

### FOSTERING

# Little baby's Big fight

Having gone through multiple relationships, a single mother is left distressed. With only irregular jobs, she struggles financially and emotionally to provide for her several children.

Baby Susie (not her real name), the youngest amongst them, was recently referred to Boys' Town's Fostering Service, Sanctuary Care, to provide the mother some relief while she tries to stabilise the home situation.

Her case was brought to Mdm Chitra and her husband's attention. The couple who was involved in providing respite care to a foster child previously, readily welcomed Susie after discussions with our Social Worker, Risela.

"When Susie came home with us, she was restless as it was new place for her. But we knew how to help because of our experience caring for our daughter when she was younger," Mdm Chitra shares.



*Mdm Chitra, Mr Sivakumar and their daughter Jayani with the foster child*



"Having Susie has given us more bonding time. My husband takes turns with me to care for the children after he returns from work. Our 11-year-old daughter, Jayani, treats Susie like her younger sister and spends their playtime together."

Like many of the foster cases we work on, Susie's case involves multiple needs – estranged family relations, financial difficulty, unemployment, and a history of family violence.

The welfare of children is intimately tied to the welfare of their families. That is why Sanctuary Care works closely with fragile families to bolster their social support, without which their struggle for shelter, food and education for their children could be weakened considerably.

Every child needs a father and mother to look after them and having a home is the best place.

**Contact us today at 6690 5420** to find out more on fostering and how you can be a lifeline for families in need.

**Join us at our fostering roadshow!**

5 to 11 September 2016  
(Monday to Sunday)

From 12 noon to 9pm

Tampines 1 Shopping Mall  
Level 1 main atrium

*\* Names and details are withheld to protect the natural family's identity.*



## BOYS' TOWN ADVENTURE CENTRE

# Adventure for at-risk teens

Bullying among students, lack of motivation in studies and negative classroom dynamics are among some issues teachers have requested to address using the adventure programmes organised by Boys' Town.

For our trained adventure leaders and counsellors, the year started with them working with secondary schools to design and implement programmes that respond to the needs of teenagers, especially those with self-defeating thoughts or behaviour.

An important part of this curriculum is experiential learning, where students learn in groups to do things out of their comfort zone and discuss personal issues in a trusting environment.

This collaborative way of learning allows them to understand situations from different viewpoints, charting the pathway for inculcating and internalising values that could shape psychological abilities and have a positive impact on their self-efficacy.

The adventure programmes range from low-impact facilitation involving socio-emotional development, to outdoor expeditions that uses whole-person approaches, and diagnosis driven treatment to target behaviours such as anxiety, low attentiveness and defiance.

**Boys' Town Adventure Centre runs adventure, leadership and team-building programmes for various organisations, schools and companies.**

**Call 66905420 or email [info@boystown.org.sg](mailto:info@boystown.org.sg) to discuss how we can develop a programme for your needs.**



*A sighted student leads a group of blind-folded boys on a Sherpa Walk involving obstacles. The activity requires students to check their blind spots and consider feelings of others.*



*Students use their index fingers to lower a 'helium hoop' to the ground while balancing the upward pressure created by the group's nerves and excitement. The activity prompts them to think about their reactions to stress.*



*Scaling a high vertical wall heightens the participants' senses and feelings. Adventure leaders work closely beside them to address anxiety and fears triggered during the process.*

## Snapshots!



▲▲ Boys' Town YouthReach: Outreach workers engaging children and youths at the void deck and playground in Tampines and Toa Payoh



▲ Triathlon club participating in the Metasprint Aquathlon 750m swim and 5km run



▲ Dance club having hip-hop lessons by \*SCAPE and Recognize Studios



◀ Media club on a photoshoot outing at Haji Lane



## Activities in Boys' Town...



## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

While most students were catching up with friends and activities during the June holidays, three groups of youths were instead preparing fund-raisers for Boys' Town.

A group from Nan Chiau High School spent weekends doing street sales, and put up a booth during their school carnival to sell bookmarks made with our boys, as well as personalised tote bags and tissue packets.

Their teacher mentor Ms Chney Chen said, "Reaching out to the community was a precious combination of words and deeds. The students learnt how to be leaders in action to bring awareness to the less fortunate youths."

18-year-old Belinda Chiang and her friends from Hwa Chong Junior College organised a donut sale and a concert in their school lecture theatre in July which saw performers from Victoria and Tampines Junior Colleges coming to support.

"In this day and age, we should not take things for granted," Belinda says. "We want to foster empathy amongst our peers. We are really happy that the concert gave us a platform to share more about who we are helping and showcase their talents."

A separate concert held by Anglo Chinese School (Independent) at Alliance Francaise saw performers and helpers from different schools too, namely ACS (I), Tanjong Katong Girls' School, CHIJ Katong Convent, Methodist Girls' School and Raffles Institution.

"Our friends' help reaffirmed to me that regardless of our capabilities, we are stronger together. Though we are starting small, we want to encourage people to come together to help in their own ways," says 16-year-old Xavier Teo from ACS (I).

# AWE- inspiring STUDENTS



*Nan Chiau students and Boys' Town boys making bookmarks together for a street sale*



*Hwa Chong JC student organisers and the performers*



*Youths behind the ACS (I) concert*

## Who WE ARE...

Boys' Town is a charity started in 1948 by the Brothers of St. Gabriel. We provide residential care, fostering, adventure therapy, youth outreach and other community and school-based programmes and services for over 500 children and youths from disadvantaged and disengaged families. We are an Institution of a Public Character (IPC) and a member of the National Council of Social Service.

**YOU CAN  
EMPOWER &  
CHANGE LIVES**

Donate now at  
[www.boystown.org.sg](http://www.boystown.org.sg)



We accept:



For enquiries: 6690 5420  
or [info@boystown.org.sg](mailto:info@boystown.org.sg)

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

### REPORT SCAMS

Boys' Town is not organising the sale of ice cream and handmade pencils to raise funds.

We have put up a notice on our website to notify the public of possible scams. The authorities would like to advise victims to lodge a police report.

If you encounter these peddlers, please check with us before making any donations. You may reach us at the contact details above during office hours Monday to Friday, 9am-6pm, or call our duty officer at 96234731.

YOUTHREACH

# BREAKING the silence

In a therapist's hands, a collection of stones, toy figurines and clay putty are not mere decorative items but tools used in projection activities to help youths access and connect with their inner thoughts and feelings.

YouthReach social worker, Aaron Leng, who is also an art therapist, recounted the story where a youth laboriously shaped a lump of clay into a palm-size heart. The little heart stood in stark contrast to the youth's towering and athletic build.

He shared his search for love beyond his home where he had failed to find acceptance and validation. Producing the art piece helped him reflect upon his family life and gain an understanding of why he was drawn to seeking peers and relationships.

In another context, principal social worker and counsellor Gwen Koh uses stones as one of the projection activities for a group of girls. Gwen paved the session by establishing a non-judging and nurturing environment which allowed them to feel supported and comfortable in self-disclosure.

She then used a physical activity to help the girls release pent-up emotions before settling into quiet visualization and reflection. The visualization allowed the group to feel relax as they were guided to create a psychological safe space.

They were then invited to pick up stones placed in the centre of the room. "We asked each youth to write a story for the stone, or allow the stone to relay a message to them. This form of expression is about validating the person. It is a liberating experience for the youth to say what they want without any rules. Often than not, it is their story that they are sharing," Gwen says.

16-year-old Eve writes about how her stone has rough and bruised edges because it has tumbled through the rapids. In a postcard to herself, she writes about a beautiful young girl who continues to persevere for things she cares about.

Gwen adds, "We want to provide healthy outlets for them to deal with conflicts and overwhelming emotions. Our work is to help them to accept and embrace what happened in the past, including their feelings, and bring them to a greater level of self-worth and acceptance."



This year, the Samaritans of Singapore reported that teen suicides is at its highest in 15 years (*The Straits Times*, 26 June 2016). More children and teenagers, aged 19 and below, have asked for help after considering suicide. Many of them struggle to express the pain they are feeling inside and cite family relationships, academic pressure and self-esteem issues as sources of stress.