



epworth moments

An Epworth Community Services Quarterly Newsletter

September 2018

The **GROWTH** and
REBRANDING
of the organisation

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Featuring

6 TIPS ON HOW TO PRAISE YOUR CHILDREN

Your parent-child relationship can sometimes become distant and tense. Break this by providing praise and encouragement! Tips on how to do so on **page 10**.

Epworth Stories

“ I did not qualify to be a foster parent but I could act as a befriender to troubled children by working alongside foster parents who are mainly responsible for the children's welfare. ”

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Community Services

Epworth Community Services is the new name for MCYC Community Services Society.

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Epworth Community Services, a voluntary welfare organisation, helps at-risk children and youths in their educational, social, emotional and moral development.

The Society is a registered charity, a full member of the National Council of Social Service and an Institution of a Public Character.

Mission

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

Objectives

To help children, youths and parents of all language, race and religion, especially from dysfunctional, disadvantaged and needy families, to:

- Develop to their fullest potential;
- Enjoy a balanced family life;
- Become responsible and caring family members; and
- Become useful members of society.

Epworth Community Services is the new name for MCYC Community Services Society. The new name reflects the organisation's Methodist origin as Epworth is the birthplace of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism.

The colours of its logo are the same as that of The Methodist Church in Singapore. The light from the cross radiates to form a star within the letter 'O' of the name Epworth. While the cross represents our faith, the symbol of the star represents a light in the night sky that guides children, youths and families through challenges in their journey of life.

The font is customised to represent a modern, professional organisation, while giving emphasis to the star logomark – the anchor to the logo's meaning.

The red and blue tone provides a distinct and bold contrast, representing stability and warmth – similar to the mission of Epworth Community Services. The yellow is used on the star logomark, signifying the guiding light that Epworth provides.

A NEW AGE

by Christian Teo, Community Relations

As we reach our 10th year of independent operation, we celebrate our organisation's significant growth over the last decade. We see this milestone as a wonderful opportunity to rebrand our organisation to better define our work.

The achievements and good work of MCYC Community Services Society will continue under a refreshing new name - "**Epworth Community Services**". Being an organisation with Methodist roots and focusing on children and youth issues, Epworth seems an appropriate name for us.

Epworth is a village in Lincolnshire, North-East England. This was where John and Charles Wesley were born. The house where they were born in and spent their childhood years, the Old Rectory, still stands today. It was here that the siblings were nurtured under the loving care of their parents, Susanna and Samuel Wesley. There, they received their foundation in education and spiritual formation.



The pedestal on which the village cross once stood in Epworth, Lincolnshire, where John Wesley preached. His famous words "The World Is My Parish" resonate deeply with Methodists throughout the world today.



The Old Rectory in Epworth, Lincolnshire, North England; the birthplace of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism.



The tomb of Samuel Wesley, father of John Wesley, located in Saint Andrew's Church in Epworth, Lincolnshire.

In this transitional period, we understand that our donors, supporters and most importantly, our beneficiaries, will need some time to adjust to our new name. Until December 2018, our departments will continue their specialised programmes and services under the existing names. From January 2019, these departments will use new names, all aligned to the Epworth brand.

In the coming months, more children and youth in need will benefit from our programmes and services as we expand with a literacy centre in the Jurong West area. Plans are underway to begin operation in the first quarter of 2019. In addition, we are looking at more Student Care Centres in other areas of Singapore.

Epworth Moments

Starting from this issue, our quarterly newsletter will be renamed '**Epworth Moments**'. Epworth Moments promises to maintain its engaging content and exciting updates, while showing off a cleaner and more attractive layout. The name is inspired by our beneficiaries; the children and youth under our care. Epworth Moments aims to capture their special moments that best represent who they are: they are gifts from God and precious in His eyes.

Exciting things lie ahead. Please continue to keep us in your prayers as we move forward in the next chapter of our growth. Also, continue to donate generously as we aim to build a better world for our children.



CREATIVE WAYS TO SPEND QUALITY TIME WITH YOUR CHILDREN

When you add up all the time your children are spending in school, asleep, at tuition, and in other activities that do not include you, the remaining moments you have with them become especially precious to parents. Maximise these moments by doing memorable and fun activities together as a family!

Spending quality time together in creative and fun ways can help strengthen family bonds. Want some suggestions how? Hear from some of the parents of children who attend our Student Care Centre at ACS(P).



“ We will usually engage in activities like tennis, ice skating, swimming, and board games with Lucas. I like to create some thrill by writing down the various activities and places Lucas wants to do or go, and then hide these little pieces of paper around the house for Lucas to find. He always gets excited about these 'hunts'. As a family, we will do the activities on the pieces of paper he finds. ”

~ Eunice Boey, Mother of Lucas Boey, P3D

“ My wife and I work full time, leaving us with very little time with our boys on weekdays. Sometimes, if they finish their homework fast, we manage to squeeze a bit of time playing UNO or board games. Friday nights are 'movie nights', we sit together as a family at home and watch a movie that our boys pick. They can also sleep a little later. We believe weekends are great for outdoor activities like cycling, roller-blading and swimming. ”

~ Eugene Lee, Father of Dylan Lee (P3B) and Ryder Lee (P3C)



“ We spend time together playing board games and watching Netflix shows and movies. At other times, we like to mix things up by having outdoor activities like cycling. If you really want an exciting and fun afternoon (and do not mind spending a little bit), bring your children to the arcade or an amusement park, they will love it! ”

~ Jeffrey Ng, Father of Samuel Ng, P3D

AROUND THE WORLD

by Hannah Wong, Teacher at iPEAK

In June, iPEAK had the extended programme themed 'Around the World' to usher in the holidays. Being able to travel overseas is not an opportunity that most of our students have. Thus, many of them were thrilled when we revealed their mission during the briefing: explore six countries (Japan, Brazil, South Africa, Germany, Mexico and Australia) over the next two days in the centre! Each child received a "passport" and went on their journey "around the world"!

Each of the six classrooms used was adorned with decorations representing each country's culture. Many of our students were in awe at such an eye-opening learning experience. In Japan, children learnt different Japanese greetings, tried Sudoku, made origami animals and had a treat of Japanese snacks. In Brazil, students played the country's national sport – soccer – and went magnetic fishing in the Amazon River. In South Africa, students learnt about the Big 5 Animals, observed a South African sunset and received animal bookmarks as souvenirs. In Germany, students were introduced to various grand castles and famous German car and food brands. Our students also had a go at some unique German-style board games. In Mexico, students made their own Balero, a traditional Mexican cup-and-ball game and enjoyed the sweet treats that burst forth from handmade Piñatas. In Australia, students learnt some interesting facts about the Aboriginal Australians and their cave drawings. They also got to try popular Australian snacks, Vegemite and Tim Tams!

At the end of the programme, bursts of laughter and squeals of excitement could be heard as every child had his or her "passport" fully stamped. On top of that, each of them received a pair of binoculars for their participation in this programme. We were greatly blessed by the lovely volunteers from Heartware Network who helped throughout this special programme for our children.



Score! Victory cheer from one excited student after her table soccer match win.



All the teachers involved in this June extended programme.

The success of this programme is also a powerful testament to the teamwork and zeal that the teachers displayed throughout the planning and execution. Truly, the teachers exceeded expectations as they had not only transformed every ordinary classroom into a world of its own, but also gave each child an unforgettable globetrotting experience.



Students making their own Balero at the Mexican station.



Students learning about interesting landmarks and culture at the Brazil station.



Teacher Ann, dressed in a Yukata, welcomed the children to the Japan station.



Students cracking their brains trying to solve a german board game at the Germany station.

EPWORTH STORIES

Testimony by Loh Chen-Yi, Befriender

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

~ Matthew 19:14

As a divorcee without children, the joys and frustration of parenthood are things I could only imagine. But those things started to change in a more personal way for me one Sunday morning after church last year.

I was invited to sign up as a volunteer for a fostering and befriending programme run by the organisation. As a single person, I did not qualify to be a foster parent but I could act as a befriender to troubled children by working alongside foster parents who are mainly responsible for the children's welfare.

Before becoming a befriender, there were a few hurdles to cross. First, I had to pass a detailed interview and screening procedure. These steps are for the protection of the young and vulnerable children being dealt with. Training is also provided to ensure that volunteers such as myself, know the dos and don'ts of interacting with these children who often come from troubled backgrounds.

It was some months after training that I finally received a call on my first assignment. I was told I would befriend a 5-year old Indian boy who had been placed under the care of a foster family. My role was to expose him to new experiences by taking him from his foster home on weekends to places he enjoyed or that were educational for him. The aim was to give him a balanced exposure to life and to provide some respite for the foster parents who handle many responsibilities.

The day soon arrived to meet Rajan* and I must say I was pleasantly surprised. He was an active and inquisitive boy with bright eyes and a ready smile. However, he could be a handful at times if I did not assert myself; and I could not always understand the things he said with his limited vocabulary.



The times I spent with Rajan were always enjoyable but I discovered an unruly side to him as well. This unruliness was often displayed in his behaviour towards other children when it came to community sharing. He did not yet understand that he was part of a wider community who should share and care for each other. He was reluctant to share the things he enjoyed, such as toys and playground rides. On some occasions, he would even be aggressive if I was not around to control him.

Alas, my time with him was short. Two months after I met Rajan, I was informed he had been outplaced to a children's home away from his foster family. Apparently, his unruliness had also spilled into the home of his foster parents. It had become too challenging for them to control or reason with him. The best option was to place him in a children's home where institutional help and resources were available to improve his behaviour.

It has been more than half a year since Rajan was moved to a children's home but I still think of him fondly.

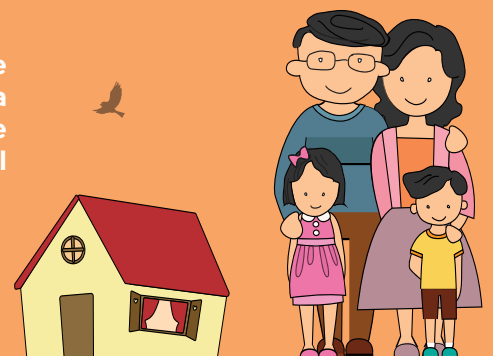
My prayer now for him is that he will have the love and stability to grow into a happy and well-adjusted boy under the care of his own mother. As for me, I look forward to helping other boys like Rajan as each volunteer befriender will do in their own way for the children under their care.

*Name changed to protect confidentiality

About our Fostering Agency

Our fostering agency recruits foster parents and supports foster children and their foster families. The agency aims to provide quality care and support to foster parents; and, connecting them to a wider network of resources.

In this way, foster families are equipped to ensure the well-being and holistic development of foster children in a safe, nurturing and caring family environment; while the reintegration of these foster children with their natural families are being worked at.



A photograph of three children in a classroom setting. A girl in a pink shirt and a boy in a light blue shirt are both raising their arms in celebration. A third child is partially visible on the left. They are standing at a table with various items on it. The background is a light green wall with yellow and green paper fans.

HOW TO PRAISE YOUR CHILDREN

by Quek Li Koon,
Fostering Department

As parents, there may be times when your children presents difficult behaviours such as not listening to your instructions or being disrespectful towards you. Under such circumstances, it may become difficult to focus on the positive; and many parents resort to using threats like nagging and raising their voice towards their children. This will often cause your children to feel that they are constantly in the wrong; resulting in a distant and tense parent-child relationship.

One of the ways to break this negativity is to focus on the positive things the child does (however few!) and provide praise and encouragement for the desirable behaviour you see and wish to see an increase in. By doing so, both parent and child will start to feel better and your positive stance will help your child want to behave well to please you.

To increase the opportunities for you to praise your child, you may even have to make requests that you are quite sure your child will comply with. This gives them the experience of listening to you and be praised for their good and desirable behaviour.

In reality, not everyone is comfortable to give praise to others. Perhaps in our formative years, we seldom received praise from others. Some parents may perceive praise as ineffective; or that it may even cause a child to become proud or less motivated. The trick is to practice praise more often and understand how it works best for your child.

Here are a few tips when giving praise:



Specific

Besides general praise such as “Good job!” or “Well done!”, you can be specific when praising your child’s desirable behaviour. Examples of specific praise: “I see that you are putting in effort in doing your problem sums, keep it up!”; or “Thank you Lynn for helping me to serve the drinks to our guests.” In this way your child will know exactly what behaviour you would like to see happen more.



Sincere

Praise works best when you are sincere in delivering it. This means that you will need to take note of your tone and facial expressions. Always maintain eye contact and give praise in a warm and gentle way.



Immediate and timely

It helps when the child receives praise straight or as soon as the good behaviour is seen. This will help the child to make the link between the good behaviour and why he or she is being praised.



Avoid bringing up past negative behaviour

Remember to praise the current behaviour and not to bring up the past negative behaviour of your child in your praise. Children tend to focus on the negative comments about what they did not do well in the past and that will discount the positive impact of your praise on the current behaviour.



Appropriate

Be careful about giving too much praise for what they already love to do or what they are already very good at. Also avoid giving overly inflated praise as well. When overdone, such praises may lead to less motivation for the child to continue good behaviour.



Avoid social-comparison praise

If we praise children for out-performing others, they are likely to lose their motivation when they are no longer performing as well as before. They may also focus on beating others rather than mastering and improving their skills.

With these few tips in mind, start to observe and find opportunities to praise, encourage and affirm your child. Not only will it build up your child’s self-esteem, it will also motivate your child to improve his or her behaviour and strengthen your parent-child relationship!

BE A VOLUNTEER WITH US!

Volunteers play an important role in our programmes and services, many of these programmes and services could not have been conducted without their involvement. Volunteers can choose to be engaged in ad-hoc, short- or long-term programmes and are matched to programmes according to their time, interest and inclination.

Examples of ways you can help are:

- kidsREAD (reading programme for young kids)
- Student Care
- Community Programmes and Events



Please contact Ms Jessica Soo, Assistant Manager - Volunteer Management and Facilities Management, at 6715 3711 for details on how you can volunteer.

THE HELP YOU GIVE CAN CHANGE LIVES

Epworth Community Services helps at-risk children and youths from needy and disadvantaged families in their educational, social, emotional and moral development. We are a registered charity, a full member of the National Council of Social Service and an Institution of a Public Character.

In the last financial year, our programmes and services reached over 5,000 children, youths and their parents. Through our intervention, we hope that they with their families will be able to better cope with the demands of our fast-paced society.

Our ability to continue helping children, youths and parents from dysfunctional, disadvantaged and needy families is largely dependent on our generous supporters who strongly believe in our cause. As a voluntary welfare organisation dependent on goodwill donations, we seek your ongoing support to realise our mission and objectives of developing those most in need to become useful members of society. Please donate generously.