

final thoughts...

A recent visit by the staff of the National Council of Social Services left an indelible mark of encouragement for YGOS...

On the 20th of March, a team of NCSS staff led by the president of the Board of Members RADM (RET) Kwek Siew Jin paid a visit to YGOS woodlands center. A cordial reception was being meted out to the visitors and it was an engaging affair in which a presentation was shown pertaining the work of YGOS followed by individual life sharing from three of the YGOS staff who were former youth-at-risk themselves.



The sharing touched on their past delinquency and how their experience at YGOS had transformed their lives which further inspired them to lead better lives and help others in doing youth social work. Much admiration was expressed by the visiting staff team in which one of them commented on the uniqueness of YGOS' current success through the complement that "it was rare for any social work organization to witness success stories of youths who are willing to continue as a social worker to help others who are still ensnared in their own predicament. " It demonstrates a deeper qualitative change in the heart of the youth in further caring for others and giving back to society rather than just coming out of their own problems.

During the Q & A session the NCSS team stated about their purpose of visit which is also to inquire of the need for any form of help or funding. Some informal sharing continued after the session over light refreshments and as the visit comes to an end, one can conclude that it was indeed an inspiring encounter for both sides.

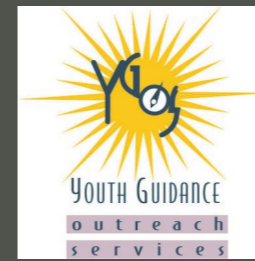


(Personal sharing of experience by one of the staff, Royston Khoo.)



Insights into youth social work.

Jan-June 2012



YGOS Updates

“The long-term framework by YGOS is a wise, preventive approach in being able to work and impact youths beginning at a younger impressionable age.”

- a common sentiment shared by the visiting team from NCSS

What's in this issue >>>

- ◆ A lighthearted evening at Club Mustang café night opening.
- ◆ Enkindle the passion in sports and living through Tchoukball.
- ◆ The impact of positive psychology in schools.
- ◆ Visit from National Council of Social Services.

Our Mission

To provide hope to youths-at-risk and their families through caring relationships and developmental opportunities for the whole person.

Our Story...

Many paths, one purpose...

The postmodernism challenge among youths today consist of connecting a changing generation fraught with uncertainty and crisis with the unchanging message of leading a meaningful life of intrinsic value to the society...

Contemporary youths lived in a world characterized by a plethora of problems and faces a future that is murky and unpredictable.

The situation of youths today is marked by dissolution of the family, growing child abuse and domestic conflict, information and media overload and the demands of a competitive and tech-savvy society. Change is the name of the game, and in order to adapt to a crisis-ridden and rapidly mutating world, engagement with youths must occur at a multidimensional level and with relevance to their particular interest such as sports and adventure. At YGOS, it is through such methods that we seek the developmental opportunities in maximizing a youth's potential and preparing them to be psychologically firm and positive in order to tackle the challenges and realities of modern society. This issue of newsletter will highlight our holistic approach by bringing you across a variety of programs held at secondary schools and our center. From promoting teamwork and fair play through the high intensity game of Tchoukball to the informal classroom lesson

on our PEARLS program, the complexity of each unique case makes youth work a dynamic, enriching and demanding experience.

The period of Jan to March witnessed an influx of youth social work volunteers. As much as they have guided the youths encountered through school programs and at the center, the process of working with lives has also impacted themselves when they are able to empathize with people from different walks of lives. Therefore, such interactions are also a form of mutual learning. Among the things such as providing a positive environment and theoretical lessons on positive psychology, one should not neglect the apparently simple and yet important aspect of relationship and interpersonal skills with the youths which requires not just the mind but the heart of the volunteer. The challenge to youths these days is to overcome social barriers by being proactive in helping one another regardless of our background. Indeed it is a diversity of identity and approaches but one common purpose of positive development.

“...one should not neglect the simple yet important aspect of relationship and interpersonal skills...”



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setting the stage

A lively opening night for Mustang Cafe

About 40 youths from various schools were present at the climactic opening of the Mustang cafe. It was a lighthearted evening filled with music, food and fun.



A time of fellowship

The cafe, which will be held once every month, provides a blissful time of gathering and hob-nob after a hard day's work. The presence of students from different schools is also an avenue for more diverse interaction and exchange of new friendships.

Club Mustang

The cafe is part of a larger initiative called Club Mustang. The club offers opportunities to develop one's potential in courses such as table-tennis, table-football, music (guitar/piano), Tchoukball,



development of positive values. Youths will find more meaningful ways to spend their time after schools rather than loitering in the neighborhood having the risk of negative influences. We believe that one should not merely seek to influence and monitor a youth's conduct during school hours but more importantly, the after-school environment also has crucial implications in their lives such that a positive environment needs to be cultivated during this period as well.

dance and tuition. Members pay an annual fee of 5 dollars with the entitlement to such courses and priority booking for the Playstation 3 games/jamming room. Together with the cafe, the club hopes to create a form of small and enriching community that would be conducive to youth's learning and

Engaging the Community...



"Kranji Secondary School students engaging the community through Tchoukball in their service learning trip to Malacca during 15th to 17th of March 2012."



School Programmes >>>

Inculcating the right values through sports.

"The objective of all physical activities is not to make champions, but to make a contribution to building a more harmonious society." This quote by the founder of Tchoukball, Dr Hermann Brandt, captures in a nutshell the essence of imparting values through exposure to the competitiveness and teamwork in sports.

Since its implementation, the Tchoukball CCA enrichment held at Assumption Pathway School (tues) and Beatty Secondary School (mon) has been challenging its students in developing personal attributes such as perseverance and self-sacrificing spirit of teamwork and sportsmanship. Competitions such as the B division also provide opportunities for team-building and a sense of direction for the youths. Besides the fun, the moments of bonding through positive values firmly etched in their memory will serve as a perpetual guidance in other aspects of their lives.



Developing a positive psychology...

The increasing complexity of influences and the competitive nature of our society today would necessitate a framework such as the PEARLS program to develop the strength of character in youths to meet these challenges.....



Building human capacity for living a happy and fulfilled life is one of the important objectives of our PEARLS program. The program follows the empirically supported principles of positive psychology which is the scientific study of strengths and virtues that would enable an individual and communities to thrive for success and live fulfilling lives. PEARLS is an acronym that

stands for Personal growth, Environmental mastery, Autonomy, Relationship, Life purpose and Self-acceptance. Each of these themes constitute the 6 modules that would make up the entire program. Each of them are held once every week over a period of 2 months, involving schools such as Kuo Chuan Presbyterian and Riverside Secondary School recently.

A unique way of learning

The PEARLS program promotes the teaching of values through an engaging form of pedagogy that differ from the more academically intense school curriculum. Other than theoretical lessons, the identification of values is being inculcated through games, hands-on activities and even outdoor trips such as rock-climbing and an amazing race at Sentosa. The program encourages reasonable structure and development in the critical transitional phase of adolescence, and to improve their faculties of critical thinking and judgment, shaping their opinions to social and life decisions as well as sharpen their intellects and give them a chance at personal self-actualization.



Hands-on approach

In one of the sessions aimed at developing respect and appreciation for rules and authorities in parental relationships, an activity was carried out in which the students experienced playing the game of captain's ball with and without rules. In experiencing the chaos and confusion during the game without rules and the order during the game with rules, it led them to reflect on the importance of certain rules and boundaries that defines the game in proper order and by extension, a peaceful and meaningful relationships with respective peers and authorities.

Comments from the group facilitator >>>

Self-esteem and confidence are the important first steps...

"In the way some cases are handled, special attention must be paid to young people who take credit for all their achievements or failures. For it can have very negative repercussions for a person's concept of himself/herself and his/her motivation if he/she perceives his/her failures as a consequence of his/her inability to achieve a specific goal, rather than of his/her lack of effort and hard work. The ability or inability to do something is difficult to modify, efforts, however, can be enhanced immediately."



Jasper,
Riverside



"At first I thought the program would be boring, but the games and activities turned out to be fun. It helped me to be better in time management and to realize the vitality of planning. I also learnt about the challenges of working in a team."

Zafri,
Riverside
Secondary



"I was quite shy at the first session until my facilitator Jonathan Kiew encouraged me to speak up more and to participate in the discussions. The program helped me to be more purpose-driven and dare to dream."