

OUR SOCIAL MISSION

BY CARITAS SINGAPORE COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Being a friend in need

Recognising each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, we are encouraged to respond to situations and others according to our Catholic Social Teachings. In this way, we give each other a helping hand to rise above our difficulties.

AT MORNING Star Community Services, there is always a bustle of activity. Happy voices of children fill the air. Everywhere you go, friendly faces of the staff continue to welcome you.

Among them is Raymond Chang, who oversees the student care centres to ensure the efficient and effective operations of the facilities and the various programmes.

The programme for children comprises holistic and balanced activities to enhance their intellectual abilities, emotional development, social skills, character formation and physical growth.

Whenever he describes the programmes, Raymond stresses the importance of making a connection with each child. "God's love is expressed when we encounter each child as a whole person rather than as just another student," he says.

Raymond demonstrates that in his daily work, he is living out the Principle of the Dignity of the Human Person of the Catholic



"God's love is expressed when we encounter each child as a whole person," says Raymond Chang of Morning Star Community Services.

Social Teachings. He is mindful that all human beings, created in the image of God, are unique and are an integrated whole – physically, spiritually, socially and emotionally, and should be treated as such.

Morning Star has a learning support service called "Nurturing One's Valuable Attributes" which caters to the unique educational needs of children through an individualised learning programme.

Whenever Raymond refers a child to this programme, he is giving a helping hand to enable the child to raise his or her level of competency. Poverty and the lack of opportunities can prevent innocent children from developing to the best that they can be.

Just as all of us have a responsibility in shaping our own lives, we also have a responsibility in helping to shape the lives of others for the better.

to enable them to participate fully in society (Principle of Participation). It is a duty and a fundamental right of every human being.

Raymond reveals that he likes working at Morning Star because it allows him to put his faith into practice. In his daily activities, he tries to love his neighbour as Christ has loved us (John 13:34). He willingly helps any parent or child in need.

To help parents facing financial hardship, he and Morning Star will try to obtain extra funding or subsidies. To help a child who may be stressed by homework, he will work with the parents to find ways to let the child enjoy the learning and growing process. Raymond believes in engaging and understanding the parent and child as human persons with needs, rather than as "cases" to be handled. And this reflects the Principle of Solidarity.

Raymond sees his work and the work of his co-workers as holy, and this is the Principle of the Dignity of Work. He believes that each of them contributes in his or her own way to co-creating this world and making it a better place.

He recalled a divorced mother with three sons. Because of her long and irregular working hours, the boys were not properly cared for. One fell in with the wrong company, and another had a reading problem that required special attention but was not getting help.

Morning Star stepped in to provide subsidised care and a structured programme for the boys, allowing the grateful mother to concentrate on her work, confident that her children are in good hands.

As a result of the care and concern that Raymond and his co-workers have put into their work, lives have been changed for the better. Several children who used to be in their before and after school care have returned as volunteers in Morning Star's Youth Outreach Programme.

Through their good work, Raymond and his co-workers have indeed been a friend in need to the people who seek help at Morning Star.