

# SPFTN!

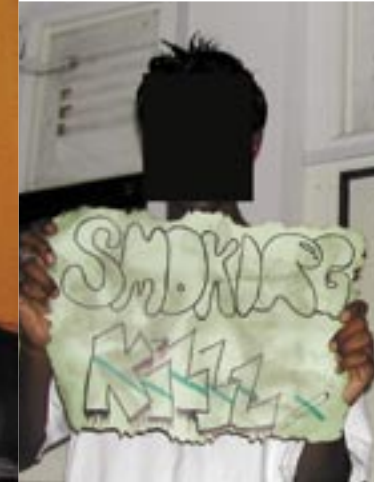
A publication of Children-At-Risk Empowerment Association (CARE)

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Bringing you news and information about CARE's events, people and happenings.

It started out so innocently. Spurred on by friends and just for fun, Ali picked up the stick and puffed. Before he knew it, he had been smoking for three years. The habit hurt his pocket and his performance in soccer was deteriorating. Worse yet, he couldn't stop. He had become a teen addict.

For Ali and many like him, CARE designed the PowerCharged! Success Camp where students were guided through the various steps of quitting the habit. Tightly packed in the three-day schedule of "anti-smoking indoctrination & inoculation" were group sessions, a rigorous exercise regime, counselling, expeditions and outdoor fun and games. The camp's objective: to help smokers quit and build anti-smoking peer supporters.



## PowerCharged! For Success

by Adelyn Tan



A blessing shared is a blessing doubled — and students had to proactively

do something to help other teens not to smoke. It was decided that they would do some undercover sleuthing to expose the unscrupulous retailers who readily sell cigarettes to under-18s.

After some "acting" practice, the campers fanned out to different places collecting data — names and addresses of retailers who readily offered them cigarettes when asked. Within four hours, they found 43 such outlets.

They also learnt a precious life-lesson. Not

everyone who gives you what you ask for is really being good to you, while those who scold you are not always being bad to you.

It is the hope of these young reformed ex-smokers, now called non-smokers, that more young people will quit the habit or, better yet, don't ever start.

### CARE is supported by



First timers are fined \$5,000 while repeat offenders can be fined up to \$10,000. In 2000, only six retailers were prosecuted, while in the first four months of 2001, two were caught for the same offence — the same average of six per year.

## Editorial

# Sspftz!! — Sound of explosives being ignited

While serving my National Service as a combat engineer, I had the unforgettable experience of handling explosives. Some charges are set off when lit through a detonator cord connected to a primer atop the explosive itself. The ignited cord gives off an unmistakable hiss as its flame speeds to the charge while we shouted, “IGNITED!” to warn all of the impending blast. It was thrilling.

Likewise, CARE’s work is about igniting the potential of young lives. In every cohort of youths, there are those that need a little more support, help or push. We want to be there especially for those at-risk of academic failure, social maladjustment, delinquency and crime. Within every child, whatever the

background, there is a success story. Our purpose is to help materialise these successes.

To date, CARE has served thousands of youths by stoking the talent in them. The work is overwhelming and our resources are limited. We actively seek and need others to come into the arena. This newsletter, Sspftz!! is a step in that direction. It aims to capture the essence of our work as catalysts. Come, join us in our cause to help youth help themselves! Ignite!



John KE Tan  
Editor, Sspftz!! and  
Director of Development, CARE

Children-At-Risk Empowerment Association (CARE) is a school-based social work agency empowering at-risk youths to acquire life-skills, build resilience, and establish wholesome relationships. It does this both in and

outside of the classroom setting.

A voluntary welfare organisation and member of the National Council of Social Service, CARE is a registered charity with IPC status, authorised to accept tax-deductible donations.



## Kindness on Display

by Derek Chan

For James Pinto, James Soh, Don Hemantha, Cai Bing Xiang, Roozainy and Hidayat, all members of CARE’s PowerCharged! Success Club, St Gabriel’s



Secondary School, it was an eagerly anticipated event. Their task was to wrap up the launch of the Singapore Kindness Week 2003 with their song, “Kindness to You & Me”. Co-written with local singer-songwriter Shayn Phua, it was their icon of achievement.

They took the stage in style and delivered their song with all their hearts, with the kindness mascots

sharing the limelight. The audience responded by clapping along merrily, ending the event on a high and cheerful note.

The presence and approval of the Minister for Foreign Affairs Professor Jayakumar, guest of honour, totally made it a day they could always look back with pride.

*The Singapore Kindness Week 2003 was organised by the SKM and the South East Community Development Council at Bedok Central on April 27, 2003.*

## Volunteering at CARE

Volunteering opportunities abound at CARE, both direct and indirect.

Direct work involves face-to-face interaction



## A Volunteer’s Experience

By Melvyn Leey

During my school term break, I had the chance to volunteer at the PowerCharged! Success Camp organised by CARE. It helped me understand why people do things that are so obviously self-damaging. Oftentimes, it is to numb out their hurts and pains.

Some of the stories they shared drove me to tears. One quiet and introverted secondary four boy spoke softly of his mother who’d walked out on his family when he was in early primary school. Since then, he had been utterly bullied by his sisters and neglected by his father. Very much a jaded and indifferent person now, he felt no one in this

world cared for him. So what’s the problem with smoking? You only die earlier.

Besides, he had nothing to lose, nor to live for.

That and other painful life stories... some not even suitable for print, created a deep impression on me. I feel I have grown up so much in these past few weeks. I learnt to be slow to judge and ready to listen. For behind every “problem kid” is a story, waiting to be told, heard and understood. Hopefully, before the story escalates to tragedy.

*Melvyn is a first-year business student at SMU*

Indirect work relates mainly to administrative help, IT support, promotion, publicity, and fund-raising.

Internship stints are also available. If you are interested in being an intern or volunteer, please call 6824 2217 or email <info@caresingapore.org>.

and connection with our students for varying stint periods. This includes mentoring, academic coaching, sports coaching, facilitating, activity instructing and befriending. Interviews, orientations and skills training are pre-requisites.

# Youth Synergy at Yuan Ching

by Nicholas Lim

A group of 13 secondary one normal technical students put up a performance entitled Youth Synergy for their school's 25th Anniversary and Prize Presentation Day on April 28.

The performance got its name from the unique characteristic of each student, eager to display his or her talents.

Initially, the students felt that it would be impossible to fit their item into the three minutes

choreographed steps, danced to trendy music.

The boys, with their flexibility and agility, executed the high difficulty level of break-dancing moves with extreme accuracy and elegance.

In addition, Shahril, a student with a passion for public performance, dressed in a clown suit and totally in character, left the audience mesmerised with his juggling



allocated, but they were motivated to give it a shot nonetheless.

Divided into two groups of boys and girls, they came up with an item each and started rehearsing about two months prior to the event.

The girls put together an ensemble of "Storm-like" percussion, with sticks and some fantastically-

and antics.

Everyone present was very happy with the students and their teachers were full of praise for them.

Despite their initial apprehension, the students persevered and produced results that they did not imagine they could achieve, forging closer bonds with each other in the process.



## Our Logo

Designed by a student, it embodies various youth ideals.

Youth reaching for the stars:

*Realising a Dream*

The wave:

*Power & Resilience*

The eagle:

*Vision & Prowess*

## CARE Bears

In late 2002, four gutsy Raffles Junior College students, Lin Shumin, Natalie Koh, Adelina Young, and Joy Kwek, participated in the YMCA-Citibank CitiYouth for Causes program.

By the end of March 2003, they had planned, executed and completed a fundraising project, raising a nett total of \$11,010 for CARE. They produced an attractive, inspirational journal and approached strangers on the streets to buy copies. The bulk of the

sales came during a three-day blitz around the Raffles Place MRT Station, which saw the girls braving the sun from morning to evening, selling the journals.

At the program's closing awards ceremony, the guest of honour, Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Community Development and Sports, praised the girls, who clinched one of the top team awards.

Copies of the journal are still available at just \$10 each. Please contact CARE's office at 6284 2217 for orders.



## Care to Mentor?

Research shows that a powerful factor for building resilience in an at-risk youth is the investment of time and guidance in the youth's life by a concerned and caring adult.

Recognising this, CARE has established the Mentoring Program to match volunteer adults with students.

There are two types of mentoring schemes: Intervention-mentoring and Transformation-mentoring.

Intervention-mentoring seeks to match an appropriately-skilled adult with a youth going through situations requiring immediate attention.

Examples of such situations include gang involvement, divorce of parents, grief, or depression.

Transformation-mentoring, which forms the bulk of the mentoring matches, aims to guide motivated students through the process of goal-directed and value-driven behaviour.

The Mentoring Program is loosely structured, with no fixed curriculum. Mentors are assigned to work with just one student over a year and are committed to initiate contact with their mentorees on a weekly basis.

CARE provides orientation and training to equip mentors with the skills needed to reach out to their mentorees.

If you need more details, please contact John Tan at 9455 6946 or email <john@caresingapore.org> or more information about CARE, check out <www.caresingapore.org>.



# Power Behind the Scenes

by Ian Teo

March 29, 2003 saw the Baking Industry Training Centre (BITC) transformed into a bustling baking bazaar. More than 1,000 people thronged the usually quiet premise for a bake sale charity event marking its tenth anniversary celebration. Celebrities and renowned chefs shared their baking secrets while crowds queued patiently for the mouth-watering goodies. All to help CARE bring hope to the many young people it serves.

Behind the scenes, we realised that there were great powers hard at work months before the baking event.

Primus Cheng, chairman and CEO of Prima Flour Pte Ltd, led BITC to turn its anniversary celebration into a charity event. In a bold and innovative

initiative, they launched a recipe book to mark the occasion and to raise funds for CARE. Tough times did not deter Cheng and his team from thinking big. They enthusiastically ordered the printing of



3,000 copies of the book, entitled *A Celebration of Taste!*

Two months later, Cheng handed a cheque of \$100,000 to CARE.

CARE is grateful to Cheng for believing in our work. He is truly a miracle worker in these trying times.

The mayor of South West CDC, Yu-Foo Yee Shoon is another hope creator. Fabian Doh, principal of BITC, revealed that *A Celebration of Taste* would not have been possible if not for her boundless energy and enthusiasm. She succeeded in getting more than a hundred recipes from ministers' wives and celebrities to make the book truly a great celebration of taste.

The power of creativity is Doh's hallmark. With his team of chefs, he transformed the baked goods into a visual feast for readers. His meticulous eye for detail and high standards for quality created a book we are proud and honoured to be associated with.

On May 28, when Mayor Yu-Foo reminded us how lucky CARE was to receive a cheque for \$100,000 during these tough economic times, I could not help but thank God for these miracle workers.

CARE's decision, late last year, to take on three more new schools meant a need for new staff and a bigger budget. The money raised will thus certainly help CARE keep its services going further. That means the young people we



care for will continue to get help to carve a future for themselves — thanks to the great powers behind the scenes.

Twenty-five students from the PowerCharged! Success Club at Swiss Cottage Secondary School spent an activity-packed three days, from Friday, March 14, to Sunday, March 16, on the campus of the Singapore Management



## Donations to CARE

As CARE is a registered charity with IPC (Institution of Public Character) status, all donations to our agency are tax-deductible. Donors, intending to claim tax-deduction, need to furnish their names, NRIC numbers and contact addresses.



## The Making of Leaders

by Adelyn Tan

University (SMU) building up teamwork, leadership and communication skills.

The camp, organised by a group of SMU students, also gave the students plenty of time for fun, as they interacted with each other while taking part in the various activities, including a treasure hunt at Botanical Gardens, football and an all-night movie marathon.

Youth worker Chung Wai Leng found it a good time to talk to her students without having to worry about running the program. "It was good to take a back seat and let others plan and run the show while I spent some



quantity and quality time with the students, getting to know them better," she said.

"The SMU students are very responsible and carried out their duties excellently. And they showed that they are able to build good, strong rapport with our kids. I had fun!" she added.

