

Heart 2 Heart

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BCCS Newsletter issue #2016/3

HOPE Centre

OFFICIAL OPENING

13 AUG 2016



And there is HOPE

Faced with the prospects of losing MacPherson Primary School as the venue for CAPLE (Child And Parent Learning Experience) programme but undeterred to press on with its work of reaching out to the community in need, Bartley Community Care Services (BCCS) surveyed several venues and the Board evaluated many options, seeking the opinions and advice of expertise in various fields. After much deliberation, unit 01-29 at Block 81, MacPherson Lane stood out as the best option available.

The first hurdle was getting the necessary approval for the use of the premises as a centre for BCCS' intended programmes. Through sheer dogged determination and hard work of the project team headed by Programme Director Kenneth Teo, supported by many, the unit was

approved for BCCS' intended use. The next challenge was to ensure that the design and lay-out meet the needs of the various programmes to be run there for

HOPE, a centre for BCCS' Holistic Outreach Programme to Empower, right smack in the midst of the community BCCS needs and wants to serve.

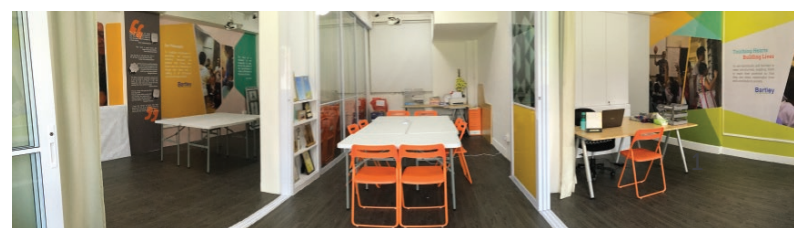
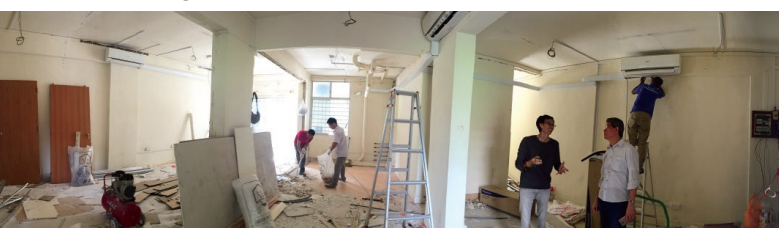
the immediate and the near future whilst ensuring compliance with statutory safety requirements. All this including the actual renovation had to be completed in a relatively short time so that the CAPLE programme in BCCS' 2016 programme calendar will not be jeopardised.

By July 2, the 2016 CAPLE programme was running in a place BCCS could call their own, HOPE, a centre for BCCS' Holistic Outreach Programme to Empower, right smack in the midst of the community BCCS wants to serve.

HOPE centre, BCCS' third satellite centre was thus birthed and to allow residents in the neighbourhood to know what the centre is about, an official opening was planned. Ms Tin Pei Ling, a member of Parliament and advisor to this precinct was invited to grace the occasion. Ms Tin, in her speech, stressed the importance of education and the need to start young and endorsed the fine work that BCCS is doing towards this goal.

The official opening on August 13, 2016 at Block 81 saw a good turn-out of curious residents and interest groups who were treated to games, snacks & even a goodie bag to take home. In popular demand was the yummy & refreshing

▼ During and after renovation ►





▲ CAPLE in session



▲ Fun & games for all



▲ Youth Volunteers from KidsZone with guest of honour, Ms Tin



▲ Happy visitors at opening



Programme Director, Kenneth Teo tells it all ▲



Italian ice cream generously sponsored by Artisan Alfero Gelato, an ice-cream parlour in the vicinity. While the many banners put up in front of the centre and brochures provided information about the programmes run by BCCS, many volunteers were on hand to befriend and to answer queries from interested parties. HOPE Centre succeeded in making its presence felt that day.

Beyond the hype of its official opening, HOPE Centre aims to live up to its name to bring hope to disadvantaged families—the single parent, the divorced, unemployed, lowly educated or uneducated mums and dads in the neighbourhood in whatever ways it deems fit. As in all other BCCS' programmes, its activities will target families with low income who could do with a little support to stay afloat as they build their lives.



Block 81, MacPherson Lane,
#01-29, Singapore 360081

HOPE Centre hopes to engage needy families through programmes providing life skills training, child mentoring, counselling & retreats and other support services basic to building a good family foundation.

All are welcomed to check out the centre.

▼ Applause for new HOPE!



▼ May I have one (Alfero) please?



Thumbs Up for BCCS KidsZone

KidsZone was set up by BCCS in 2014 with the objective of providing a safe, yet stimulating environment for students from MacPherson Primary School, many of whom are from lower income families to pass their time meaningfully after school.



We asked the vice-principal and the discipline coordinator of MacPherson Primary School what they thought about the KidsZone programme now that it has been running for over two years and this is what they have to say:

MR CHONG CHIN HONG, VICE-PRINCIPAL, ▶ MACPHERSON PRIMARY SCHOOL

How KidsZone began

“Recalling the history, the school initially opened up the facility to the KidsAglow programme (another of BCCS’ enrichment programmes) to help meet the needs of the community. We then saw the benefit and bonding it had given to the children and parents, so we asked BCCS to help set up another programme for our own students—KidsZone, and also to run the monthly activity for the fathers—the Dads for Life programme.”

Evolution of KidsZone

“From one tiny, small project, it has now become one big umbrella providing additional after school support and also emotional support for the students. It has been recognised to be the key component of care culture in the school to engage the students after school hours.”

Benefits of KidsZone

“It became the additional avenue for students to be engaged in as it provides regular games engagement and even the old students come back to be the youth volunteers.”



We are thankful to Emi (KidsZone Programme Head) from BCCS and the other volunteers. We are very grateful for this and hope it to be part of school’s culture of care. We also noticed the staff and teachers now recognise this as they have seen the benefits of KidsZone over the years. Now, they will just go to KidsZone to look for any missing students and some parents gave feedback that KidsZone is providing good balance for their children—they are

gainfully engaged in some good and meaningful activities within the safe environment of the school.

BCCS also helps the school out with the ‘out of the norm’ needs of some families as part of our school-based family support. I am very grateful for their care.”

(the children) are gainfully engaged in some good and meaningful activities within the safe environment of the school.

“Before KidsZone was established, I used to have to deal with some students with social behaviour but now I don’t hear about them and I don’t need to deal with them anymore. I credit it to KidsZone, as we can now refer students in need of social support to KidsZone. Thank you again BCCS. “

MR JEFFREY TAN WEI QIANG, DISCIPLINE COORDINATOR, MACPHERSON PRIMARY SCHOOL

“When KidsZone first started, we couldn’t understand its purposes, but now I see a lot of changes in the support from the teachers and staff which we didn’t see before. We are finally seeing the real value added to the students here in terms of social behaviour and values and that their time in KidsZone is well spent. We used to have a lot of complaints about their social behaviour but they are very much less now. And I know KidsZone played a very big part in this change. I can only attribute the improvement to KidsZone. “



My 7 years with BCCS



Madam Sri Dayanti is a mother of 3 boys, Rahul, Randy and Rezki, now aged 11, 9 and 5 years old respectively. BCCS' programmes and activities have been a very integral part of her family's lifestyle since 2009 when her eldest, Rahul, enrolled in the then Learning Family Programme, 'LFP' for short, through recommendation of BCCS' partners for this programme, the SECDC (South East Community Development Council) and PCF (PAP Community Foundation). Randy enrolled 2 years later. As this is a parent-child programme, a parent is required to share in the learning activities. She was happy to be there to support both her two sons. She was dutiful as she was hopeful that she would be better able to relate to and to contribute to her sons' learning process.

Now that Rezki is enrolled in BCCS' CAPLE (Child And Parent Learning Experience) programme, the enhanced version of the LFP programme, Madam Sri Dayanti has observed that the programme has improved considerably making classroom

activities highly interesting and the educational field trips very enjoyable. She is also full of praises for the dedication of Ms Deborah Pay, CAPLE and Tuition Programme Head, and volunteers and does not forget the support of many donors.

Beyond pre-school preparation in the LFP programme, her two elder sons

"BCCS has helped my family a lot. They journeyed with us"

also benefitted from BCCS' KidsAglow enrichment programme where the love for reading is being cultivated but as they again found themselves falling behind in school, what other help is available? Madam Sri Dayanti simply couldn't afford tuition of any kind for her children.

Thanks to Tuition@Bartley programme which started in 2010 after BCCS identified the need for on-going academic support, Rahul and Randy were enrolled and received help in their studies.

It has been a seven year long journey with BCCS for Madam Sri Dayanti thus far and the help she has received in the form of educational assistance and gift vouchers to buy school necessities for all her children has made the road less rocky for them.

The family is happy doing things together. After going for tuition every Saturday morning, Rahul and Randy would join their mum and Rezki at CAPLE in the afternoon. According to Madam Sri Dayanti, Rezki, though still very young, seems to be able to focus easily and cope well in his school assignments independently. This, she attributes to the very conducive learning environment in the CAPLE programme.

Madam Sri Dayanti says, "BCCS has helped my family a lot. They journeyed with us."



▲ Heartfelt message of appreciation for CAPLE volunteers

"DEAR MEMBER OF CAPLE,

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME SPENT WITH US AT THE LEARNING FAMILY PROGRAM MEMORIAL (MEMORY) IT WAS SO GREAT TO GAIN THIS KIND OF EXPERIENCE AND REALLY HELPED OUR CLASS BETTER AND MY KIDS MORE LEARNING AND MORE UNDERSTANDING. I WILL NEVER FORGET THE STORY AND EXPERIENCE THAT YOU TOLD TO ALL AND ANYONE WHO SERVED TRULY AND THANK YOU TO ALL MEMBER OF CAPLE

THANK YOU"
(sic)



A life that touched many....

Ann Chay, a keen and active volunteer with BCCS since 2014 was taken home to glory suddenly on Aug 29, 2016. She had turned sixty hale and hearty recently and celebrated her well-lived life with many members of her close knit family and friends.

Her love for children unconditionally is exemplary and her passion to teach them to love learning is inspiring.

She leaves behind a legacy of spending one's time wisely for the benefit of others especially those in need. Her dedication and creativity in helping children in the reading programme at KidsZone and in Art and Craft in the KidsAglow programme is something that BCCS will miss and find hard to replace.

A TRIBUTE TO ANN BY MATTHEW TEO, KIDSAGLOW PROGRAMME HEAD

When we think of Ann, these attributes like caring, thoughtful, loving come straight to mind. For her petite frame, Ann exuded tremendous influence and output. Her husband safely entrusts her with home and affairs of the family. Elizabeth, her only daughter, grew up secure and free under her loving watch. In all her work, her self effacing ways showed a superb care for details and of an efficient

mind. Ann used to man a gift shop at Orchard Road with family members. It was successful but she decided to sell it in order to pursue her prime interest in serving and teaching others.

Ann joined KidsAglow 3 years ago. Very quickly, she established her influence. She loved story-reading and most of all, the children. Her skills & experience also

made her our choice candidate for taking up leadership. But Ann's interest and vision went far beyond this community care program. Unknown to others, she was studying to teach English as a foreign language. She succeeded and started volunteering to teach the Nepalese domestic workers.

Ann; Ever Persevering Learning & Loving.



▲ Thank you & farewell cards from kids whose lives she had touched

Good Bye Ann! You came, you taught and you inspired. We are sad to say to 'Good Bye' but we know that fond memories of you will remain for those whose lives you have touched. Rest in peace, for we will strive to carry on the good work you have started.



Thank you BCCS

BCCS' FamilyZone Programme is labour-intensive and often physically and emotionally draining for staff and volunteers working with the clients but they are often met by their outpouring of thanks. Their reward indeed is being able to witness the joy and hope their efforts bring into the lives of the beneficiaries.

BCCS
FamilyZone 



HERE ARE EXCERPTS OF SOME OF THOSE SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED BY THE BENEFICIARIES:

“Before I joined the programme, I was always at home, saddened by the death of my two daughters. I couldn't stop thinking about them and that drove me into depression for many years. Through this programme, I have had a lot of the volunteers befriending me and taking me out for activities. So I am much happier now.

“I used to keep a lot of unnecessary items in the house till it was full. Then Keith (Programme Head) helped me to slowly let go of the old items that I had been storing. So now I have enough space to walk in my house.”

Mr Lai is an 85 year old who lives with his wife and a reclusive daughter. The tragedies within the family had left an emotional scar on them all. Both Mr Lai and his wife who is extremely quiet suffer from several medical conditions and struggle with managing their medical records and appointments. When BCCS first met Mr Lai, he was lonely, still grieving and in despair. Mr Lai is now chatty and showing the cheerful side of his character.

“I want to thank BCCS and all the volunteers for helping me find happiness again in singing as I also really love to sing. Thank you.”



“The volunteers are all very good, very kind and I look forward to their every visit. I only knew Keith, Matthew and Raja (the latter two from Braddell Heights Zone B Residents Committee) in the beginning but slowly I am getting to know a lot more of them now. I enjoy the ‘makan’ outings especially the National Day Celebration at Changi Airport.

“Before this programme, I had no friends. My husband and I only watched TV and read papers. We seldom went out. Through this programme, I have more friends now and I am learning more about God. I enjoyed the activities like the Moon Cake festival and singing together.

“Thank you everybody, thank you for the food and thank you for everything, BCCS.”

Aunty Sally lives with her husband, both in their late seventies/early eighties. They have no children of their own. The couple used to keep pretty much to themselves, opening doors to volunteers only to receive their lunch packs. They started opening up only recently after they began attending the activities they were invited to.



Outside In

For BCCS Awareness month this year, it was decided that talents from within Bartley Christian Church should be tapped to showcase some of the work that BCCS does in various programmes it offers. The videographer and the editor/producer of the BCCS programme videos were in turn interviewed for their ‘outside in’ view of BCCS after the project.

VIDEOGRAPHER, BARNABAS HONG

How did you first get involved with BCCS?

I have been a church member for more than 30 years. 10 years ago, our ministry first stepped into Lorong Lew Lian, starting with a Christmas party. I started as a volunteer, taking photos of all the activities.

What observations did you make when doing this project?

Along the way, it was interesting to see how the beneficiaries are comfortable with our ministry in allowing us to help them with their young ones, which is a long term commitment as it starts from

their kindergarten years. So I see the heart and mind of BCCS is surely in the right direction. This is also proven when we see the youths who have been in KidsZone programme coming back as a Youth Volunteer to contribute back to the community.

What touched you most in the course of this project?

I see BCCS doing small parts in the community. Though small, they are very focused programmes in the lives of children and elderly to benefit them well. What touched me the most is when one family shared their story with the congregation, to thank BCCS and to acknowledge the work that BCCS has done that had benefited their whole family.

EDITOR & PRODUCER, OLIVIA SIONG

What made you take on the job of doing the video clips?

It was a project that had piqued my interest from the start. I had always thought there was a potentially impactful story to be told with the programmes that BCCS is running—whether it was about the beneficiaries involved or the volunteers. So when asked if I would be able to help, it was easy to say yes to be part of telling these meaningful stories.

Did your impression of BCCS change after the project?

I knew that the organisation was “doing good” in the community, but not the details. However, after working on this project, I can say that the organisation does far more than just “good”. There’s no end goal or target of how many food packets to hand out, how many children to have in a programme. Instead, I realised the focus was always about the person—meeting each individual where they are and helping them to better their lives.

What stood out most to you during your involvement in this project?

- The volunteers handing out food packets to low income families they had befriended in Lorong Lew Lian on a blistering hot Saturday morning, the long chat with Keith (Family Zone Programme Head)

▼ Barnabas on a shoot accompanied by Emi, KidsZone Programme Head



Outside In (con't)

- The interview with 90-year-old Granny Lau. When recounting how BCCS' volunteers went about repainting their old flat, to give it a new shine for Chinese New Year during the interview, Granny Lau's daughter welled up in tears with gratitude. It took me a bit by surprise, but then I realised why. BCCS was different—it was about going through the door to befriend the people inside the flat and building a relationship with them.

- The interview with returning student leaders who had graduated from the school. When asked how KidsZone had benefited them—one boy, Xavier, very candidly said, "Last time, I always lied to my teacher about not bringing my homework, when actually it was in my bag. Now they teach me to do my homework every day. Made me a better person." I'd imagine seeing transformation like this has kept the many volunteers going.

What kind of impact did this exposure have on you?

I think working on this project changed my perspective of what reaching out to a

the focus was always about the person—meeting each individual ... and helping them to better their lives



▲ Coffee shop chat, Keith and Olivia

community entails. One thing mentioned by Keith got me thinking. He said, "Don't say I want to make a difference. Ask yourself, 'can I learn something from this?' Then you'll come with a serving heart."

It's powerful as it shifts the focus away from yourself and feeling good about what you've done, to the community, people and building genuine relationships.

What will you say to those considering volunteering with BCCS?

Go in with an open mind. Observe, find out more, speak to the beneficiaries and volunteers. It's hard not to be naturally inspired!

Bartley
Community Care Services
Teaching hearts, building lives.

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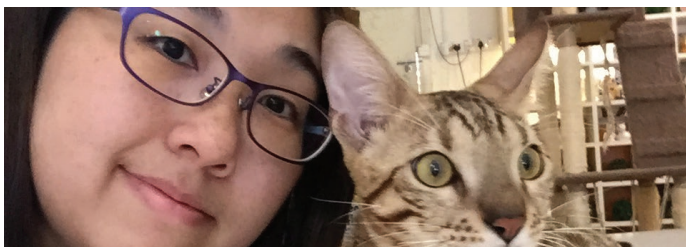
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Welcome aboard!

BCCS is pleased to welcome aboard Ms Tiffany Yong and Ms Quina Abbas to its staff to support BCCS' goal of expanding the breadth and depth of its programmes and services to the community.

Let's catch a glimpse of Tiffany's and Quina's hope and aspirations as they plunge into their roles in BCCS. Both joined BCCS on July 1, 2016.



Tiffany Yong ▲
Programme Executive @ HOPE Centre
tiffany.yong@bccs.org.sg

"Through the HOPE programme, I hope that we can empower the beneficiaries in rebuilding their lives. I look forward to play part in making a difference in their lives. Seeing them standing on their own feet and shining bright will be my greatest reward. And I would like to bring this message across to them. 'Help is just around the corner and there is always hope.'"

Quina Abbas ▼
Executive, Corporate Office
quina.abbas@bccs.org.sg

"I am blessed to learn about the heart and mission of BCCS. I hope to be able to do my role in sharing these with the others for the good of the community."

