

Lakeside-News

February 2012



*"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."
~ Mark 10:14*

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From the desk of the executive director

Little Oak Trees

Children are the future.

Children are also vulnerable. Too often, we see children who are victims of physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Children can be manipulated, scapegoated, and exploited. They can be led astray through exposure to immoral values and practices. When there are conflicts in the home, children often get caught in between, and end up either as the target of their parents' anger, or the unwilling messenger because their parents have stopped speaking to one another. For all these reasons, and more, children need to be cared for, protected, and helped as much as possible, when they face such issues.

We understand how important, and also how vulnerable, children are. That is why we invest much time and resources in them, and their families. Our counselling and casework ensures timely intervention for cases of child abuse and family violence. Through our Creative Arts Programme, we nurture young hearts and minds through the visual and performing arts, building talent, self-esteem, and discipline. At our Before and After School Care, we take care of their daily needs, providing a conducive environment for them to rest, play and grow in, while their parents are at work. And our Educational and Psychological Services help ensure that every child we meet with learning difficulties will have a chance to develop cognitively and behaviourally. All

our children's services are specially catered to children from disadvantaged and needy families.

We understand that no child exists in a vacuum, but lives in an ecosystem of intertwined systems and individuals, including the family, the school, the neighbourhood, and the wider community. Through our School Social Work with the primary schools, we provide educational workshops for parents and teachers. Our trained social workers and counsellors also provide counselling for the children and their families. During family counselling sessions, we help children and their parents find hope and healing. I hope the articles in this issue will give you a better insight into the kind of work Lakeside does to reach out to the children and their families.

Children are the future. Just as no one knows the number of oak trees stored in an acorn, so no one can fully know the vast potential stored in a child. Thanks for your continuing partnership as we nurture and guide these "little oak trees", and build them strong and full of hope for the future!

God bless you.

Teo Tee Loon
Executive Director

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Synchronic Symphony

Since the inception of our Creative Arts Programme in 2008, Lakeside Family Centre has organised an annual concert. Called 'Steps & Sounds', this concert has proven to be a great platform for the students in the Programme to display their talents and skills on the guitar, violin and percussion instruments, as well as in drama and dance, to their proud families and friends.

Last year's 'Steps & Sounds 2011' on 26 Nov saw some of the best ever performances by our students, a few of whom have grown up with our Programme. It was thrilling for us, and no doubt their families too, to see them perform with so much assurance and, for the group performances, in such synchrony. One item in particular stood out: The Carpenters' tune *Top of the World* performed classically by an ensemble of four guitarists and six violinists.

We are, as always, much indebted to our principal donors, Mr and Mrs William and Mavis Tok, whose faithful support has undergirded our Programme all these years. Special thanks also go to our other donors, the instructors who labour so faithfully, and the supportive



A section of the ensemble of four guitarists and six violinists playing *Top of the World*.

parents of our students. To our students, we say: you have proven that constant diligence does pay off in the long run, and we are proud of you.

Lucy Lee
Programme Coordinator

Grow with Me



Learning teamwork at Camp Show Time



Taking up the challenge at eXplorerkid.



The BASC children's song presentation at the 2011 Christmas Celebration.

Bustling activities filled our two Before and After School Care Centres (BASCs) during the school holidays. Children at the centres were meaningfully engaged in workshops, camps and outings that enhanced their learning journey.

Both our BASCs are privileged to partner with strong groups of volunteers from schools and churches. 'Amazoo: Racing in the Wild' was organised by volunteers from Hwa Chong Institution. Children from our Jurong West (JW) BASC learned more about wildlife through the fun and interactive 'Amazing Race!'. At the JW BASC 'Fun Concert', the staff team and parents were delighted by the impressive performances from the children, ranging from Hip-hop dance, skipping, singing of Christmas carols, to guitar rendition.

JW BASC organised 'Show Time', a 4-day-3-night camp for children in P4 – P6. An experiential learning camp, the children were able to learn skills of teamwork. A group of key volunteers also co-organised a 3-day camp. Called 'Secret Garden', the camp highlight was an outing to eXplorerkid at Downtown East.

At our Jurong East (JE) BASC, a 3-day camp was held to enable children to be more aware of their strengths and be empowered to realise their potential. In partnership with another group of key volunteers, JE BASC also had a Christmas Celebration, where the children were treated to a special puppetry performance using the black light effects.

Despite all the buzz and hectic year-end activities, the ultimate satisfaction is always to see each child growing up stronger physically, cognitively, socially and spiritually.

Violet Sim
Head, BASC



Great Drivers!

A 3-day camp was held from 30th November to 2nd December 2011 for the JE BASC children. The theme of the camp was "Great Drivers!", and was intended to instill motivation and drive amongst our students. Over the first two days of the camp, the children were engaged in various exciting activities such as learning how to make Japanese potato salad, creating their very own car models out of recycled materials as well as putting their energy into a mass dance choreographed by our volunteers. The highlight of the camp on the third day was an outing to the East Coast Park, where the children thoroughly enjoyed themselves as they pitted their talents against one another in telematch-style games in an indoor soccer field. At the end of the camp, **the children learnt that each of them are special and have their own strengths.** Another life lesson they took away from the camp was that they could achieve their goals as long as they put their minds to it and work hard.

Christopher Chua
Social Worker



Read with Me!

With the school holidays over, our Reading Programme has resumed since the end of January this year. This programme is targeted at K2 - P2 students with reading difficulties. They come from our Before-and-After-School Care and also include some of the children of our centres' casework clients.

Our philosophy is that reading is the real job of a student and that every child can learn. To this end, we have invited volunteers to read with the children on a one-to-one basis, with resources and training provided.

Our goal is to develop a life-long love of reading in students and have recently included a Story-telling component to our programme. We hope to make each session an adventure for the students.

The work is carried out by volunteers and if you have a passion for children, we would love to have you join us. Our sessions run on Mondays-Fridays from 9.00-10.30am and 3.30-5.00pm.

Come help us grow the children into readers and writers!

Cate Tan
Reading Specialist



Listen to My Heart

Mdm S is 40 years old and married with a daughter and son in primary school. She approached Lakeside to seek help with parenting issues. When she first came, she was on the verge of reporting her daughter to the Juvenile Court as a Beyond Parental Control (BPC) case. Her daughter was often rude to Mdm S and her husband, and often bullied her younger brother. The school also complained of her constant misbehaviour in class.

Mdm S shared with me that she had suffered from depression after the birth to her second child. She developed a "shorter fuse" and would often complain to her husband about their daughter. Her husband began to scold and cane their daughter whenever his wife complained. Gradually, he started habitually scolding and caning their daughter regardless of whether she was in the wrong. Mdm S was aware that their daughter was often wrongly punished by her husband. As a result, their daughter gradually developed hatred towards them and would often deliberately engage in behaviour that would anger them.

When Mdm S' daughter was brought to Lakeside for counselling, she was able to share openly about her anger and hatred towards her parents. She felt that she was being treated unfairly at home and in school. As such, she felt she had the right to express her anger towards anyone who offended her.

During one of our counselling sessions, **the parents apologised to their daughter for their wrong treatment of her in the past, and she in turn apologised to them for her misbehaviours that had saddened and hurt them.** This breakthrough facilitated healing in the relationship between parents and child. Since then, the girl's behaviour has become more manageable. Her parents became more aware of their mistakes in disciplining her out of anger and not being consistent in their discipline of her. They also learnt that they needed to be more patient with her, and to take time to listen to her.

Mdm S' daughter has since vastly improved in her relationship with her parents, and she told me one day that she likes the way she is relating to them now, as compared to before. She feels that she now has a voice in the family and her parents are more willing to listen to her.

Chong Lai Ha
Senior Counsellor

