

New Chapters for the Youth Sail



By Naseema Banu Maideen

IT WAS a giving December for more than 150 students from Hwa Chong Institution, Montfort Secondary School and Dunman High School last year. They dedicated three whole weeks of their year-end holidays for a worthy cause: they had been the heartbeat of the FairPrice's Used Textbooks Project. Their teamwork, commitment and discipline had helped 9,000 school-going children and their families with the provision of used textbooks last year.

The students' dedication and efforts are part of the philanthropic act that has provided a bridge across the income divide in supporting the education of over 100,000 needy students with \$6 million savings in textbook expenses over the past 23 years.

Today, about 75 FairPrice supermarkets island-wide serve as collection points for used textbooks donated by the public. Student volunteers then step in to sort these books and package them for collection.

Young Giving Hearts

The three weeks of volunteerism have provided an eye-opening outlook on the lives of the lower-income Singaporeans. Team leader, Dorothy Goh Li Ying, a Secondary Four student from Dunman High School, values the friendships that she has built up in the process and takes away valuable lessons of teamwork and leadership with her. "Volunteerism should come from the heart", said Dorothy who is glad to have spent her holidays meaningfully.

The other team leaders – Clifford Yee Ping from Montfort Secondary School and Huang Shu Xong from Hwa Chong Institution, both in Secondary Four – second Dorothy's thoughts on teamwork and leadership.

Clifford believes that he has in some way, contributed back to the society for what it has given him. Shu Xong reflected: "It initially started off as a mode for clocking hours from 8.30am to 5.30pm everyday for the Community Involvement Programme. It has now made me realise that many in our community still need help and also wish to study and progress. I feel proud to have given a helping hand in a little way."

Member of Parliament for Bishan-Toa Payoh GRC and NTUC Youth Development Unit Director Josephine Teo said: "These student volunteers have an energy, passion and community spirit which NTUC hopes to tap and nurture", a reflection of Young NTUC's vision, since its inception in 2005.

New Exclusives of Young NTUC

In this light, Young NTUC, with a membership pool of 135,000 under the age of 35, has created much space for young minds to identify and immerse in the labour movement. One such avenue is the

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new-born performance arts group known as pLaY! – Performing with Love, by Active Youths. This group has 60 members who have a passion for performance. The singers made their debut performance on 5 January. The performance was received favourably.

There is more lined up. More new platforms have been carved out for a more active and interactive youth engagement towards LM2011. A new forum, "Youths for a Competitive and Inclusive Society" is in the making by Young NTUC. President

S R Nathan's challenge to the nation in building an inclusive and not just a competitive nation, at his 11th Parliament, has been the inspiration. Young NTUC has braced up to this challenge.

YCiS will essentially create grounds for youths to explore and discover the concepts of competitiveness and inclusiveness in the Singapore context and identify and reflect upon the roles that they play in the various aspects.

Mrs Teo reinforced: "Our youths today

want to look beyond making a living. They want to make choices that will help them achieve meaning and purpose in life. Our participants will get insights on a broad range of issues, but they will decide what they believe to be the best way forward, for themselves and for Singapore. Put in another way, our vision of YCiS is not a sermon but a script to be co-written by our youth participants."

The forum is designed with the new 5Cs that President Nathan has highlighted. He wants to promote a vision of Competitiveness, Cohesion, Compassion, Compact and Choice.

Mrs Teo added: "We will give youths the opportunity to shape various aspects of the forum, so that they can take ownership and develop a strong sense of belonging to it."

The forum will begin with 100 youths on board. A dialogue with NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say is expected to mark the fresh start for YCiS. Mrs Teo said: "We are thankful that Mr Lim has been a strong supporter of Young NTUC. As always, we expect him to be candid and open in sharing his views. We also hope he can share with us how he sees youths making a difference to the future of Singapore." ■

The Special Ones

By Sharon Lee

WINSTON Churchill, Albert Einstein, Beethoven, Thomas Edison and William Wordsworth all had one thing in common.

They all suffered from Attention Deficiency Hyperactive Disorder or ADHD for short.

A half-day seminar on three common disorders: ADHD, autism, and dyslexia at NTUC Centre, attracted 200 teachers from pre-school, primary and secondary schools and parents on 20 January 2007.

"The World Through Their Eyes" is a project by three final-year students from Nanyang Technological University's Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information and supported by Young NTUC and Central CDC.

Insightful talks by four speakers, occasionally peppered with humorous and often moving anecdotes, kept

the audience enthralled.

Autism, a developmental disorder, affects 60 people out of 10,000 people worldwide. There are also other variations such as Aspergers Disorder and Pervasive Development Disorder.

It is characterised by three behaviours – impaired social interaction, social communication and inflexible behaviour.

Those affected often have different personality types, skills and abilities.

WeCAN Early Intervention Programme Head Stephanie Khoo spoke at the seminar.

She said: "Parents should find out more and get help from the relevant professionals and after that get support from the relevant bodies. There is actually a lot of information in Singapore."

Children with ADHD or Attention



NTU students Ting Kai Ling, 22, Jason Tan, 24 and Pam Fang, 22, sought the help of Young NTUC for their final year project.

Deficiency Disorder are often inattentive, impulsive and spontaneous. It affects 3 to 5 per cent of all children, mainly boys who outnumber girls 4 to 1.

Most – 50 to 70 per cent – do not outgrow their condition and their symptoms continue into adolescence and eventually adulthood.

Support group, Society for the Promotion of ADHD Research and Knowledge President Bella Chin who has three sons aged 18 to 22, the youngest of whom suffers from ADHD said: "Many parents who first come to us are stressed, burnt out and emotional. We tell them



Student leaders with an enthusiasm and passion for volunteerism. From left, Clifford Yee Ping, Dorothy Goh Li Ying and Huang Shu Xong.