


CHILDHOOD – ONE SERVING ONLY

1 CHILDHOOD PER PERSON, *PASSES SO QUICK* IN A *BLINK* OF AN EYE.

FOR THOSE WHO MEASURE
— AND —
FORGET TO **TREASURE**,
LEFT WONDERING WHAT THEY HAD LEFT BEHIND.

SO
PLAY
AND BE
HAPPY,



LOVE
AND BE
LOVED,

FOR NO ONE
CAN TURN BACK
TIME.

**AS WHAT
MATTERS MOST
ARE NOT MARKS
ON SOME PAPERS,**

BUT **LAUGHTER** A N D **HUGS** A A SOUND N **PEACE** D OF MIND.

SAMUEL TAY

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



For in every adult there dwells the child that was, and in every child there lies the adult that will be.

- John Connolly



→ I am very happy to be penning this message. 2014 was a milestone year for Morning Star Community Services. Much time, effort and resources were spent raising our standards of service for all our programmes. Through our efforts, we hope that our stakeholders will develop a greater awareness and understanding of the importance of family wellness and the measures one can take to keep family relationships strong and lasting. Prevention is after all, better than cure.

We opened two after-school care centres and two learning labs, bringing the total number of centres and labs to six and four respectively. Our six centres are located in the East and Northeast and are more than after-school care centres. "A child is more than a student", hence our focus on the holistic development of the child. We revamped the curriculum to place greater emphasis on the acquisition of virtues for character formation, and the development of life-skills. These are the lessons that will never be outdated.

Our NOVA Learning Labs are situated in Canossa Convent Primary School, Punggol View Primary School, St. Anthony's Convent Primary School, and at HG Centre. Enrolment is by referral and only children at-risk of dropping out of school are accepted into the programme. Every child enrolled has a personalised learning plan that capitalises on his or her strengths. Concrete but creative learning strategies and tactics are used to inspire and coach the child to develop a love for learning and for school.

In total, these two programmes which are under the purview of Children's Services effectively reach out to 450 children and their families (up from 334), an increase of close to 35%. Moving forward, we hope to establish more community-based after school care centres, as these allow us to serve a diversity of children from different schools, exposing children to a greater social network beyond school.

The more children and families we reach out to, the greater we are able to keep a look out for them. Stresses experienced by the family often manifest through the child's behaviour. Our Family Wellness Department, comprising a team of counsellors specialising in the areas of family therapy, art therapy

and play therapy provide opportunities for children and their families to clarify, discuss and resolve issues in a safe environment.

Art therapy and play therapy were introduced as part of our service in 2014 as these modalities are conducive for younger children to work through their emotions at a pace they are comfortable with. The year also saw an increase in the number of counselling hours logged for members of the public doubling, bringing the total number of counselling hours to 422 hours.

Our Workshop & Training Department saw a 48% increase in the total number of training hours logged, and close to 55% increase in participants. Nationally, Morning Star also fielded the largest team of trainers to be accredited as Triple P (Positive Parenting Programme) instructors, an evidence-based programme initiated by the Ministry of Social and Family Development. Common Sense Parenting Programme, another evidence-based programme developed by Boys' Town in the USA and conducted exclusively by Morning Star in Singapore, saw an increase in the number of runs from 132 to 168 (21%).

The year also saw Morning Star becoming a GST-registered organisation. The increase in operating income came about due to the two additional after-school care centres, and the increment in service fees by \$26, our first in more than 5 years - to offset the increase in operating costs due to inflation.

We remain thankful to the Catholic community and to Caritas Singapore Community Council, whose financial contributions over the years have enabled us to boldly serve the community. We are also grateful to the numerous foundations, corporations and kind individuals who have supported us, in particular, Tote Board, the Lee Foundation, the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation, Far East Organisation Centre Private Limited, the Kwan Imm Thong Hood Cho Temple, Innovalve Precision Limited, amongst many others who have not wavered in their support for our mission to

build strong family relationships.



I am indebted to my fellow Board members who have consistently been a source of inspiration, wise counsel, and professionalism. My Board members and I also wish to extend our gratitude to Mr Francis Ng who has served with great tenacity as our Treasurer for two terms, the maximum number of terms permitted for this office. I also wish to affirm and acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the staff at Morning Star. It takes a very special group of people to do work that is for the betterment of our community. I am encouraged by their perseverance of effort and the capacity of their heart to care deeply for the people Morning Star exists to serve.

This year we are celebrating our 15th Anniversary. This is also the year our nation is celebrating its Golden Jubilee. I invite all to join me in celebrating this special and memorable occasion. ←

God bless.

- Gerald Tan

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

 *Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.* 
- Fred Rogers

AFTER-SCHOOL CARE SERVICES

→ Our flagship centre at Lorong Low Koon opened 15 years ago to provide after-school care for primary school-going children. Since then we have continued to grow in leaps and bounds; our second centre started serving the residents of Sengkang in 2004, followed by Saint Gabriel's Primary School Centre in 2007, and Primavera Centre in 2009. In 2014, Morning Star Community Services established two new centres as part of our strategy of reaching out to more families through their children. Saint Joseph's Institution Junior was established in March 2014 and in April 2014, Morning acquired the student care centre at Bedok North Avenue 3. With the addition of two new centres, we now serve approximately 450 children and their families on a daily basis, an increase of about 35% from the previous enrolment of 334 children. In total, all six centres have a capacity of 518.

While the values embraced by society can change over time, virtues are fundamental and define what makes us truly human. A Morning Star Child is a joyful and hopeful child. They are respectful and responsible children. They are independent, disciplined and sensible children. They are interested to learn; in touch with themselves, engaged with others, the environment and with life. In keeping with our adage of 'a child is more than a student', we revamped our entire curriculum to place greater emphasis on character formation through the acquisition of virtues. The programme looks at honing the cognitive abilities of our children, their emotional development, social skills, character formation and physical development



through creative and engaging activities in a conducive environment.

During the mid-year school holidays the children visited the Marina Barrage where they learned about Singapore's water resources, and had a go at flying kites. The second outing was to the Forest Adventure at Bedok Reservoir where they learned to overcome their fear of heights and obstacles, and walked on rope bridges to build courage and confidence. In December, the children visited Snow City to experience what it felt like living in a colder climate. They played with snow and slid down the slopes. The children also had great fun with the water features and fountains at the Port of Lost Wonders in Sentosa. The year culminated with a Christmas party held on 5 December with all our children coming together to celebrate an early Christmas at Saint Joseph's Institution Junior. They sang and performed for their peers and facilitators and had a wonderful time playing games organised by our staff and the Caritas Singapore Young Adults.

During the course of the year, our children also participated in the following community programmes:

WECARE ARTS PROGRAMME

The WeCare Arts Programme was a collaboration between the North East Community Development Council (NECDC) and the National Arts Council to engage children in the Arts. Through the Programme, we were able to engage professional trainers to provide singing and dancing lessons for our children. Subsequently, our children were invited to perform at the NECDC Appointment Ceremony held on 18 July at the Serangoon Gardens Country Club.

AWAKEN THE DRAGON

Awaken the Dragon was a community art project featuring the last two remaining Dragon Kilns in Singapore. Our children were invited to participate in the programme to understand the background of the Dragon Kilns in Singapore by professionals engaged by North East Community Development Council. Hougang, Sengkang, Primavera and Bedok North Centres participated in an educational workshop in October and they were taught to make collective sculptures from clay which were subsequently fired in the Dragon Kilns.

Wish Upon A Silver Star 2014

The Wish Upon A Silver Star programme, is a dollar-for-dollar matching fundraising project organised by the North East Community Development Council and NTUC FairPrice Foundation Limited. The project raises funds to support 200 lower income families living in the Northeast district by providing them with essential household items. For every ten origami stars completed, NTUC Fairprice Foundation donated a dollar to purchase household items for the beneficiaries. This year, our children folded 56,000 stars, raising \$5,600.

MORE THAN WORDS

In line with its focus on education and community development, the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation (TCTF) initiated the More Tan Words programme which offered our children the opportunity to participate in speech and drama lessons and other fun-filled educational activities. Through partnering with Acts of Life, the programme which started in April and ended in June 2014 culminated with an educational tour to a farm and a performance by our children at the More Than Words Concert 2014 – Cherish Your Dream, in September 2014 at the Nanyang Auditorium @ NTU. ←



CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE FUNDING BY MSF

We received the Cyclical Maintenance Funding from MSF in October for Primavera (\$11,916) and Bedok North Centre (\$24,827).



KIDS FOOD FUND BY NECDC & CAPITALAND

The CapitaLand Kids Food Fund which was coordinated by the People's Association and CapitaLand aimed to enhance the nutritional well-being of children in Singapore. Morning Star received a grant of \$14,504.

AFTER-SCHOOL CARE SERVICE REPORT



Enrolment Chart for 2013 and 2014.



 *Play is the highest form of research.* 
- Albert Einstein



NOVA LEARNING INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

 *Because children grow up, we think a child's purpose is to grow up. But a child's purpose is to be a child.* 
- Tom Stoppard

MORNING STAR HARDSHIP FUND & NOVA FUND

The Morning Star Hardship Fund helps defray the programme fee for after-school care service for children from families who require financial assistance. The NOVA Fund does likewise for children enrolled in the NOVA Learning Lab. Each year, all our staff engage in fundraising activities to raise funds for these two restricted funds. In 2014, more than 35 team members participated in the Run for Good Campaign to raise close to \$85,000 for the NOVA Fund.

\$28,364 from the Morning Star Hardship Fund and NOVA Fund was used to support 61 children (13%) enrolled in after-school care and the NOVA Learning Intervention Programme.



→ The NOVA Learning Intervention Programme was started in 2006 at Hougang Centre. The programme serves mainstream primary school children encountering temporary learning challenges due to weak foundational skills. Children enrolled in this programme are either referred by their respective schools or identified through our after-school care centres. Typically, they would be failing at least two subjects in school, have difficulties sustaining attention, or are unable to cope with the level of school work due to various emotional or behavioural issues. Individualised Education Plans are developed for every child enrolled to address the specific and unique needs of the child. This ensures that the child learns at a pace he or she is comfortable with. Through little successes on a daily basis, the child's self-esteem and confidence is boosted and he or she begins to acquire a positive cycle of learning.

The first school based NOVA Learning Lab commenced operations at Saint Anthony's Canossian Primary School in June 2013. In 2014, two labs were established in Canossa Convent Primary School and Punggol View Primary School. The four labs currently serve 80 children on a daily basis, an increase of 66%. ←



FAMILY WELLNESS



All of us are products of our childhood. - Michael Jackson



Through counselling, family therapy and case management, the family wellness team supports the emotional and mental health of children under our care, their families, and also the community-at-large. Greater awareness through advertisements, outreach and word-of-mouth saw a 60% increase in community counselling hours and 120 hours of pro bono counselling.

ENHANCED STEP-UP PROGRAMME

The Enhanced Step-Up Programme is funded by the Ministry of Social and Family Development. A change in focus to solely target school absenteeism for the Enhanced Step-Up Programme saw a significant drop in referrals by schools. ESU counselling hours declined from 807 hours in 2013 to 189 hours in 2014.

NOVA LEARNING INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

Family Wellness continued to support the NOVA Learning Intervention Programme through its counselling intervention with children enrolled in the programme and through coaching of their families. Therapeutic services include: individual sessions for children and parents and/or parent-child sessions; team case conferences and case consults with the schools; referrals to the school's educational psychologist, Family Service Centers, and the Response Early Intervention and Assessment in Community Mental Health (REACH) team. A total of 216 counselling hours were logged for the children and their parents.

ART AND PLAY THERAPY

In an effort to provide more child-centric services, we expanded our therapeutic team and introduced therapeutic use of art and play for children who do not benefit from conventional talk-therapy modalities. It has been beneficial for emotional expression and self-regulation.

SUCCESS STORY

Adam (not his real name) is an 8-year-old boy diagnosed with ADHD. He was referred for therapy in October 2014 due to behavioural issues. Some of the therapeutic goals for Adam were to increase his self-confidence, provide a space for self-expression, improve his emotional literacy, social skills and help him cope with his impulsive behaviour.

During the initial phase of art therapy, Adam struggled with his emotions. He would mention that he is "very bad and stupid." He would require a lot of encouragement and assistance to create his artwork as his self-confidence was low. He believed that he could not do it and the task was too difficult. Slowly as the therapy progressed, Adam was able to create more and more intricate artwork without any assistance. He began to show the ability to manage his time effectively and work within the time allocated. No longer does he feel that he is "bad or stupid". He is now able to share his feelings, displays less impulsive and disruptive behaviours and shows understanding of his actions and what is considered acceptable.

Art therapy provided Adam with a safe space to work on his social and communication skills with the therapist where Adam was able to practice his current and new behaviours. Adam was able to learn to work in a team and to understand that play does not always revolve around his needs. Now he is able to display acts of reciprocity, show more interest in other's perspectives and the need to give and take.

WORKSHOP & TRAINING



It's not our job to toughen our children up to face a cruel and heartless world. It's our job to raise children who will make the world a little less cruel and heartless.

- L.R. Knost



→ This department is focussed on empowering parents of primary school-going children with skills and knowledge on how to effectively manage the behaviour of their children without eroding the confidence and self-esteem of their children. The total number of hours of workshops and talks conducted in the previous year increased by close to 50%, from 348 hours in 2013 to 678 hours. The number of participants increased from 3078 to 6721, an increase of almost 55%. The increase is due to the introduction of the Triple P Programme (Positive Parenting Program), an evidence-based programme initiated by MSF. We were allocated 8 schools to conduct Triple P in 2014. The number of schools will be increased to 15 in 2015.

Our signature programme, Common Sense Parenting® (CSP), has seen an increase in the number of runs conducted in the past three years. We aim to conduct at least one run of CSP® per month to reach out to and benefit more participants. 2014 saw a 21.4% increase in the number of runs over the previous year.

The department also reviewed the induction and training programme for new employees to ensure that new team members thoroughly familiarized themselves with the vision, mission, ethos and code of conduct of the organisation. Five core modules with theoretical underpinnings from Common Sense Parenting® and The Skilful Teacher Framework were reviewed and updated. Modules include Managing Children's Behaviour, Lesson Planning, Cooperative Learning Strategies, Managing Group Work and Lesson Observation. The department also spent a good part of the year to revise the curriculum of our after-school care services to incorporate our 3 core beliefs; every child can learn,

every child is unique, and every child has a right to dignity. Our character-based education curriculum is based on the 4 Catholic cardinal virtues of Wisdom, Courage, Justice and Temperance. Our aim is to provide our children with knowledge and skills that would help them build character through 3 distinct domains of development:

1. Social/Emotional: instilling self-awareness and self-management, interpersonal skills and positive life skills and character strengths.
2. Character: instilling and strengthening core moral virtues and moral character strengths.
3. Pursuit of Learning: instilling education beliefs and attitudes, developing learner-related character strengths and cognitive skills. ←



THANK YOU! - PARTNERS & CLIENTS

Ahmad Ibrahim Secondary School
Anglo Chinese School (Barker)
Arise Kindergarten
Balestier Hill Primary School
Bedok Green Primary School
Canossa Convent Primary School
Canossian Daughters of Charity
Centre of New Life Kindergarten
CHIJ St Nicholas Girls' School
CHIJ St Theresa's Convent School
ChildFirst Pre-school@Dunearn
Church of Holy Trinity Kindergarten
Covenant Family Service Centre
East Coast Primary School
East View Primary School
En Community Services Society
Holy Innocents' Primary School
Hougang Sheng Hong Family Service Centre
Junyuan Primary School
Learning Vision@Work Private Limited
Mee Toh School
Methodist Girls' School
Metta Welfare Association
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ministry Of Social & Family Development
Nan Hua High School
National Council of Social Services
Ngee Ann Polytechnic
Ngee Ann Primary School
Noah's Ark Childcare Development
North Spring Primary School
Northeast Community Development Council
NurtureStars @ Mt Faber SAFRA
NurtureStars @ Yishun SAFRA
Our Future Prodigies Childcare Centre &
Development Centre



PAP Community Foundation Kindergartens
Peirce Secondary School
Punggol View Primary School
Punggol View Primary School
REACH (Response, Early Intervention and Assessment in
Community Health)
Red Swastika School
Saint Anthony's Canossian Primary School
Saint Gabriel's Primary School
Saint Joseph's Institution Junior
Serangoon Secondary School
Siglap Secondary School
Springfield Secondary School
Standard Chartered Bank
Tampines Primary School
Tampines Secondary School
Tan Chin Tuan Foundation
Tote Board
Trans Family Service Centre
Yio Chu Kang Primary School
Yuhua Primary School
Zhonghua Secondary School

THANK YOU! - DONORS

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Wee Tai Seng
Wong Wei Teck
Wong Wui Jin
Wong Yen Fern (Shirley)
Woo Mei Lin Jacqueline
Yang Hao Lau



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

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SAINT GABRIEL'S PRIMARY SCHOOL CENTRE

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SAINT JOSEPH'S INSTITUTION JUNIOR CENTRE

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