

AKTIVITI ACS

For Private Circulation Only

January 2005

Catastrophe

When the 9.0 on a richter scale earthquake hit Aceh, Sumatra on December 26th 2004, little did we know that the ripples which turned into giant tidal waves were going to be so devastating. Penang experienced its first major natural calamity when tsunami hit its shores several hours after the quake.

ACS Stepping Stone Centre is located in Pulau Betong, south western coast of Penang Island. The centre is less than 2 km away from the coastal shores where tragedy had happened. While all is safe at the ACS home front, we cannot but remember the affected victims and their families in the surrounding areas.

Tragedies usually happen elsewhere, but this time when it strikes so close to home, you cannot but reflect on the fragility and meaning of life.

“Que sera sera” as some may say; but let me continue to add that “I walk in this world but once, if there should be any good I can do, let me do it now, for I may not ever pass this way again.”

All these years, ACS is grateful for the support we have been receiving from the public in providing services to children with special needs and adults with intellectual disabilities. This is therefore, an opportune time for us to challenge our members at the Centre to consider the ways in which they can in return contribute back to society.

FIRST STEP CENTRE

A 24-hour overnight stay together with 10 of our six year olds was very memorable for the 14 volunteers. We packed the day full of activities at the park, a visit to the aquarium, beach and McDonalds, and even a BBQ dinner in the evening. The little six-year olds even experienced cooking their own breakfast.

We appreciated the parents for trusting us and sharing their kids with us. Two weeks later, the 10 of them had the opportunity to put up a fan dance in front of 1,000 people when they performed at a Charity Concert at the Dewan Sri Pinang. I believe they received the loudest applause from the audience.

At our peak of bonding with the kids, we had to say a tearful farewell to all of them at their Graduation cum Family Day which was held at City Bayview Hotel on November 28th 2004.

The event was proudly organised by the parents and we had over 150 people in attendance to witness the graduation.



Meet Shahirah, our youngest chef.

Class of 2004



STEP TRAINING CENTRE

In September, 6 trainees from Step Centre participated and enjoyed the adventure camp organised by the Pusat Majudiri YMCA which was held in Jerantut, Pahang.

We sent 4 representatives for the 1st National Self Advocacy Conference in November. As we were given limited places, we went through an election procedure with the trainees. It was an excellent experience for all of us – as predicted, all nominated themselves but they still had to think about voting for their friends.

In the end, 4 of them with the highest votes selected by their peers represented both ACS Step Training Centre and ACS Stepping Stone Work Centre at the conference which was held in Kuala Lumpur. We hope that in the entire process, they have learnt something about self-advocacy and democracy.

We held a small graduation at Hotel Waterfall for the 6 trainees in recognition of their years of training at the Step Centre. Yes, it is a shame to let them go. As we have helped them discover these potentials, we trust that they will be able to develop their potential to the fullest.

In the meantime, we will be closing Step Centre for an indefinite period of time in order to do a thorough evaluation of our training services. We also hope to conduct a survey of the needs of young adults with intellectual disabilities and their families in Penang to ascertain the actual situation.



STEPPING STONE WORK CENTRE

Being out in the rural district, having visitors is always something that the members look forward to. We are thankful for the constant flow of visitors both local and from overseas to the Centre. We are also glad for the strong support that we have from the local community.

Workwise - As an extension of the dyeing programme, the members have started to experiment with tie and dye products. The results have been quite encouraging. Soon, we will start the recycling project following the construction of a concrete site at the Centre's compound.

In October, 12 members participated in the Annual Jogathon held in Kuala Lumpur. Shahell and Sariha both emerged champions in the men and women categories respectively.

We are also proud that 2 pieces of cloths, laboriously hand woven by Sariha and Asniza have been selected as gifts to be presented to the Governor of Penang as well as the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak during their visits to Balik Pulau district recently.



Asniza presenting the woven cloth to the TYT Governor of Penang during Karnival Sukaneka.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are a rare breed. To the faithful ones, words are not enough to express our gratitude. Soo Kee, Shirley, Adrian, Joanne, Kitamura, Desmond, Miko, Lucy and ladies from Dari Penang group, Helen, May, Mrs Bok and many others have kept our activities going in many silent ways.

In September, students from the Sekolah Menengah St George Balik Pulau spent half a day at ACS Stepping Stone as part of their community service programme.

In early December, we hosted a team of 8 youth volunteers from the Yomiuri Light and Humanitarian Foundation, Japan. The volunteers together with some of our members from the local community toiled for 3 days under the hot sun to construct the recycling site at the compound of the Stepping Stone Centre.

We are impressed with their enthusiasm, dedication and diligence. I sometimes wonder whether our local youths could display half that energy doing manual labour work. Much still needs to be done to instil the spirit of volunteerism in the youths of our nation.



However, having said that, the recent tsunami disaster has shown that Malaysians will generously volunteer their time, energy and money to help the needy. Let us hope that we will not have to depend on tragedies to raise action from the nation.

Yomiuri volunteers, together with members from the local community working with our members at ACS Stepping Stone.

TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Soo Hoon, the Coordinator of ACS First Step Centre was privileged to be given a one month exposure programme in Australia. Together with another colleague from Kuala Lumpur, they were able to attend a couple of Early Childhood Conferences as well as visited a total of 13 centres in August / September

In return, we were able to host Ms Samantha Brick, an Occupational Therapist from Australia for one month in October. Thanks to Myers Foundation for this sponsorship and to Noah's Ark Melbourne for this collaborative effort.

ACS hosted 2 child care workers from Japan for a one month staff exchange programme in November under the sponsorship of Foundation for Children's Future. Earlier in September, we coordinated the visit of a group of student nurses from Asahigawaso in Penang for a couple of days.

Nurdzarifah, our staff in ACS Stepping Stone Work Centre was able to attend the Basic CBR Course in Ipoh organised by Yayasan Sultan Idris Shah from July – September 2004.

Terri Faust, our speech pathologist was able to be a part of the training team for the year-end certificate course in special education organised by USM (University of Science Malaysia).

In September, ACS was also invited to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the USM to provide placements for their special education teacher trainees.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Priscilla Ballet Academy celebrated their 30th anniversary with a charity concert in November whereby ACS was one of the 3 beneficiaries. Thanks also to the employees of Dell who collected 81 educational toys and items for our Jom! Mobile Toy Library in line with their Christmas project.

Earlier in October, ACS was awarded an amount of RM7,500 from the Ford Motor Conservation & Environmental Grant.

Thanks we must express also to IWA (RM1,000); Tritons Marketing (RM19,000); Dreamz Foundation (RM13,000); TOG & XZQ-Tiv Charity Carnival (RM4,000); National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (RM5,000); Sokka Gakkai (RM10,000); Lions Club of Georgetown Charity Golf (RM6,000); Han Chiang Ex-Pupils Assoc - Wanita Section (RM1,500); ST Beauty (RM5,000); Thong & Kay Hian Securities (RM3,000); Penang Joy Club (RM712); Penang Yoga Association (RM1,231); Dari Penang Group (RM3,000) and many, many individuals.

With Best Wishes for the New Year,

Khor Ai-Na

Director

Not one of us is perfect. Every child born will be a person with a mix of abilities and disabilities; talents and shortcomings. Some disabilities, like some abilities, are just more obvious than others. All persons have the same human right to be free from persecution, to live, to love and to be masters of their own fate.

Disability is a natural part of being human. It should not be punished as a crime.

- Lisa Blumberg -

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
 - 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. All cash donations are tax-exempted).

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____ (H) _____ (O)

ASIA COMMUNITY SERVICE

C0-23-UP Kompleks Masyarakat Penyayang, Jalan Utama, 10450 Penang.

Email: acspen@po.jaring.my Website: www.asiacommunityservice.org

First Step: 33 Changkat Minden Jalan 3, Gelugor, 11700 Penang.

Phone: 04 – 6585396 Fax: 04 – 6597852

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

Phone / Fax: 04 – 6462804

Stepping Stone: 53 Jalan Baru, Pulau Betong, Balik Pulau, 11000 Penang.

Phone / Fax: 04 – 8665349

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

