

AKTIVITI ACS

For Private Circulation Only

January 2006

The Right to Safe Public Access

I sometimes fail to understand why it is so difficult to provide for an efficient public transport service especially in this time and age. The usage of public transport is essential for people to commute and move around.

As part of our community living training programme for the young adults with intellectual disabilities, utilising the buses would enable them to get to work on their own. Training included safety awareness, crossing the roads, identifying and hailing the right buses, using money and paying for the ticket, descending at the correct terminals, changing buses and using public telephone where required. Besides that, other self-enhancing elements such as exercising patience, appropriate public behaviour, social communication, confidence building and problem solving were also developed.

After several months of intensive real-life training experience, the members displayed their abilities with great confidence. However, their achievements led to parental apprehension. Some of the families' concerns included fears of the increasing number of road accidents, unpredictable bus schedules and routes, and inconsiderate and dangerous drivers. Their worries were valid – the risks were too high. Consequently, the programme was abandoned.

It is for this reason that ACS decided to participate in the recent launching of the Citizens for Public Transport (CPT) Campaign, appealing to the authorities for a better and safer public transport system in Penang – for the sake of all bus users and pedestrians.

NEWS FLASH

Mutiara Voice Club – The self advocacy group was set up on July 11th 2005 by 7 members of the ACS Stepping Stone Work Centre. They elected Mohd Shahell as their President and Rozihad as the Secretary. The members meet once a month and since then, have organised their own outing to the Rumah P.Ramlee, the Penang Forest Reserve and Penang Hill.

The formation of the group was spurred on earlier in 2005 by a visit from Eugene Lau of United Voice, another self advocacy group in KL, which recently became the first officially registered society of members with intellectual disabilities in Malaysia.

This whole self advocacy movement is very exciting. We need to recognise that adults with intellectual disabilities have grown up. Given the right information, they can make their own decisions which sometimes may not necessary be in tune with what parents or even service providers would have liked. We must not deny them their right to choose. We must respect and offer support where necessary.

Everyone has a river in life they need to cross. Some will face physical barriers, others mental, neither is easy. All will need help, yet they must still cross the river in their own way.



Members of Mutiara Voice Club

*Eugene Lau of United Voice KL with
Mohd Shahell, President of MVC*



EVENT

One Stop Disability Registration Drive

The registration of people with disabilities is important as it can provide data and statistics pertinent to the planning and provision of adequate services for this population.

Currently the registration comes under the jurisdiction of the Welfare Department. Besides the fact that welfare officers are always overworked, the process itself can be bothersome as it can involve several trips by the individuals and their families to the hospital for medical certification. Regulations such as registration permitted only in the district where the individual is residing should also be revamped in this modern age of computer technology.

With numerous requests from parents and families, ACS organised this one stop disability registration drive with manpower assistance from Golden Key Club student members of USM on November 28th. This one day event brought three government departments, i.e. Welfare Department, Education Department and Health Department together and enabled the registration of 57 people with Welfare and 27 with Special Education Department. Many thanks to the officers, medical doctors and volunteers present.



Consulting with Medical officer

Registering with Welfare Dept



ACTIVITIES & UPDATES

Jom! Mobile Toy Library

In an effort to include the children from the PDK Balik Pulau, we started to run the monthly session at the premise of Stepping Stone Centre on a Friday afternoon. Instead of visiting individual homes, the toy library now caters for 10 children with special needs in one combined play session. The other positive outcome is that several members from the ACS Stepping Stone are helping out as volunteers!!

Graduation

November 20th was a memorable day for parents of the 9 children who graduated from our programme at the First Step Centre. It was such a lovely family affair as the mothers took so much effort to organise the party and siblings entertained with performances as well.

Taiping Zoo Visit

A family outing to Taiping Zoo on November 26th was organised for over 100 children and their families.

The weather was kind; the rain stopped the minute we arrived at the Zoo entrance and we were able to

end the day with a KFC meal at the Lake Gardens. Our grateful thanks goes to volunteers and several donors who had made this trip possible.

Lions Outreach Eye Camp

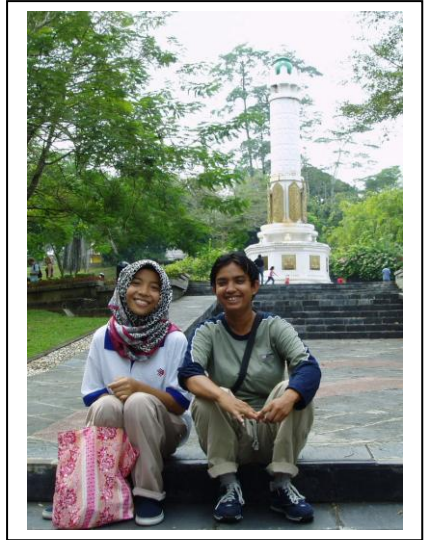
In collaboration with the Lions Club of George Town, a one-day eye and medical check-up was organised and held at the grounds of ACS Stepping Stone on September 24th. About 68 people from the local community which included many senior citizens turned up for the medical check-up. We are glad to be in partnership with the Lions Club and appreciate the voluntary medical services provided by the Penang General Hospital.



Class of 2005

ACTIVITIES & UPDATES

Visit to Sarawak – Asniza and Diana, two members from the Stepping Stone Work Centre had been saving up their hard earned money since the beginning of last year. In July, supported by staff Hooi Keng and volunteer Akemi, they flew to Sarawak to see the work of renowned local designer Edric Ong. The flight itself was an adventure let alone being away from families, visiting new places and learning about native arts. Upon their return, both of them had lots of stories to share based on their experiences.



‘Special Hands’



Rozihad demonstrating water candle

Special Hands Bazaar which was held in Bangsar KL at the end of August was very encouraging for all who attended. Our members demonstrated their artistic skills in batik painting, candle making and weaving throughout the two day event. We were also featured in the local newspaper. Other events that we participated included the International Women’s Association Bazaar in Penang, the American Association of Malaysia’s Christmas Bazaar and the Charity Bazaar in Legend KL in December.

Social Events

Besides the Special Hands Bazaar, our members at the Stepping Stone Work Centre made several trips to KL which included participating in the Jogathon (October) and the Dinner and Dance, a chic event in December which saw the gathering of over 200 young adults with intellectual disabilities. It was certainly a “nite to remember” for all who attended.

TRAINING PROGRAMMES

To Japan – Child care workers Elizabeth Ratnam of Rumah Juara, Selangor and Suzanne Teo of Rumah Charis, KL were selected for the one month staff exchange exposure programme during the Japanese autumn, sponsored by the Foundation for Children's Future. They were based in various children's homes.

From Australia – In August, Judith McKay, an Inclusion Consultant and Rebecca Foott, a Speech Therapist came from Australia to run several training workshops for parents, teacher trainees and staff from various welfare organisations and kindergartens in Melaka and Penang. We are indebted to Noah's Ark Melbourne for this staff exchange programme partnership.

ECI Symposium – The Early Childhood Intervention Symposium held in August in Shah Alam ended on a successful note with a pledge towards the organisation of a full fledged National Early Childhood Intervention Conference to be held in Penang this year. As a key player, we will be busy and would value much assistance in sponsorship and organising.

Conference – We were also able to participate in the 10th International Toy Library Conference held in Pretoria, South Africa in September. What an eye opener to be able to learn about the different models of toy libraries around the world and the privilege to network globally.

Workshop Courses – Amongst some of the courses that our staff team has had the opportunity to attend included the CBR Course in Ipoh; Story-telling and Inclusion workshops; Independent Living Seminar, the Disability Equality Training Workshop and the National Seminar on Social Welfare held in K. Lumpur.

Research – We started three research surveys last year: inclusion of children with special needs into local preschools; comparison of play styles in Japan and Malaysia; and employment needs and services for young adults with intellectual disabilities in Penang. These surveys are still on-going and therefore we will report more on the findings later.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gotong Royong – Penang Audit Department celebrated their 100th year anniversary with community service at the Stepping Stone Centre on August 13th. We are also thankful for their donation of a new computer.

Donation in kind – pottery equipment and furniture were received from Simply Ceramic Studio and an electric sewing machine from staff of ICI Paints. We are also happy to report that we have received good support for our recycling project, with thanks to parents and many in the
ε *Consulting with Medical Officer*

Grants – Designated grants for training, research and publications were received from the NZ High Commission (RM 7,000), Japan National Council of Social Welfare (RM 9,400) and Sakura-kai of Penang Japanese Association (RM 4,000).

Donations – We must also express our deep appreciation to the organisers of the KL Rat Race 2005 for their cash contribution of RM 82,100, Businessmen Network International (RM 2,500), Kiwanis Club of Butterworth (RM 5,000), Post Office International (RM 12,000) as well as many individuals for their support and encouragement.

On behalf of everybody in ACS
I wish you the best for the New Year 2006,

Khor Ai-Na, Director

**We don't stop playing because we grow old;
we grow old because we stopped playing.**

Dr Freda Kim, IPP
International Toy Library Association

***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