

AKTIVITI ACS

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July 2007

Accessible Public Transport for All

A clean public toilet reflects the attitude and mentality of the users. Likewise, a public bus service system that is orderly and accessible to all is a reflective sign of good governance and a mature developed society.

Malaysia is celebrating its 50th year of independence. We have achieved so much in the past five decades that it makes it so inexcusable that we fail in providing this basic fundamental service.

Maybe we have been overzealous in producing our own national cars or building one of the world's longest bridge that we have neglected to improve the public transport system. Maybe it is the enthusiasm to encourage young entrepreneurs that issuing of licenses for public buses and taxis have become more of a business rather than a public service.

We are glad however, that the Federal Government has realised its responsibilities and started the re-vamp in Kuala Lumpur a couple of years ago. This year Penang is looking eagerly towards the implementation of a new public bus system starting in August with the promise of 250 brand new buses plying the roads by the end of this year.

A good and friendly public transport shows the concern of the state not just for its citizens but also for the many visitors and tourists to the Pearl of the Orient. If the system is reliable, people will have an alternative mode of travel, and this will not just help encourage a healthier lifestyle but also create a cleaner environment.

FORUM ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

In a response to the proposed major re-vamp of bus service in Penang, ACS in collaboration with 9 other NGOs organised a One Day Forum on “Public Transportation for Disadvantaged Groups” held on May 19th.

Careful consideration must be taken to include the needs of all commuters especially senior citizens, expecting mothers, wheelchair users and people who have mobility difficulties, visual and / or hearing impairments, including those who have literacy problems or even those with mental handicaps.

Invited resource persons with disabilities and experts included Peter Tan and Christine Lee from Barrier-free Environment and Accessible Transport Group (BEAT KL), Naziaty Yaacob (UM KL), Chau Loon Wai (UTM JB) and Judy Wee, a Universal Design & Access Consultant from Singapore. Other local Penang speakers included Yusoff Abdul Rahman, Tan Chin Chin, Nordin Hanafiah, Dr Choong Sim Poey and Rajendra.

A Memorandum regarding Accessible Buses for Disabled Persons was presented to the Chairman of the Penang State Traffic Management Committee YB Dato Dr Teng Hock Nan. The 10 page memo, endorsed by 40 groups and individuals, detailed the issues of concerns, principles and practice affecting people with disabilities can be downloaded from www.asiacommunityservice.org.

Judy Wee,
Universal
Design and
Access
Judy Wee, Universal
Design and Access
Consultant from
Singapore
manoeuvring super
steep curb cuts in
Georgetown!



2ND ASIAN TOY LIBRARY CONFERENCE 2007

The 2nd Asian Toy Library Conference was held towards the end of May in Kuala Lumpur. With the theme of “Toy Libraries – Reach Out”, the 3 day conference created the awareness of the role of toy libraries and the importance of play. There was a gathering of almost 140 delegates from all over Malaysia including many from Singapore, Japan, Korea and Brunei.

The Malaysian National Council of Toy Libraries was launched by the Deputy Minister in the PM’s Department, YB Tuan Joseph Entulu during the opening ceremony. Dr Freda Kim, Immediate Past President of the International Toy Library Association and Founder of World Play Day presented the keynote address.

The rest of the programme included country reports, various types of toy libraries, practical workshops, study visits and the conference ended with the celebration of World Play Day on May 27th.

As one of the co-organisers, ACS participated actively and presented several papers i.e. overview of the history and development of toy library movement in Malaysia and the activities of Jom! Mobile Toy Library.



Left: Dr Freda Kim presenting the keynote address.
Above: Workshop on Handmade Toys by the team from Japanese National Council of Toy Libraries.

UPDATES ON ACTIVITIES

Computers Replaced

We have been able to replace the computers that were burgled from the ACS First Step Centre – thanks to the many of you who have made this possible. In fact, we are secretly delighted to have brand new computers with brand new touch monitors for the children!!

In order to prevent and deter such incidences in the future, the landlord was kind enough to arrange for the installation of a burglary alarm system at the centre.

So even though the burglary, being its fourth was a traumatic experience, it ended up as a blessing in disguise for us in a way!

Little Penang Street Market

Every last Sunday of the month, our team from the ACS Stepping Stone Centre participates in the Little Penang Street Market held at the Upper Penang Road. This is a fantastic opportunity to showcase the artistic merchandise made by the young adults with intellectual disabilities such as handwoven, batik, tie and dye and handmade paper products.

Over and above that, it is so encouraging to see that the merchandise is admired and appreciated. Indeed our aim of promoting the abilities of people with special needs has proven worthwhile. Customers are actually buying these items because of its value image and NOT just based on charity.



UPDATES ON ACTIVITIES

Riding for Disabled Activity

Horse back riding for the disabled was resumed in April at a new venue which is located at the beautiful grounds of the Equestrian Centre at the Penang Turf Club.

Prior to her move to Kuala Lumpur, our coordinator and founder member Eva Blake was able to get the Penang Turf Club to adopt the programme. Since April, six children had completed six consecutive riding sessions under Ooi Jean Lee, riding instructor at the Equestrian Centre. Another group of children will begin their riding sessions in June. Give us a call if you can help out with this programme every Wednesday evening.

Human Resource Development

In January, Dr Prema Devaraj and Ms Jaya from Women's Centre for Change (WCC) conducted a "Ok Tak OK" session with our young adults to bring about awareness on good and bad touching

In February, our staff Hasra Othman participated in a workshop in KL to develop a guidebook on "Including PWDs in the Work Force". In March, we also attended the "UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities" held in KL to help us understand this important document which was been adopted recently by United Nations assembly.

Parents' Support

As a follow-up to our 2006 publication on "Exploring the Issues of PwIDs in Adulthood" whereby we are unable to ignore the concerns, fears and sometime aspirations of parents and families of young adults with intellectual disabilities, it seems natural for us to focus our efforts on providing support to them.

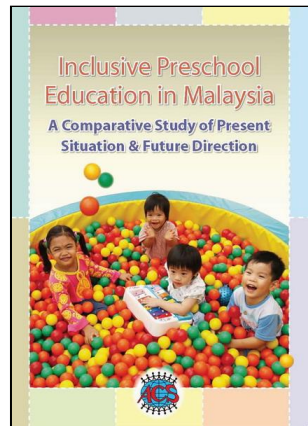
We are hoping that empowered parents will then be able to take the lead in providing better and more appropriate services for their adult children. As part of this effort, several study trips to Perak and Kuala Lumpur were jointly organised by and for parents, families and interested people to learn and network from other groups.

ANNOUNCEMENT

New Publication - Inclusive Preschool Education

We are proud to publish a book entitled “Inclusive Preschool Education in Malaysia: A Comparative Study of Present Situation and Future Direction” early this year with funding assistance from the Mainichi Shinbun. This 100-page publication is based on a survey which initially started in Penang but was eventually extended nationwide to Perak, Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Melaka, Johor, Sabah and Sarawak with the cooperation from local NGOs in those states.

A follow-up roadshow campaign to various parts of the country is also being planned to further promote awareness on educational options for pre-school education for children with special needs, targeting nursery, kindergarten and preschool operators and teachers.



Up-Coming Events

August 9th – A one day seminar on “Working Together for Self Advocacy” will be conducted by visiting psychologists, Prof Dan Goodley and Dr Rebecca Lawthom from Manchester UK.

August 13th – 17th – Seven members of the Mutiara Voice Club will be attending the National Self Advocacy Conference to be held at Outward Bound in Sabah. These members have been diligently saving up their hard earned money for their own flight tickets and other expenses. They will be accompanied by two supporters.

August 25th – The Merdeka Charity Carnival is being organised in a collaborative effort with JCI International Pearl and Engtek Community Service Club. This will be held at the Penang International Sports Arena (PISA). This carnival is to raise funds for ACS running expenses and also towards the building fund of ACS First Step Centre. Please let us know if there is any way you can help us out – perhaps sponsor a stall; help us sell tickets or contribute items for the jumble sale?

APPRECIATION

Visitors & Volunteers

We are always encouraged to have visitors streaming in from all over Malaysia and even those from Thailand, Myanmar, Hong Kong, Japan, Australia and USA.

We bid farewell to some of our students and volunteers from overseas namely Tine Dhooge, Deborah Buysse, Shuhei Matsushima, Ava Chacon, Issey and Maju. We thank them for their spending time with us – helping us and touching our lives.

Once again, on behalf of everybody at ACS, I wish to thank all our generous supporters and donors for your faithful contribution and your belief in our work.

Blessings to all,

Khor Ai-Na
Director

**"I am only one, but still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
but still I can do something; and
because I cannot do everything,
I will not refuse to do something
that I can do."**

- Helen Keller (1880-1968) -

**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 about ACS and its' activities.
- I would like more information about Mutiara Voice Club.
- I would like to be put on your mailing list.
- I would like to purchase the following publication at RM 36.00 per copy (inclusive of local postage).
 - "Exploring the Issues of PwIDs in Adulthood"
 - "Inclusive Preschool Education in Malaysia"
- I would like to donate RM _____ towards the Merdeka Charity Carnival.
- I would like to make a general donation of RM _____ towards the activities and running expenses of ACS.

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)



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Phone / Fax: 04 – 8665349

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