

Another Proud Moment

It is not everyday you witness one of your students up on stage presenting a speech and receiving an award from the Minister for National Development, Mr Mah Bow Tan. CARE was looking forward to the National Youth Achievement Award Bronze and Silver Award Presentation at RELC Auditorium on December 4, 2003, where we would witness Miss Nooraini Shah Binte Sikkander doing just that.

Nooraini's first project was to set up the Read and Play (RAP) centre in her school, where she bought indoor

games and books to encourage her fellow students to read and to interact through the games. As part of the NYAA programme, she went to the Chen Su Lan Methodist Children's Home where she helped to put up a show for the children and played with them. To fulfill the physical recreation component of the award programme, she picked up kick-boxing and basketball. She also learnt to play the clarinet and saxophone, became a drum major, and took part in a leadership camp organised by Singapore Management University as part of the skills development section.

Unfortunately, Nooraini had to fly to India on December 4 itself due to unforeseen circumstances and was thus unable to attend the presentation. That, however, does not dull the pride we feel about her achieving the award, and the glory of being the single individual chosen to go up on stage and give a speech. Nooraini's disappointment was perhaps assuaged a little when she was interviewed about her award on FM 95.8's noon-time radio programme.

This is a snippet of the speech that she prepared for the award presentation:

"I am very proud that I have managed to get this award after putting in so much effort. I have gained experience in communication, confidence, taking the initiative and working in a team. These are just some of the things I learnt in the NYAA Programme and am looking forward to learning much more as I go for the Silver Award.

"Before I end, I would like to say thank you to my teachers, my CARE leaders and everyone else who helped me through the NYAA Programme."

From all of us at CARE, congratulations Nooraini, you deserve the accolade!

CARE is supported by Baking Industry Training Centre, Community Chest, Distinguished Universities Alumni League, National Council of Social Service, National Youth Council, Singapore National Co-operative Federation, Old Rafflesians' Association, Singapore Pools and Singapore Sports Council.

Making the Connection

by Nicholas Lim

Working with youths is extremely challenging for me. I like challenges, but sometimes it can be frustrating.

I once had a student with whom I found it really hard to make a connection. However, my perseverance paid off one day when he started sharing his life story with me

of how he was involved in illegal activities and why he kept breaking school rules. He even shared his after-school activities with me. I felt that, at some point in time, I had made him feel comfortable confiding in and coming to me for assistance. It was motivating for me. It made me want to continue to persevere as these youth definitely need the time and space to trust and begin connecting with others. The greatest satisfaction comes when you see them making a change in their lives for good without imposing your values on them.

Youth work brings with it much joy. Although youths may sometimes be unresponsive, their silence could indicate that they are sizing you up. They want to make sure that they really want you to be involved in their lives. They will then take that step to initiate a connection if they sense that they have nothing to lose or have all to gain. Each time that happens, I feel affirmed of my own patience, efforts and attempts in reaching out to them.

Ed: Nicholas is a full-time youth worker with CARE.



Nooraini (second from right) with a group of friends at RAP centre.

CARE is...

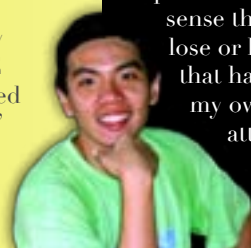
A voluntary welfare organisation operating a school-based social work with an upstream preventive focus. NCSS member and registered charity with IPC status.

Philosophy

There is a success story in every child.

Mission

Helping youths succeed.



Guest Editorial

by Selina Tang

While John's away, the interns gets to play! I was not only invited by John to write a guest editorial while he's up in Ooty, India, refurbishing Mizpah Home Orphanage as part of the YEP Project, but I also got to be feature of the month, sharing my experiences as an intern at CARE. My five seconds of fame!

The past two months at CARE have been a truly valuable experience. I joined CARE in October when I returned from Australia, wanting to chalk up some experience for when I finally join the rat race and hopefully, become a youth worker myself. Unfortunately, as the schools had already started their exams, I missed out on seeing the CARE youth workers in action.

However, I did get the chance to help facilitate the PowerXpress! workshops at Yuan Ching Secondary School. Understandably, it was different from the classes usually held. Nonetheless, it was fun! Hopefully it was as fun for the students as it was for me facilitating it. It was pure joy watching the students wriggle and crawl their way through the obstacle course at the GRIT station and racking their brains to come up with the most creative solutions for the brain teasers at the WIT station.

I also had the opportunity to see how the youth workers interact with the students. The rapport they had with them was inspiring. When I saw the students approach the youth workers in the canteen, I thought to myself, "You mean students come up to you just to talk to you on their breaks?" I never thought students wanted to chat or be seen with their teachers outside class. That's when I realised that the youth workers were more than teachers to these students. They were confidantes and trusted friends — people students could look and turn to.

From the interactions I've had with various students, as well as the stories I've heard from the other youth workers, I realised that it's a whole different world which the students are living in. CARE's doing a truly noble job. One that I believe is essential in today's society — helping the youth that everyone else has given up on or chosen to ignore. One day I hope to work in an organisation just like CARE, serving the kids of today and helping them to realise their potential to become the success stories they are waiting to be.

Ed: Selina is presently pursuing a master's degree in Australia.

SMU Camp Dynamite

To promote a healthy lifestyle, undergraduates from Singapore Management University (SMU) organised a three-day camp for 43 students from New Town Secondary. From October 17-19, students were split into groups of 10, with three volunteers from SMU attached to each group.

The SMU volunteers were great with the students, running the camp with maturity and care while conscientiously guiding the students without appearing too lecture-like. To prevent students from being bored and put off, they managed to subtly incorporate the message of healthy living and leading a smoke-free life into



games such as a scavenger hunt and a tele-match. They even catered to the night owls — students were given the choice of watching a movie or taking a walk in the cemetery!

Although initially reluctant and fearing boredom, the students involved came out of the camp happy that they had participated, with most claiming that they'd had fun. More importantly though, they learnt the essentials of a healthy lifestyle and the virtues of not smoking. Hopefully through them, the message of a smoke-free, healthy lifestyle will be passed on to others.



YEP! It's Ooty!

On December 5, CARE sent our Team Mizpah off at Singapore Changi Airport. Led by two staff members, John Tan and Nicholas Lim, our troop of 24 volunteers from all walks of life, race and religion, is going to help to refurbish Mizpah Home Orphanage, located in the hills of Ooty, Tamil Nadu, India. The 18-day project will see the team engage in refurbishment work, cultural exchange, and recreation within the context of service-learning. The aim is to enhance and generate transfer of learning, back to the team members' local setting.

In preparation for the climate and physical demands of the project, the team had spent the last two months improving and maintaining their mental and physical fitness. They have also been busy raising funds, and researching social issues involving children, orphanages and education. In addition, to forming close ties and cooperation within the team, the team successfully camped over at Pulau Ubin from November 5-7, as well as went on a little hike in Singapore's nature reserve.

Good luck Team Mizpah!

Ed: Check out the team's report in the special insert this issue!

Volunteering at CARE

Volunteers form an important resource pool at CARE. There are two categories of volunteering opportunities: direct and indirect.

Direct volunteer positions, which involve face-to-face interaction with our students, include mentoring, academic coaching, sports coaching, facilitating, activity instructing and befriending. Length of direct stints vary from ad-hoc, as in camp-facilitating, to one-year periods for mentoring. All direct voluntary positions come with orientation and skills training.

Indirect volunteer positions relate mainly to administrative help, IT support, promotion, publicity, and fund-raising.

Internship stints are also available at our agency. We welcome all interested individuals. Interviews, however, will be conducted to ensure that intended volunteering stints will be enriching to volunteers and beneficial to the agency.

If you are interested in being a volunteer, please email <info@caresingapore.org> or call 6824 2217. For more information about CARE, visit our website at <www.caresingapore.org>.

Project Y! Breaks Stereotypes

Organised by the Interact Club from Raffles Junior College, Project Y! was a fun-filled

two-day event of games, games and even more games. Attended by 90 students from the Secondary 1-3 classes from Swiss Cottage Secondary School, this event was a mentorship exercise, aimed at fostering positive thinking and attitudes, while creating rapport through a wide gamut of interactive games and sports, such as touch rugby, netball and tennis.

Reluctant at first, many of the Swiss Cottage



students, fearful that the RJC students would look down on them, peppered the CARE youth workers with questions like "Do they know where we are from? That we are from Normal Technical stream?" They were also afraid that the camp would turn out to be boring. Apparently, they were conditioned by the stereotype that all RJC students were 'nerds and geeks' who only knew how to study. However, by the end of the camp, even the most hardened mindset was changed. Not only did the students have immense fun they also bonded with the RJC students. And that was not all. Treated to a variety of RJC talents at a mini-concert, the Swiss Cottage students were floored by rappers, dancers, singers, hip-hoppers, guitarists and even a magician. If the two days of sports and games hadn't changed their impressions of RJC students, this definitely did.

One student mentioned to youth worker Derek Chan that it was through this camp that he learnt more about himself and developed greater self-confidence. He remarked that the people he had always perceived as snobby were really not so.

This event proved a roaring success, with both RJC and Swiss Cottage students enjoying themselves tremendously and building solid relationships that continue to this day. What was even sweeter was that the relationships between the students and CARE youth workers were also greatly enhanced.

It is our wish that the positive attitudes and perspectives nurtured will continue to impact and influence the lives of these students. Hopefully they will remember not to judge and stereotype others prematurely.

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.

Snippets

September 7: Ropes

Challenge Course As part of the President's Challenge, 24 students from Yuan Ching Secondary School enjoyed a day at Ngee Ann Polytechnic's Camp David playing Spiderman. Through low and high rope elements and games, the rope challenge course sought to promote team-building, stretch personal physical limitations and confront personal fears while building a sense of achievement. **September**

10: Attachment at IKEA

Twenty-four Secondary 3 and 4 students from Yuan Ching Secondary School experienced a day in the life of IKEA staff. For six hours, each student was attached with an IKEA staff as mentor, in a department of their choice. Not only did our lucky students gain new knowledge, they gained hands-on experience. What better way to get a reality check, expand career horizons, and have fun all at the same time? **September**

11: Visit to Cisco Police

Training School A group of students from Yuan Ching Secondary School, St Gabriel's Secondary School and New Town Secondary School had the opportunity to understand the nature of work that CISCO does. The students visited four training stations where they were exposed to the different training modules engaged by CISCO to equip its staff, such as how to handle a riot or bank robbery. The students were especially engaged at the shooting simulation. Student feedback was highly positive: they enjoyed themselves and gained additional industrial exposure that may come in handy in the future. **October**

16: ORA Golf Tournament The Old Rafflesians' Association was kind enough to raise funds for CARE by organising a Golf tournament at Sentosa. CARE staff and several St Gabriel's Secondary School students acted as marshals on the green. During the

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Good Day In the Sun!

Fun in the sun!! September 13, 2003 is going to be a memorable day, not only for a group of Secondary One students from St Gabriel's Secondary School but also for CARE. Team 2-1-0-1, a group of students from various ITEs and Temasek Polytechnic, had organised a day at Pulau Ubin, to provide the students with the opportunity to spend a day outdoors with potential positive role models.

The day started out at St Gabriel's Secondary School where various ice breakers were played and the students were introduced to their buddies. Led by one of our star CARE ex-students,



Team 2-1-0-1 continued their debriefing while food and water supplies were restocked before resuming their long journey back towards home.

It was definitely a good day for the students who, without exception, enjoyed themselves. It was also without a doubt, a great day for CARE. Watching Lionel, stand up in front of the group helping to conduct the debriefs was a proud and encouraging moment. No one could have guessed that Lionel was not always the confident and self-assured individual he is today. Not only does he reinforce CARE's belief that within every student there is a success story but it is for moments like these that we remember why CARE does what it does.

Lionel Louis, the group proceeded onward to Pulau Ubin. Pairs of buddies and students chatted and trekked to Mamam beach where they were well-fed and subsequently divided into five groups. They were asked to discuss problems they face and come up with possible solutions. (See! It's not all about fun!) Each group then took turns to present key points, following which event co-leaders, Naz and Lionel conducted a debrief that included many of the topics covered in during CARE's PowerCharged! classes, such as goal-setting. It was highly satisfying for CARE to watch an ex-student, who himself was once an at-risk youth, now leading others who are in the same situation that he used to be in.

The entire group was then divided again into four groups for an exciting but very tiring game of Captain's ball which saw the group exhausting the available supply of water. The tired troopers then stopped for a break at the village, where



Students from Yuan Chin Secondary School with their principal and Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam.

post-tournament dinner, several Sec 4 students from Yuan Ching Secondary presented a very inspiring and touching self-written skit showcasing how CARE has helped them change their lives. **October 18: WOW Day** Organised by LP34, a group of professionals undergoing the Leadership Program conducted by AsiaWorks, the event allowed 10 students from St Gabriel's Secondary School to enjoy a day at Sentosa, interacting with students from Chao Yang Special School. During the debrief following the event, students shared that while they were in the Normal Technical Stream, they feel that they are not as disadvantaged as they had once thought. **October 22 & 29: PowerXpress! Workshops** Held over two consecutive Wednesdays for Yuan Ching Secondary 1 and 2 Express students, these workshops were organised with a competitive nature in mind. Students were divided into four groups within each class, with prizes going to the best groups. Through the three different stations, students were challenged mentally and physically, and learnt not only more about themselves, but more about their classmates and team work. **October 23: Overnight Cycling** Fourteen adventurous night owls from Yuan Ching Secondary School and Swiss Cottage Secondary School cycled from Corporation Road to East Coast Park. Accompanied by a safety vehicle, volunteers and staff, all our students completed the route happy but very, very tired. **October 24: Mr Tharman's Deepavali Party** It was a grand Deepavali celebration when 13 Secondary 1T1 students from Yuan Ching Secondary School turned break-dancers and performed for Acting Minister of Education Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam. Not only was it spirited and well-received, nobody would have guessed that the students had managed to practise and perfect it on very short notice.