

new life children & student care

OPENS

5...4...3...2...1!

Music reverberated through the air and applause erupted as the gates rolled up and balloons popped, marking the official opening of the New Life Children & Student Care.

A carnival-like buzz permeated this usually quiet neighbourhood at block 507 Jelapang Road that Saturday morning, 26 March.

Residents witnessed a distinguished company in the Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, and Member of Parliament for Holland-Bukit Timah GRC (Zhenghua), Mr Liang Eng Hwa, who were the special guest and guest-of-honour respectively.

*MP Mr Liang
and Minister
for MCYS Dr
Balakrishnan
at the opening
ceremony*



Taking the stage, Dr Balakrishnan shared, "Everything that we do here has to be for the sake of the residents, and the most important residents are the children. They represent our hope for the future."

To Mr Liang, the new centre was a "personal wish come true", as he recalled the long discussions, planning and approval process that spanned three years, and involved many parties and government agencies.

"Maybe it's destined that way. We found a perfect partner, New Life, which also had similar plans to develop a student care centre and had

In this Issue

Happenin' Hubs

- Children & Student Care
- New Life in Youth Hub
- The Driving Force

Chief Editor

Diana Ooi

Editorial Team

Victor Yeo

Amy Tan

Ariel Wee

The New Life News is published quarterly by New Life Community Services Centre.



10 Jelapang Road,
Singapore 677740
Mainline : 6892 7191
Fax : 6892 7181
Website : www.newlife.org.sg
Email : email@newlife.org.sg

Copyright is held by the publisher. All rights reserved.
Production in whole or in part without permission is prohibited.

MICA (P) 207/04/2011

New Life Community Services Centre is affiliated to Covenant Evangelical Free Church and a member of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS).



VIPs touring the new premises



Performance and testimony



the expertise to run one. So you could say this is an opportunity made in heaven," said Mr Liang, who was himself instrumental in seeing the centre come to fruition.

The homely centre is New Life's second satellite centre in Bukit Panjang. It offers a wholesome and nurturing environment for children age 7 to 14 before and after school hours.

In Singapore, many families see both parents working. As such, young children often go unsupervised outside of school hours. They face an increased risk of getting involved in delinquent activities.

It was this concern for his students that led Greenridge Primary School's Head of Pupil Management and Development, Mr Suresh Balakrishnan, to knock on the doors of New Life in 2007 with a proposition for a student care centre.

"That's how it started. What drives us is the belief that we want our children to be cared for. And we believe that if we can do something about it, we should," said Mr Balakrishnan.



Not content to be just another service provider, New Life has committed to mentoring its charges with a CARED philosophy. CARED is an acronym that stands for

- C: Connect with others in a fun and nurturing way
- A: Adopt a disciplined routine & way of life
- R: Rest and recreate adequately
- E: Engage in meaningful, creative & healthy activities
- D: Discharge duties responsibly

In addition, life skills workshops, enrichment classes, weekly mentoring time and holiday activities are also conducted. Quarterly Meet-the-Parents sessions are also in the pipeline.

Currently, 29 students are enrolled at the new centre and there is already a wait list. Just weeks after its opening, parents have given feedback that their children are more disciplined at home.

A team of caring and dedicated staff and volunteers runs the programmes. The children are cared for and mentored on weekdays from 7am to 7pm, and up to 1pm on Saturdays.

On weekday nights and during weekends, the centre conducts the Steady Readers programme (see pages 6-7), and the Kids Champ Club, a Saturday children's character club.

At the heart of it all, Ms Diana Ooi, New Life's Director, hopes that every child who goes through the centre's doors will leave a different person.

"We want to develop in our children a lifestyle that's disciplined and with a

“ You could say this is an opportunity made in heaven. ”

Mr Liang Eng Hwa
Member of Parliament for Holland-Bukit Timah GRC (Zhenghua)



Children CARED



sense of confidence," said Ms Ooi. "Now that we have this resource, we want to maximize it so that we can use it to bless the community."

To inquire, please call **6892 8040** or email **studentcare@newlife.org.sg**

New Life in YOUTH HUB

The year was 2006. Primary six pupil Liang Jie stepped into New Life's Youth Hub for the first time. His smouldering temper often erupted into threats and vulgarities then.



Liang Jie (left) with mentor Daniel and on Reception Duty

Five years on, 2011, the first year ITE student is on duty at the Hub's reception desk, even tempered and chirpy.



"If not for the Youth Hub, I would be smoking and fighting at the void decks," he mused, looking back on the past five years. "Nobody's home, so I would have been out with friends."

Knowing himself, he would have succumbed to peer pressure to smoke, and provoked to fights easily.

Liang Jie's turnaround exemplifies New Life's simple process of **Connect-Change-Contribute**, noted Mr Nelson Ong, New Life's Youth Manager.

Connect

"Young people are looking for relationships," said Mr Ong. "The Youth Hub provides a platform for them to *connect*."

Of the 486 Hub members, about 30 "hang out" on a typical day. They play

pool, video and board games, study, or chat in groups.

Youth workers join in the games, keeping order and getting to know new youths. To deepen connections, they organise activities like magic and guitar classes, sports, outings, and barbeques.

Change

Change takes place through group and individual mentoring.

Liang Jie picked up respect, responsibility and anger management from workers at the Hub. "Joshua taught me to cool down and not dwell on things," he said.



Mr Joshua Cheng, Senior Programme Coordinator at the Youth Hub, observed that "Liang Jie has grown to have a lot more self-control than when we first knew him."

The constant guidance is balanced with appropriate consequences. Liang Jie was banned from the Hub numerous times for the infringements of rules, ranging from foul language to fighting.

"Once, I was banned one whole month for damaging the pool table," he recalled wistfully. "I really missed Youth Hub that time."

"He has changed a lot. He doesn't lose his temper or talk back to me now, and he tells me where he is going," said Liang Jie's mother, who gratefully attributed it to the Hub's influence.

Contribution

Having reaped the benefits, Liang Jie now contributes by rendering his services. He signs members in and out at the Hub's reception desk, and is responsible for the games. Such roles were designed to give youths opportunities to *contribute*.

"We are seeing more youths contributing," said Mr Ong. "It gives them the opportunity to get involved and find significance."

Looking ahead, Mr Ong hopes that each youth who drops in will find help. "I would like them to be mentored and grow as a person," said the veteran counsellor and youth worker.

To volunteer at the New Life Youth Hub, please call **6892 4366** or email **volunteer@newlife.org.sg**

The New Life Youth Hub is a drop-in centre for youths at Blk 419 Fajar Road in Bukit Panjang. It opens on weekdays from 2 – 6.30 pm. This Hub-based platform complements New Life's two other platforms, School-based and Community-based, to build the next generation.



“ If not for the Youth Hub, I would probably be smoking and fighting at the void decks. ”

Liang Jie
Youth Hubber



The Driving Force

Four executives, two retirees, an undergraduate, eight teachers, a pharmacist, seven stay-at-home-moms, a music teacher, two business owners, and a speech therapist.

What do they have in common? They are the driving force behind New Life Children Services' flagship programme, *Steady Readers*.

Every week, these 27 volunteers show up at New Life's doorsteps to impart reading skills and confidence to more than 40 children from the neighbourhood. These volunteers, and some 20 others over the last five years, propelled *Steady Readers* to be one of New Life's most recognizable programmes today.

Inspiring Confidence

Children who have difficulties reading in English do not just fare poorly academically. Often, they shy from speaking up as they could not form proper sentences or find the right words. This inadvertently affects their self-confidence.

Steady Readers aims to instil confidence in children by teaching them to read. The 10-week phonics curriculum is taught by a volunteer.



Mdm Koh*, whose daughter Su Lin* has reading difficulties, testified, "After three months on *Steady Readers*, I noticed that her reading has improved and she is also able to speak her mind. Now, she enjoys reading without me pushing her to, and she even has the confidence to speak before an audience. I am very thankful to Ms Vivien for teaching, helping and encouraging Su Lin."

A Passion to Serve

Su Lin's teacher, Ms Vivien Tan, is a civil servant. The visible difference she makes keeps her coming back. "The students improved in their reading ability, plus they enjoyed the class too!" said the third-time volunteer.

Many recognise the critical place of literacy in young lives. Ms Kaelyn Luar is a second-time volunteer with *Steady Readers*. "I find value in this



Volunteer in action



Fun Time at Steady Readers

programme,” said the undergraduate. “I grew up reading and I want to help children to experience books as they grow.”

A love for children is indispensable, as exemplified by Mrs Ong Lay Tin. “I’ve always enjoyed serving children and this is something that I can contribute to. I’m very privileged to be a part of this,” said the home-maker, who has volunteered with Steady Readers since it started.

Volunteer-Driven

Volunteers such as Vivien, Kaelyn and Lay Tin are the key to the programme’s success. The number of children in Steady Readers depends on the number of volunteers available.

Steady Readers started in 2006 because of a need. However, right up till 2008, insufficient volunteers limited its capacity to just 12 children a year, and many were

Fast Facts | **Steady Readers**

- Two runs a year, Jan–May and Jul–Nov
- Students attend lessons twice weekly
- Each volunteer teaches a small group of 2 – 5 children
- Volunteers commit to a minimum of once a week in each run
- Sessions are currently on Mondays & Thursdays, 10.00–11.30 am or 7.30–9.00 pm

turned away. In 2009, volunteers stepped forward and the programme grew to 40 children. By 2010, the number of children had exceeded 70.

This year, the current contingent of 27 volunteers serves more than 40 children already enrolled. About 80 more children are anticipated for the second half of 2011. The need is pressing.

Would you join us to teach a child to read?

Please call **6892 4366** or email **volunteer@newlife.org.sg** for details.

* Names and other details have been changed to protect the families’ privacy.



Family involvement

For.Your.Interest.

The Mayor Drops In

The Mayor of North West District, Dr Teo Ho Pin, visited New Life Youth Hub on 21 Mar. Dr Teo toured the premises, chatted with youths and discussed issues with senior staff. "New Life has a good program for youths," said the Mayor. "Befriending and life skills learning are areas which New Life can share with others."



Singing Gratefully

Kids at the Kids Champ club learned to express gratefulness through song. The Sunbeam Children's choir conducted lessons to prepare the children for a Mother's Day presentation.

A New Pool Table

Youth Hub received a refurbished 8' slate-top pool table on 20 Apr. With pool a major draw and the old 6' table worn, this timely donation-in-kind will keep the Hub vibrant. "I want to let youths enjoy it," said Paul, whose business partnership donated the table.



Up to Their Tricks Again

The Magic Performing Team showed off their skills again, this time at Temasek Holding's T-TOUCH charity event at *SCAPE on 19 Apr. The 8 youths mingled with the 200-strong crowd making magic in their midst.

UPCOMING EVENTS

14-17 Jun 2011

Tchoukball Camp for Youths

Learn and improve on this unique game. Call 6892 4419 to sign up.

2 Jul 2011

To the Max Youth Event

Watch out for a high-energy youth event in conjunction with Youth Day.

Jul 2011

Steady Readers Teachers' Training

Volunteer training for the Jul-Nov semester will commence in early July. Call 6892 4366 to inquire.

13 Aug 2011

Childcare Sports Day

New Life Childcare's first ever sports day will invite participation from parents.

OUR SERVICES

New Life Childcare (Bukit Panjang)

Nurturing Wholesome Children in Partnership with Parents

New Life Children (Bukit Panjang)

Love Children by Mentoring them to become Character Champions

New Life Children & Student Care (Bukit Panjang)

Mentor Children to become Disciplined and Confident Individuals

New Life Youth (Bukit Panjang & Woodlands)

Building Character & Developing Resilience

SUPPORT NEW LIFE!

Your support makes a difference to young lives! New Life Community Services Centre is committed to *Building the Next Generation* through a range of programmes and services.

Donations received are 2.5 times tax deductible. From 1 Jan 2011, IRAS no longer accepts tax deduction claims based on donation receipts. Thus, all donors would need to provide a tax reference number (NRIC, FIN or CRN) to qualify for tax deduction through IRAS' Auto-Inclusion Scheme.

For more information, call **6892 4366** or email to donate@newlife.org.sg

By Cheque: Payable to
New Life Community Services Centre.

Please furnish your name, NRIC/FIN no., address and contact no. on the back of the cheque.

By Credit Card: Please go to
<http://www.newlife.org.sg/donate.htm>

By Interbank Transfer: Please transfer funds to
OCBC Current Account: **7339-581-473667001.**
Please state your NRIC/FIN no. as payer name.

By Interbank GIRO: Please download a GIRO form from our website or call 6892 8127.

Please furnish your full name and NRIC/FIN number in order to enjoy tax deduction.