

MINDS MYG ISSUE 20/21 H2

# **RADIANCE**

## **20/21 H2**

THE NEW NORM


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# *Voices Of Our Volunteers*

# My volunteering experience during COVID-19

FEATURING ANG MO KIO PROJECT

## Volunteering during COVID-19

"What a year it has been for 2020! COVID-19 has not just affected one's health, but also the emotional, mental and interpersonal aspects. Since February 2020, our physical sessions started seeing restrictions and added regulations to protect the well-being of our volunteers and trainees.

The introduction of virtual Zoom sessions had eased some of our trainees' anxiety and frustrations during the Circuit Breaker period. While virtual sessions created limited interactions between volunteers and trainees, I was glad to see the trainees having fun and getting excited seeing familiar faces of ours. They must have really missed us and coming for physical sessions."





# My volunteering experience during COVID-19

FEATURING ANG MO KIO PROJECT

"Due to the disruptions of physical sessions, many projects started facing a shortage of volunteers. Despite so, we still tried our best to prepare for the resumption of physical sessions. Physical sessions are no longer like before – there are a lot more regulations and safe management measures to adhere to. Though not easy, volunteers are all doing their best to make the activities and interactions meaningful for the trainees.

Our trainees should not be isolated because of the pandemic. With the introduction of the COVID-19 vaccines and Phase 3 reopening, I look forward to having more volunteers and trainees to join us at the physical sessions to continue to be socially engaged."

- Wing Lun from AMK





# Impossible made possible during COVID-19

FEATURING FERNVALE PROJECT

## Virtual Sessions

"Circuit breaker definitely caught all of us off-guard, most scrambling to get the equipment required for work-from-home and basic necessities as we transit into the month with no clear directions in sight. Amidst the worries and anxiety during this time of global uncertainty, we began to worry about our trainees as we went on weeks without the routine weekly physical interactions with them.

Initially, the idea of carrying out volunteering virtually seemed impossible and almost pointless due to the lack of human touch and physical interactions. The first session itself felt awkward as we were all adjusting to communicate virtually and we had little to no idea on how to engage them through our tiny webcams."



# Impossible made possible during COVID-19

FEATURING FERNVALE PROJECT



"Over time, collaborations with other project volunteers and MINDS MYG Central Committee members have helped to strengthen the virtual engagements through fun activities such as Bingo, Treasure hunt and online games which challenge their memory skills. Additionally, combined virtual sessions had allowed our trainees to meet and mingle with their friends from other projects more regularly than pre-COVID times. There is indeed a silver lining amidst the period of uncertainty, and the weekly virtual sessions eventually became an anchor of certainty for both volunteers and trainees."

- Nadiah Masri from Fernvale



# Missing each other's physical presence

FEATURING EAST POINT PROJECT

## Connecting with our trainees

"I can still remember it vividly – the first virtual session that we conducted with our trainees. It was a cacophony of sounds – screams, shouts, and exclamations from both trainees and volunteers. It was evident that everyone was (very) excited to see each other again. For the trainees, they found it fascinating to be communicating with us in this manner. For the volunteers, we were already accustomed to such virtual engagements (with our countless Zoom meetings at work & home-based learning). Nonetheless, we were delighted to be able to connect with our trainees.

However, engaging our trainees virtually was not entirely without challenges. Some days, we were busy troubleshooting ("You have to unmute!", "We can't see you!", "I have no idea why the Zoom link isn't working!", "You are lagggggggg...ing"); other days, the volunteers were scrambling to find suitable activities to virtually engage our trainees with ("We've exhausted all kinds of art & craft ideas!"). "



# Impossible made possible during COVID-19

FEATURING EAST POINT PROJECT



“Needless to say, we miss each other’s physical presence. The trainees miss running about in the basketball court, and the volunteers miss chasing them around the basketball court (who are we kidding, really?). But we understand that these safe management measures are meant to keep our trainees and volunteers safe and protected – ultimately there is nothing more important than that.

Things are now taking a change for the better! We will soon be allowed to resume physical sessions, albeit with safe management measures to adhere and adapt to. But honestly, we wouldn’t have this any other way. To reconnect with our EP family physically again - there’s nothing more we can ask for.”

- Jenna from EP



# Conducting virtual sessions

FEATURING RSPID (CTDC) PROJECT

## COVID-19 does not stop us from engaging our trainees

"2020 was indeed a challenging year for us due to COVID-19, but that did not stop us from engaging our trainees. The pandemic taught us to try out new things that we didn't think would work, like having a hybrid ACID and conducting virtual sessions. During the circuit breaker, we took our volunteering sessions online. Initially, we were afraid that the responses would not be forthcoming. To our surprise, we managed to get some responses from them. Even though there were a few hiccups in the beginning, both the trainees and volunteers eventually managed to ease into the virtual sessions. We are glad that we have since been able to resume physical sessions, and re-establish the physical interactions between trainees and volunteers.



Overall, even though COVID-19 has imposed several restrictions on how we engaged our trainees, we still managed to adapt to the situation and overcome the challenges that arose."

- Volunteer from RSPID (CTDC)

# ACID 2020

INTO THE FUTURE



"Compared to last year, ACID 2020 was different as it was a one-day programme instead of the usual 3-day 2-night. However, the trainees still had fun playing the games, especially the bubble station. The highlight of this event was indeed the disco night where we could see the trainees dancing enthusiastically with the disco light and music. In addition, it was also a good experience for our volunteers to experience something different from the usual sessions."

- Volunteer from RSPID (CTDC)





# ACID 2020

INTO THE FUTURE



"Amazingly, MINDS MYG managed to pull off ACID 2020 with COVID-19 regulations and safe management measures in place. It was a new experience for everyone and with the help of technology, we managed to have an entire ACID "together" despite being segregated into four different schools. Moreover, it was a good initiative to have both a physical and virtual ACID as trainees, caregivers as well as volunteers have the option to choose their preferred mode during the pandemic. It was a pity that we could not have an overnight camp, but at least the tradition of having an ACID dance continued in ACID 2020. The spirit and energy of ACID in 2020 was just as much as in previous years.

What seemed impossible in the beginning was made possible with the efforts and creativity of volunteers and active participation of the trainees and their families. Just like what Nelson Mandela mentioned, "it always seems impossible until it's done".

- Nadiah Masri from Fernvale



# ACID 2020

INTO THE FUTURE



“Despite cancellations of MINDS MYG's annual events, ACID 2020 still managed to take place successfully. The whole experience of ACID 2020 was surreal - it included both physical and virtual sessions so that all projects could come together to still experience an engaging camp. Even though the projects had to be separated and assigned to different locations, I really appreciate the hard work and dedication of the ACID committee members to make it happen. The use of technology has definitely enhanced the experience for the trainees to be able to enjoy the camp.”



- Wing Lun from AMK





# ACID 2020

INTO THE FUTURE



“Unlike previous years, ACID 2020 was uniquely different, given that stringent safe management measures had to be put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead of gathering at a single location, participating MINDS MYG Projects were assigned to four different schools and centres, and some even participated from home. To ensure the safety of our volunteers and trainees, safe management measures (e.g. safe entry, travel declaration, temperature taking) were adhered to, and everyone was segregated into pre-assigned groups to limit socializing.

The session kicked off with sing-along and dance, much to our trainees’ delight. Themed “Into the Future”, trainees then participated in activities and games that encapsulated space travel and exploration. Trainees who were unable to be present at the respective centres, were given home-kits and were engaged virtually. Shortly after, dinner was served, followed by screening of movie clips. ACID finally ended with the much-awaited Disco Night, where everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves.”



# ACID 2020

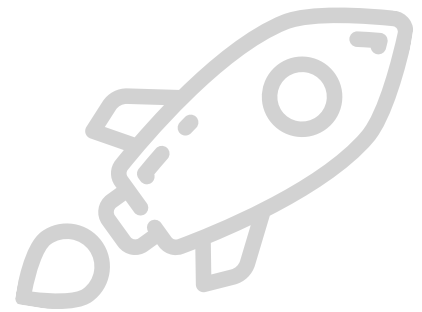
INTO THE FUTURE



"Despite not being physically present together, everyone was connected digitally, and thus in spirit. Although certain "ACID elements" (e.g., overnight experience) were absent, the camp was nonetheless meaningfully special and unique.

Kudos to the efforts of the ACID Committee who had to plan and coordinate the entire event. One could only imagine the manpower, administrative and logistical nightmares that they had to go through, on top of the ever-changing COVID-19 safe management measures."

## - Volunteer from WestEnd





# ACID 2020

INTO THE FUTURE



"ACID 2020 was a camp planned and executed in the middle of the pandemic. Although it had been scaled down to a single day event, it was one of the more intense ACID experiences for me so far - starting with the year-long planning.

It was hard to decide whether to proceed with the event back in March 2020; the endless restrictions and uncertainties took a toll on team morale. Moreover, having laid most of the groundwork by then, it was a huge setback for the whole committee to have to scrap existing plans.

However, it was apparent to us that as social distancing and isolation became the norm for 2020, it would have been a particularly frustrating and lonesome year for trainees who have limited social circles and activities. Therefore, even a decentralized camp represented an opportunity given to us to bring more trainees back for activities in a safe and controlled environment!"



# ACID 2020

INTO THE FUTURE



"With much deliberation, we decided to retain the core ACID event: Disco Night, while keeping up with safe management measures, therefore removing the overnight stay. We've even joked that ACID 2020's real theme should be "Together but Apart" while coordinating the live-stream events across the four sites.

It is hard to convey the amount of dedication and heart put in by the team in so little words. But I hope that I can adequately represent the comm when I say that every bit of joy we've seen at ACID 2020 was rewarding enough!"

- Shi Yun from RSPID (WGS)



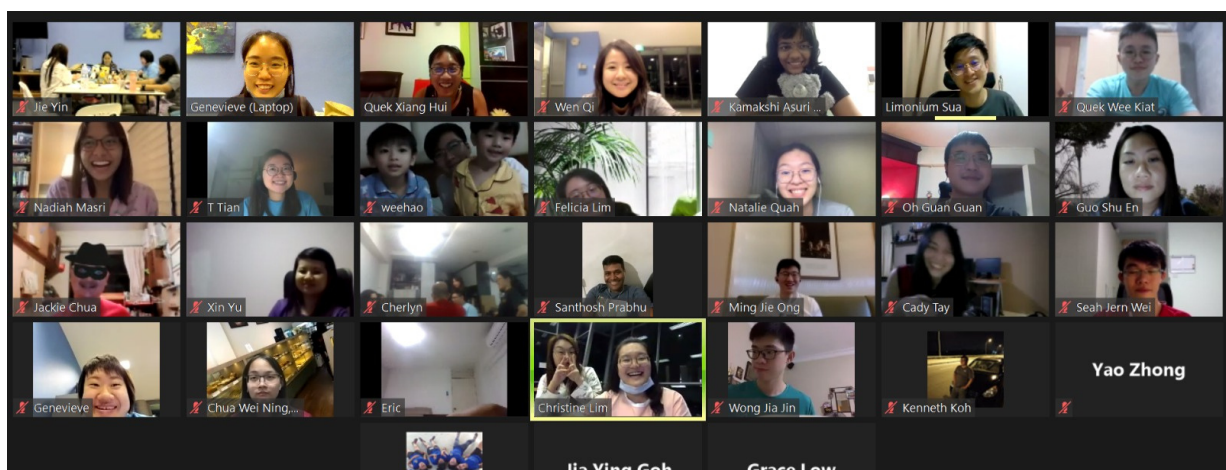
# Volunteers' Night 2020

"In celebration of the International Volunteer Day, Volunteers' Night 2020 was held on 5th December 2020 via Zoom. It was a special event for volunteers to celebrate and enjoy a night of fun-filled activities despite these unprecedented times.

In line with the night's theme – Pyjamas Party, we had a "Best Dressed Competition" and nominees had to perform a catwalk in their pyjamas! There were exciting games and a medley of familiar tunes put up by Volunteer Guitar Connection. Of course, what is an event without lucky draw? 10 lucky participants had each walked away with a lucky draw prize! A video montage was also put together to appreciate our volunteers' time and efforts particularly during COVID-19. It was heart-warming to see trainees and caregivers expressing their gratitude in the video.

The planning was rather challenging as it was the first time Volunteers' Night was organised virtually. Nonetheless, the event was a success and volunteers could connect regardless of geographical location. We saw volunteers attending from the comfort of their homes, friend's home and even from overseas. This would not have been possible without the efforts of the emcee – Limonium (RO), VGC performers and the organising committee!"

## - Genevieve from RSPID (WGS)



# *Volunteers' Night 2020*

"Now that Singapore has enjoyed three months of Phase 3 of Circuit Breaker, some of us may have forgotten a time when we occasionally spent almost the whole day in our pyjamas. After all, we were not even allowed to leave the house because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was therefore fitting that Volunteers' Night 2020 was a virtual pyjamas party - an apt metaphor for the unusual year we had.



If anyone had misgivings that having to hold Volunteers' Night on Zoom would dampen the event, surely such a view had failed to take into account the characteristic spirit and zeal of MINDS MYG volunteers. Unwilling to succumb to the restrictions of the pandemic, volunteers across all projects gathered on Zoom - accoutred in their finest sleepwear - to participate in an event that was no less enjoyable and engaging than those held in the pandemic-free past. The volunteers participated enthusiastically in games that had been modified for virtual participation, clapped along gleefully to beautiful performances by VGC, and prayed fervently during each lucky draw segment. What was particularly heartening to see was how volunteer interaction did not diminish because of the virtual setting, and many volunteers in fact got to befriend and chat with their fellow volunteers in other projects. Even a nationwide lockdown could not prevent MINDS MYG volunteers from connecting with each other (even across international borders!) and making new friends."



# Volunteers' Night 2020

"The memorable night finally concluded with a best-dressed "pyjamas pageant" (won deservedly by a volunteer bedecked with Australian finery), and virtual treasure hunt. The winners of the lucky draw and games left with exquisite prizes, while the rest of us left with joyous memories of what was hopefully a once-in-a-lifetime virtual Volunteers' Night. For much as Volunteers' Night 2020 was a dazzling success, we look forward to the day when volunteers can finally meet each other in the flesh at this annual event. Perhaps, if we all wear our masks and wash our hands, this dream could come true for Volunteers' Night 2021?"

- Limonium from RO

