

What can you do to promote world peace?

Go home and love your family.

~ Mother Teresa

Annual Report 2012



VISION

Through empowering families and individuals, we strive to build vibrant communities that can make a difference to society.

MISSION

To enrich and strengthen family relationships in Singapore

CORE VALUES

- Respecting the Dignity of Each Person • Learning for Life • Making Connections •
- Building Wholeness • Living our Faith •

Registered Name & Address

Morning Star Community Services
No. 4 Lorong Low Koon
Singapore 536450
Tel: 62851377 Fax: 62852702
Email: mstar@morningstar.org.sg
Website: www.morningstar.org.sg

Auditor

Kreston David Yeung PAC
128 A Tanjong Pagar Road
Singapore 088535

Student Care Centres

Hougang Centre

No 4 Lorong Low Koon
Singapore 536450

Sengkang Centre

Blk 261B #01-400
Sengkang East Way
Singapore 542261

Primavera Centre

Blk 95 #01-1415
Bedok North Ave 4
Singapore 460095

St. Gabriel's Primary School Centre

220 Lorong Chuan
Singapore 556742

Individual & Family Counselling

Hougang

No 4 Lorong Low Koon
Singapore 536450

Sengkang

Blk 261B #01-400
Sengkang East Way
Singapore 542261

NOVA Programme

Hougang

No 4 Lorong Low Koon
Singapore 536450



President's Message

In keeping with our vision and mission of empowering, enriching and strengthening family relationships, 2012 was spent re-visioning, redefining and revamping core services and programmes so as to better serve the needs of families. The exercise will continue into the new financial year as we continue to develop programmes that are relevant, useful, and significant for the continued wellness of families.

The four core areas of service; children's services (through our after-school care centres and NOVA Programme), individual & family therapy and casework, workshops and talks, and community events, will continue to be the mainstay of our programming. Although each service targets very specific needs of families, they are each important components to holistic wellness.

I am indebted to the Board of Morning Star, whose members have been a constant source of encouragement. I am grateful to Sr. Geraldine Lim, who stepped down from the Board at the end of the financial year, for the many years of faithful service rendered to the Board and the organization.

I extend my heartfelt thanks for the generous donation by Far East Organisation, the Lee Foundation, Singapore, the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation, Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple and the numerous individuals who have donated to our Hardship Fund and NOVA Fund, helping us to support families and individuals requiring financial assistance. Our gratitude goes to the Ministry of Social and Family Development, the National Council of Social Services, the Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore, Caritas Singapore Community Council, the Canossian Daughters of Charity, REACH (Response, Early Intervention & Assessment in Community Health), Northeast CDC, Southeast CDC, Central CDC, and all volunteers and well-wishers for the constant help rendered. I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of all team members at Morning Star. Their efforts and unrelenting dedication to working with children and families is an inspiration.

Gerald Tan
President

Board of Directors

President	Gerald Tan
Vice-President	Alan Ow
Treasurer	Francis Ng
Secretary	Michael Koh
Immediate-Past-President	Jeremy Tay
Board Members	Augustine Low Christina Lim Sr. Geraldine Lim Joseph Yeo Kelvin Poon

Spiritual Director Fr. Henry Siew

Committees

Name	Position	Human Resources	Finance & Audit	Community Engagement	Nominations	Remuneration
Gerald Tan	President				*	*
Alan Ow	Vice President		*			
Francis Ng	Treasurer		*			*
Michael Koh	Secretary	*				*
Jeremy Tay	Immediate-Past-President	*			*	*
Augustine Low	Board Member					
Christina Lim	Board Member					
Joseph Yeo	Board Member			*		
Kelvin Poon	Board Member					
Geraldine Lim	Board Member					



Governance Report

Morning Star has complied with all the applicable guidelines of the Code of Governance Evaluation Checklist for Institutions of a Public Character (IPCs) and large charities.

Board Governance

Morning Star is governed by a volunteer board with either elected or appointed members, following the constitution of the society which clearly defines the roles and composition of the Board. There is no paid staff on the Board and all Board members do not receive any form of remuneration or fee. The Board meets every month to review monthly reports with the Executive Director.

Conflict of Interest

All Board members are required to disclose their interest in all other organisations and to abstain from any discussions and decision making in matters with potential conflict of interest. All family relations between the team members and any of the Board members are made known to the Board.

Financial Management and Controls

Morning Star has complied with all the applicable guidelines for financial management and controls specified in the Code of Governance Evaluation Checklist. Financial reports are presented and reviewed regularly at Board meetings. Our current ratio of reserves to annual operating expenditure is 1.33:1. Reserves are all held mainly in fixed deposits and are not exposed to any significant risk other than interest rate fluctuations.

Strategic Planning

The Board regularly reviews strategy and plans to ensure the society's activities are in line with its objectives and stay relevant to the changing environment and needs.

Board Meetings

The Board is supported by five working committees. They are the Human Resources, Finance and Audit, Community Engagement, Nominations and Remuneration committees. They have the authority to examine issues related to their portfolio and report back to the Board on their findings and recommendations. There were 9 Board meetings from the period of February 2012 to January 2013.

Disclosure and Transparency

Morning Star's annual financial statements are prepared in accordance with the disclosure requirements of Financial Reporting Standards (FRS) and these financial accounts are audited by Kreston David Yeung PAC.

Human Resource Management

The performance appraisal exercise for Team Members was completed in December 2012. The remuneration committee conducted the review on performance and salary structure and guidelines in January 2013. The annual remuneration for each of the top-three key executives in Morning Star remains within the \$100,000 salary band.

Children's Services: After-School Care

At the end of the financial year, a total of 289 primary school children were enrolled for the after-school care services at our four centres. Subsidies amounting to \$34,081 were disbursed to 41 families who qualified for financial assistance.

The service revamped its entire programme to enable more preventive teaching opportunities and the inculcation of values for character formation. Learning modules complement each other so that information and knowledge gained from each module contributes to the holistic development of the child.

Emphasis was placed on recruiting facilitators who have the knowledge, skills, passion and desire to work with children. Facilitators came from a diversity of training and backgrounds, and that too contributed to the dynamism of the revision of the programme and the way modules were conducted.

Ms P.Y. Chong, the Senior Facilitator is very experienced in handling children. It is not uncommon to see her going the extra mile to try to help parents and children alike in many areas, such as instilling self-discipline in young children..... the environment is conducive for students..... a good and safe environment.

~ C.K. Tai

The Hougang Centre was refurbished to provide a more conducive and comfortable environment for study and play. A new month-long menu incorporating a wide variety of food from different food groups and emphasizing nutritious eating was completed and is currently in its pilot phase.



Celebrating Christmas with fun and games in the field at HG Centre, and visit to Qianhu Fish Farm and ACRES (Animal Concerns Research & Education Society)



Children's Services: NOVA Programme

NOVA, in Latin, means 'new' and also refers to a bright star. At Morning Star Community Services, NOVA is also the acronym for 'Nurturing One's Valuable Attributes'.

A child's learning cannot be decoupled from his affective needs, life-stage needs and behaviour. When children are confident and feel good about themselves as learners, they are more willing to learn, take risks and tackle tasks they believe they can be successful at. The objective of the programme is to help mainstream children aged 7 – 12 with learning challenges cope with, adapt to, and respond appropriately to school.

Children enrolled in this programme would already be failing at least two subjects. NOVA uses a combination of approaches to help children with learning challenges develop learning skills, be disciplined and independent and ultimately be able to catch-up academically with their peers and integrate into the mainstream school system.

Of the 13 children served, I am pleased to report that all have made significant progress in school and even winning awards as a result of their improvements.

Individual & Family Therapy and Casework

In a highly urban environment and an increasingly globalized society, families and individual family members experience multiple stresses and a deep sense of isolation which in turn threatens the deterioration of family relationships. The difficulties that these families face are multi-faceted, including but not limited to: irregular and low-income, parents with chronic and debilitating illnesses, single parent/income families and incarcerated parents.

Focused on the areas of life transitions, anger management, grief and depression, anxiety, stress and fear, and marital and family relations, counseling at Morning Star attempts to bring about hope and peace for the individuals and families who engage with this service. In addition, through the Enhanced Step-Up Programme (ESU) in schools, the counseling team at Morning Star works with children and youth who at-risk of dropping out of school. The total number of counseling hours increased from 550 hours in the previous year to 800 hours for the current financial year, with a total of 97 clients and their families served.

Casework 1

Sam (not his real name) was a primary five student who came from a multi-stress environment. Both his parents were incarcerated when he joined NOVA. His grandparents were taking care of him then. When Sam first joined the programme, he was defiant and had been publicly caned twice in school. While at NOVA, he learned how to make choices and to take ownership of his behavior.

Last year, he received an award for being the first in Math for his entire level.

Casework 2

John Tan (not his real name), an upper primary student in the NOVA programme has been enrolled in our centre for 5 years. His father suffered injuries and became jobless for an extended period of time. Being divorced, unfit for work and having to provide for John and his older brother, the father of two was thrown into a financial crisis. The family co-rented a 2-room flat from HDB with another family consisting of a father and two teenaged children.

Problems arose after a few months when the father of the other family started scolding and using vulgarities on John and his older brother over trivial matters. John, who was naturally timid, suffered from low self-esteem and became withdrawn in his social life. He would even refuse to go back to the flat if his father was not home, in fear of the fierce "uncle". Morning Star worked with Mr Tan to problem-solve the crisis he was facing. In the partnership, the team helped with providing:

- Recommendation letters to authorities citing negative effects of the current home setting on Mr Tan's children.
- Financial assessment and planning.
- Application for the NOVA Fund to enrol John in the programme.
- Counselling sessions for John.
- Parent coaching and counselling sessions for Mr Tan.

Through sheer tenacity and with the help of the team at Morning Star, Mr Tan managed the crisis by reconciling differences with his ex-wife and placed their children under her care. About a month later, Mr Tan managed to get a part-time job and started working on a regular basis. Today, John has shown remarkable growth in his self-esteem and social well-being. He is able to initiate meaningful conversations with peers and teachers, and is confident in his own abilities and skills. With the change of home environment and the cordial reunification of his parents, John is now maturing into a well-adjusted and congruent teenager.



Casework 3

Danny (not his real name) was a 12-year old student referred by the school counsellor because he was caught smoking with group of friends in school; had poor conflict management with peers; frequent anger outbursts, low self-esteem and poor compliance with completing homework.

Through the sessions it was found that the boy's father was absent most of the time due to work commitments and mom was mostly permissive in her parenting. There was a lack of structure and routine for Danny at home. He was also facing various issues with his peers and tended to be easily influenced by friends. We worked with Danny's father to build a bridge with his son to enhance parent-child bond and communication. Both parents tried introducing appropriate consequences for undesirable behaviours, and words of affirmation for positive behaviours. Avenues for mentoring Danny on the dangers of staying out late were effected. Our counsellor worked with Danny to manage his anger appropriately; practice self-affirmations and decision making.

Danny now in secondary school, he has been chosen to be part of the school's soccer team as captain and is very proud of his achievements. Both father and son share that they understand one another more and there is closer bonding since father has been spending more time with son. Parents also shared that it has been easier to manage Danny. He no longer hangs out after school but returns home to get his homework done instead. He also shares that he is better able to manage his emotions and likes the feeling of being able to do so.

Workshops & Talks

In our very hurried world of today where families face constraints in a multitude of areas, our workshops and talks help facilitate ways by which emotional and relational needs of families can be met through the acquisition of skills and knowledge. A total of 380 hours of workshops and talks were conducted, reaching out to at least 4000 participants. Programmes were conducted at pre-schools, and with organizations such as the Government Investment Corporation, People's Association, MINDEF, Keppel Land, Singapore Land Authority, Health Sciences Authority and numerous other institutions.

Community Events

In a clinical report by Kenneth R. Ginsburg, MD, MsEd, the American Academy of Pediatrics emphasizes play as essential to the healthy development and well-being of children by contributing to their cognitive, physical, social and emotional health. In addition, engaging in fun activities with children offers an ideal opportunity for parents to create lasting traditions, rituals and family memories. In 2012, Morning Star Community Services organized a total of 4 community events reaching out to 149 families (373 participants); Games Nite 2012, Movie Under the Stars, Amazing Race – The Family Edition 2012, and Christmas Under the Stars 2012.

Happy Faces Say It All!

