

# epworth moments

an official publication of  
Epworth Community Services

February 2021

## Raising RESILIENT Children

Pg 4

## Run The Race

Pg 14





#### 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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P.10



P.18

# CONTENTS

- 04 Raising Resilient Children
- 07 Getting A Grip On Your Emotions
- 09 Over The School Holidays...
- 10 Christmas Carnival Fun
- 14 Run The Race
- 16 Community Programmes
- 19 Setting Goals With Your Child

## ED'S MESSAGE

# CELEBRATING THE CHINESE NEW YEAR

By Mr Tan Khye Suan,  
Executive Director of Epworth Community Services

Traditionally, when we celebrate Chinese New Year, our celebrative activities are focused on the family. During the festivities, we turn our attention away from economic activities; from commerce; and, from social interactions with friends. All these activities take a temporary halt. The family takes precedence!

Family members gather together for a Reunion Dinner on the Eve of each Chinese New Year. We visit the elders of our families to pay them our respects during the fifteen-day duration of Chinese New Year. All these are wonderful reminders for each of us of those who have loved us; those who have contributed to our growth and development; and, those who will continue to walk with us in life's journey. In this way, we express respect, gratitude and know that we have been blessed.

The focus on the family is a wonderful reminder of God's intended purpose. The family unit is designed to be closely knitted, so that members of each family can love, care for and support each other.

However, not all families are functioning well. Some are fractured, unhappy and acrimonious. Some families have completely fallen apart. Some of these have family members not speaking to each other and being left to nurse their own wounds. This leads to much pain and anger. I have seen people, young and old, who have expressed anger and even hatred, for their family members during such family-centric festivities.

A strong family provides love, care and support for each member that belongs to it. We all know this! But we have taken this for granted. Very often, we allow small differences and disagreements to ruin our family relationship that is a powerful source of strength to overcome the challenges we face everyday. We allow these small differences and disagreements to become incredibly large and irreconcilable, causing the breakdown in family relationship.

In today's world, where there is much stress and challenges, the breakdown of family relationship also takes away the resource and support that can help maintain our mental well-being. Hence, we see more people suffering from mental health issues.

Epworth Community Services is a social service agency that believes in the value of having **Strong Families!**



We promote Strong Families through Epworth Family Welfare, working to rebuild family relationships that have broken down; between children and youths, with their parents. The department also works with at-risk youths whose parents find hard to manage them, helping them to build on common grounds and bridges.

Where there are difficulties in rebuilding bonds and relationships in biological families, we help children and youths to grow and develop in a family environment through Epworth Foster Care. Foster families can provide a temporary and good substitute to support children and youths from biological families that are facing much difficulties in reconstituting.

Studies have shown that children and youths still develop better in a family environment instead of in an institution. Hence, we are working hard with foster families, supporting foster children and youths to do well despite being away from their biological families.

As Epworth Community Services continues to work towards building Strong Families, we seek your support through donations during this Chinese New Year period. Beyond the Chinese New Year period, we will be having a virtual "Flag Day" on 20 March 2021. It will run over a four-month period from March to June 2021. Please give generously to Epworth Community Services through Giving.sg.

Our work in the community will continue to grow in the coming years. We ask for your continued support through donation, volunteerism and prayers. We will be sharing our work through our quarterly newsletters and social media. Stay connected with us!



# RAISING RESILIENT CHILDREN

By Cai Hui Tian, Assistant Manager of Epworth Family Welfare



**All of us, including children, will experience frustrations, failures and difficulties at some point in life. Resilience is the ability to bounce back from these difficulties or challenging situations.**

Years ago, a friend asked me what I would do if my child was bullied by other children at the playground. While I replied that I would probably 'rescue' my child by telling the other children off, my friend said that she might just sit and watch how her child would respond to the bullies. She explained that she could not be with her child 24/7 and it is important for her child to learn how to deal with such situations. It then dawned upon me that perhaps, I was overprotecting my child. I also realised the importance of helping my child build resilience at a young age.

## Why is Resilience Important?

Resilience, learned through life's various challenges, helps children manage stress and cope with rejection. It allows them to regard these difficulties as part and parcel of life. Children need to learn how to be resilient in order to become an adult who can survive and thrive.

According to the Singapore Mental Health Study 2016, the lifetime prevalence of mental illness in the Singapore resident population is 13.8%, which translates to about 1 in 7 people having a mental disorder. Singapore mental health professionals confirm that anxiety and depression are affecting growing numbers of young individuals. Children who are not resilient have higher risks of mental health disorders and behavioural issues. There is also emerging evidence to suggest that young people who are resilient are more likely to achieve success in school.

**A friend asked me what I would do if my child was bullied by other children... my friend said that she might just sit and watch how her child would respond to the bullies.**

## How to Raise a Resilient Child?

Fortunately, resilience is not inborn. Rather, it is a skill that can be learnt, and parents can help their children become more resilient.

Here are some suggestions for raising resilient children.

### 1. CONNECTION

- It is essential for parents to build a strong relationship with their child by letting them know that they are accepted and loved even when they make mistakes.
- Parents can empathise with their child by listening to them share about their feelings, so that their child feels understood. It is important for children to know that their feelings matter and that even the negative ones are okay.

Children will then learn that they can turn to their parents for comfort when they are feeling troubled. Empathy also helps children develop compassion and healthy relationships with others.

- What parents can say: "It is okay to feel sad and disappointed that you did not do well for the test. Your thoughts and feelings are important to me, and you can share them with me."

### 2. COMPETENCY

- Parents can help their child recognise and reinforce their strengths by encouraging activities that they are good at and enjoy doing.
- Parents can celebrate their child's achievements and emphasise the child's role in creating their own success.
- Parents can teach their child problem-solving and life skills. Instead of removing or avoiding difficult situations, parents can explore and discuss with their child on how they can handle the challenges, or how they can manage their negative emotions.
- Parents can explore with their child on what went wrong when they made mistakes, and help their child to understand that mistakes are for learning. This might enable their child to feel more optimistic and be more willing to take risks in the future.
- What parents can say: "Wow, you play the piano so well! I'm so proud of you.", "Let's see, you must be nervous about your first examination. What do you think can make you feel better? Let's see what we can do to help you in your revision.", "The colours of the painting did not turn out as well as we expected. What can you do differently next time?"

## What would you do if your child got bullied?

No parent wants to think about their child getting bullied. Driven by the need to protect, most parents would not hesitate to step in to help their child.



In such a situation, what kind of help and support would you offer your child? Scan this QR code to learn more!





### 3. CONTROL

- Instead of intervening and taking over their child's task, parents should give their child ample opportunities to solve problems and make decisions. This will help the child to believe that they are capable and are in control of their own lives. However, this should only be done when the child's safety is not compromised.
- Parents can ask themselves, "What does my child need to learn?", when their child misbehaves or makes mistakes. Instead of shaming, blaming or making hurtful remarks, parents can help their child to learn those lessons or skills.
- What parents can say: "Oh no, the blocks keep tumbling down. What can you do to ensure it stands?", "You might need to start writing down the list of homework you have, as you have been forgetting to do some of them."

### 4. COACH

- Children are always watching their parents, and parents are important role models and coaches for their child. Therefore, it is important for parents to be mindful of how they handle stress, challenges and transitions. Parents can teach their child good coping skills by exhibiting those skills themselves.
- Parents should also own up to their mistakes and apologise to their child. Parents can point out what they said or did wrongly, and explain how they can learn from the problem and fix it. This will teach their child that making a mistake is fine, as long as they apologise and learn from it.



## EPWORTH FAMILY WELFARE

To promote mental well-being, the programmes and services of Epworth Family Welfare are aimed at addressing at-risk behaviours of children and youths. These programmes and services are designed to mend and build stronger relationships between family members, in particular, parents with their children and youths.

### Family Guidance Order (FGO)

Epworth Family Welfare provides intervention programmes and services to help parents facing challenges in managing their children and youths below the age of 16 years old. These Pre-FGO programmes and services are designed to work with at-risk children and youths on their challenging behaviours; provide parenting skills for the parents; as well as build better family relationships.

### Project Dawn

Project Dawn was created to work with at-risk youths with various problem behaviours. This programme can be facilitated in small groups or with individual youth. Parents of at-risk youths will also be included at various points of this programme.

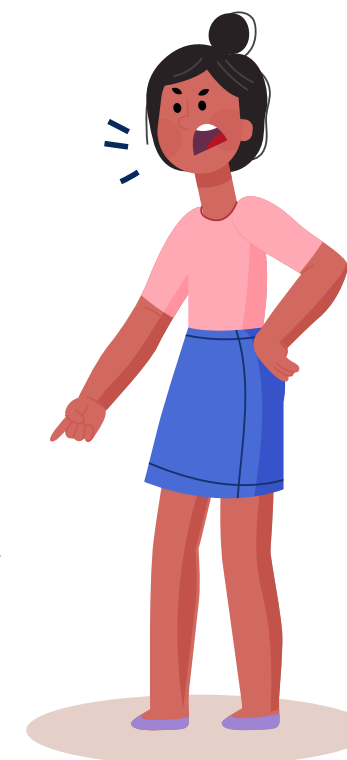
### Supervised Access

This service facilitates children and youths not living with their natural families to maintain contact with them in a safe environment. This will help them to continue with positive interactions and build attachments between the children and youths and their natural families.

# GETTING A GRIP ON YOUR EMOTIONS

By Quek Li Koon, Manager of Epworth Foster Care

**According to cognitive theory, the way we think about a situation determines our emotional response. The way we interpret or give meaning to an event affects how calm or stress we feel about it. When we tell ourselves, "He is always lying and I cannot trust him anymore," we have a negative or unhelpful thought. This will make us feel angry, causing us to shout or say unpleasant words to the child.**



Parenting has many challenges. As parents (caregivers), it is unavoidable to have occasional negative thoughts that will affect the way we respond to children.

Sometimes, we may feel helpless and demoralised, and say to ourselves, "She does not show any respect to me. I am such a useless mother." When we think this way, we feel defeated. We become irritated and unassertive. We are unable to follow through with the appropriate response to a child's action, whether it is to reward when our child behaves well; or, to withdraw a privilege when our child misbehaves.

Thinking negatively or having unhelpful thoughts will affect the way we communicate and care for our children. In short, negative thoughts towards situations will lead to negative responses on our part as parents.

We may end up verbally putting our child down, saying mean words that hurt our child's feelings; punishing our child physically; or, thinking that our child will never change.

### Negative Thoughts

The first step to getting a grip on our emotions is to recognise our negative thoughts.

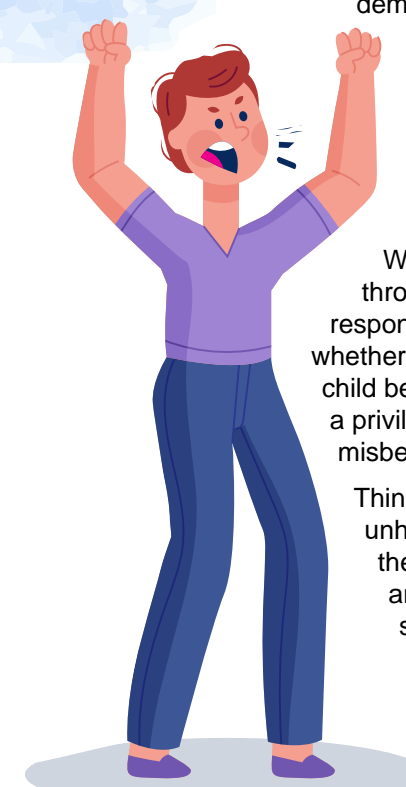
Some examples of negative thoughts are:

**She's self-centred.**

Such a label implies that the problem and the child will not change.

**She should know how I want her to behave.**

Such thoughts causes us to feel down, cheated or angry when reality falls short of our expectations.





He did not reply to my text because he does not care about how I feel!

This belief may not be true and it will only make us feel down and respond negatively when our child comes back home.

I cannot tolerate his tantrums anymore.

This will make us feel hopeless and want to give up more easily.

He is always chatting with his friends or on the Internet and not studying.

This is an example of an exaggerated statement that may not be true.

Negative thoughts may lead us to become less patient with ourselves and our children. Often, they may also lead us to make hurtful remarks

or actions that distance relationships.

### Positive Thoughts

We can substitute our negative thoughts with positive and helpful thoughts by challenging our inaccurate and unhelpful thoughts.

Below are some examples of how we can replace negative thoughts with positive ones:

She is quite self-absorbed at times; but there are times when she is quite thoughtful.

She may not know exactly what to do in this situation. She will need a little coaching here.

He may be busy and has not checked his messages.

This is hard, but I have coped with this before. I can also contact his counsellor regarding this problem.

Since he has been on the Internet for the past half hour, let me remind him to focus on his studies.

### Being Mindful of Our Thoughts

As parents or caregivers, we face many trying situations. In order to keep our emotions in check, it helps to be mindful of the situations that stress us up. Be prepared to intercept our unhelpful thoughts and challenge them. By replacing them with positive thoughts and coping statements, we will have a better grip on our emotions and behaviours.



# OVER THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS...

By Krystin Foo, Epworth Literacy Intervention Teacher



### Zoom Training Workshop

Epworth Literacy (Bukit Batok) organised a Zoom Training Workshop for students who were new to online literacy lessons. Through a series of interactive activities and games, they learnt to use various features on Zoom. With close guidance by facilitators, this workshop provided an opportunity for the students to hone their digital literacy skills.

At the end of the workshop, students had the chance to apply their newly-acquired skills in a mock lesson conducted by literacy teachers. It was a novel experience for all involved, and the students emerged better equipped to participate in future online lessons.

## WHAT ARE EMOTIONS?

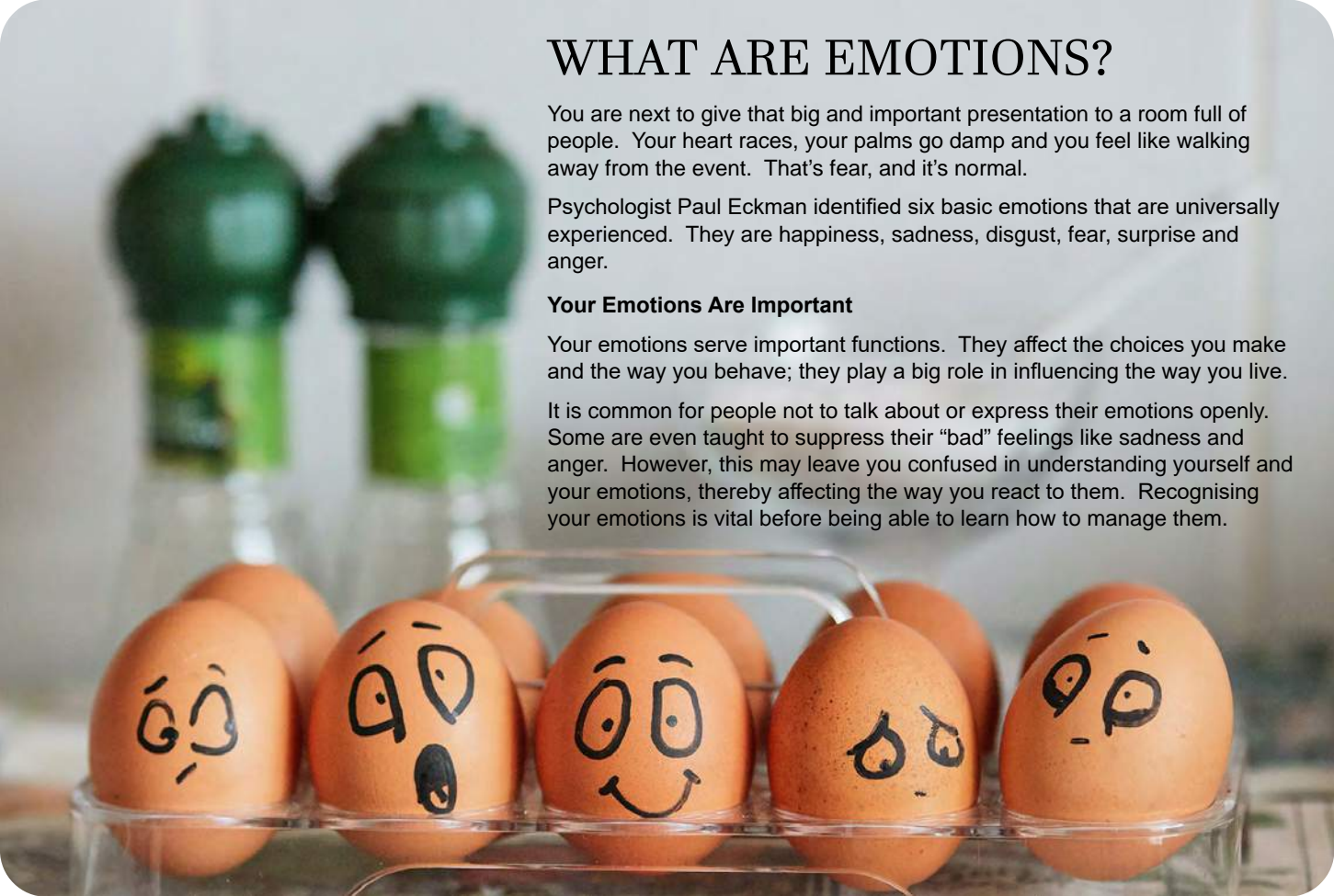
You are next to give that big and important presentation to a room full of people. Your heart races, your palms go damp and you feel like walking away from the event. That's fear, and it's normal.

Psychologist Paul Eckman identified six basic emotions that are universally experienced. They are happiness, sadness, disgust, fear, surprise and anger.

### Your Emotions Are Important

Your emotions serve important functions. They affect the choices you make and the way you behave; they play a big role in influencing the way you live.

It is common for people not to talk about or express their emotions openly. Some are even taught to suppress their "bad" feelings like sadness and anger. However, this may leave you confused in understanding yourself and your emotions, thereby affecting the way you react to them. Recognising your emotions is vital before being able to learn how to manage them.



### Christmas Thanksgiving

Our Epworth Literacy Intervention teachers at Jurong West ended the school year with a Thanksgiving celebration that was marked with laughter and gratefulness. The celebration kicked off with a sumptuous meal while they reminisced about their time teaching at Bukit Batok centre. They then played Secret Santa with a creative twist! The teachers chose their gifts based on the descriptions on the presents that they each prepared.

Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow.

Melody Beattie





# CHRISTMAS CARNIVAL FUN

By Ann Chiam, Manager of Epworth Literacy Jurong West

While Christmas in 2020 went a little differently, Epworth Literacy Jurong West was blessed to have one filled with the familiar Christmas cheer. Volunteers from NTU organised a mini Christmas Carnival to bring joy and laughter to the students from the centre.



The highlights of the carnival included fun station games and awesome prizes to be won.

The volunteers set up a beautifully decorated photobooth complete with Christmas-themed props. The children, with their winning smiles and goofy grins, captured wonderful memories.



There were also craft stations that showcased the artistic abilities and creative talents of our students!



Piecing puzzle pieces together to solve the mystery.



By Julie Chu, Manager of Epworth Student Care and Stanley Quek, Supervisor of Epworth Student Care ACS(P)

Epworth Student Care spent the December school holiday 2020 differently and uniquely compared to the other school holidays that we have had. We had our masks on, had our temperatures taken daily, and maintained our social distance. This school holiday, we managed to organise different programmes to enhance our student's learning.

Our students also got to celebrate Christmas with a group of volunteers from NTU. Besides having a merry time at the games and activities stations, they commemorated the event at the Christmas photobooth.



Decorating his own Epworth Christmas tote bag!







### Sushi Making

Who does not love eating sushi? We organised a hands-on session where our students got to customise and make their own sushi!

Everyone had fun, and the best part was getting to eat the fruit of their hard work. Delicious!

### A Virtual Tour Around Singapore

Instead of the yearly learning journeys, the staff organised a virtual learning journey. The students got to explore the different icons and attractions of Singapore. They even recreated a version of their own using playdoh!



Can you guess what is the Singapore attraction pictured above?

### Playing Outdoors

There is nothing more fun for the students than playing outdoors. A group of volunteers facilitated a game of floorball for the boys. They all had a good sweat out!



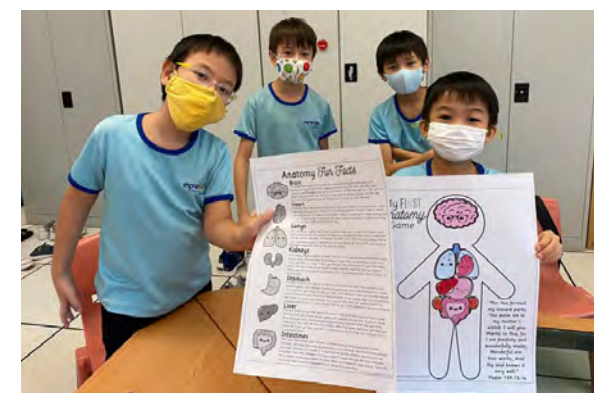
How many cups can you stack within a minute, using only one hand?



### Be Yourself Workshop

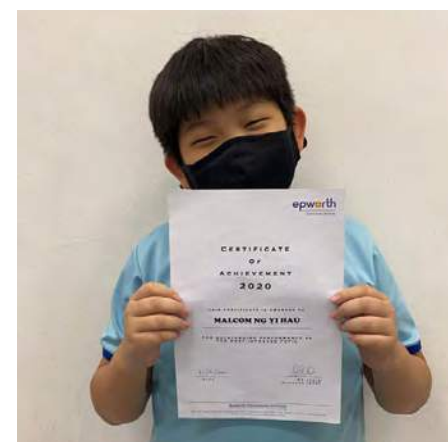
The Epworth Community Relations team conducted a "Be Yourself Workshop" for our students. It was a self-discovery workshop where our students learned to identify their strengths and face their fears with courage.

There were various games such as marshmallow stack and picking up marbles with chopsticks. The students displayed their own uniqueness through the games.



Getting to learn about the human body.

## SCC AWARD PRESENTATION



To end the school term, we had our first Award Presentation Day at the Student Care Centre. Our students were awarded based on their behaviour and work performance in the centre. Selected students who displayed the character values taught over the semester were also awarded with the Character Champion Badge.

We hope to be able to hold more of such ceremonies in the future as we continue to work towards helping our students develop their characters and values.

Posing with their certificates for their outstanding performance at Epworth SCC.





Receiving the Most Improved Award.



Conducting team building games was challenging for the staff as they needed to adhere to all the precautionary measures, where there cannot be more than 5 students in a group. Despite the challenges, the team building activities were engaging and the children enjoyed themselves greatly. The students' positive responses was a great encouragement to the staff!

The students ended the year with spring cleaning, goal setting for 2021 and a sumptuous meal. We wish all the Primary 6 students from the 2020 cohort all the best in their Secondary School life.

All of us look forward to a better year ahead.

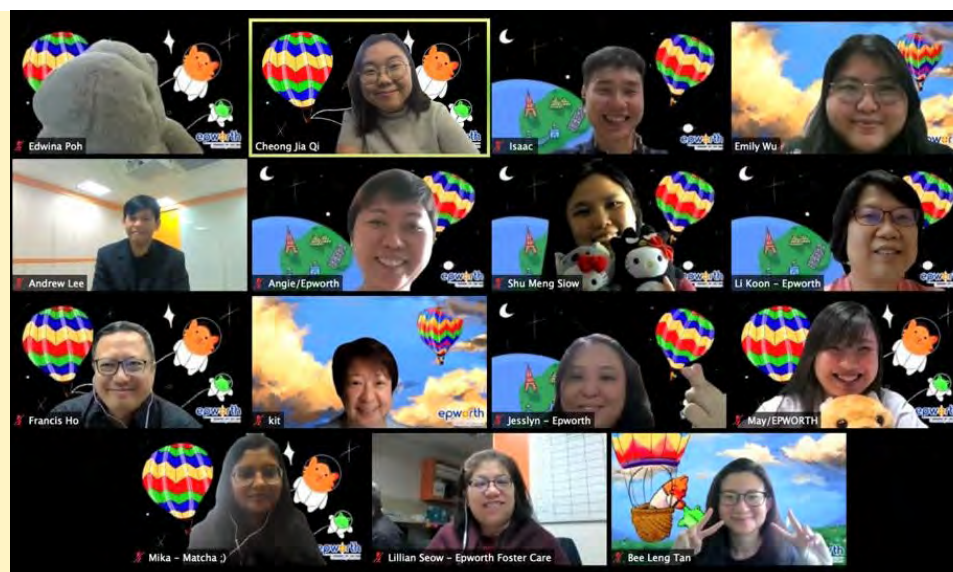


# RUN THE RACE

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

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to hold our annual celebration at a physical venue. Instead, we celebrated Epworth Foster Care's 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary online via Zoom! The theme for the celebration was 'Run the Race'. We wanted to thank our foster families during this trying period for their dedication and patience towards the foster children; for helping them to grow physically, mentally, and emotionally.

In commemoration of Epworth Foster Care's 5<sup>th</sup> year, we gave recognition to foster parents who have been with us through ups and downs over the years.



The activities planned for the celebration were intended to encourage our foster parents to persevere through their fostering journey. Even when the going gets tough, we hope for them to press on, run the race and finish it well.

The event saw a total of 88 participants online: 29 adults and

34 children from the foster families, 9 of our befrienders who also led in some segments of the programme, 3 guests from the Ministry of Social and Family Development and the FA committee, and 13 Epworth Foster Care staff. It was an afternoon filled with fun, activities, lucky draws and prizes for the participants!

To the Foster Parents who have been  
with us over the past 5 years,

# Thank You!



Mdm Bibi  
Rabiah  
Binti Sheikh  
Muhammad  
Jailani & Mr  
Abdul Hamid



Mdm  
Nagalingam  
Tanapakiam &  
Mr Mathivanan



Mdm Rohaya  
Binte Omar &  
Mr Jasni Bin  
Hayon



Mdm Cheah Li  
Ling Elaine &  
Mr Oh Oon Lye



Mdm Ng Yuet  
Mei & Mr Seet  
Juay Hiang



Mdm Siti  
Rahmah Binte  
Abdul & Mr  
Abdul Jalil Bin  
Mohd Ali



Mdm Chomel  
Awaluddin &  
Mr Jaffry Bin  
Akesah



Mdm Noryah  
Binte Mohd  
Shariff & Mr  
Hanif Bin  
Othman



Mdm Siti  
Raziah Binte  
Raffee & Mr  
Kevin Woo  
Keng Mun



Mdm Fiona  
Cheong Wei  
Harn &  
Mr Donovan Wu



Mdm Ong  
Soh Kim &  
Mr Chua Kim  
Hwa



Mdm Yong  
Gork Serene &  
Mr Lum Chee  
Chong



Mdm Joyce  
Too Yip Yeuk  
Sze & Mr Too  
Teh Hsin



Mdm Patsy  
Francisco  
Teresa & Mr  
Noel Walter  
Marsh



Mdm Zuleila  
Binte  
Mohamed  
Saifollah &  
Mr Sazali Bin  
Samat



Mdm Khatijah  
Binte  
Mohamed &  
Mr Sallim Bin  
Sungip



Mdm Rapiah  
Bt Hitam & Mr  
Teow Ming  
Yoke



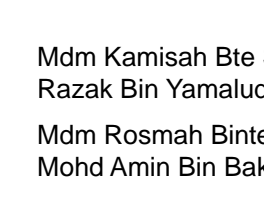
Mdm Norli  
Binte Fargi  
(passed away  
in 2017) & Mr  
Jafri Bin Mohd  
Yusoff



Mdm  
Maimunah  
Bte Dolah &  
Mr Azman Bin  
Asmat



Mdm Rasniti  
Binte Jamali &  
Mr Azman Bin  
Mohamed



Mdm Kamisah Bte Siraj & Mr Abdul  
Razak Bin Yamaludin  
  
Mdm Rosmah Binte Awang & Mr  
Mohd Amin Bin Bakar



# COMMUNITY PROGRAMMES

By Fyn Wong, Volunteer Coordinator of Epworth Community Relations



## Project Lightbulb Bowling Party

At Project Lightbulb, not only do we help our students to achieve academic prowess, we also impart life skills through building relationships with them. We concluded Project Lightbulb with a bang last November. In groups of 5, our students and volunteers paired up to showcase their bowling skills. Laughter and words of encouragement filled the air as everyone tried their best to avoid rolling the ball into the gutter. Time flies when having fun. Although it was a short two hours, it was a memorable morning for our students and volunteers.

**Our volunteers and students learning to bowl together.**

## Storytelling and Dance Workshop

A group of volunteers from NUS Indian Dance organised a two-days storytelling and dance workshop for our students last December. Our students learnt about Indian folk stories and were taught enchanting Indian dance moves. Two of them even took it upon themselves to show the volunteers their own favourite dance moves and music!

The workshop ended with a mini performance by our students, alongside the volunteers, to showcase what they have learnt. It was more than just an exchange of culture; it was also an exchange of passion for dancing!



Our students actively participating in the dance!



A snippet of the volunteers performing Indian dance.



Our students engrossed in the performance.



## Volunteers' Appreciation

Despite several changes over the past year, from contact to non-contact volunteering projects, our volunteers adapted well and continued to serve our beneficiaries.

To thank all of them, we invited them to a cosy appreciation dinner. Keeping to their small groups, the volunteers had fun playing games and participating in quizzes. Everyone enjoyed themselves, not forgetting the delicious food. We also had 5 lucky winners who took home gift vouchers. At the end of the dinner, we were heartened to hear our volunteers share about their well-wishes for Epworth in the coming year.



Well wishes written by our volunteers.



Artwork beautifully done by our boys from HomeSweetHome for the volunteers.

## Erudite Presenter Programme

We partnered with Erudite Enrichment Centre for an introductory public speaking course. Our students learnt how to use drawings to frame up their presentation points as well as how to deliver engaging public speaking content. Our students were also invited to participate in their nationwide aspiring presenter programme.

One of the participating students, Syarin received a prize under the Junior Speaker Top Achiever Category (out of 31 contestants). Congratulations! Through this introductory course, Syarin discovered his talent and passion for public speaking and drawing.



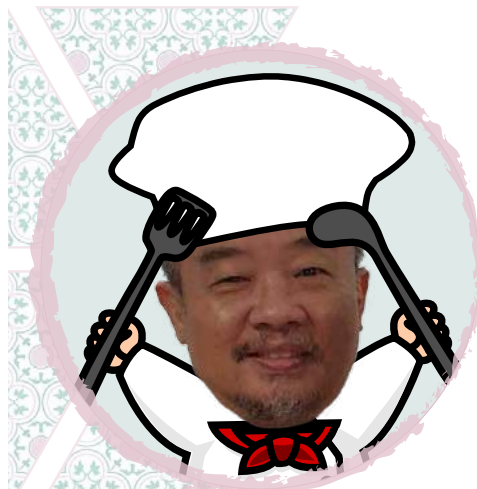




About to enjoy their meal!



Our donor and her family together with our Executive Director, Mr Tan Khye Suan.



## GIVE & Feast

Lima Ribu \$,  
Lima Orang Makan

By Angie Lee,  
Community Relations Executive

The evolving pandemic situation calls for a different kind of fundraising. Instead of the usual annual fundraising dinner, we called upon our Executive Director, Mr Tan Khye Suan to cook up a storm for our donors in appreciation of their generous giving.

Mr Tan led the fundraising team to prepare and cook Peranakan dishes that included Babi Assam, Babi Pongteh and Buah Keluah. It was delivered to the donors' home for them to dine in comfort with their friends and families.

We are immensely grateful for the support we have received. This fund would go toward providing programmes and services to the vulnerable children, youth and disadvantaged families under our care.

Epworth Community Services would like to thank all of our donors for giving generously. Together, we can build strong families in the community through imparting skills for resilient living and nurturing beautiful minds.



Our staff, preparing the ingredients to whip up a feast.



Home-cooked Peranakan meal.

# SETTING GOALS WITH YOUR CHILD

By Angie Lee, Community Relations Executive

Don't just talk to your child about goal setting. Write them down too!

## 1 GUIDE YOUR CHILD IN PICKING A GOAL

Let your child choose a goal that he wants to achieve. You can guide your child by asking "What is something that you want to achieve?". Discuss with your child the purpose of his goal.

## 2 REFINE THE GOAL

Set SMART goals! Frame your child's goal to be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound.

## 3 BREAK IT DOWN, TAKE SMALL STEPS

Work out a plan with your child to achieve his goal. Discuss with him each action he can take to achieve his goal.

## 4 BRAINSTORM ON POTENTIAL OBSTACLES

Encourage your child to identify challenges that he might face and make plans on how he can overcome them.

"This is too difficult...  
I give up!"

- Remind your child on why he set this goal in the first place.
- Remind your child on how he decided to overcome obstacles.
- Let your child know on how he can continue to improve instead of giving up.
- Celebrate the little milestones with your child.

Scan here to watch a video about goal setting!





## 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](http://www.epworth.sg) or contact us at [community.relations@epworth.sg](mailto: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](mailto:admin@epworth.sg) or call 6562 2211 to update your personal particulars.