



LESSONS ON THE SUMMIT

What lessons are there in mountain climbing? Plenty.

A youth team from the Youth Hub became the first New Life team to reach the summit of Mount Ophir on 16 June 2009.

The climb was an outdoor adventure initiative, which aims to impart life skills to youths as well as build close bonds through the experience.

The 6-man team comprised 1 New Life Youth Staff, 2 Youth Volunteers and 3 Youth Hub Members.

According to Mr Alan Yong, a Youth Volunteer who participated in the climb, the environment and the nature of the activity definitely helped forged closer ties.

"At the Youth Hub, we see each other a few times a week. But on this trip, we spent 3 days together, from sunrise to sunset. We talked a lot more and engaged on deeper levels," said the 21-year-old.

"The different environment also enabled the youths to open up more. Towards the end of the trip, we became much closer friends."

Standing at 1,276 metres, the popular climbing destination in Malaysia took its toll on the youths, averaging 15 years old. For most, it was their first mountain climbing trip.

"It was most tiring to climb up to the summit and then down from there," said Alvin Ee, 15.

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From Left: Alan Yong, Muhammad Arif Mohamad, Kenneth Tan, Morgan Choy, Alvin Ee and Ivan Chew.



Mr Yong recalled that he had to keep the morale of the youths up during the climb. "They were discouraged when they realised there was a still long way to the summit. I started to make small talk with them to take their minds off their tired legs," he said.

Fatigue aside, the 3 youth members achieved many "firsts" during the 3-day-2-night trip. They travelled overseas without their parents, rode on the Malaysian Railway or KTM, cooked their own meals and scaled a mountain.

Alvin shared that he signed up for the trip hoping it would help prepare him for National Service.

"It was tiring but fun. We talked, laughed and shared about our lives. We helped each other during the climb," he said. "One of the team members was afraid of heights; we encouraged him and helped him overcome the fear."

Most importantly, all the youths took home valuable lessons. For Alvin, it was perseverance. "Through this experience I realised I can't have what I want immediately. Just like getting to the summit, I'll get there with patience and perseverance."

The climb took place from 15 to 17 June.

登山经验



登山有什么值得学习的地方？

“爬上顶峰,再从那里爬下,是最疲倦的,” 15岁的余威良说。

青少年聚会中心(Youth Hub)的一支青少年队伍,在2009年6月16日成为新生第一支爬上马来西亚柔佛金山(Mount Ophir)的登山队。

宇威回忆说,他爬山时必须让这些青少年持续高昂的士气。他说:“当他们发现还有好一段距离,才能到达顶峰时,有点气馁。我就开始跟他们聊天,让他们忘记疲劳的双脚。”

爬山是项户外探险活动,目的是传授青少年求生技能,以及通过它促进密切关系。

这支六人登山队是由新生青少年服务的一名职员、两名青少年义工,以及三名青少年聚会中心成员所组成的。

三名青少年在三天两夜的行程中,经历许多的“第一次”:没有父母陪伴、乘搭马来亚铁道公司(KTM)的火车、自己煮食和征服了一座山。

参与爬山的义工杨宇威说,爬山的环境和性质本身肯定加强了关系。

威良分享说,他报名参加,是希望这项爬山活动能协助他为国民服役做好准备。

这名21岁的义工说:“在青少年聚会中心,我们每星期看到对方几次。但这趟行程中,我们从早到晚,有足足三天的时间在一起。我们有更多交流,也有更深一层的认识。”

他说:“是很疲倦,但充满趣味。我们交谈、欢笑、分享生活点滴。爬山时,我们互相扶持。其中一个队友有惧高症,我们鼓励他,协助他克服恐惧。”

“处在不同的环境,也使这些青少年更愿意打开心房。旅程快结束时,我们成为更亲密的朋友。”

更重要的是,所有青少年都吸取了宝贵经验。对威良来说,是学到百折不挠的精神。“经过这次的经历,我发觉我不能马上得到我想要的。就像到达顶峰一样,我必须凭耐心和毅力,才能获取我所需的。”

金山高1,276公尺,是马来西亚广受欢迎的爬山景点。它让平均15岁的青少年消耗许多体力,疲倦万分。这是大部分队员第一次的登山之行。

三天登山行是从6月15日至17日举行。

“

是很疲倦,但充满趣味。我们交谈、欢笑、分享生活点滴。爬山时,我们互相扶持。

”

TIDINGS FROM STEADY READERS



Mdm Leong in action.

A Dealer in a stock broking house by day and a Steady Readers Volunteer by night, Mdm Leong Hoe Leng is no superwoman.

She just wanted to help children enjoy the world of books.

As with many volunteers who are working professionals, Mdm Leong had to manage her multiple commitments. For the mother of a 19-year-old daughter, it meant reprioritising.

"This commitment is not simple, I have to reprioritise my habits and fine-tune my schedule," said Mdm Leong. The working mother is not alone.

The Steady Readers Programme is conducted on 2 weekday evenings weekly. Mdm Leong and 9 other volunteers teach a maximum of 4 children each. A variation of the programme is also taught by 4 volunteers in Zhenghua Primary School.

With a total of 14 volunteers currently, up from only 4 previously, more children in the community are benefiting from the programme.

A DEDICATED VOLUNTEER

Asked why she decided to volunteer, Mdm Leong said, "I'm excited to be able to reach out to people we see in the community...the nearby school children and their families."

The professional dealer is every bit as serious about her voluntary work as her salary paying job. "I look forward to each lesson to improve what I did not do well in the previous lesson and see how each child is progressing each week."

Teaching children has its challenges. "Lesson preparation is minimal but the challenge is to capture the children's attention, which is quite short, and their curiosity to try new things. They tend to give up easily if they feel that the lesson is difficult for them," Mdm Leong said.

The reprieve for volunteers such as Mdm Leong comes in the form of support. "Among the volunteers, we would share problems, triumphs and ways to improve," she added. Training helped too.

Join us as a **Volunteer Teacher**.
Call **6892 4366** or email to
volunteer@newlife.org.sg.

A DELIGHTED MOTHER

Mdm Hamida* beamed with pride as she watched her son performed at the Steady Readers Graduation Party.

The mother of 2 recalled how her older son, 11, used to be reserved and shy. But she noticed a new found confidence in him lately.

"His confidence level has improved tremendously. In the past, when I asked him to participate in children's road shows at shopping malls, he would rather sit and watch the performances. Now, he loves to participate," Mdm Hamida said.

She added that he actively participated in classrooms nowadays. Also, he used to prefer pictorial books. But since he started Steady Readers, he would choose books with more texts than pictures.



Learning to read, step by step

Along with this, Mdm Hamida faced a good "problem" — he could not put his books down. "He would come home after Steady Readers and continue reading his books till 1am," Mdm Hamida added with a chuckle. "I had to persuade him to go to bed."

Mdm Hamida also marvelled at his eagerness to arrive early at each Steady Readers lesson.

"Our house is just 10 minute's walk away (from class), but he would anxiously ask to leave the house at least 30 minutes before the class starts."

The Admin Account Human Resource Manager is more than appreciative of the positive changes in her son. She had this to say to all the volunteers of Steady Readers: "Thank you very much for the effort in teaching the children. Thank you also for the enjoyable programme at the recent Steady Readers Graduation Party!"

The Graduation Party was held on 7 May at Covenant Evangelical Free Church (Bukit Panjang). More than 30 parents and children attended the event. This was the 7th batch of Steady Readers graduates since its inception in 2006.

What is Steady Readers?

Steady Readers is an English literacy programme that aims to help primary level children overcome learning difficulties and improve literacy.

For details, visit www.newlife.org.sg/steady_readers.htm or call **6892 4366**.

**Not her full name. Details have been changed to protect the identity of the child.*

REACHING THE YOUTHS

As he walked, he pointed out various hangouts frequented by youths. For the past 6 months, Mr Ivan Chew has been visiting these haunts weekly to meet youths.

Every Friday afternoon, Mr Chew, New Life Youth Programme Assistant, would walk the Fajar neighbourhood in Bukit Panjang to meet new faces and catch up with familiar ones.

The walkabout is part of a Community Outreach Programme by New Life, which aims to reach youths who are at risk of dropping out of schools.

"We want to reach the youths where they are in the community," said the tanned youth worker. "If these youths don't come to the Youth Hub, we go to them."

Mr Chew meets an average of 10 youths on each walkabout. According to him, there are many more youths and much ground to cover across the Bukit Panjang estate.

More help is needed. "For now, I'm flying solo. We definitely need people to befriend these youths, especially females. There are girls hanging out too," he said.

Spotting at-risk youths is not difficult, according to the jovial Programme Assistant. "They usually smoke, sit around and do nothing much. Many are bored or neglected by their families."

Mr Chew added that patience and a non-judgemental attitude is essential for the job. "Over the last 6 months, we've made the presence of New Life Youth felt on the



Mr Ivan Chew reaching youths where they are.

ground. Through our actions, we showed them we are here for them and we care."

The investment of time and energy reaped its fruits in the form of friendships forged.

"I'd SMS them for sports like our Street Soccer event and they'd turn up. They'd call me to join them for games or hang out together also," Mr Chew said. "It's important to keep them in mind."

The frequency of the Outreach has been revised from once weekly to twice weekly from July onwards to include a night session.

The 27-year-old explained that it was necessary to walkabout at night as the youths who hang out in the afternoon were different from those who hang out at night.

For more information, contact New Life Youth at **6892 4419** or email to youth@newlife.org.sg.



DOING OUR PART, H1N1 SPECIAL

Temperature screening at New Life Childcare.

“

We must be extra vigilant since we work closely with children and young people.

”

It was first detected in April in Mexico. In less than 6 months, the H1N1 Influenza A virus has affected more than 100,000 people worldwide, causing no less than 400 deaths.

While the virus appeared relatively mild, it remained a threat to high-risk individuals.

New Life Community Services Centre is doing our part to limit the spread of the virus.

“New Life serves the community through its Childcare, Children and Youth Services. We must be extra vigilant to protect the young, especially those who are susceptible to succumb to the virus,” said Ms Diana Ooi, Centre Manager of New Life Community Services Centre.

Various precautionary measures were implemented across the board, including temperature screening, hand sanitisation, disinfection and leave of absence.

At Childcare Services, children screened their temperature twice daily and classes were segregated to minimise cross-infection. Children-sized masks were also provided for children with flu-like symptoms.

At the Youth Hub, youths adhered to the precautionary measures too. Youths screened their temperature at the door and sanitised their hands before mingling with their friends.

Measures have also been put in place to slow the spread of H1N1 should it be detected on New Life's premises.

For Your Interest.

Talk First, Kick Later

The 4-A-Side Street Soccer Challenge held on 13 June at the Fajar Street Soccer Court kick-started with a Character Talk. Mr Melvin Au, soccer coach and New Life Youth Volunteer gave the talk, designed to impart life skills to the participants.



Youths Learn To Serve

New Life Youth partnered 10 Singapore Management University students to conduct a Service Learning activity for the Youth Hub Members. The students and 9 Hub Members treated 56 senior citizens from Care Corner Family Service Centre (Toa Payoh) to a morning of interactive games at East Coast Park on 17 June. Such service learning collaboration aimed to help youths look beyond their needs to serve the elderly.



Sculpture For Kids!

New Life Childcare organised a field trip for 65 children to the Sculpture Carnival held at the Contemporary 3D Art Centre on 29 May 2009. The carnival themed "Kampong Days" gave these city children a glimpse of kampong culture through kite-making and creating their own toys from recycled materials such as plastic bottles.



UPCOMING EVENTS

5 Sept,
New Life Sports Challenge 2009
New Life's inaugural sports competition in Woodlands!
8am, Admiralty Sports Park

9 to 11 Sept,
Camp Initial D
For West Spring Secondary School

14 Sept,
Drama Workshop for Children
Part of Steady Readers Programme where children will gain self-confidence and uncover hidden talents.

26 Sept,
Annual Pool Competition 2009
9.30am, New Life Youth Hub. Register at Youth Hub or call 6892 4419.

OUR SERVICES

New Life Childcare (Bukit Panjang)
*Nurturing Wholesome Children
In Partnership With Parents*

New Life Children (Bukit Panjang)
*To Love & Mentor Children To
Become Character Champions*

New Life Youth (Bukit Panjang & Woodlands)
Building Character & Developing Resilience

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New Life Community Services Centre is a not-for-profit, voluntary welfare organisation committed to serving the community through a range of programmes and services in order to *build the next generation*.

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