

epworth

moments

The **BEST** Tips To Help Your Child In School

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Of new challenges, new **hope** and new **strength** to **OVERCOME.**

By Tan Khye Suan, Executive Director

As each year comes to an end, we wait in anticipation for the new year to arrive. Somehow, the passing of one year to another gives us the feeling that we pass through an invisible door. What happened in the past year, especially those that gave us bad or unhappy experiences, can be left behind. As we pass through this invisible door, we hope to see a better year ahead, with blessings, opportunities and achievements. This is the hope that we hold dear as we transit into each new year.

The transition from 2019 to 2020 was somewhat different. Even before we crossed into the new year, there were ominous signs looming on the horizon of the new year. First, there is the US-China trade war; then there is Brexit; and, the wild raging bushfires in parts of Australia.

All these have already dented the world economy with negative impacts. As if these were not enough, in January, the novel coronavirus from Wuhan (COVID-19) began to spread rapidly in China, and to a number of other countries. Singapore is not spared from the scourge of this new virus.

What do all these mean to Epworth Community Services?

Personal Hygiene Matters

First of all, we are reminded of the need for good personal hygiene. In 2003, when we were faced with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Singaporeans began conscientiously practising good personal hygiene. We were able to overcome this health challenge. But over the years, we soon forget the practises of good personal hygiene. COVID-19 is a stark reminder of how we should be living our lives with good hygiene practices.

Epworth Community Services was one of the early Social Service Agencies (SSAs) visited by the National Council of Social Services (NCSS) in the wake of COVID-19. We have quickly put in place all necessary measures to ensure that our staff's and clients' health and well-



Ms Tan Li San, Chief Executive Officer (Designate) and Ms Elaine Loo, Director of Membership and Strategy Implementation at NCSS paid a visit to Epworth Literacy.



Our staff conducting temperature checks to ensure the safety and health of everyone in the literacy centre!

being are looked after. Epworth will remain vigilant in our operations through this period of time. We will diligently continue with the relevant precautionary practices, even when the alert level is reduced.

Drop-in Donations Received

Epworth, like all SSAs, is dependent on the generosity of our donors. The weaker performance of Singapore's economy means less donations.

In December 2019, we had already seen less donations compared to previous years. The spread of COVID-19 is likely to impact the economy further and correspondingly, we expect a further reduction in donations.

More Subsidies Anticipated

However, our work in the community needs to go on. The demand for our programmes and services will not decrease. The flip side of poor economic performance is the loss of jobs. Some of our clients' families will be affected when their parents lose their jobs. We cannot discontinue our support for these children and youths because their families cannot pay for the programmes and services. Hence, we have to extend additional help to these clients, in the form of more subsidies. This would mean higher costs to Epworth.

Additional Operational Costs

With the spread of COVID-19, Epworth has already deployed a slew of measures to ensure that the children and youths who attend our programmes and services are kept safe from any health risk. We have carried out additional cleaning of premises; provided staff and clients with sanitisers and surgical masks; other health equipment like thermometers, gloves and so on. We also have to prepare for more operational and hygiene contingencies if the situation worsens. All these are additional costs to Epworth.

It appears that Epworth is headed for a bumpy ride in 2020, and we will face challenges in meeting operational and financial demands. How are we going to cope?

Having resilience in the face of adversity.

Epworth is prepared to press on and will not stop helping our clients despite the challenges ahead. Our clients - the children, youths and their families - are all precious in our eyes because we believe that with continued help, they can realise their potential.

GARNERING RESOURCES

We will adopt various strategies to attract resources to help us continue with our work. However, we cannot do it alone! We will need those who have the means to continue giving to support our work.

Every Bit Counts

Epworth believes that donations need not be in large amounts. If there are many small donations, the sum effect will still be similar. Hence, we will be reaching out to existing and new donors. As long as there are those who are willing to donate, the amount does not matter, as every little bit will make a difference.

A Constant Flow Helps

We will be reaching to existing and new donors to pledge a regular donation throughout the year. Pledging is a disciplined form of giving and helps organisations like Epworth to be able to plan for the work ahead. We will be able to estimate the resources coming on stream and determine how to deploy these resources meaningfully to help our clients.

A Big Push

We are planning for a fundraising event, a Gala Dinner on 24th July 2020 at the Pan Pacific Hotel. Apart from donors, we will be looking for sponsors to support our fundraising event. We will be providing more details on this event in the coming months.

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

There is a story in the Old Testament about God asking Israel to conquer the promised land (Numbers 13 and 14). They had journeyed all the way to the edge of the promised land. The direction was to go ahead with the conquest and to trust God to help them.

But in prudence, their leaders sent out spies to determine the opportunities and threats that they would face when they start their conquest. The spies saw the threats as more looming and insurmountable than the opportunities that were presented. Hence, they did not attack and failed to conquer the promised land. This resulted in the Israelites wandering in the wilderness for 40 years.

While we cannot be foolhardy, Epworth has started its journey of serving the community since 2001. It is inevitable that we should press on with the work. Hence, we will be raising funds for the work despite the monetary challenges ahead.

We ask that those who read this message consider how you can support Epworth Community Services. We also seek your fervent prayers for our organisation.

We seek your generous support. Help a child today.



ABOUT US

Epworth Community Services is a Social Service Agency (SSA) that helps at-risk children and youths from needy and disadvantaged families. We want to create a better world for them so that they can develop their potential. Our work focuses on promoting the mental well-being of children and youths by building strong families and imparting skills for resilient living.

VISION

Strong Families, Resilient Living, Beautiful Minds.

MISSION

To reach out in Christian love, by providing quality programmes and services to all children, youths, parents and their families, of all language, race and religion, and nurturing each family member in body, mind and spirit.

EPWORTH MOMENTS

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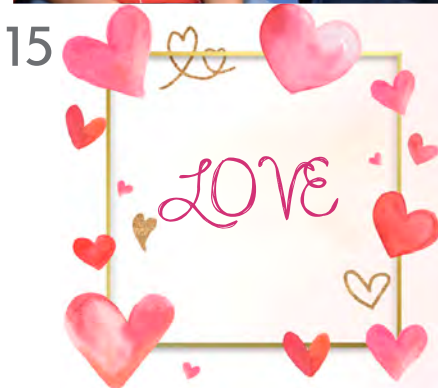
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PSST!

Here's a little INSIGHT for you!





WHY YOUR CHILD SHOULD JOIN A CCA

By Angie Lee, Community Relations Executive

Staring at the blank space where I was supposed to fill in my choice of CCA, I remained undecided on what I wanted to join. It was due for submission the next day. Should I go with Choir to join my sister, or explore something new and go with Dance? I vividly recalled my mother telling me, "Just choose what you like. If you're not sure, mummy can bring you to explore first."

I chose the latter and have never looked back. I am not the best dancer, but the amount of things that I have learnt is immeasurable.

Flying Club, E-Sports, Golf, A Capella, Rock Climbing... the list of Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) goes on. The number of CCAs in schools is growing to suit their students' varying interests, while parents worry that they will be a source of added stress or distraction. However, joining a CCA has definite benefits for your child. Being a student is more than just being book-smart; it is about learning and discovering.

Your child gets to make new friends and learn new skills. Beyond that, joining a CCA opens up a **whole new world**.



LEADERSHIP

It is never too early to learn how to lead. In every CCA, students are encouraged to step up and take a position of leadership. It could be the President of Interact Club, or just staying back after training to teach the boy struggling to follow how to shoot the basketball into the hoop. Students will also be given the opportunity to liaise with external vendors whom they will be working with during events. They are useful life skills to pick up.

SELF-DISCOVERY

Your child will better know his own likes and dislikes, can-dos' and can't-dos'. With time running tight and responsibilities piling high, he will find out where his limit is. Participating in events such as competitions test them on whether they are able to showcase their skills under public scrutiny and pressure. Even though you may find this a challenging journey, it is essential for every student to discover more about himself to reach his fullest potential.



EXPOSURE

Participating in a CCA is more than just about the individual, the team, or bringing glory to the school. Students get to learn how to be more caring towards others even though they may be competitors. Students get to put up a performance for a good cause. Students get to interact with the less privileged and learn how to be more compassionate and empathetic. Outside of the class, these opportunities are endless and will provide invaluable exposure to your child.

A stylized illustration of a person with brown hair, wearing a green shirt and blue pants, parasailing. They are holding a rope and are surrounded by yellow and blue paint splashes.

This is not to paint a rosy picture about joining a CCA. Every student will face their own set of challenges. Though not every battle will be a triumphant victory, it is through these that they stretch, learn how to cope and eventually overcome. Success has never been about winning, it comes through learning.

THE

BEST



TIPS TO HELP YOUR CHILD IN SCHOOL

By Angie Lee, Community Relations Executive



The start of each new year marks a milestone for every primary school student as they transit from one Level to another. A child's success in school – academic or non-academic – begins at home. As your child's first teacher, your support is especially important to his or her performance. Here are some of the best tips to help your child.

> GOING BACK TO SCHOOL AFTER A LONG BREAK SPARKS ANXIETY FOR MANY CHILDREN. PARENTAL SUPPORT IS VITAL IN EASING THEM DURING SUCH PERIODS OF TRANSITION.

Be Interested

Discoveries that may seem completely novel and exciting for your child may appear to us as ordinary or mundane. Nonetheless, take the time to know about what your child has learnt in school, or what happened today. It's easy to dismiss their excitement, or their exhibition of signs of distress, which may lead to undesirable consequences. Listen, get involved and ask questions – that's how you learn more about them, build trust and strong relationships. Remember, listen first before you start reacting.

Encourage

Research has shown that encouragement is more effective in instilling good behavior in children as compared to punishment. Words of affirmation and appropriate praises play a significant role in boosting your child's self-esteem and confidence, motivating them to become or do better. You can even do it in fun ways, such as slipping a note of encouragement into their snack box. Such notes will not just bring a smile to your child's face, but also remind them of how much he or she is loved by you.

Set Goals

Set practical and achievable goals with your child at the beginning of each school term. By helping them visualise what they want to achieve by the end of the term, it helps them to be more focused and gives them a sense of purpose. Motivation also comes from experiencing that sense of accomplishment upon completion – knowing that if he can do it once, he can do it again! Goals can range anywhere from passing an English test to folding his own laundry. A little tip: Rewards work well with children! Not only do they make the process more enjoyable, it also gives them more motivation.

Time

Contrary to popular thinking, luxurious gifts and lavish meals with your child are not as important as you spending time with him. Setting goals, giving encouragement and staying interested in your child's life requires your commitment and time. With changes and new experiences that he encounters everyday, your support and guidance is more important than the most positive words told to him by his teachers and peers. No matter how busy your schedule, relook at your priorities if you need to, and let your child know that you will always be there for him.

**Parents, YOU are important.
Only you can guide your child in
becoming the BEST version of
themselves.**



DO YOU KNOW...



Simple praises that recognise your child's efforts and works have positive effects on his or her intrinsic motivation! Don't skimp on the verbal rewards, but don't overdo it either. Your words carry weight. Phrases like "You did a good job in reading that paragraph!" or "You folded that shirt so neatly!" goes a long way.



Wandrous

DECEMBER

★ BALLOONS. CANDIES. AND A LEAP OF IMAGINATION

By Lucia Lee, Programme Coordinator at Epworth Student Care

It was the most wonderful time of the year – December. Our student care teachers have prepared a series of team building games for the students to enjoy. Here's a look at what we did to build leadership, communication and decision-making skills!



Using fun and interactive games, our colourful balloon “school buses” taught the boys about the magic of science.



The curious boys quickly turned into science experimenters. On one hand, the Lower Primary boys learnt about the ocean, and what the deadliest predator was. They also made a replica of creatures living in the Abyss. On the other hand, the Upper Primary boys experimented with pop candy! They mixed the candies in different solvents. They even learnt how to use healthy fruit juice to make gummy noodles.



DramaSprout held a puppet making workshop at the Student Care. Each student had the opportunity to present their personalised puppet to the rest of the class, and they thoroughly enjoyed the session.



Engrossed in making their very own puppets.



GOING ON AN ADVENTURE!

Early exposure is important in developing and nurturing interests and hobbies, which has the power to drive learning. With that in mind, we took our students on excursions, teaching them about performing arts, technology, animals and the environment!



Learning about how aviation works.

They also got to learn about the inner workings of the aviation industry through exciting hands-on experiences at Jewel Changi Experience Studio. Our students were awed at the **technology**, and they were thrilled to be able to get their hands on the machines and gadgets!

Our students took a peek under Esplanade's famous domes. We took them on an experiential trip into auditoriums, Concert Hall, Theatre and other front-of-house spaces. We also taught them about the **performing arts** scene in the Singapore.

With the increase in intensity of climate variability and the rise in environmental problems, we brought the students to Marina Barrage to participate in the Young Green Programme. They were encouraged to play a role in fighting against climate change. Practical tips were also given on how they could build a **sustainable future** for Singapore.



★ ONE WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS. 107 MERRY HEARTS.

By Ondrea Goh, Literacy Intervention Teacher at **Epworth Literacy**

The long-awaited school holidays opened with a Christmas party for our students. Held at our new literacy centre at Jurong West, the morning kicked off with a series of station games.

The elaborate stations quickly became a springboard for the students to pose questions about Christmas, and to learn more about the reason for the season.



Teachers and volunteers alike were deeply heartened by the sight of the children as they immersed themselves in the games. From the classic telephone game to a maze, the activities across the stations were varied and gave the children many opportunities to draw on their different strengths.

In another room, the young ones busied themselves with cellophane paper and glue as they worked on decorating fridge magnets for themselves. Wide grins could be seen from every corner!





Trying their best to pass the message accurately.



The morning ended on a high as they kicked back to a video screening of the Christmas story. At the end, refreshments were handed out and the event drew to a close.

It was truly a morning well spent. We are grateful for all our volunteers from OMS Oilfield Services Pte Ltd and individuals who have contributed their time and effort to make the party a resounding success. Thank you for tirelessly looking out for our young charges; your presence helped to bring smiles to so many children!



Even our teachers were smiling from ear to ear!



★ 6 YEARS. COUNTLESS TRANSFORMATIONS.

By Francis Lee, Administrative Officer at Epworth HomeSweetHome



It has been an adventuresome 6 years since HomeSweetHome's inauguration in July 2013. As our residents were busily preparing for their performance, guests were streaming in steadily, admiring their gift of delicate artwork which were hand-drawn by our residents.

On that night, the turnout for the event was higher than expected. We were very honoured to have partners from various sectors join us in this annual event. Guests came from schools to Ministries to companies like Michelin! Everyone took the opportunity to get to know one another as they waited in anticipation for the night to begin.

The celebration kicked off with our very own art exhibition. We showcased our residents' artworks created over the course of the year. The residents were very proud of their masterpieces, confidently presenting and explaining them to the guests. After which, guests left several notes of encouragement on the wall of appreciation.

After the opening speech by our Executive Director, Mr Tan Khye Suan, our residents performed a spectacular dance routine that captivated the audience's attention. The crowd roared with cheers and shouts of "Encore!" as the performance came to an end.



"Art can permeate the deepest part of us, where no words exist."

Eileen Miller





Our guests enjoying the splendid performance put up by our residents.

While the guests were settling down for dinner, an appreciation video was screened to show a glimpse of what life was like for the residents in Epworth HSH. There were many joyful and emotional moments from the video which our guests thoroughly enjoyed.

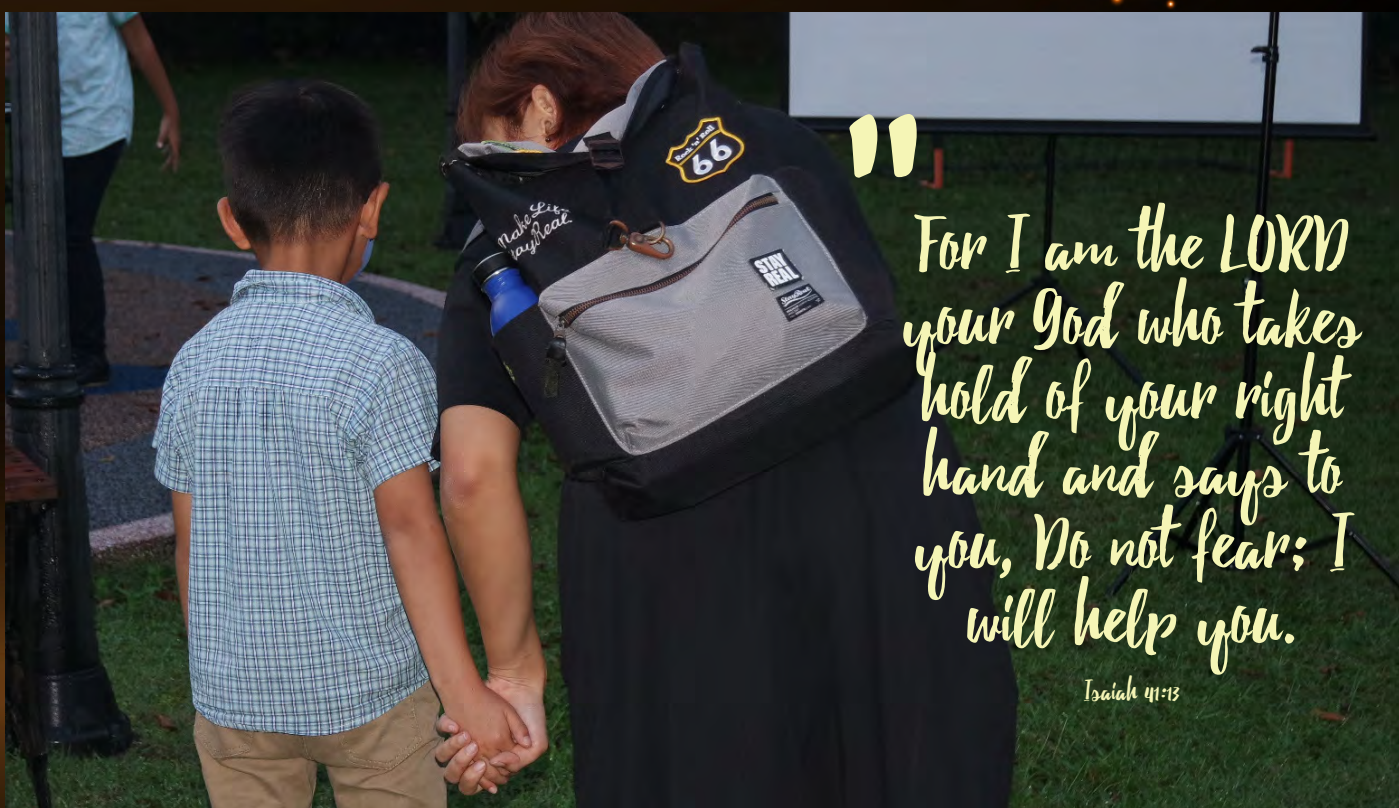
After the screening ended, two of our residents took the stage and shared their journey in Epworth HSH. They also took some time to appreciate the staff and their teachers who have helped them through their journey to recovery.

As the event came to a close, our Head of Home, Ms Hazel Wong, gave a passionate speech to thank all of our guests for their generous support and contributions. Every contribution made an impact to each of the resident's journey in Epworth HSH.

It was indeed a successful event! Although it was challenging for the residents to juggle different commitments simultaneously, we were proud that they managed to pull it off and even delivered such an impressive performance.



Our Executive Director, Head of Home and partners posing together with their beautiful gifts.



“
For I am the LORD
your God who takes
hold of your right
hand and says to
you, Do not fear; I
will help you.

Isaiah 41:13



★ WIDE SMILES AND WARM HEARTS

By Angie Lee, Community Relations Executive

Just 5 days before Christmas, staff from all our departments – Epworth Literacy, Family Welfare, Foster Care, HomeSweetHome and Student Care – gathered together at the Youth Centre for a festive feast. Our behind-the-scenes warriors from the Headquarters were not forgotten - they also joined us on this joyous occasion. They always say “the more the merrier,” so some of our staff brought their families along. With children running around, and staff fighting to carry a baby, the atmosphere of the room livened up almost immediately.

The smell of food filled the air in the room. Apart from the catered buffet, some staff sacrificed sleep to whip up their specialty to bring along to the celebration. There were turkey, agar-agar jellies, homemade carrot cake... you name it, we had it. The wide spread was more than enough to fill all our hungry stomachs. Food was definitely a topic that kept conversations going! *Try this cheesecake! Try that turkey, it's delish! How did you make the lasagna?*

Due to the different locations and the vastly different job scopes that everyone from each department had, times like this where everyone got to connect and learn more about one another were greatly cherished. We took this opportunity to show appreciation for our staff from various departments, thanking them for their good work. At a glance, I could see staff from different departments sitting together, enthusiastically chatting with one another. It was a heartening sight. Everyone broke out of their comfort groups to know one another better. What I saw was not a group of colleagues gathered together; I saw a family.

In the blink of an eye, two hours have passed and it was the end of the celebration. Some of our staff gathered around the buffet spread with empty lunchboxes and containers in their hands. None of those delicious food were going to waste – it's time to *dapao!*

With a satisfied tummy, hands occupied with bags of food and a heart warm and fuzzy, all of us went back to our various locations for work. Though the event was not one that's of large-scale, we all enjoyed it thoroughly. It was definitely a fuel that perked us up for the rest of the day, and a great way to round up the year.





THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

By Fyn Wong, Community Relations Executive

We held our Volunteer Appreciation Event at The Dungeon Room in Red Box, kindly sponsored to us by the National Youth Council. Decorations were put up, with food and drinks laid out nicely as we waited excitedly for our volunteers to arrive.

Partners from Dignity Kitchen, volunteers from our Community Programme, Project Lightbulb, and Literacy Programme, KidsREAD, came streaming in shortly after the event began. It was a gathering of well-wishing people.

We proceeded to exchange our backgrounds, volunteer experiences and views on the current volunteering landscape. One of which was when Dignity Kitchen – a social enterprise that aims to restore dignity to the differently-abled and disadvantaged through vocation with passion – shared how impressed they were by our residents from HomeSweetHome, who had learnt to regulate their emotions despite the trauma they had gone through.

Before the event came to an end, certificates of appreciation were presented to our volunteers to thank them for their invaluable service. Our volunteers also connected with one another. We ended the night with holiday wishes and talked of more collaboration opportunities in the coming year.

We were glad that the event turned out well. All of us had a cosy time together, and we definitely look forward to meeting more of our volunteers in the future.



YOUR SUPPORT
GOES A LONG
WAY.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT OUR VOLUNTEERING
OPPORTUNITIES!



Our lovely artist and balloon sculptor were kept busy throughout the event.



Parents, partners and staff alike were enjoying the impressive performance.



Our social worker enjoyed a talk with foster families.



★ NO GREATER LOVE

By Cheong Jia Qi, Recruitment Officer at **Epworth Foster Care**

Epworth Foster Care celebrated its 4th anniversary with a dinner party for our foster families at Lagun Sari (Bukit Timah Plaza). The theme of the event that night was “Magical Garden”. We were amazed to see the enthusiasm of our foster families, who came decked up according to the theme creatively. There were some who came dressed as gardeners, some who came dressed as fairies, and even a whole family of smurfs that came marching into the party!

A line of activities such as balloon sculpting, singing, and magic show were arranged to entertain our foster families. Everyone had a fun time together! Our foster parents also took this time to get to know one another, sharing their joys and struggles in fostering.

Towards the end of the party, our best-dressed contestants took the stage to model their outfit and showcase their talent. Some of the performances garnered loud cheers, while some others thundered the room with rounds of applause. Though one thing was sure – foster parents swelled with pride as their children performed. Most of them left their seats and swamped towards the front of the stage to show their support, each of them fighting for a good spot to photograph the moment.

It was indeed a memorable evening for all foster families, staff and guests who were present. It was a heart-warming sight to see how our foster parents took part in the contest so enthusiastically just to bring a smile on their faces. We hope that through this celebration, it continues to spur our foster parents on their commitment to caring for our vulnerable children.

Thank you for bringing hope to these children, giving them a chance to believe that love does exist.

Your Little Fact #1

When being in their natural families becomes impossible, foster care is the most ideal situation for children to be in. In Singapore, there are about 1,150 vulnerable children and young persons placed in Out-of-Home Care. However, less than half of them are under foster care.



BECOMING



BETTER

Interview with Rayan, Foster Child under Epworth Foster Care*

14 year-old Rayan began his volunteering journey in Ren Ci Home in 2018. He enjoys spending time with the elderly, especially when he has the opportunity to listen to their stories. He is constantly amazed by what they had to share, attentively gleaning nuggets of life advice whenever they did.

Being in the Values-In-Action Club in his school gave him the platform to do what he always wanted to do – contribute back to the society. “When people give back to the community, it makes our community a better place, and it strengthens and unites us.” Rayan also provided a timely reminder for all of us that we should never take what we have for granted – an advice he learnt which he still holds dear to his heart.

Rayan was not from a privileged background. He came under the Fostering Scheme at Epworth Foster Care in 2005. At home, he helps his foster parents wherever he can – from sweeping the floor to doing the dishes. He also enjoys having long conversations with his foster grandmother, always displaying an eagerness to learn.

Despite the lack of a complete and supportive natural family, Rayan defied the norms. On 16th November 2019, he was presented with a commendation award for achievements in the academic field, as well as in the sports, arts and character development at the Ministry of Social and Family Development’s (MSF) Foster Family Day.

Rather than allowing his background to define him, he used it in his favour to make him a stronger and better individual. Rayan humbly attributed this achievements to his foster family – the role models who got him to where he is today. Receiving this award further spurred his motivation to continue contributing to the society.

The battle chose Rayan; Rayan chose to become better.

Thank you to all foster families for providing constant support to our children. Your valued contribution is vital in building our children’s future. Most importantly, thank you to all children for having the strength to be the person that you want to be. Each one of you is amazing.

*Name has been changed to protect the child’s identity.



A TIME OF ~ LOVE ~

By Angie Lee, Community Relations Executive

Instead of gifting your spouse a bouquet of flowers over a candlelight dinner, and a night movie to follow after, here are some meaningful and fun date ideas for you couples out there to celebrate love!



Go Night-Kiting

Instead of squinting your eyes at your kite backed by the merciless sun rays, simply get clip-on LED lights from Kite Culture, Passion Kites or from any online platforms to attach on your regular kite, lighting up the night sky. Head over to windy hotspots such as Marina Barrage, West Coast Park, East Coast Park, Bishan – Ang Mo Kio or Punggol Waterway Park – there is a place to fly kites for all. If you're heading to Marina Barrage, there's also a light show and water show at 8pm and 9pm respectively, a stone's throw away at Singapore's iconic Marina Bay Sands.



Get fit and moving

For my fellow office-goers who are bound to their desks for a majority of their time, it is time to work out a good sweat with your spouse after a long day of work! Instead of picking up a pair of 30kg dumbbells to define those arms, or trying your best not to fall over while holding in your yoga position, why not take up a fitness class at a boxing gym or go for a HIIT workout that leaves you breathless? Shake up your workout with something different! It will be fun to see one another pulling silly moves as beginners while learning something new together.



Break the script by volunteering

When was the last time you volunteered? Yes, Valentine's Day is a day to celebrate romance and love between two individuals. However, Valentine's Day could also become an extra meaningful experience for both you and your spouse by taking this opportunity to love on others. There is a plethora of volunteering opportunities on Giving.sg, and there is definitely an area of work that will suit your interest. Give it a try with your spouse! There's so much we can learn from this experience.



HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE



SUPPORT US

The important work of Epworth Community Services is funded primarily by generous well-wishers who strongly believe in our cause. We invite you to join us in making a difference in the lives of children and youths under Epworth Community Services.



VOLUNTEER WITH US

Volunteers play an important role in our programmes and services. Volunteers can choose to be engaged in ad-hoc, short- or long-term programmes and are matched to programmes according to their time and interests.

For donation or volunteering enquiries, visit www.epworth.sg or contact us at community.relations@epworth.sg or call 6562 2211.

In order for us to keep you up to date with Epworth's happenings, contact us at admin@epworth.sg or call 6562 221 to update your personal particulars.