

YWCA Link

“You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance.”
Psalm 65:11

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January - March Issue



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President's Message



Past, Present and Future

"O God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast and our eternal home" – Isaac Watts

Each new year gives us new opportunities to change our lives or do something worthwhile with our lives, but this is also true of every new month or new week or new day! The first issue of 2015 gives a roundup of the activities of the last quarter of last year. It is also an issue which gives notice of new events that will occur in the first quarter of 2015 and I urge you to note down the dates and events in your diary.

In 2015, the YWCA will celebrate her 140th anniversary and 140 years of service to the community since 1875. The 140th anniversary celebrations will start from the AGM to be held on 23 April 2015. Traditionally, the YWCA celebrates her birthday on the fourth Thursday of April each year but as this is the 140th anniversary, there are plans for celebratory activities throughout the 140th year. Do read the notices of events which will be sent to you through the various media in the coming months!

The YWCA has been growing in the past 139 years, but she never wavers from her vision and mission and the emphasis on women, youth and children. This focus may have changed from decade to decade and from year to year with the changing society and needs of the community. Sometimes we need to look at the past in order to see the future while we continually try to make it work in the present!

The association has been blessed with dedicated volunteers and staff who work together. The Spotlight section features a member of staff who has been with the YWCA for decades – Mrs Lucy Lim, the Senior Principal and Principal of McNair CDC and her stories of her experiences with the YWCA tell us of the past, present and the future! The YWCA succeeds as her foundation is teamwork between volunteers and staff and amongst staff. If we continue on this basis, I can only see continual success for the YWCA in the future.

I wish you a blessed year ahead and enjoy your life and every tomorrow!

Tan Kee Leng, PBM
President
YWCA of Singapore

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UPCOMING EVENTS

AQUA AEROBICS CLASS

EVERY WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY

Venue : YWCA Fort Canning Lodge
Swimming Pool (Level 3)

Time : 7pm - 8pm (Wednesdays)
7pm - 8pm (Thursdays)

AQUA SPIN CLASS

EVERY MONDAY & TUESDAY

Venue : YWCA Fort Canning Lodge
Swimming Pool (Level 3)

Time : 8pm - 9pm (Mondays)
7pm - 7.45pm (Tuesdays)
8pm - 8.45pm (Tuesdays)

FINANCIAL LITERACY TALK

6 MARCH & 10 APRIL (FRIDAYS) 2015

Venue : YWCA Fort Canning Lodge
Multi-Purpose Room

Time : 7pm - 8.30pm

INVESTMENT TALK

27 MARCH 2015 (FRIDAY)

Venue : YWCA Fort Canning Lodge
Multi-Purpose Room

Time : 7.30pm - 9pm

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

23 APRIL (THURSDAY)

Venue : YWCA Fort Canning Lodge
Sophia Cooke Ballroom

Time : 6pm - 9pm

YWCA BAZAAR

20 JUNE 2015 (SATURDAY)

Venue : YWCA Fort Canning Lodge
Levels 1 & 2

Time : 10am - 4pm

For more information, please visit our website at www.ywca.org.sg or call us at 6223 1227.

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Bukit Batok Emergency Preparedness Day

By Nicole Chua

Bukit Batok Emergency Preparedness Day is organised every year and features a myriad of exhibition booths that educate the public about topics such as home safety, dengue prevention and personal safety. Last year's event took place on Saturday 6 December from 2pm to 5pm at the hardcourt in front of Blk 235 Bukit Batok East Avenue 5. Participants consisted of residents from the neighbourhood and they visited the booths and displays whilst the little ones were kept entertained by interactive games and popcorn!

The YWCA was invited again to set up a booth and promote our YWCA Safety Alert application which is designed to enhance the safety of young women anytime and anywhere. When an individual is in a compromised situation, tapping the alert button or shaking one's phone releases a loud sound and notifies a pre-set list of emergency contacts. We were pleased to share more about the application and encouraged women in the crowd to download it onto their mobile devices, presenting a Chic notebook to those who did so. The notebook is a by-product of the Thank God I'm Female (TGIF!) Campaign and addresses common issues faced by young women.

Mdm Halimah Yacob, grassroots advisor to Jurong GRC Grassroots Organisation, Speaker of Parliament and MP for Jurong GRC graced the event and visited our booth. YWCA was honored to receive a token of appreciation presented by Mdm Halimah Yacob for supporting the event.

The YWCA Safety Alert App is available for free on iTunes and the Google Play store. Since its launch in 2012, the total number of downloads has exceeded 15,000.



LLI & WDA Charity Effort

By Nicole Chua

The YWCA of Singapore was invited to a year-end charity fair, organised by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) and Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts on Monday 8 December. Held from 12pm to 4pm, the fair served as a platform for various charity organisations to raise funds and awareness about their respective causes. The YWCA was honoured to be one of such organisations invited to this event.

The fair was attended by staff from WDA and LLI, as well as other companies located in the LLI building and SingPost Centre. We were extremely privileged to be blessed with the assistance of a few WDA staff members who were instrumental in the setup of the booth and sale of our merchandise. At the end of the day, the YWCA was able to sell a total of \$702 worth of merchandise. Thank you to WDA for inviting us to be a part of this worthy cause and to all who came down! We hope to see you at our events and fundraisers in the future!



Upcoming Membership Events By Kwok Shuyi

Financial Literacy Talk

You will definitely be able to step up your financial game after this "Financial Planning Begins Now!" series jointly organised by the YWCA and the Institute for Financial Literacy. There will be two parts to this series; 'Measuring Your Financial Fitness' and 'Implementing Your Financial Plan'. The talks will be held at YWCA Fort Canning Lodge, on 6 March and 10 April respectively.

Investment Talk

The very experienced Dr Tan Kee Wee is back to share his insights on financial markets and global economies. Join us as we find out if we have seen the end of the financial earthquakes of 2014, or if we should brace ourselves for the ensuing tsunami that might come in 2015. The talk will be held at YWCA Fort Canning Lodge on 27 March, from 6.20pm onwards.

Annual General Meeting

The next Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on Thursday 23 April 2015, 6.00pm at YWCA Fort Canning Lodge's Sophia Cooke Ballroom. All voting members* are invited and reminded to nominate candidates to fill the vacancies on the YWCA Board of Management.

The vacant positions for elections for AGM 2015 are:

2nd Vice President (1)

Honorary Secretary (1)

Member of Board (5)

Nominations Committee (3).

Nominations will close on Saturday 21 March 2015 at 12pm.

*Voting members must be ordinary members. Nomination forms have been sent out.



Sports

Thinking of getting fit, or fitter? Join our Aqua activities; Aqua Aerobics and Aqua Spin!

Aqua Aerobics

Incorporating a variety of rhythmic body movements and dance steps performed in water, Aqua Aerobics helps to improve cardiovascular circulation and conditioning. Guided by an experienced female instructor, these sessions provide fitness and fun! In addition, it is an effective weight-control exercise for all ages, and all fitness levels, swimmers and non-swimmers included!

Join us every Wednesday and Thursday evenings at YWCA Fort Canning Lodge!

Aqua Spin

Looking for a workout without joint and muscle stress that burns up to three times more calories than land-based exercises and has more benefits than possibly any land or water exercise? Aqua Spin is the answer! Aqua Spin is for everyone, from elite level athletes, elderly, expectant mothers, the injured, the disabled, to those fighting diabetes and obesity. You will not only improve your cardio fitness and muscle strength, but will also reap the benefits of improved blood circulation, reduced risk of varicose veins and water retention, effective cellulite breakdown and body-toning. Look no further, start spinning with us!

Join us every Monday and Tuesday evenings at YWCA Fort Canning Lodge!

For enquiries or registration for any of our membership activities, contact Shuyi at 6223 1227, 9094 7617 or members@ywca.org.sg. For more information, visit www.ywca.org.sg/programmes/activities.

Kids' Club Christmas Party

By Ling Goh

Located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean is Hawaii, a place famous for being an island paradise filled with a warm and caring "aloha" ('love' in Hawaiian) spirit. For this year's Kids' Club Christmas Party, we decided to take on a Hawaiian theme to bring more joy and fun to the YWCA's biggest annual children's event. Around 300 beneficiaries and guests alike were treated to a "Mele Kalikimaka" ('Merry Christmas' in Hawaiian) on Saturday 20 December from 9am to 1.30pm at Fort Canning Lodge's Sophia Cooke Ballroom.

The aloha spirit was felt early from the onset of planning with several donors generously stepping forward. The first kind donor was Mr Derrick Koh, a dedicated Meals-on-Wheels volunteer driver, who sponsored part of the Christmas Wishlist gifts for the 150 child beneficiaries; and his friend and fellow volunteer driver, Mr Victor and Mrs Georgette Chong, who sponsored Appetotts cooking sets so the children could apply what they learnt in Kids' Club cooking workshops. Besides games like limbo rock and hula hoops, a Hawaiian party would not be complete without some hula (Hawaiian dance)! We were lucky to have Ms Sue Mayuzumi, from hula studio Kupono Lani, step in to be our special performance. She agreed to do a hula dance segment that featured performances from her "wahines" (ladies) and "keikis" (children) students along with audience participation. The segment was a great hit and everyone felt touched by the aloha spirit.

Radin Mas Primary had about 50 staff and teachers who wished to participate in a community service project. They were engaged to purchase and wrap half of the Christmas Wishlist gifts. On 19 November, they came to the YWCA National Office for a briefing, then headed to Vivocity to do the Christmas shopping and thereafter returned to wrap their gifts and write a personalised note for each child. One clear example of their efforts was the Principal, Mrs Wong Siew Shan, who was at first baffled by a gift request for a polar bear stuffed toy. She thought to buy a white teddy bear instead but her daughter urged her not to give up. Along the way, she bought items related to polar bears to prevent disappointing her assigned child. After a month of searching, her tenacity paid off and she finally located the elusive present in Malaysia!



Another miracle phone call was from a women's fitness group from The Minton condominium. Spearheaded by Ms Shirleen Ong, the group rallied together over 70 residents through social media to donate nearly \$9,000 for the YWCA Bursary Awards and remainder of the Christmas Wishlist, and even be ushers, station masters and origami craft teachers on the day. Thanks to their efforts, we were able to recognise 40 disadvantaged children for the Bursary Awards and 10 for the character value-driven Kids' Club Awards. Several members even went the extra mile to sponsor goodie bags for the 150 children, as well as a candy floss machine. Ms Tan Kee Leng, President of the YWCA, also graced the occasion with Board member, Ms Foo Chek Chiang, to hand out the bursaries and awards.



Besides them, many vendors also gave charity discounts; our expert balloon sculptor sponsored all her balloon artworks; the Portraits of the People campaign travelled to the party; major sponsor for the last Christmas Party, Ms Michelle Cheo, offered to cover the substantive party costs; and star emcee Ms Vivienne Tseng, who was also involved last year returned to enliven the stage despite being six months' pregnant. It was a truly miraculous Kids' Club Christmas Party with so many kind souls coming together to make the event a highly memorable and meaningful time for the beneficiaries and all involved, full of true aloha.



YWCA Guangzhou Visit By Stephanie Hung

On Friday 12 December, we welcomed six guests who travelled all the way to our sunny isle from YWCA Guangzhou! The group comprised of YWCA Guangzhou's Executive Director, Board members and Programmes Managers. The exchange session at Fort Canning Lodge was a short but meaningful one, as all partook in a Teo Chew buffet lunch spread at the Café Lodge. Our Guangzhou counterparts were brought out of their comfort zones as they adventurously tried local dishes that contained a fair amount of chili! Some enjoyed the heat while others had to stop after a few mouthfuls and neutralize their taste buds with the array of cooling and refreshing desserts provided.

After lunch, we adjourned to the Love & Charity Room, where we presented on our community services and programmes, followed by a presentation by a member of YWCA Guangzhou who shared about their history and the various events and programmes that they run. It was a thought-provoking session as each party learnt how the other's organisation is run, and there was a two way flow of ideas and inspiration.

Thank you to our friends from YWCA Guangzhou for spending your afternoon with us and we hope that our paths will cross again sometime in the future!



Hong Kong Outstanding Youth Volunteers Exchange Tour By Alice Chua

Every year, a group of youth volunteers from Hong Kong are selected under the Hong Kong Outstanding Youth Volunteers Scheme to visit Singapore for an exchange tour. In 2014, we were overjoyed to be one of the Voluntary Welfare Organisations selected to host the youths as part of their tour. On Tuesday 30 December, we welcomed 20 youths and five representatives from the Social Welfare Department of Hong Kong. Our regular volunteers from Ngee Ann Polytechnic FoodAID Club joined us too.

Our guests were treated to a sumptuous buffet lunch at Fort Canning Lodge's Café Lodge, which allowed them to sample a variety of local delights. They thoroughly enjoyed the lunch and the conversations that ensued. Following lunch, we presented on our community services, followed by a presentation from our guests entitled 'Volunteer Development in Hong Kong' and an overview of FoodAID Club's upcoming activities by Ngee Ann Polytechnic students.

After the presentations, everyone headed to YWCA's National Office at Outram Road to pack rations for 150 families as part of the Sustenance for Families Programme. Our Ngee Ann Polytechnic youths have been volunteering with us regularly, so they guided our Hong Kong guests on the packing process. The youth volunteers displayed concrete teamwork, swiftly setting up a production line to facilitate the packing process! Within a blink of an eye, all 150 ration bags were packed!

During the subsequent debriefing session, our guests shared their experiences and explored ways in which they could improve in the future. They also took this opportunity to share their volunteering experiences in Hong Kong with our local youth volunteers. Upon reflection, it was a meaningful afternoon as both groups had a fruitful session learning from one another and sharing stories. We are very thankful for this opportunity to have met this group of future community outreach leaders from Hong Kong and would like to thank all who came down for being with us on that day!

If you would like to make a difference in the community, please visit our website at www.ywca.org.sg and sign up to volunteer with us!



Sustenance Packing with Grundfos

By Sharon Regina Kulasekaran

Bright and early on the morning of Saturday 13 December 2014, 12 corporate volunteers from Grundfos gathered in their office at Jalan Tukang to pack rations for 122 low income families living in the vicinity of Boon Lay.

Once the provisions arrived, the team eagerly took charge and immediately arranged the provisions into an assembly line. Family members of the staff even came down to lend their support and join in the action! The young and old alike enthusiastically packed all 122 ration bags in under an hour. The rations were then loaded onto trucks and everyone headed to the two blocks at Boon Lay for the distribution. Once the rations and Grundfos volunteers arrived at the location, all worked together in teams to distribute the rations to the families. There was a sense of fulfilment and happiness felt by everyone after helping the families in need. Needless to say, our corporate volunteers enjoyed the time bonding with their colleagues and friends whilst doing a good deed.

Grundfos has been a regular and dedicated volunteer partner with the YWCA since December 2013, generously assisting in distributing rations monthly to the West area of Singapore. In addition, they have also supported the programme by raising funds. In 2014, the amount raised was \$1,934.10, which will greatly benefit the 1,300 families that we serve. A heartfelt thanks to Grundfos for their continued support and commitment towards the Sustenance for Families programme and thank you to all who came down for the packing!



Youth Centre Year-End Holidays Programme

By Nicole Chua



Last year's year-end holidays saw a surge of baking and cooking activities at our YWCA Youth Centre! The holidays started off with a baking workshop with the AG Home on Tuesday 18 November when 12 young ladies came down to our premises to bake macarons. They let their creativity flow as they mixed in their favourite colours and piped the macarons in different shapes. The macarons were filled with a decadent chocolate ganache, making the end product a treat to both the eyes and one's taste buds!

The next day, eight youths attended a session to bake a simple all-time favourite and crowd pleaser; chocolate chip cookies. Another group of nine youths living around the vicinity of Outram came to bake macarons too on Wednesday 20 November. Strawberry jam thumbprint cookies wrapped up the last session of the holidays workshops on Thursday 21 November.

During the second week of the school holidays, the youths picked up a new skill; crocheting! We were pleased to have our lovely volunteer, Mrs Sabina Yuen to take the time to come and impart this skill to the youths over two days. First, they learnt about the basics of crocheting and practised getting the hang of things before they proceeded to crochet a beanie! Balls of yarn were strewn across the tables as they choose their favourite colour combinations to personalise the item.

To reward all who diligently attended the sessions throughout the holidays, an outing to Singapore's River Safari was organised. During the excursion, the youths had a lot of fun learning more about the species of wildlife that inhabit the world's most iconic rivers. The Giant Panda Forest was undoubtedly one of the highlights as the youths spent almost an hour there, vying for a chance to catch even a mere glimpse of the famous giant pandas, Kai Kai and Jia Jia!

Workz-on-Wheels at Canossaville Children's Home

By Alice Chua

We have been conducting workshops with Canossaville Children's Home since 2013. Upon discussion with the home, we discovered that they would like the children to learn more about how to take care of themselves. Thus, during the recent November school holidays, we developed and conducted a series of four Self Care workshops for two different groups of children. One group consisted of 29 children aged seven and eight years old, whilst the other consisted of 25 children aged nine to 12 years old. These children were residents of the home and the group included some special needs students from their Student Care. This was our second time working with children with special needs.



We started the first session with increasing the children's self-awareness. They learnt to identify and develop their strengths and potentials. One of our goals was to help the children understand that each of us are unique individuals with a different set of strengths. The second session featured role playing scenarios focused on social etiquette and personal hygiene. Body image and self-grooming made up the third session, during which the children were educated on the negative effects that bad manners can have on one's image. Our final session centred upon the importance of a balanced lifestyle, namely the different food groups and mechanisms to counter stress.

We were blessed to have two groups of volunteers; SGCares and a local church group, on hand to befriend the children every session. It was thoroughly rewarding for all parties as the volunteers voiced out that they learnt a lot from the children as well! We are looking forward to partnering with the home to conduct more soft skills workshops in the year ahead, and will need a lot of support from volunteers who can commit on a regular basis. Besides working with Canossaville Children's Home, we are also collaborating with other partners such as Sunbeam Place, Prison Fellowship Singapore, New Town Primary School, Punggol Primary School and Chen Su Lan Methodist Children's Home. Please visit our website or drop us an email at volunteer@ywca.org.sg for more information!

Kids' Club December School Holidays Programme

By Ling Goh



When school is out, it is time to head to the YWCA for our Kids' Club year-end holiday programmes!

"He's my future self," quipped one boy who discovered his youth volunteer from Nanyang Junior College (NYJC) had the same name as him. This was the kind of impact that the two Year 1 classes from NYJC had when they came on 15 and 22 November to hold special activities for the Kids' Club children. The older youths came out in full force to play games, organise races, teach crafts, and perform for the children to inculcate the values of love amongst friends and teamwork by example.

Nearly 25 Kids' Club children and adult volunteers from Avnet came to YWCA Outram at 8.30am on 29 November before heading to the River Safari. Except for a brief ride on the Amazon River Quest boat, the kids fully expended their energy chattering and walking all around the park with their volunteer buddies. Although Kai Kai, the Giant Panda, was having an early nap, the children were glad to be able to enjoy the air-conditioning there before settling down for lunch with their grown-up friends.

More weekday happenings were rolled out from 1 to 10 December with craft and food related activities such as making 3D pop-up cards, yummy sandwiches and trendy rainbow looms. These were organised by a precocious team of four Girl Guides from River Valley High School and a team of five Singapore Polytechnic students who engaged the children in do-it-yourself stamp art on canvas tote bags, games, and Christmas cookie decorations. Best of all was seeing the youth interacting with the children and working hard to keep their attention with jokes, sincerity and their very own charisma.

Other highlights included our very first carpentry workshop on 5 December courtesy of Home-Fix D.I.Y. The children got the chance to head to a real woodworking workshop and make their own toolboxes under the care and guidance of LaSalle Investment volunteers. It was an educational and out-of-the-box experience for the children, many of whom were attempting this for the first time.

YWCA Staff Training on 29 November 2014

By Tracy Er



The YWCA provides multiple platforms such as workshops and in-house sharing sessions to help our teachers remain competent and knowledgeable to ensure that they are kept abreast of the early childhood educational landscape. This allows them to continue to deliver the high quality of care and education that are vital in meeting the needs of the children and their families.

Our teachers had their second in-house sharing session on Saturday 29 November at YWCA Outram with two sessions running concurrently - one for the Chinese teachers and another for the English teachers. Both were not 'chalk and talk' sessions, but rather, interactive and participatory, promoting collaborative learning through discussions and group sharings.

The Chinese session was conducted by Mdm Ho Mee Khuen, Senior Principal of Pasir Ris Child Development Centre. The teachers learned and developed their skills in areas such as children's observations, interpretation of children's behaviours and documentation.

Meanwhile, the English teachers engaged in a session centred on Stretcher Booklets, led by Pre-School Manager, Ms Sandy Koh and facilitated by the Curriculum Team. With teachers as



the facilitators, the Stretcher Booklets enhance a child's role as an active learner and are a positive reinforcement. The booklets will be officially launched later this year.

The teachers enthusiastically engaged and participated in the activities during the sessions, and were able to bring both work experience and knowledge into the learning situations. Both sessions were fulfilling and rewarding as all who participated uncovered practical ideas and practices which they could take back and implement in their classrooms.



BCA Charity Shopping Outing

The highlight of the YWCA Kids' Club December school holiday programme was definitely the 'A Good Deed Behind a Good Deed' Charity Shopping outing held on Monday 15 December. Over 30 children were buddied with corporate volunteers from the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) and were sponsored \$20 each to buy five items for themselves and their family or friends and another five items to be given away as Christmas gifts to needy children from the Marine Parade Family Service Centre. It was heartening to see the children use care and thought to pick out the presents – some bought matching items for their recipients, while others chose things from toys to stationery. After the shopping, everyone took a bus to Marine Parade Family Service Centre to personally present their special gift bag to be distributed to the needy children later. Each child received a special thank you note in return, and went home with their own presents and the warm feeling in their hearts knowing they were able to bless someone else this Christmas.

31 December 2014

Dear Ling,

On behalf of my colleagues, we would like to thank you for giving us this opportunity to spread happiness to the children.

There were many heart-warming encounters that day which will constantly remind us to be content and to treasure our loved ones always. I must admit that we also had some fun ourselves as this was an interesting yet meaningful break from our routine work in BCA.

Thanks and Best Regards,
Ding Hock Hui
Director (Quality & Certification Department),
Technology Development Group
Building and Construction Authority



COMPLIMENTS

New Town Primary School Partnership Award

On Friday 14 November 2014, we were invited to New Town Primary School's year-end awards ceremony to receive the Partnership Award. The school took this opportunity to thank YWCA for partnering with them in two programmes. Firstly, our Meals-on-Wheels for Children provided free and nutritious lunches for the students from low income families. Secondly, during our Workz-on-Wheels programme, we conducted a variety of different soft skills workshops for latchkey children, such as self-esteem and culinary workshops.

We are humbled to receive this token of appreciation, and look forward to continuing working in tandem with the school to reach out to more underprivileged children this year!



Hello Alice!

I enjoyed working with the youth through the YWCA. When I was volunteering, I felt very fulfilled. I thought we were doing a good job and that the children were positively gaining from our time together. The most important thing the youth gained from our time together was that there are people in Singapore and in the world that care about them and hope they do well. I think we served as proper role models for them as well, modeling good behavior and how to resolve conflicts peacefully (something they need a bit of work on!)

I was able to see many of the themes we were learning about in my educational psychology classes with the groups, which was very beneficial to me.

I hope my feedback helps!

Best,
Alison Flinchum



To Simon Juanita,

I would like to commend the staff regarding our recent visit to your lodge for dinner. As soon as my wife and I arrived at the lobby, we were greeted by some very friendly smiles and warm welcome. The kind you usually receive in 5 or 6 Star hotels.

As we entered the coffeehouse we were also greeted with a warm welcome by all the staff on duty and the service throughout was excellent, from recommending the favourites from the buffet line to telling us before the buffet line was about to close.

All these complemented the lovely authentic dishes. I've recommended the lodge to many friends. Keep up the excellent service!

Regards,
Robert Steven Chitty
Director
Chitty Training Consultancy

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome on Board

The YWCA is pleased to welcome new staff to the team. We welcome Teo Seow Bee as Para Educarer at Ang Mo Kio CDC, Goh Hock Neo as Teacher at Bedok CDC, How Li Yoke as Para Educarer at Jurong East CDC, Surya Binte Ahmad as Para Educarer and Thong Gek Choo as Attendant at Marine Parade CDC, Koh Siaw Hwee as Teacher at Outram CDC and Puah Wei Ping, Eileen as Teacher at Outram Kindergarten.

At Fort Canning Lodge, we welcome Hatish Raj a/l Chandran as Technician, Rohaya Binti Ismawi as Room Attendant and Yeo Kaiwen, Aaron as Guest Relations Assistant.

At the National Office, we welcome Gabriel Fu as Project Executive and Sharon Regina Kulasekaran as Volunteer Management Executive cum Social Work Associate.

SPOTLIGHT: MRS LUCY LIM

Since her first step into the YWCA 40 years ago, Mrs Lucy Lim has been actively involved in the association. From a helper at the Children's Centre in her early teenage years, to Acting Head Teacher and now the current Senior Principal of McNair CDC, Mrs Lim has had many fun and challenging encounters. In this issue's Spotlight, she shares some of the stories that have shaped her experiences in the YWCA through all these years.

When did you first come to be involved in the YWCA?

On 8 January 1971 I was employed as a helper in the YWCA's Children's Centre. Prior to this while waiting for my 'O' level results, I was working as a production worker at an electronic firm. I have my father to thank. He introduced me to the supervisor at the Children's Centre, Miss Evelyn Tan. I was paid \$40 per month working daily from 9am to 12pm. A few months later, I started to help out in the afternoon session from 2pm to 4pm too. Thus my monthly salary was increased to \$80. It was the first time that I earned so much money through my own effort. So I decided to continue to working there, and the rest is history!



Could you describe a typical work day as Senior Principal at McNair CDC?

I start my day very early in the morning, together with two other staff at 7am. I greet and welcome parents and help to pacify the occasional crying children. I feel that being present to interact with the parents gives me an opportunity to build a good rapport with them and also hear out some anxious parents regarding their child's progress. The rest of the morning, I interact with my teachers and children in their respective classes. In this way, I am not only able to supervise the teachers in a non-threatening manner but also to assist them in observing children while they are at play or work. In the afternoon, I usually attend to all administrative work; meetings, interviewing parents, the list goes on! At times, I may stay until 7pm to attend to parents' concerns or Centre matters. My mind can really be at ease and I will call it a day when the last child leaves the Centre.

What are some of the challenges that you faced during your tenure and how were they overcome?

In early 1992, YWCA, situated at the current location of the KK Hospital, was asked to evacuate. We were not given much time to look for an alternative place to house our students and had difficulties looking for a suitable place. However, we put our trust in God and prayed hard. Our prayers were answered when MCYS offered their premises (belonging to HDB). We had only two months before we had to evacuate. Everything happened so fast; I remember that it was really chaotic. Nevertheless we were thankful that out of the three contractors, one of them offered to rush the job and promised to finish on time by March 1992 with a reasonable cost. My staff and I spent our Sundays and holidays packing. One of the parents provided free labour and transport. We thank God that because of the team spirit – one mind and one heart - and the collaboration of volunteers, staff, parents and contractors, we managed to move into our new McNair CDC smoothly. It has been 22 years since then!

What do you personally spend most of your time on?

When my children were young I spent most of my time ferrying them to tuition. While they were with there, my husband and I would shop for items for the Centre, so much so that my husband told me that he did not only marry me but YWCA too! He was always involved in whatever I would do, from shopping to repairing defects - YWCA is like my second home. I guess it is the passion I have for the children and the work that I enjoy doing. My spare time is spent thinking of ways to improve the programme or activities and visiting other childcare centers. I would like the children who are in my care to experience a happy childhood.

What is your motto in life?

Believe in your principles ... "Do it once and do it well!"

Who is your role model?

When YWCA Children's Centre was converted into the Kindergarten, I was made Acting Head Teacher. I had very little experience and knowledge of running a kindergarten. I was only holding a Basic Kindergarten certificate and so were all my colleagues. Then Mrs Bibi S Williams, our Executive Director, introduced me to Mrs Gin Chua, her very good friend who was our advisor. At that time not many of us had gone through proper training in running a kindergarten, so Mrs Chua came in at an opportune time. She was a very elegant lady and through her I learnt how to run an effective kindergarten and she imparted good life principles to me.

Through her humble ways, she showed us how we can help children to learn through fun ways and how to nurture them to their full potential. All her trainings, though very minimal in verbal instructions, were very hands-on and interactive. The most important thing I learned was that children must be allowed to learn at their own pace and be happy in doing what they enjoy doing. Mrs Chua participated not only in academic activities but also involved herself in related manual work such as scrubbing the floor, washing the toilets, etc. She walks the talk, all for the sake of her love for young children.