The Osaka Forum in October which encompassed a series of meetings was held to mark the end of the UN-ESCAP Asia Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993-2002).

Reports and achievements from each country confirmed that the Decade has made a difference to the lives of individuals with disabilities in the region. Some reported extensive progress; whilst others acknowledged that at the very least, disability awareness has increased.

UN Assembly concluded that the past Decade which promoted “full participation and equality for people with disabilities” has been meaningful and passed a resolution for an extension of the second AP Decade of Disabled Person from 2003 – 2012. The framework of action will be ***“towards an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for persons with disabilities”***.

Many years back at a local conference, I presented the need for a legislation to protect the rights and ensure that people with disabilities have equal opportunities. I remember the response I got from a welfare officer in attendance – ‘Malaysians are not activists nor aggressive people, we are a caring society, there is no discrimination, therefore we do not need to resort to legislative measure’.

But now, many years later, the inevitable has come. As if to mark the end of the decade, a proposed draft of the People with Disabilities Act 2002 was recently submitted to the Ministry of National Unity and Social Development. It may take years for it to be eventually tabled and approved by Parliament. Nevertheless, this is a start.

FIRST STEP INTERVENTION CENTRE

A camp overnight which was held in November at First Step Centre was a great thrill for the six-year olds; a nervous yet exciting event for the staff and volunteers; and possibly a sleepless night for the parents back in their own homes!!

This short experience enabled us to appreciate very much the role of parents. We want to pledge to you our continual support.

Later that month, over 120 people had the honour of sharing joyful moments with eleven sets of proud parents during the Graduation Party held at Copthorne Hotel. We wish our six year old graduates the best as they take the next step forward towards formal schooling.

Education for All

By the way, we wish to commend the Ministry of Education for making primary education compulsory as of 2003. This will cover all children including those with special needs – we must support this and trust that there will be adequate trained (and interested) teachers in order for proper individualised education plans to be developed.



“JOM!” MOBILE TOY LIBRARY

“Jom!” recently expanded its activities to include the setting up of a monthly Recreation Club for the adults with intellectual disabilities. Recreational activity is an important aspect to a wholistic development of a person, especially so to those with disabilities. Otherwise their lives will only be immersed with education, therapy, rehabilitation and training.

Kelab Rekreasi began in August 2002 in consultation with the members of Stepping Stone Workplace in Balik Pulau. They plan the activities and we support to make it a reality. Football dominated during the World Cup fever.

In December Kelab Rekreasi organised a 3 days 2 nights bungalow stay up in Penang Hill. Activities included night walk, canopy walk, sleeping in tents, BBQ, relaxation and massages, etc... Thanks to the 10 supporters and volunteers who befriended the 17 members for a great time.



STEP TRAINING CENTRE

Taking the bus home is something that the trainees look forward to each evening. We introduced transportation training and have gradually weaned off the support in order to increase the trainees' confidence and independence.

The training experience has proven that our trainees are reliable; but others are not. The traffic is unpredictable; the buses do not keep to schedules; drivers and motorists are not so kind to pedestrians. Nobody seems to understand the function of “zebra crossings”; we need more overhead bridges. We need to educate motorists on road courtesy.

The risk will remain; but entrusting them and building up their confidence will enable them to cope with different situations and respond appropriately. This is part and parcel of a normal life process.

Accidents are unavoidable – for you and for me; including those with disabilities. And we cannot protect people with disabilities forever. We can, however train them in problem-solving and allow them real-life experiences to deal with.



STEPPING STONE WORK CENTRE

In the rural area, we seem to have more success in the area of utilising public transport. All (but one) of our members commute to work by bus whether rain or shine. It took over one year of training and support and it has certainly paid off. We have seen changes in the attitude of the bus drivers and conductors.

This independence and sense of achievement is vital to the development of one's self esteem and dignity.

Social Participation

We must express our appreciation to volunteers and various groups for opportunities to display and sell our products at their venues and events i.e. Smart Kids Expo, Gurney Plaza, Island Hospital, AWA Bazaar, Intel etc..

The sales of products not only generate income for us but proceeds go to the members as their monthly wages. But what is far more important is the social interaction and public awareness raised and recognition of the members' ability. The pride of our members is enhanced whenever a product is sold..... not simply out of charity but for its quality.

Member Rozihad giving a speech with staff-supporter Jamilah at City Bayview.



OTHER NEWS

New Building

We are pleased to report that the ***Support Centre for Community Living Project*** located in Pulau Betong (Balik Pulau District), finally began building construction in August after several years of waiting. We are grateful to the team of consultants (headed by BYG Architecture) for the progress.

The project will comprise of 2 facilities i.e. the work place and the independent living training facility. The building construction will be fully completed by mid-January. We trust that by mid-year, we will be able to utilise the premise once the certificate of fitness or occupational certificate is issued.

In the meantime, we are still short of RM 120,000.00 – please let us know if you wish to sponsor a brick at RM10.00 or if there is any way you are able to assist in equipping the place. We are looking for sponsorships of electrical items, kitchen appliances, office and household furniture, gardening equipment, commercial oven and refrigerator etc...

OUR APPEAL

A big “*terima kasih*” to Pertubuhan Bunga Tanjung ladies for its donation of RM 50,000 received recently. This is our biggest single local donation in our six-year history and we are extremely grateful to the wives of our assemblymen and parliamentarians of Penang for this support and recognition of our work.

With a team of 13 full-time staff and 4 full-time volunteers serving over 100 people with special needs and their families, it is hard work trying to raise approximately RM 28,000 each month to cover running expenses.

We trust that you will continue to invest in us financially in our strive to make a difference to the lives of these individuals.

Thank You and have a Good Year Ahead.

Warm Regards,

Khor Ai-Na

Director

**All of us do not have equal talent,
but all of us should have an equal
opportunity to develop our talent.**

- John J. Kennedy -

***A Non-Profit Organisation Providing Services To People With Special
Needs, In Particular Reference To Those With Disabilities.***

RESPONSE SLIP

- I would like more information / to be a regular volunteer in:
 - First Step Intervention Centre, Minden Heights
 - Step Training Centre, Relau
 - Stepping Stone Work Centre, Balik Pulau
 - "JOM!" Mobile Toy Library
 - Horse Riding / Swimming / Special Olympics
 - Administration / Fund Raising
- I would like to be put on your mailing list
- I would like to make a general donation of RM _____ .
- I would like to donate RM _____ towards the building fund.

Postal Order/Cheque No : _____ Date : _____

(Please make all cheques payable to Asia Community Service)

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____ (H) _____ (O)



ASIA COMMUNITY SERVICE

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Phone: 04 – 6585396 Fax: 04 – 6597852

Step Centre: 1-3-9 Kompleks Sri Relau, Pesiaran Bukit Jambul 1, 11900 Pg.

Phone / Fax: 04 – 6462804

Stepping Stone: 3 Tingkat Seri Genting 2, Balik Pulau, 11000 Penang.

Phone / Fax: 04 – 8665349

"Jom!" Mobile Toy Library: Mobile Phone 016-4487006

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