

epworth moments

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Epworth Community Services

May 2019

ED's Message

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What We Do at Therapeutic and Parenting Unit

Find out what our social workers do to support our children and youth

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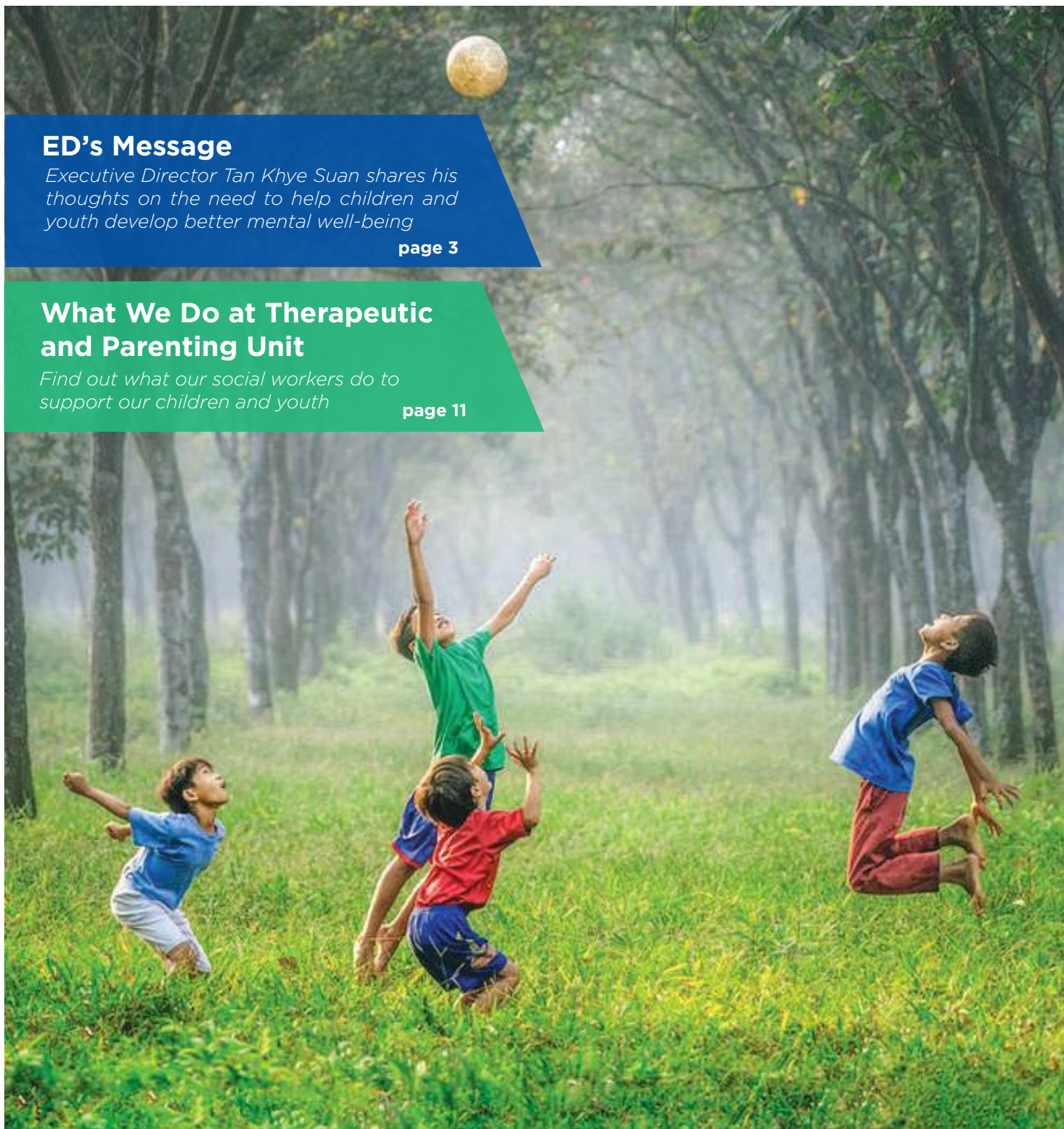


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About Epworth Community Services

Epworth Community Services is a non-profit organisation 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.

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







Vision

Strong Families, Resilient Living, Beautiful Minds

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.

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Epworth Moments

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ED's Message

*By Tan Khye Suan,
Executive Director*

STRONG FAMILIES, RESILIENT LIVING, BEAUTIFUL MINDS



In the February 2019 issue of our newsletter, I asked the question: “Where do we go from here?”

This is an important question that we must answer to determine the long-term direction of Epworth Community Services. As the organisation grows, we want to be very focused on what we are doing and be very relevant, so that our contributions help children and youth in our society.

One issue that has been coming to our attention is the mental well-being of children and youth. Our existing programmes and services are already addressing some aspects of mental well-being. These include our literacy programmes for children with learning needs due to developmental challenges; behavioural modification programmes for children with impulse control issues and poor coping skills; and, treatment for children with abusive backgrounds and complex trauma. But more can be done, especially pre-emptive work.

Perhaps, it is good to define mental well-being at this point. Simply put, mental well-being is about having good mental health. All of us will agree that good mental health is important. Good mental health helps us to function optimally everyday. But what do we understand about good mental health?

We often associate good mental health as being free of depression, anxiety, or other psychological issues.

This is a misconception and a very narrow definition.

Good mental health is not just the absence of mental health problems. It is about the presence of positive characteristics; how we think, feel and act as we cope with our lives. These positive characteristics determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices.

Hence, promoting mental well-being is about putting pre-emptive and proactive programmes and services in place that can help children and youth cultivate positive characteristics. It is about equipping children and youth with better coping skills that will eventually help them to better manage their own stress; build better relationships with others; and, make better and responsible decisions.

Studies have also shown that strong and stable family environments and good parenting are positive and protective factors that promote mental well-being. Therefore, the need to support families, especially those with difficulties and challenges, is an important aspect of our work to help promote good mental well-being of children and youth.

Hence, we have decided that as an organisation, we will continue to help at-risk children and youth from needy and disadvantaged families. We want to create a

better world for them so that they can develop their potential. Our work will now focus on promoting the mental well-being of children and youths by building strong families and imparting skills for resilient living.

The new vision adopted by the Board for Epworth Community Services is:

***“Strong Families,
Resilient Living,
Beautiful Minds”***

Apart from existing programmes and services that are already promoting mental well-being, we look forward to adding more that will help children and youth learn how to:

- take charge of their mental health
- build their mental resilience
- manage life's ups and downs

We will also step up and enhance our parenting programmes and help parents who may already be having mental health challenges within their families. As an organisation, we will equip our staff to contribute even more towards the mental well-being of children and youths in Singapore.

As Epworth Community Services boldly moves forward with our vision, we ask that friends and stakeholders continue to support us with prayers and resources to bless our community.

Gel Painting: A Splash of Fun

*By Joan Seah and Jovian Wong, Literacy Intervention Teachers
at Epworth Literacy*



Excited little artists creating their own masterpieces

Over the March school holidays, Epworth Literacy organised a three-day gel printing art workshop called “My Enchanting Forest” for some of our children and their families, in collaboration with JurongHealth.

On the first day, the children arrived at Epworth Literacy brimming with curiosity and enthusiasm to learn about this new medium of art. Upon seeing the variety of tools and materials laid out for them, their eyes lit up. The children were even more excited to find out that their completed art pieces will be displayed around the wards of the Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and Jurong Community Hospital to add a splash of colour and bring joy to the patients residing there. Then, the art instructor, kicked off the session with an engaging and interactive rendition of the classic story, The Giving Tree.

Inspired by the beautiful story, the children quickly set off to create pictures of simple landscapes, trying out the various techniques they had been shown. A little hesitant at first, they quickly became comfortable with the tools and techniques. Using brayers and stamps, they were able to create backgrounds, patterns and their own stencils. From there, slowly but surely, emerged picturesque landscapes. From whimsical forest scenes to sandy seashores and even snowcapped mountains, the children let their imagination take over and created amazing works of art.



On the second and third day, parents of our children were invited to join in the fun and create pieces of their own. The children, who were now little experts, taught their parents some tips and tricks they had learned the day before. Throughout the entire workshop, volunteers from Ng Teng Fong Hospital, together with our Epworth Literacy teachers, played a supporting role to guide the children and help them turn their artistic vision into a reality.

On the final day, we had a mini exhibition where the children showcased their art works to their friends and family. From their gleeful expressions and bright smiles, we could tell how proud they were of their work and that they thoroughly enjoyed the process of creating these wonderful art pieces.



To congratulate the children on their beautiful art pieces and a job well done, the volunteers treated our children to cakes, pastries and goodie bags.



We would like to thank the staff and volunteers from JurongHealth for giving our children and families this rare opportunity, and also our dedicated staff of Epworth Literacy for making this collaboration possible!



“From their gleeful expressions and bright smiles, we could tell how proud they were of their work..”



A fun activity with gel painting - thanks to dedicated staff and volunteers from Ng Teng Fong Hospital and JurongHealth.

So "March" Fun at Student Care

*By Stanley Quek, Assistant Manager
at Epworth Student Care*



The March school holidays came and went!

The one-week March school holidays was fun-filled for the children in Epworth Student Care. Our theme for term one was "*I Am Special*". God made each of us special in His eyes and we were encouraged to remind our children of this message.

There was a fun day of finger-painting, with a message that everyone's finger-print is unique and different. After the session, we reviewed all the lessons and values they learnt in term one, such as responsibility, perseverance and self-discipline. For tea break, the children had an opportunity to design their own snacks before devouring them. They were all gone in 60 seconds!

Another highlight over the week was a three-day Math and Chess Workshop under SkillsFuture that was conducted by Edcel Pte Ltd.

The instructors are MOE-approved trainers and the children were engaged in various exercises. Some children even challenged the staff to a game of chess (and yes, I was beaten by my student!).

We ended the week with a treasure hunt, organised by a group of young volunteers from Cornerstone Church. The children had a blast with all the games, and not forgetting the goodies and prizes from the treasure hunt loot.

It was a busy and exhausting week for our staff, but the smiles on our children's faces reminded us that we have not laboured in vain. Term 2, here we come!



"Hmmm.. what should my next move be?"



Fun times at Student Care

"Fostering" Creative Thinking in Youths

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



The March school holidays came and went!

In partnership with NUS College of Alice and Peter Tan (CAPT) student volunteers, Project Kindle+ is a programme aimed at developing independent thinking skills in foster youths. The programme ran for eight sessions which included mentoring and group engagement activities to convey socio-emotional lessons to youths.

Dave, an NUS Year 2 Psychology student, shared the joys of volunteering: "My involvement with CAPT Project Kindle+ has taught me so much about foster youths, and particularly about how the "foster" label does not differentiate them in any way. I have learned to treat them equally as I would with any other children or youth - their behavior is no different from ours at that age. I am glad to say that the youths enjoyed themselves tremendously through the course of this programme, and I am also hopeful that they have learned from their individual mentors in the past eight weeks.

**"I have learned to
treat them
equally as I
would with any
other children or
youth."**

**Dave Thio,
NUS Student Volunteer**

Events by Epworth Foster Care

Building Families Up by Building and Construction Authority

In collaboration with Building and Construction Authority (Singapore) (BCA), 67 participants from our foster families had an enjoyable day out together in March. They caught an animation movie "Wonder Park" at Shaw Theatres at Nex, followed by a Plant Potting activity at the BCA Academy. We would like to thank our foster families for their participation, and BCA for organising and sponsoring this event as a way to encourage our foster families in their fostering journey!



Spreading the word on Fostering at Compass One

We held our first fostering roadshow of the year from 25 to 31 March 2019 at Compass One. We received 29 interest slips from the public, indicating their interest to become a foster parent or to volunteer with us. The interest and support from the general public truly encourages us to continue our work.



What We Do at Therapeutic and Parenting Unit

*By Luke Yan, Social Worker
at Epworth Family Welfare*




Epworth Family Welfare's Therapeutic and Parenting Unit (TPU) was set up in early-2018 with the objective of providing holistic help for those who face problems stemming from past trauma experiences. Our staff are trained and continue to undergo training on essential knowledge and skills to provide effective interventions for these clients.

Together with Sarah from Epworth Foster Care, I first met John*, a foster child, in mid-2018. John had been through a number of painful experiences in the past, including physical and emotional abuse, as well as feelings of loss and abandonment.

During our first few meetings together, John displayed resistance to our attempts to engage him. At times, he laid on his bed and buried his face into his pillow; other times, he responded in frustration or simply walked away when we asked questions. Although we expected that working with John would not be easy, given his past experiences, we were still challenged and had to think very creatively about our intervention efforts.

*Name has been changed to protect identity



“Most importantly, my experience in the TPU has shown me that the work we do as an organisation is deeply linked to offering hope and restoration in response to brokenness in this world.”

After many sessions filled with conversations about football and *UNO* games, we built rapport and trust with John and over time, our sessions ended on more positive notes. John even started seeing us out to his doorstep. His receptiveness led to him sharing more deeply about emotions he previously found difficult to express, and disclosing critical incidents regarding his contact with his natural family that we were able to address in a timely manner with the help of other agencies.

These were moments that I personally found challenging to deal with, and I felt frustrated and angry at times with the factors and people that placed him in the situations he was in.

Yet, these moments also deepened the sense of meaning in our work with him, as we were there to support and guide him through these problems. We were also able to witness how our intervention efforts translated into increased coping skills.

We also discovered that beneath his initial demeanour, he was a fun-loving, curious and thoughtful boy, who just like many his age, simply sought a sense of belonging and wanted to be understood.

Being involved in the TPU has challenged me and helped me to grow on both a professional and personal level. I have gained valuable skills and important insights into issues of trauma that our clients face. I have also gained a greater appreciation towards the level of inter-agency work that trauma work often requires, and learnt what it means to empathise effectively while keeping healthy professional boundaries. Most importantly, my experience in the TPU has shown me that the work we do as an organisation is deeply linked to offering hope and restoration in response to brokenness in this world.

Building Life Skills with Swimming

*By Jerry Quah, Assistant Head of Home
at Epworth HomeSweetHome*

Supported by Active Sports SG, our residents started their SwimSafer3 journey in December 2018.

Conducted at Yishun Swimming Complex, the SwimSafer program is a national water safety program developed to teach children below 16 years old to swim. SwimSafer is recognised by all schools, institutions and water-related sports in Singapore.

Before attending Swimsafer3, our residents would only run, splash water around the pool and play on the slides during their weekly swim outing. They were neither confident nor had the ability to swim using proper swim strokes. We knew we wanted to give our residents the opportunity to learn a new skill, while having a good time at the swimming pool.

After a brief introduction, our residents started their learning journey. A little nervous at first, they gradually gained water confidence and started to train hard during their swimming lessons. Their efforts paid off when all of them passed the SwimSafer3 Test!

Their swimming coach shared that he observed positive changes from our residents. They were able to push themselves out of their own comfort zone and achieve success.

Learning to swim is an essential life skill. We are glad our residents could take away a new skill, increase their self-esteem and develop a greater belief in their own abilities through this process of learning to swim.



Be a Champion for our Cause!



What is Epworth 500?

Epworth is a five-year fundraising initiative (2019 - 2024) by Epworth Community Services to call upon 500 individuals, corporations and foundations to come alongside and partner us in our work.

YOUR GIVING ENABLES US TO...

LITERACY



Help 150 children cope with learning, behavioural and emotional difficulties

Provide 43 at-risk families with intervention services

FOSTER CARE



Support 120 children and their foster families

Treat 9 children with trauma-informed therapy

STUDENT CARE



Provide 117 children with after-school care to support working parents

FAMILY WELFARE



HOMESWEETHOME



EVERY WEEK!

note: based on min. or average numbers

Meet Megan



“Epworth Literacy has been instrumental in helping my daughter, Megan (aged 10), learn to read. We first came to Epworth when Megan was in K2 as she was not picking up basic literacy skills at the same pace as her peers. Since then, Megan’s literacy has grown from strength to strength. While she was previously anxious about spelling, she is now fairly confident. I do not know what magic Teacher Anne did during her sessions with Megan, but I will never forget the joy I felt when Megan blended and uttered her first syllable independently.

I am grateful for the solid foundation that Epworth has laid for her and for opening up the world of reading with all its pleasures and knowledge to her. They have been consistently professional, nurturing and systematic in both teaching and tracking Megan’s progress. I know that Megan is in good hands and can only hope that all children who need support are as fortunate as my daughter.”

- Mandy, Megan Looi’s Mother

Visit our pages for more information

nurture literacy care learn trauma treatment **strong families** welfare relief **resilient living** intervention engage growth foster hope compassion

Epworth.sg



Epworth500.sg



*All donations will qualify for a 250% tax exemption.

Scan me

mental well-being develop benefit future holistic skills strength beautiful safe support children minds

THE HELP YOU GIVE CAN CHANGE LIVES

Together, let us build a better world for our children!

How You Can Be Involved

Donate

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

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** or
contact us at **community.relations@epworth.sg** or call **6562 2211**



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