

epworth

# moments

an official publication of  
Epworth Community Services  
February 2022

## Engaging The Community Despite The Ups & Downs

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**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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ED'S MESSAGE

## SMALL THINGS MATTER!

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

*Zechariah 4:10:*  
"Who dares despise the day of small things, since the seven eyes of the Lord that range throughout the earth will rejoice when they see the chosen capstone (or plumb line) in the hand of Zerubbabel?" (NIV)

This is the first Executive Director's message for the year 2022. As Epworth Community Services' roots are in the Christian faith, I will write this message linked to the Bible. However, the message is applicable to both Christians and non-Christians alike.

The Scripture passage quoted is from a prophet of the Old Testament; at the time when the Jews had started returning from exile to Jerusalem. Their Temple, the place of worship, had been destroyed by invading forces; and, the walls of the city were broken down. It was going to be very difficult for the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem. The devastation was great and the Jews needed encouragement.

Hence, it is important to understand that the "small" things that every returning Jew can contribute will add up significantly to the effort of rebuilding Jerusalem, led by their leader Zerubbabel (the chosen plumb line in the hands of Zerubbabel). And, these "small" things were certainly pleasing in the presence of God (the seven eyes of the Lord that ranges throughout the earth will rejoice).

Over the last 20 years, Epworth Community Services has grown from a very small social service agency to a mid-sized one. All glory to God for His great blessings as we continue to serve the community, motivated by the unconditional love of Christ. As we enter this new year, it was brought to my mind, that Epworth did not grow because we did many "big" or "great" things over the years. Instead, we did many "small" things that helped us to grow. What is more important, is that these "small" things were in line with God's plan for Epworth and is, therefore, blessed and caused to multiply.

How do "small" things contribute to the growth of an organisation like us?

Firstly, we must **be of one heart and one mind** with the vision of the organisation matters!  
Secondly, we must **be willing to work together** towards the vision of the organisation matters!  
Thirdly, **be willing to work with the leadership** of the organisation to achieve the vision matters!



Fourthly, **every little effort counts**; however, small they are!  
Fifthly, **efforts made should not be compared** to determine who did more or who is better!  
Lastly, **being supportive and encouraging of everyone's effort matters!**

Very often, many may think that being successful is about an individual being able to do "big" things, achieve positive outcomes and being credited for having done well. The passage of Scripture quoted expressed the idea of achievements very differently: **"Do not despise the day of small things ..."**.

In other words, even as the new year begins, let us all work together towards the common vision of Epworth: Strong Families, Resilient Living, Beautiful Minds. Let us do well even in "small" things. As an organisation, if we put together the effort of everyone, we could achieve more than we could imagine. I am reminded of the word: **TEAM. Together Everyone Achieves More.**

Beyond Epworth, the idea of working together on "small" things and achieving success together still applies. May I encourage collaboration in work, especially in the social service sector, so that the community-at-large will benefit!



# ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

## DESPITE THE UPS & DOWNS

By Fyn Wong, Community Relations Executive



### Adapting and Evolving

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, the Volunteer Relations team had to adapt, with ongoing programmes having to shift online.

A recent collaboration with Hasbro was one such instance. Plans for the Global Week of Joy in December 2021 began as early as July 2021.

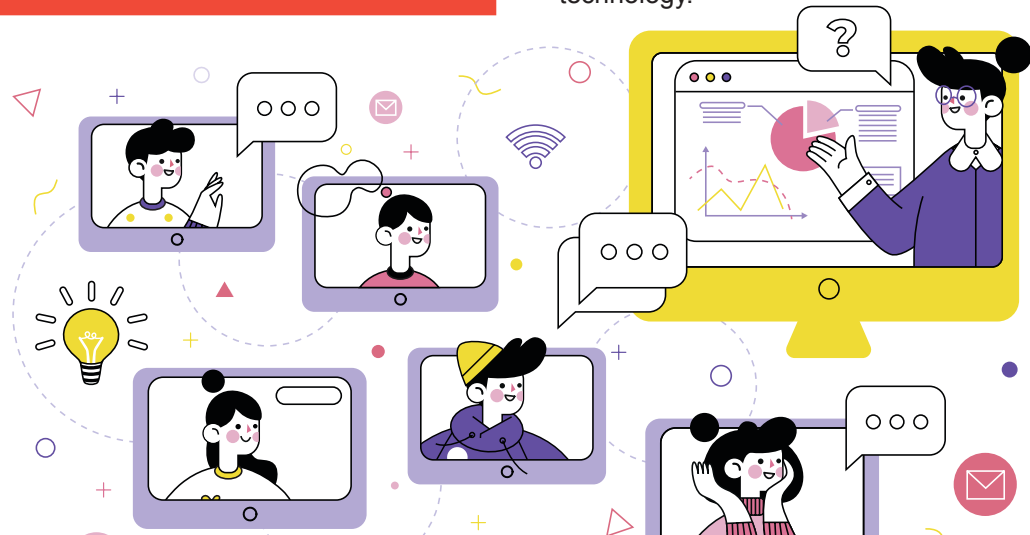
This is an annual event where Hasbro employees give back to the community by supporting children in need. Initial plans involved having physical sessions.



However, when the number of Covid-19 cases started to increase, the programme had to adjust and allow for hybrid engagements (both virtual and physical).

Through this, it was evident that exploring creative solutions to engage and meet the needs of the community can be further enabled through the use of technology.

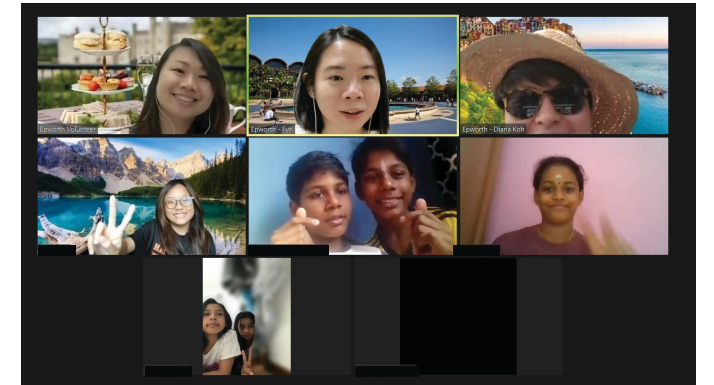
**The ever-changing restrictions and situation meant that collaboration with volunteers and stakeholders had to evolve as well.**



### Keeping it Meaningful

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, interest from volunteers, and engagement with both volunteers and stakeholders have increased.

The team held its first virtual Project Lightbulb Volunteers' Appreciation Event in December 2021 - a brunch party! The theme for the event was "Dream Destination". Everyone had a great time of fun activities and games.



All smiles with the Project Lightbulb volunteers and their tutees.

On top of this, customised care packs were sent to the volunteers as a small token of appreciation for their dedication.

While the event was conducted a little differently this year, it was still a memorable and meaningful time spent together.

The team will also be expanding the catalogue for the Fun-At-Home Activity Kits to allow for a wider range of volunteers to contribute. This will continue to be a resource for family interactions, providing parents greater relief from parenting stress.



### Staying Relevant

Although online events have their own challenges, with creativity and passion for success, no event is too tough to manage.

It is important to stay relevant with the use of different technologies and be open to exploring new ways of engaging volunteers and stakeholders.



# UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA IN CHILDREN

By *Danshikah Vivekananda, Residential Care Worker*

Trauma is an emotional response to unfortunate incidents. This includes accidents, abuse or natural disasters.

An individual may develop trauma as a response to an event that they find physically or emotionally threatening. Trauma can bring about physical, psychological or emotional harm which may lead to various disorders, as well as positive-negative coping mechanisms. For example, experiencing shock and denial during the event is common in trauma.



## Signs and Symptoms

If the child is unable to cope with these stressful situations, they may exhibit responses of fight, flight, freeze and fawn. These are known as emotional or behavioural dysregulation.

They can experience emotional symptoms like anger, fear, sadness, confusion, and shame.

When overwhelmed with emotions, they will find it difficult to cope with how they feel and may withdraw from others. Trauma also causes physical symptoms such as, headaches, perspiration, fatigue, increased heart rate, anxiousness, and hyperarousal.

If left untreated, it can develop into Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the long run. This may result in anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, and suicidal tendencies.

The child may also face learning challenges, such as, difficulty concentrating; inhibiting his ability to do well in school.



## Create a Safe Space

Each child displays signs of trauma differently. It ranges from a loss of interest in activities the child used to enjoy; having sudden emotional outbursts; inconsistent eating habits; to experiencing nightmares.

Observing the child's abnormal behaviour and triggers in school and at home can help identify the tell-tale signs of trauma.

A child's reaction to a traumatic memory can also be influenced by responses from others as they tend to seek for safety, security, and comfort from someone when feeling distressed.

Hence, it is important to address these events with the child safely, by being cautious in what is said, and by encouraging them to share their feelings and the events that happened.

Aside from addressing the trauma, it is also crucial to provide moral support. This involves trust and safety - encouraging recreational activities, keeping promises, acknowledging, and validating the child's concerns.

Lastly, it is important not to pressure them into sharing what they are not comfortable with sharing.

## Trauma Spectrum for Children

Three Types of Trauma
Acute Trauma: Develops from a single stressful or dangerous event.
Chronic trauma: Develops from repeated and prolonged exposure to highly stressful events like child abuse, bullying, or domestic violence.
Complex Trauma: Develops from exposure to multiple traumatic events.

Ten Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) of Trauma
Physical abuse
Sexual abuse
Psychological abuse
Emotional abuse
Substance abuse
Physical neglect and emotional neglect
Exposure to domestic violence
Family members having mental illness
Divorce
A relative who went to prison



# INTRODUCING THE CENTRE FOR POSITIVE RECOVERY (CPR)

By Tan Bee Leng, Assistant Director (Programmes & Organisational Development) of Epworth Community Services

Since early 2020, Epworth embarked on an Organisation Development transformation. We developed a 5 year plan to focus on 3 strategic areas:

- Our Strategy;
- Our Knowledge; and,
- Our People

## A Strategic Presence and Value Proposition

### Centre for Positive Recovery (CPR)

To establish a strategic presence in the community, a physical presence is needed to create more value to clients and stakeholders such as donors and volunteers.

Epworth's Centre of Positive Recovery serves to support both the internal services and the external outreach to the community.

Epworth has been involved with children, youths and their caregivers with various types of trauma through our Foster Care and HomeSweetHome.

One of the key strategies and a natural progression is that Epworth will become a Centre of Excellence in Trauma Care. Being a Centre of Excellence means that Epworth wants to build a culture or a DNA of being trauma informed, where our practices are centred on **safety, trust, collaboration, choice, and empowerment.**



## Specialised Services

(clients fulfil pre-requisites to be admitted into the programme)

### 1. Trauma-focused Intervention for Foster Families

Foster children come from complex backgrounds and some may have experienced multiple care arrangements.

These children often have difficulties developing healthy attachment and secure relationship with their caregivers. This may result in tantrums, emotional distancing or meltdowns in the foster home. When foster parents are unable to hold on any longer due to stress and burnout, it will result in a placement breakdown.

Through the generous support of UBS, we were able to build up capability to form a multi-disciplinary team of specialised professionals (counsellors and assistant psychologists), to provide a range of intensive work to prevent placement breakdowns.

Foster parents are taught strategies to promote positive behaviour and to address attachment needs.

Concurrently, children receive individually tailored behavioural interventions, focusing on problem-solving skills and promoting prosocial behaviour.

### 2. Trauma Treatment Care for Children and Adolescents for Both Internal and External Clients

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (TF-CBT) is a conjoint child and parent psychotherapy approach for children and adolescents (aged 3 to 18), experiencing significant emotional and behavioural difficulties related to a traumatic life event(s).

It is tailored to the needs of the child and family, in the context of a therapeutic relationship between the therapist and the client.

### 3. Parenting for Caregivers – Triple P

Triple P is an evidence-based programme that equips parents with techniques to promote their children (aged up to 16 years) psychological, social, and emotional competence.

The programme is built on a tiered system that provides different degrees of parental support. The Triple P training was first managed by Epworth (previously known as MCYC) in 2005.

The Triple P is a parenting and family support system designed to prevent – as well as treat – behavioural and emotional problems in children and teenagers.

## Therapeutic Services

It aims to prevent problems in the family, school, and community before they arise. It also aims to create family environments that encourage children to realise their potential.

Triple P draws on social learning, cognitive behavioural, and developmental theory, as well as research into risk factors associated with the development of social and behavioural problems in children.

It aims to equip parents with the skills and confidence they need to be self-sufficient and to be able to manage family issues without ongoing support.

### 4. Family Therapy and Individual Counselling

Family therapy is provided as a supportive intervention to help stabilise family dynamics that have been destabilised especially due to traumatic events.

Family therapy intervention will be helpful to support families who have stressful dynamics, in addition to traumatic experiences that further destabilise the family dynamics and cause further difficult familial experiences.

Secondly, upstream preventive work through individual counselling to promote mental wellness, is provided.



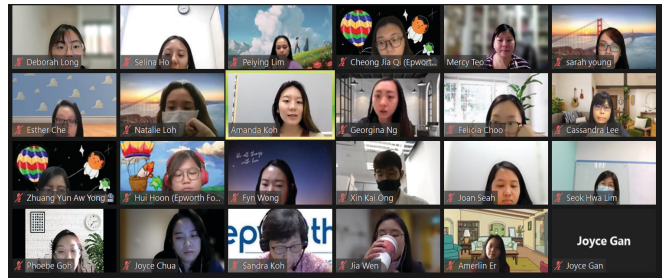


# DEALING WITH TRAUMA

Adapted from **Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice and Application Workshop**

Staff at Epworth Community Services had the privilege of attending a trauma-informed workshop where they learnt more about the effects of trauma on individuals, and the symptoms to look out for when an individual has been through a traumatic event.

The 3-day workshop equipped staff with greater knowledge on the trauma-informed principles. Staff also learnt useful tools, skills, and strategies to better respond to clients in ways that convey respect and compassion while honouring self-determination.



Staff attending the workshop.

## What is Trauma?

- Trauma is an effect from a stressful event that shatters a person's sense of security, causing them to feel helpless.
- Examples include, one-off events such as an accident, injury, violent attack or ongoing events such as, repeated bullying, child abuse, and domestic violence.

## Impacts of Trauma

While some individuals recover with time without treatment, some will experience persistent traumatic stress reactions that develops into Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Here are some exercises that can be key in helping a distressed individual relax. These can be particularly useful to enable an individual to focus on the HERE and NOW.

### Deep Breathing

1. Place one hand on your chest to feel your heartbeat or breathing.
2. Close your eyes to focus better.
3. Breathe in through your nose in 3 counts and breathe out through your mouth in 5 counts.
4. Repeat the above a few times, while letting out any harbouring tension.

### Grounding Exercise

This exercise helps to remind the individual of the here and now by exploring the familiar and comforting senses at present.

1. **See** – Describe 5 things that you see in the room or in your surroundings.
2. **Smell** – List a few things you can smell at the moment, otherwise list your favourite scent.
3. **Touch** – Pay attention to what you can feel around you. This can be the floor beneath your feet or the chair you are sitting on.
4. **Hear** – List the things you can hear.
5. **Taste** – List the things you can taste at the moment, otherwise list your favourite flavours.

# VOLUNTEER HAPPENINGS

By **Stephanie Poon, Community Relations Executive**

December 2021 marked one of the most eventful months. A total of seven events were planned and held to commemorate the end of 2021 as well as the school holidays.

Organised by Hasbro, the Global Week of Joy was held on the first week of December, which included both physical and virtual workshops. These were conducted for the children at Foster Care, HomeSweetHome, and Student Care.

Activities included storytelling through Transformers arts and craft, DIY tie-dye socks and tote bags, and terrarium workshops. Hasbro also kindly gifted many toys to the children. All of which brought great joy to them. In the coming year, Hasbro will also be offering scholarships to the students at Epworth Literacy under the Brian Goldner Literacy Fund.



Another group of volunteers from Kroll Singapore organized a hybrid Christmas engagement event with the children at HomeSweetHome. Activities included dancing along to Christmas songs, unwrapping presents, playing Kahoot quizzes, and sculpting candy cane sword balloons.

On top of that, Kroll Singapore also generously gifted the children and students from Project Lightbulb with back-to-school packs for the new academic year.

Epworth is truly grateful to all who have volunteered and dedicated their time to giving back to the community. Your contribution have put smiles on the faces of these children, and made a positive impact in their lives.

Separately, a group of students from the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) College West, School of Hospitality, held a shake bottle and slime making workshop at the Student Care Centre. It was definitely a fun, meaningful, and unforgettable time for both the students and volunteers!





# A MEMORABLE SCHOOL HOLIDAY

By Joshua Wong, Programme Coordinator of Epworth Student Care Centre (ACSP)

Throughout the December holiday, students in Epworth Student Care @ ACS(P) were involved in a variety of engaging Character Development Programmes (CDPs) and exciting enrichments.

Despite the challenges and limitations, the teachers outdone themselves in developing and organising programmes that ensured the students had an educational yet entertaining time.

## The Meaning of Christmas

The CDPs developed were in line with the values of Christmas. This included values such as gratitude, giving, kindness, simplicity, and family bonding. Students learnt to be grateful for what they have, to give with an open heart, to be kind to others, and be happy with the simple things in life. They were also taught on the importance of having integrity.

Activities were organised to apply what was learnt about the values. For instance, after learning about gratitude, students were tasked with designing goodie bags and writing words of encouragement for children from Chen Su Lan Methodist Children's Home.

As part of the Arts and Craft segment, students designed their own Christmas cards for their friends and families. This saw them displaying their creativity and affection for their loved ones. Students and teachers also came together to decorate the Christmas tree, a yearly Epworth tradition.



## Fun and Fulfilling Activities

During the enrichment programmes, activities such as, I'M Possible, Pin the nose on Rudolph, and Dongzhi festival related activities were organised.

I'M Possible taught the students to look at situations in a positive light and find ways to improve on themselves instead of doubting themselves. This is in hopes that even in the face of IMPOSSIBLE situations, students will be empowered, believing that "I'M POSSIBLE".

Pin the nose on Rudolph was a fun activity where students worked together as a team to do their best and encourage each other.

Next, for Dongzhi festival also known as winter solstice, the students were taught about the history of the festival, and why it is celebrated. They had the opportunity to create their own tang yuan and eat the tang yuan prepared by the teachers. Some even asked for extra servings which left smiles on the teachers' faces.

It was definitely a meaningful and memorable time spent during the holidays!



# TIME WELL SPENT

By Shankari Faith, Programme Coordinator of Epworth Student Care Centre (ACSJ)

## Teambuilding Games

It was a fun-filled December holiday with exciting activities prepared for the students.

Starting off the holidays was a series of Minute-to-win it station games, as students raced against time to win as many points as they can for their team. The goal was to inculcate the importance of teamwork and sportsmanship.



## Christmas Party

The teachers decorated the centre with Christmas trees and DIY crafts created by the students. A delicious spread was also prepared with dishes such as turkey, and not forgetting the candy canes!

Next, a surprise gift exchange was organised, where students exchanged the gifts they brought through drawing lots.

A photobooth was set up with a fun backdrop for the students to take pictures with. These pictures served as a memento for the memorable Christmas celebration at the centre that day.

It was truly an eventful day at Epworth SCC @ ACS(J).



## Arts and Craft

Students also took part in other activities such as art jamming, terrarium, and pottery making, where they unleashed their creativity to make their very own masterpiece.





## GIVE & FEAST 2

In 2020, Epworth Community Services kickstarted a different, yet one-of-a-kind fundraiser led by Executive Director, Mr Tan Khye Suan. The hallmark being homemade and delicious Peranakan dishes, lovingly prepared by Mr Tan, with the help of the fundraising team.

Due to the resounding success of Give & Feast in 2020, it was brought back in 2021.



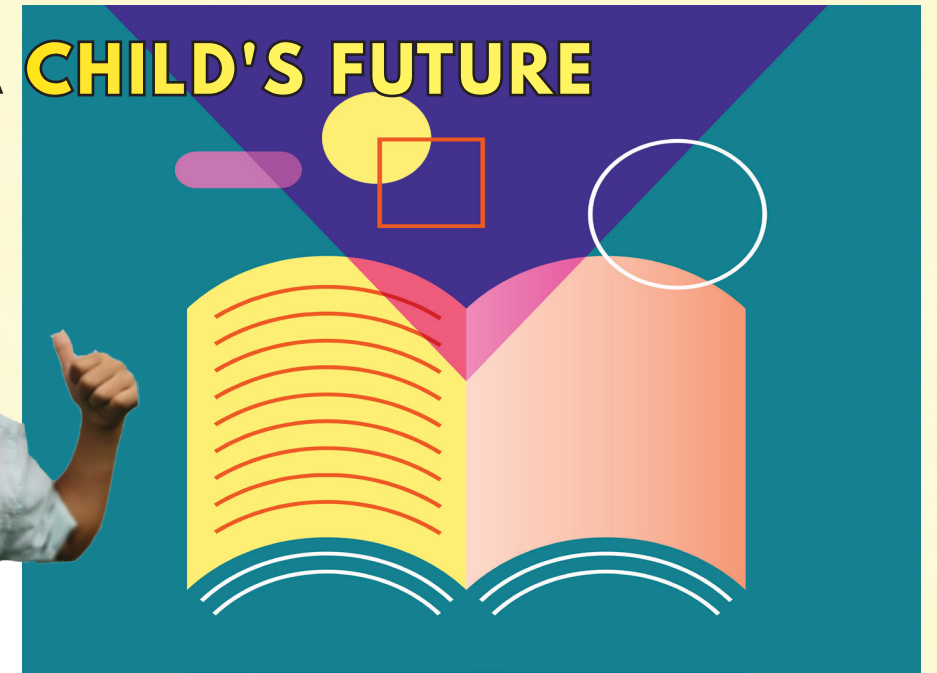
From preparing the ingredients, to putting them all together and delivering mouth-watering meals to the donors – it was truly a meaningful and memorable time for all who were involved.

Epworth Community Services would like to thank all of our donors for their generous giving. With your continual support, we are able to continue our work towards the organisation's vision of building strong families in the community through imparting skills for resilient living and nurturing beautiful minds.



Staff hard at work!

## GIFTING TO A CHILD'S FUTURE



After attending STAR sessions with Ann, Ethan has displayed better self-control, empathy and willingness to cooperate in school.

He is a lot more enthusiastic about going to school now as he gets into lesser conflicts and arguments, and is able to enjoy his time with his friends and teachers.

Ann has played a significant role in mentoring Ethan. Ann is constantly encouraging, motivating, and correcting him so that he displays more positive behaviours.

Ethan has come a long way, from resisting school to enjoying it, which is definitely heartening to witness. I hope that in time to come, he can extend the kindness he had been shown to positively impact the lives of others.

**He is now more motivated to improve on areas where he is lacking. When he sees improvements in himself, he finds more joy in learning.**





# THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE



Living in unprecedented times calls for us to continually adjust and find new ways to adapt to the new normal. For one, working from home might result in some to feel the strain from juggling between work, rest, spending time with family, and other responsibilities.

This is where the importance of self-care comes in. Self-care is any activity we deliberately do in order to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical well-being.

We asked some of our colleagues why they thought self-care was important and some activities they do to promote this!

## Stephanie Poon, Community Relations Executive

Self-care puts ourselves first and validates our being in this world. It creates the space to talk to ourselves in a loving and nurturing manner, whilst listening to our needs. Only when we prioritise ourselves, can more love and care freely flow towards others.

Some activities I enjoy doing include gardening and cooking.



## Fyn Wong, Community Relations Executive

“Self-care is giving the world the best of you, instead of what’s left of you” – Katie Reed

Self-care is important because it recognises our relationship with ourselves and makes it a priority. Caring or loving ourselves is not an easy task, as it requires intentional effort to sustain it.

We can think of ourselves as a glass of water and self-care as the amount of water in the glass; the more we prioritise ourselves, the more water we will have, and the more we can pour from it.

As someone who harmonises work, studies and life, I practise self-care by reading, painting, birdwatching, stargazing, among others.



## Xin Ying, Counsellor, Epworth Family Welfare

Self-care is important because it honours the natural rhythm of work and rest that we all should have. However, I don’t believe that engaging in some self-care activities is enough.

“Establishing a sustainable pace is the solution to an unsustainable pace of life”, a quote by Carey Nieuwhof resonates greatly with me.

As such, I have set up a rhythm of rest to promote self-care: a personal retreat lasting a few days once a year, a time of evaluation with a therapist once a month, and nightly journaling and reflections.

I also do my best to ensure that I don’t do any work on Saturdays, hence spending the mornings reading, doing craft work, such as painting or clay work, and the rest of the time with my husband, family or friends.

## Zhuang Yun, Caseworker, Epworth Foster Care

Self-care means granting ourselves the permission to rest, rejuvenate and replenish our spirits. When we begin to take good care of ourselves, we step into our best selves for the sake of our loved ones and those around us!

One of my recent favourite activities to help me unwind is to spend time with cats at a local volunteer-run, non-profit sanctuary for rescued strays! Seeing these furry animals simply melts my stress away and puts a smile on my face instantly.





# FUN DIY CNY ACTIVITIES

With the end of Chinese New Year, many will be left with the dilemma of what to do with empty red packets as throwing them away will be a waste.

Here are some fun DIY activities that parents and children can do together; while bonding over a fun time of crafts and creating a unique piece of artwork at the end of it all!

## Red Packet Basket <sup>1</sup>

### What you will need

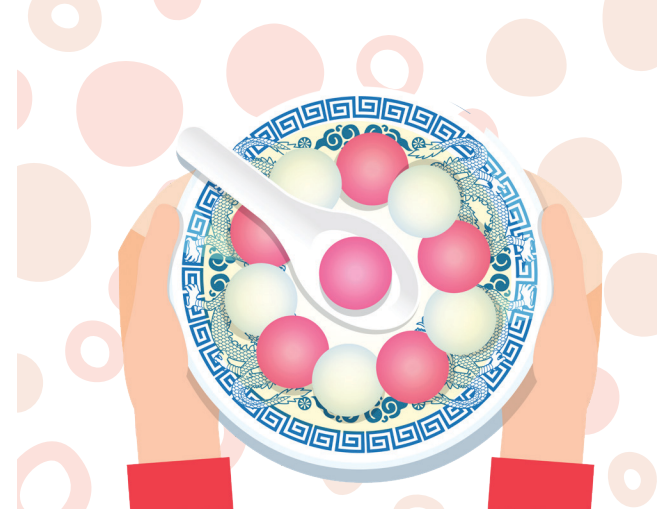
- 20 red packets (rectangular shaped packets recommended)
- Thin cardboard
- Scissors
- Glue
- Tape

### Let's get started!

1. Cut out six cardboards to fit into each of the 6 red packets.
2. Lay the red packets in a row and use tape to stick them together.
3. Cut a hexagon from the cardboard and cover it with red packets. Each side of the hexagon should be the same length as the width of one red packet.
4. Glue the six red packets on top of the hexagon cardboard to form the base of the basket.
5. To create the handle, cut a long strip of cardboard and wrap it with red packets, and stick both ends to the top of the basket.
6. To decorate the basket, cut six strips of red packets and roll them into tubes. Stick them onto the sides of the basket.
7. Using the leftover red packets, fold small fans and stick them below the tubes on each side of the basket.
8. You may add on other decorations if you wish.
9. And you are done! Use this basket to stores some candies or as a decorative piece.

### Fun fact

Desserts eaten during Chinese New Year have special meanings behind them. For example, tang yuan, a dessert consisting of glutinous rice balls, sounds like tuan yuan, which means reunion. Nian gao, a type of rice cake dessert symbolises great success, while fa gao, a type of sponge cake, symbolises good fortune. <sup>2</sup>



## Paper Plate Goldfish <sup>3</sup>

### What you will need

- Plain paper plate
- Gold and red packets
- Scissors
- Googly eyes, otherwise you can draw on eyes too
- Double-sided tape or glue

### Let's get started!

1. Cut out segments of gold and red from your red packets.
2. Paste them onto the paper plate, covering the entire plate.
3. Cut a triangle out of the plate and stick it at the back of the plate, this will be the fish's tail.
4. Glue or draw on eyes onto the plate.
5. And you are done! Display your unique fishes on the wall or at the door.



We wish you lots of fun while embarking on these DIY projects!

### Fun fact

Red packets or hong bao is a gift of money often given out during special occasions such as birthdays, weddings, and the most recently celebrated – Chinese New Year. The colour red is known to symbolize happiness, and well wishes in the Chinese culture. <sup>4</sup>



Sources:

<sup>1,3</sup> 20 Easy & Unique Chinese New Year Decorations Out Of Red Packets, <https://giant.sg/20-easy-unique-chinese-new-year-decorations-out-of-red-packets>

<sup>2</sup> 21 Things You Didn't Know About Chinese New Year, <https://chinesenewyear.net/21-things-you-didnt-know-about-chinese-new-year/>

<sup>4</sup> Red Envelopes/Packets (Hongbao) — Significance, Amount, and How to Give, <https://www.chinahighlights.com/travelguide/festivals/red-envelop.htm>



# How can I make a DIFFERENCE?

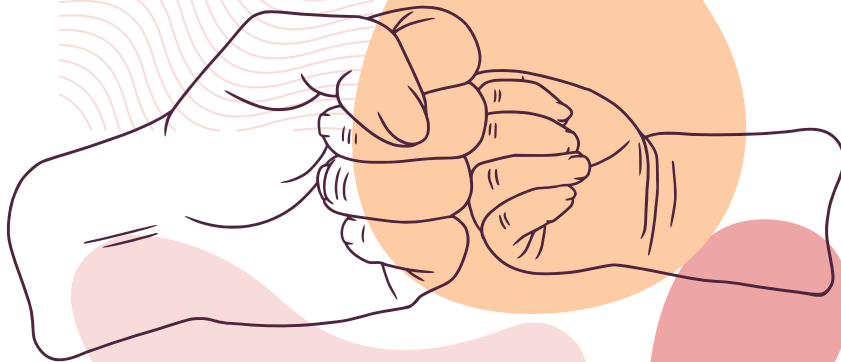


## SUPPORT US

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.

**STRONG FAMILIES, RESILIENT LIVING, BEAUTIFUL MINDS.**