

AKTIVITI ACS

For Private Circulation Only

January 2010

Creating Positive Public Awareness

On 5th December, ACS participated in the Hari OKU (International Day of Persons with Disabilities) national level celebrations in KL. The event was elaborately organised by the Welfare Department under the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development.

We were honoured to be invited, and together with our members with intellectual disabilities, we set up a booth to showcase our work and demonstrate some of our skills in paper making and weaving.

The disabled population mingled amongst each other while the service providers had a good time catching up with each other's news. Even though the carnival was held in a public place, the crowd only peaked in the couple of hours when the Minister and VIPs were there. Nevertheless, it was a successful organised event!

However, I can't help but wonder if this exclusive event had created any awareness amongst the general public at all. Interestingly, I learnt that on that same weekend, there were several other crowd pulling events such as the TV3 Jom Heboh (a popular televised entertainment carnival) and the Pesta Tarian (Dance Festival) happening in the city.

The Hari OKU carnival seemed to have ironically isolated the disabled community further from the regular society. Perhaps in the future, we should consider celebrating Hari OKU as part of other mainstream carnivals?

This will promote the principle of an inclusive society; create positive awareness; educate the public; bring various ministries together; and most certainly cut costs!

ACTIVITY UPDATES – CHILDREN’S SERVICES

Visitors - We were honoured to have the US Ambassador, Mr James Keith and his wife visit the First Step Centre on November 19th. All the children surprisingly behaved so well that day, as if it was all so well planned!

The Ambassador and Mrs Keith are very knowledgeable and showed so much interest in our work that our conversations covered program details, parental involvement and even advocacy issues!

We were greatly stimulated and encouraged by their visit.

US Envoy and Mrs Keith enjoying a musical ribbon activity with the children.



Congratulations – At the end of November, we bid farewell to seven of our children who graduated from the First Step Centre’s program. The families got together and held a small party at McDonalds to celebrate everybody’s achievements.

ACTIVITY UPDATES – ADULT SERVICES

Superbikers - In September, ACS Stepping Stone Centre played host to 600 superbikers when they visited as part of the 3-nation charity ride.

YB Lydia Ong and YB Yusmadi were at hand to welcome the riders who are from Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

The bikers participated generously in a special auction of products made at the centre; and we managed to raise almost RM 3,000!



Study Trip - The members, staff and volunteers at Stepping Stone Centre chartered a bus and made a 4D/3N outing in early November.



They stopped by to make a study visit at Bengkel Semangat Maju in Ipoh and Beautiful Gate in Melaka. They also had an enjoyable time fellowshiping with members at Pusat Berdikari Seremban as they visited the Ostrich farm together.

Everybody returned home tired but we are so grateful for this incident free outing.

Accident - At the end of November, on the way to participate in the University-Community Engagement Conference downtown, our 10 year old van met with an accident.

The brakes gave way while going downhill along the Balik Pulau hillside, hitting an oncoming car before plunging into the side drain.



God is good and miraculously there were no major physical injuries to all parties. However, driver and passengers were slightly traumatised. The van is currently being hospitalised in the workshop. Please pray with us for safety as we travel each day.

Kitchen Extension - We are glad to be awarded a RM 55,000.00 grant from CIMB Foundation. With this grant, we were able to do some renovation and extension works to the kitchen section at the Stepping Stone Centre. This enables us to have a wet kitchen outside and dedicate the indoor kitchen to our bakery project.

Visitors – The ever flowing streams of visitors always provide us with stimulating experiences and enriching exchanges. YB Farid continues to faithfully bring visitors especially those from the academic world both local and abroad, to promote Stepping Stone Centre as a global sustainable development project.

NEW SERVICES / PROJECTS

✿ **For Families** - The single storey bungalow house next door to the First Step Centre in Gelugor is vacant. Together with BOLD Penang, we are considering starting yet another new centre i.e. the Respite Care Support Service.

As this will be a pioneering project, we have distributed survey questionnaires to parents and families and are in the midst of compiling feedback on their responses which will help us plan according to their needs.

Respite Care Service aims to provide short term relief to families of children with special needs



Besides planning service details, we will also need to look at setting up the house. The setting up cost (equipment & furnishings) is estimated at around RM40,000 whereas the running cost for a year is estimated at RM60,000.

So do let us know if you can assist with sponsoring any household items or if you would like to contribute in one way or another. Besides full time staff, we are also recruiting volunteers for this project. So please give us a call if you are keen and available.

The parents' questionnaire survey form and the sponsorship requirement details can be viewed and downloaded at our website www.asiacommunityservice.org.

* **For Preschool Providers** – To enable successful inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream preschools, we consciously started establishing contacts with local preschools. We are happy to report that two of these preschool providers are receptive to our visits and our offer for a long term collaboration.

This year, we are also starting '***The Inclusive Link***', a simple newsletter to be circulated free to approximately



170 preschool providers in the state of Penang. This newsletter, which aims at promoting inclusive education in preschools, will provide practical ideas, strategies and recommendations on supporting the participation of preschoolers with special needs in mainstream kindergartens and nurseries.

Note: *We are relying on great faith to start the above new services, which will push our monthly running expenses up to about RM 33,000 per month.*

At this point of time, we have yet to secure any sponsorship or pledges for the new projects, but we are proceeding with the above plans, trusting that we will get not just the financial support but also the suitable staff personnel to carry out these programmes.

* **For Donors** - CIMB Bank has also kindly added us onto their CIMB Cares On-Line Donation Portal whereby donations to ACS can be made by logging into www.cimbclicks.com.my.

This service is not limited to just CIMB customers but other bank customers can also donate via CIMB Cares using the Financial Process Exchange (FPX). However this service is currently available for local transaction only.

Additionally, regular donors who are interested to participate in the auto payment via credit card transaction, please call us for details.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

Art Exhibition – One of our young adults at Stepping Stone Centre, Asniza was invited to hold a joint exhibition with professional artist Yoichi Saito in July. The week long exhibition was a great exposure for Asniza to exhibit and sell her batik art pieces. Thanks to volunteer Yoichi for making this possible.

Products, Display & Demonstrations – We continue to be a faithful vendor at the monthly Little Penang Street Market – thanks to the support from Joe Sidek.

Occasionally we get invited by various groups to showcase our work. Our members take such pride demonstrating soap making, candle making and paper making.

We were also happy to supply candles as door gifts for a wedding!!



Asniza demonstrating weaving to the Minister during the Hari OKU celebrations in Kuala Lumpur

Green Earth – On the 8th August at 8am, we contributed towards the Penang Government's Initiative for Environmental Management by throwing EM (Effective Microorganisms) mudballs into polluted rivers in Pulau Betong in a move to clean and resuscitate aquatic life.

Training – We continue our efforts to provide in-house training for our parents at the First Step Centre and in the past few months, we have also been busy conducting several training workshops for teachers and parents in Ipoh and Sabah. These training workshops were mainly on encouraging communication i.e. the Makaton programme, promoting Play and advocating for Education for All.

Festivities – In a true 1Malaysia spirit, we have been able to participate in all sorts of festivities i.e. Hari Raya, Pesta Tanglung (Lantern Festival) and Christmas celebrations – thanks to those who have shown kindness to us for these opportunities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to our regular and individual supporters for their faithfulness in supporting our work financially.

Being a part of the Intel Involved Matching Grant Program enabled us to earn RM25,536.10; this being contributed from the sweat and labour of the many Intel volunteers. Thanks, Inteliers!

Amee Phillips held a jewelry charity auction in September and raised RM13,000 for us. Yoichi Saito contributed RM3,050 being proceeds from his art exhibition and the Dari Pinang group of artists donated RM7,000.

Thanks also to Kon Kee San S/B (RM10,000), Tun Sardon Foundation (RM1,000), Sakurakai (RM6,000) and the Penang Combined Church Groups for blessing us with RM2,000 at Christmas.

We have great faith that we will receive continual support to sustain not just our current services but for us to venture on to new services.

Together with the Board, Management, Staff & Children, I send you kind greetings and every good wishes for the New Year.

Thank you.

Warm Regards,

Khor Ai-Na
Director

***A pessimist sees the difficulty
in every opportunity;
An optimist sees the opportunity
in every difficulty.***

Winston Churchill (1874-1965)

RESPONSE SLIP

- I would like to be a volunteer.
- I would like to be put on your mailing list.
- I would like to donate _____ towards the equipment & furnishing of the new Respite Care Support Centre.
- 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 or log into www.cimbclicks.com.my. All cash donations are tax-exempted).

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____ (H) _____ (O)



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

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

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