

AKTIVITI ACS

For Private Circulation Only

July 2010

Independent Living – Risk or Adventure?

I shared with you some time ago on how two of our members, Izwan and Sabri are enjoying independent living together in a small kampung house just within walking distance from the ACS Stepping Stone Work Centre.

They manage the house themselves, so you just need to imagine a bachelors' house. They pay all the dues and blend very well into the community. In early May, we got into a frenzy when Izwan went missing for 12 hours. Police reports were made; photos circulated. Izwan did not pick up his mobile phone because he was obedient to the work rules of not answering phone calls during working hours.

When we finally got through to him in the evening, he was somewhere on the mainland of Penang! Apparently he left with a stranger whom he had met during his rounds of recycling collection. He finally returned safely at 9pm.

This incident forced us to reflect on this whole issue of independent living. Should our programme change? Is there any way we could have prevented such an incident? Could we have given more supports? Did we panic more than Izwan? Should Izwan be 'punished'? Who should take responsibility?

Well, independent living is about freedom of choice, which comes with one's own responsibility. There are elements of risks in everything new we do. Nothing venture, nothing gained. It was probably a whole adventure for Izwan.

At the end of the day, should we deprive people with intellectual disabilities of this quality of life? Should we continue to shelter them in a protective environment?

Independent living celebrates PWDs living a higher quality of life. In ACS, we will continue to empower our members and pray to God for safety and protection over all His children each and every day.

For many of our members with intellectual disabilities, they are often not given enough opportunities for such exposures. Families tend to protect them too much; care-givers tend to instruct them too much.

There is also a general misconception that just because they are slow, these people cannot think, and therefore we need to provide them with all the answers and tell them what to do all the time!

The members can determine for themselves what they like or dislike. They are then empowered to make informed choices. Sometimes their choice may not be our choice. And we need to learn to respect their decision so long as it is not harmful or life threatening. What is unforgiveable or unacceptable is to deny them of such excitement and opportunities.

We are thankful to Ineke Proesman, our Belgian student for focussing on the independent living project during her 3 month placement with us. She provided opportunity for some of our new members to stay away from home to experience functional skills for living in the community.

In April, members of the Mutiara Voice Self Advocacy Club organised an overnight camping trip at the Teluk Bahang Forest Park. With some assistance from volunteers, the members arranged everything from activities to meals and tents all on their own. The strong helping the weak; the way the peer group supported and respected each other is truly commendable.

Sure there were moments of ups and downs. But the whole adventure itself was thrilling and exciting. It is exactly the same type of feeling that we all get whenever we plan for such events.



It is not the length of life, but the depth of life that is meaningful.

WORLD PLAY DAY

This event, held toward the end of May, was jointly organised by ACS and BOLD Penang together with Sri Pelita, a private school.

More than 200 children and adults interacted together in fun, games, music, dance, arts and sports activities.

Even the rain that poured for 20 minutes did not dampen anybody's spirit of play.



4 legged race

A week later, some of us also had the joy of celebrating World Play Day in Singapore together with play advocates on the last day of the 3rd Asian Toy Library Conference.

WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL DAY

We consciously hold this event yearly to remind ourselves of the need to reduce, re-use and recycle. With this year's theme of "*Many Species, One Planet and One Future*", this event became a mini carnival for the people in the Balik Pulau community; of course joined by people outside Balik Pulau who came to savour the many species of durians in season!

We are glad to report that over the past one year, our members at the Stepping Stone Centre have been able to collect almost six tonnes of recyclable materials such as tin, aluminium, metal, plastic and paper. This figure does not include the used cooking oil that we collect for our soap-making.

HARI ALAM SEKITAR SEDUNIA

HAS2010
HARI ALAM SEKITAR SEDUNIA *5 JUN
PELDBAGAI HIDUPAN *SATU BUMI* SATU MASA DEPAN

Tarikh : **12th JUN** (Sabtu)
Masa : **8:30 pagi - 1:00 petang**
Tempat : **Pusat ACS Stepping Stone**
53 Jalan Baru, Mki 1, Pulau Betong, Balik Pulau 11020 Pulau Pinang

Untuk maklumat lanjut, sila hubungi kami di **04 - 866 5349**
Direka oleh www.theoriginsolution.com

QUALITY PRODUCTS FROM STEPPING STONE

Cookies - TV personality Chef Ismail tasted our peanut cookies at the recent Little Penang Street Market. He complimented us so much so that our head swelled!!

So, please call 04-8665349 to place your orders with us.

Conference Bags - We are proud to supply 700 tie & dye tote bags as premium gifts for CIMB shareholders.



Happily posing with Chef Ismail

This RM15,000 project was made possible in collaboration with the single mothers group in Langkawi. We are grateful to CIMB Foundation for their encouragement and partnership in this social enterprise.

Woven Products - Together with United Voice in KL, we were also proud to supply corporate gifts such as woven tea coasters and keychains for Sime Darby.

Handmade Soap - Our handmade dish wash soap has even hit the fair trade market in the US at the New York International Gift Fair recently!! Much thanks to the promotion by Dr Mike Thair of Indochine Natural.

Batik - Thanks to designer Andreas and students from the Uplands School, we have also added some beautiful batik bookmarks onto our product shelf! Come and check them out!

Our Needs

As you can see, the handcrafted products by our members at the Stepping Stone Centre have great potential. In order for us to develop further in this area, we are looking for sewing machines and edging machines, but more importantly - seamstresses!!

Please do contact us if you can sponsor the equipment or know of anybody who can assist; or single mothers who may be able to benefit with some income by working from the home.

Fresh Look, New Designs

We are happy to announce that our website has been given a facelift; with thanks to Mr Soo Cheng Guan of Agara Base Enterprise.

Please check it out at www.asiacommunityservice.org

We are also pleased to have new design cum print of ACS brochures; professionally designed by Angie with the printing sponsored by Blean Sin.



The last stock was designed six years ago so the replenishment is greatly appreciated!

It has been a privilege to have graphic designers on-call. Andreas and Choon Ling from The Origin Solution have been obliging us with banner designs and new layouts for our centre brochures.

New Service

The Pamancar House Respite Care Support Centre started operating over the March & June school holidays and is now open twice a week on Wednesdays and Saturdays. We have 13 families who have signed up with most preferring emergency or overnight respite.

Thanks to several individuals and the ladies of Soroptimist International of Penang, we have been able to furnish the house comfortably. Volunteers George & Elaine, Serena & K.C. Tan have tended lovingly to the lawn and created a lovely herb garden at the backyard.

We are now looking at creating more publicity and awareness on this new project. We are also trying to recruit a pool of volunteers. In August, we will be organising a series of talks on respite care for families and volunteers to be conducted by a visiting couple from the UK.

Call us at 04-6587857 / 017-4785193 or email us at respitepg@gmail.com if you want more details either on the respite care services or the training in August.

Visitors – In February, we were kept busy hosting several groups of visitors from Japan. In May, we had literally hundreds of school children from various special classes from neighboring states. In between, several smaller groups and many individuals continue to honour us with their visits.



Besides having a Belgian student for three months in the early part of the year, we also hosted two social work students from the University of Bournemouth for one month in June.

Sariha showing Puan Sri Khatijah and Puteri Pos ladies how to make paper.

Articles in Mainstream Magazine

Recently our articles and our work were published in two prominent local magazines i.e. Aliran Monthly for Justice Freedom and Solidarity (Vol 29/10) and Penang Economic Monthly (Issue 4/10).

The articles on “*Special Education: Changing our Attitudes*” and “*Beating Childhood Learning Difficulties*” were featured in Aliran and PEM respectively. In the past, some of our articles have appeared in specialised columns in the local press. This time, we are particularly excited to make it into mainstream magazines.

ANNOUNCEMENT

NECIC 2010 – the 3rd National Early Childhood Intervention Conference will be held in Melaka from 2nd-4th December 2010.

The conference theme is “*Early Childhood Care & Education - Working in Partnership Towards Inclusion*”.

For more information, please check out the website at www.wingsmelaka.org.my/necic or contact the Secretariat at 06 – 2862926.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACE Japan, Kuok Foundation and Pan Malaysian Pools continue their annual support with RM34,430, RM10,000 and RM8,000 respectively. Aident gave us RM5,000; Dari Penang RM4,000; Malaysian Smelting Corporation RM1,000; YB Farid RM3,000; Penang First AOG RM3,000 plus several other generous individuals.

May, Kooi Hua and friends laboriously steamed whole meal buns and collected RM5,000.00 for our work. Thanks for sweating for us!

We thank you all for your generosity without which our work would not be able to carry on. The expenditure increases as the work expands for we need to engage more fulltime staff. We have to raise approximately RM30,000 each month to cover the maintenance of five centres, salaries for 13 staff plus wages for 21 members with disabilities.

We are therefore organising a Charity Carnival at the later part of this year to raise funds for our operating expenses. We look forward to your kind support.

Thank you.

Warm Regards,

Khor Ai-Na
Executive Director

***The strongest people in the world
aren't those most protected;
they are the ones that must struggle
against adversity and obstacles
- and surmount them
- to survive.***

Caption from Strength Former Slaves Poster

RESPONSE SLIP

- I would like to be a volunteer.
- I would like to be put on your mailing list.
- 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; CIMB Account No 07390000784053 or log into www.cimbclicks.com.my. 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: acspenang@gmail.com **Website:** www.asiacommunityservice.org

First Step: 227 Jalan Pemancar, Gelugor 11700 Penang.

Phone: 04 – 6585396 **Fax:** 04 – 6593780

Respite Care: 227A Jalan Baru, Gelugor 11700 Penang

Phone: 04–6587857 / 017-4785193 or respitepg@gmail.com

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

Phone: 04 – 8665349 **Fax:** 04 – 8665887

“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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