



radiance

Oct to Dec 2014

Inspiring volunteerism, one issue at a time

The introspective issue.

We round off the year and enter the new year with a few articles which are more thought-provoking and reflective. Do take the time to read them and ponder over some of the deeper issues raised.

Many thanks to all contributors.

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Upcoming events

- Sports Day: 14 March
- MYG AGM: 21 March
- ACID Camp: 13-14 June

Our First Internship Opportunity!

By: Wee Choo, BKTG

Basic Knowledge Training Group (BKTG) had an opportunity in June 2014 to send trainees for an internship at Bliss Restaurant, a social enterprise in the F&B industry. It was a milestone for us and our trainees as we worked towards integrating PWIDs into society and picking up skills that can help them secure employment.

After much coordination and good faith from Christine, the owner of Bliss Restaurants and Cafes, Wu Lin started his internship on 6 September 2014 at Bliss Restaurant @ Cheng San CC.

Being quiet and soft-spoken, Wu Lin's internship programme is geared towards the back-end tasks of drying cutlery, sweeping a corridor and bringing cleared dishes to the kitchen (which is also good for his weight management!). A list of other potential tasks we could train Wu Lin to do was worked out by Christine, including preparation of waffle mix, brownie mix, washing of coffee cups and cutting lemons. Sounds daunting but we know that we should take a step at a time and adapt according to Wu Lin's progress.

His first day of internship training started with sterilising the washed cutlery one by one in hot water before drying and sorting them into respective trays. The cognitive ability to differentiate a soup spoon from a tablespoon and the various types of cutlery may seem simple to mainstream adults but in the eyes of his mother and I, this was a deliberate effort put in by Wu Lin. Never mind the longer time taken to dry the cutlery, never mind the brisk activities surrounding him as the restaurant starts its daily operations.



Wu Lin wiping the tables before opening hours



Drying the saucers

Transiting from direct supervision for the first month to discreet supervision thereafter, I have had my share of good and bad days. Good days are when Wu Lin is attuned to the routine tasks and pace and it seems that he can perhaps slowly transit to working more days at Bliss @ Cheng San CC. Bad days are when I have to appear in front of him multiple times whenever he is 'skiving' longer than tolerable while the dishes pile up.

Today as I round up my third month watching over Wu Lin in his internship, he surprised me with his initiative in lighting up every tealight candle placed on each serving table after sunset.

Wu Lin is enjoying this internship, as is evident from his laughter that erupts with my end-of-session update to his mother and his commitment to report to work every Sunday.

Perhaps knowing the multiplier effect of laughter and happiness is what motivates every volunteer to continue this journey. A supportive mother who accompanies her child to and from work every Sunday even if that means less rest for her. An employer who is willing to engage persons with disability at work and walk at a slower pace. A working environment that is inclusive for all. Thank you Christine. Thank you Bliss staff. Thank you for this opportunity and your patience in Wu Lin's baby steps towards open employment.



Drying the cutlery and sorting it into respective black trays

Special Saturday with Scouts at CW

By: CW

It was a Children's Wing (CW) session brimming with even more energy than usual, as sixteen Primary Six Scouts from Yuhua Primary School joined us for a special Saturday afternoon.

The session was organized on the initiative of Kelvin Lim, the teacher-in-charge of the Scouts CCA at Yuhua Primary. Kelvin is also a volunteer and the vice-chairperson of MINDS MYG.

The students had not interacted with people with intellectual disabilities before, so they were thoroughly briefed on how to do so before they began the session proper. Kelvin, as their teacher-in-charge, had taught them to use short, simple and clear sentences to communicate effectively, as well as the rudiments of sign language. Meanwhile, CW volunteers orientated the students to the CW premises and reminded them of the essential do's-and-don'ts, after which it was finally time for the students to meet the CW trainees.



The trainees' elation at seeing so many new faces was matched only by the enthusiasm of the students to make friends with them. We had a round of introductions, and then attached two students to each trainee. First on the list of activities was a simple group colouring task, during which trainees and students worked together to colour in an art piece themed around the special session.

Next up was badge-making. Each trainee and student spent time designing and decorating a badge that was then produced on the spot with a portable machine, complete with safety-pin. The trainees and students then exchanged the badges they had made, presenting them to their partners as a token of friendship. After the hour of arts and crafts was up, it was time to head downstairs for a lively hour of games, culminating in some free-and-easy time at the MINDSville playground.

In all, this special session was a great experience on both sides. It was an excellent opportunity for our trainees at CW to interact with kids around their age, as well as for the Yuhua Scouts to learn valuable lessons about interacting with people with intellectual disabilities.

We thank Kelvin, the team from Yuhua and the CW staff for making it happen, and look forward to more such sessions in the future.

Why I Love Taking Photos at RO

By: Jian Liang (RO)

“A Picture is worth a Thousand Words” - A favorite quote that is used by many people. Pictures or photos indeed can carry a different message depending on how different people view them. To me, photos can be very simple yet can convey strong, concise messages to their beholder. This brings me to the main topic of my article, “Why I love taking photographs in Project Reach Out”.

I joined RO 2 years ago, having been introduced to this project by a friend of mine. Being an introvert, I found the business of introducing myself and getting to know new friends an unnerving experience. Through photography, I found my comfort zone and am now a regular in the project group.

Even before I joined RO, photography has always been a passion of mine. As I am not a person who can express myself well, photography became the platform through which I shared with others the moments that I had been through. The skills I picked up were self-taught. I began by taking photos of nature and landscapes but was ever on the lookout for other genres of photography into which I could move into. This search led to me bringing my camera down one Saturday session to RO to snap a few photos. I quickly fell in love with taking pictures of volunteers and trainees interacting with each other.



Helping out

Every picture I take shows me a different perspective of life. From the photos I took, the trainees have shown me one thing; though they might not be able to function and think like most people, they will do their best to finish the work tasked to them. It is their determination, courage and hard work that make me feel that there's something in their character I must really learn from.

Photography also brings me closer to the trainees and the other volunteers. It is a medium for me to interact more with other people (especially the trainees). Most trainees like having their photo taken and I will always offer them a peek at the photos after they have been snapped. Ultimately, I am really glad to see them smile and experience their gratitude for having their photo taken. I enjoy showing my photos to them as they express honest sincerity and excitement in seeing a picture of themselves.

“A Picture is worth a Thousand Words” - This quote truly defines the pictures that I have taken in Project RO and clearly explains why I love taking photos in RO.



Smile from Danny

Teach and learn



Enjoying the ukelele



Reading time

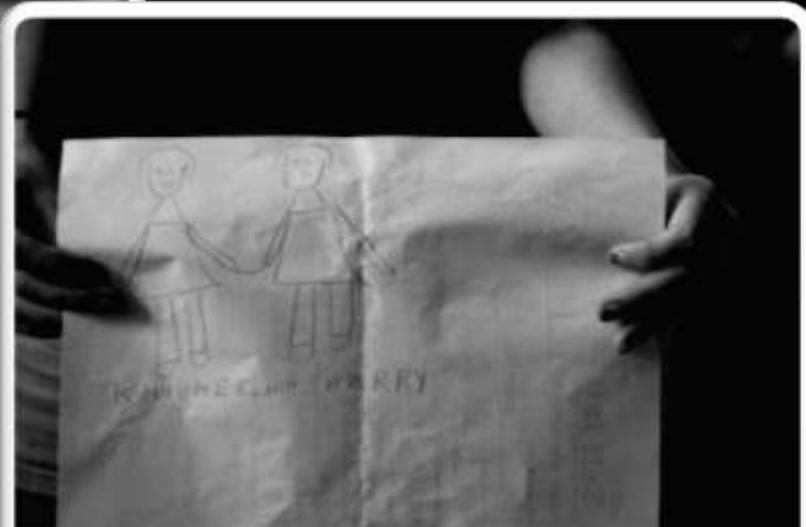
When I tell him to smile



Love and care for each other



Hard at work



Friendship



The Chairman and his Trainee

“Thank You”

By: an ageing trainee

*You have chosen to walk a path with me,
a person, ageing and with disability.*

*It's been a long, slow walk and twice as tiring.
Especially with the engine sometimes misfiring.*

*Yet, I wonder what you see in me.
Why do you keep caring unconditionally?*

*From a scale of grey, you added colour to my life,
Maybe some of you treat me better than your wife.*

*Through craft and camps, and such stuff of note,
You even once took me on a horse and dragon boat!*

*I know it's hard for you when I sometimes dirty myself.
It could be toxic, it could be nuclear, it could be detrimental to your
health!*

*But you tend to me without any hesitation,
With efforts bordering on the verge of heroism.*

*Apologies, but it's just those bits of mine that I've lost control.
(Don't laugh - you'll experience it too when you are old.)*

*At the end of the day, I'm so glad that we met,
For you helped find life in this old dog yet.*

*You know it's difficult for me, I don't know where to start,
But what I really want to say is "Thank You", with all my heart.*

*Though one knows not where our paths will go,
There may be a bend ahead, one you cannot follow.*

*Past the corner of my eye, I can see you wave,
But even then, my life will never be grey.*

*Because I know there are still others out there, with disability,
Who will one day be thanking you ... just like me...*