



FACES

A newsletter of Filos Community Services

Oct | 2013



Helping others in our life's journey

From the ED's desk

We see a lot of change and challenge happening in Singapore society as we learn to adapt to the pressures of situations around us. The paper chase leaves our children and their parents stressed, our youth face the temptations of risky activities in a post modern culture, young couples and families struggle with making ends meet, the elderly face their Goliaths of declining health, mobility and significance in life as they reach their golden years.

As we journey together in the race of life, as President Tony Tan has said, 'Together we should ensure that the last are not left behind, the lost have a guiding hand and the least are the first in our considerations as a democratic society. As a society, we must judge ourselves by how we care for those in need.'

The story is told of a man who was driving his car, when he saw an old lady, stranded on the side of the road. He saw that she needed help. So he stopped his car next to hers and got out.

As he approached the old lady, he saw that she was worried and frightened, as his appearance was rather poor and shabby. He tried to re-assure her : I'm

here to help you, don't worry. My name is Bryan Smith.

He checked her car and discovered that she had a flat tyre, so he got to work to help her change it. He got dirty as he crawled under her car, and his hands got hurt as well.

When the job was done, she asked how much she owed him for his help. But Bryan smiled and said, if you really want to pay me back, the next time you see someone who needs help, give that person the needed assistance. And think of me as you do so.'

That same evening, the lady stopped by a small, dingy looking cafe. She was attended by a waitress, nearly eight months pregnant, who had a sweet, friendly smile, although she had spent her whole day on her feet. The lady was moved by the cheerfulness of the waitress, and she was reminded of her encounter with Bryan.

The lady finished her meal and paid with a hundred dollar bill. The waitress went to get the change, but when she came back, the lady was gone. The waitress found a note on the napkin : You don't owe me anything. Somebody once

helped me, just like I want to help you now. If you want to pay me back, don't let this chain of love end with you.' The waitress found four more one hundred dollar bills under the napkin.

That night, the waitress got home earlier. She was wondering how the lady could know how much she and her husband needed the extra cash. Especially now, when the baby would soon be arriving. She knew this worried her husband, so she was so glad to be able to tell him the good news. She kissed him and whispered, 'Now everything will be all right. I love you, Bryan Smith!'

Let's continue, in our own sphere's of influence, to keep the chain of love going in our society, for each other and especially for the last, the least and the lost!

Dr. Foo Fung Fong
Executive Director
Filos Community
Service ◆



The Last are not Left behind

Elderly clients from Filos were very blessed to have caring and passionate volunteers visit them.



Students from National Cheng Kung University from Tainan, Taiwan bring cheer to our elderly



An outing to Sun Yat Sen Memorial Hall was made possible for the elderly through the sponsorship of the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY). The elderly spent the evening touring the museum and having dinner there.



Filos beneficiaries were invited for Girls' Brigade Friendship Day. The elderly had a day of fun and cheer together with Girls' Brigade at the Community Carnival.



The Elderly pay a visit to the newly opened SEA Aquarium at Sentosa



Students from St Hilda's Secondary School hold a mini Carnival for our Elderly in June 2013. It was a fun day of games, activity and treats for our Seniors!

Active Minds

When a person ages, along with the other bodily functions, the brain also starts to decline. For some, memory loss may be just due to ageing and for others, the impairment can be due to dementia. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia.

Filos' Active Minds programme aims to maintain the mental health of elderly with mild cognitive impairment and/or early dementia. During the weekly one-hour session, each of our elderly clients gets to have some mental exercise activities such as board games, memory cards, handicrafts and even reminiscing the good old days with songs and pictures. Most of these elderly clients also live alone and so our weekly visits help to alleviate their loneliness as well.



Mr Peter Cher : His daughter commented that he is happier and looks forward to the visits. He likes to play Chinese chess every week and since participating in this programme, he is better at recalling things



Our Active Minds clients have this to say:-

Mdm Cheong Moi Chan : "I use to forget where I put my keys but now I become more aware and not leave them hanging on my metal gate"

Sign and Symptoms of Dementia

Someone with dementia may:

- not only forget details but the entire event e.g. forgetting he had taken lunch when it was only an hour before
- face difficulty or lose the ability to perform everyday tasks such as dressing, eating, bathing or brushing his teeth
- become restless and irritable
- lose the ability to make decisions
- gradually lose his sense of time and place
- become less communicative and more withdrawn
- lose their way around the familiar neighbourhood



The Lost have a guiding hand

In the world of the Arts

Filos brought our children and youths to watch October! (part of The Necessary Stage's Triangle Project) The play was about a HDB real-estate agent's interactions with disgruntled, abandoned and troubled neighbours, whose lives are woven into a supportive network as they seek solace in one another. The stories touched a cord in our young clients' hearts as they laughed and cried at the true to life challenges

that some of them actually do experience or witness.

Our children and youth were also invited to watch other plays such as Murdered to Death (an NUS King Edward VII Hall play), esnes.n.on2 (an M1 Singapore Fringe Festival performance) and Othello: Shakespeare in the Park (a Singapore Repertory Theatre production). ♦



Filos goes to the S-League Finals!

Here's yet another holiday event right after their exams!

our tickets to this high adrenaline, power packed and fun event on 2nd November 2012! ♦

Thank you YEO's for sponsoring

Reconnecting those who have Lost Touch

Filos' held our first ever parent-child bonding event "Come Dine with us". It was a time of building bridges amongst staff, volunteer tutors and clients, and between parent and child. Many a times, a family gets submerged in the turbulence of life's troubles and struggles, like extreme poverty caused by multiple illnesses, tragedies, business

failures, or simply, longstanding poor financial management. Instead of turning to one another for support and comfort, they drift apart or even go against one another during such tense and stressful times. Over a scrumptious meal and lots of ice cream at Swensen's, new friendships were forged, struggles were voiced and advice was shared. ♦



The holidays are here!

The children & youth shout HOORAY as both school and tuition take a break. With their newfound freedom, Filos decided to step in to tantalize them with our first ever 2D1N Holiday Camp. It turned out to be a truly blessed time spent together. We had outdoor games, a mini Masterchef moment, mask painting and play acting, and also water games by the beach with a BBQ thrown in as well! The night

ended with us watching BRAVE, a movie that has many learning points about family and responsibility .

The young people went away with many treasured memories of the camp. In their feedback to us, they told us, "Please more camps la please!" Ever since then, relating camp stories among themselves every now and then would bring sweet nostalgia to them. ♦



Know It to Beat It!

On May 31st, Filos pioneered a Primary 6 cohort-wide Stress Management programme entitled "Know it to Beat it" at Eunus Primary School. This Health Promotion Board mental wellness programme aims to build up the students' mental resilience. In a round-robin fashion, Filos taught the classes easy ways to understand and cope with their stress. Whether it be stress for their upcoming PSLE or stress in their everyday lives

and family situations, the students were able to take home lessons about stress management through simple but fun activities. With debriefing and a Jeopardy quiz, the students were able to consolidate their learning. They also took home postcards as souvenirs and reminders. To add, winning groups were able to walk away with ez-link card holders and thumb-drive wrist bands! ♦

Jazz Shines!

The Filos youth had a holiday outing at Wild Wild Wet for some fun in the sun. One of the older youths, Jazz, took the initiative to help look out for everyone's safety, including that of the newcomer's!

On another outing to Marina Bay Sands for the "Mummy: Secrets of the Tomb" exhibit, Jazz again rose up to help out with the young kids. This is truly very heartening, as our youths (Jazz included), face their own struggles individually

and with their families, but yet, they are willing to help others when needed.

Jazz, together with Emily, another youth who regularly attends our tuition programme, also took it upon themselves to raise funds for Filos and their own families through the sale of soft toys that had been donated to Filos. ♦



P.L.E.A.S.E.

"Parents Learning English And Speaking Excellently (P.L.E.A.S.E)" is a new initiative offered to parents of our tuition kids and their friends. Many parents struggle to communicate with their children in English, or with people they meet at the doctor's, their workplaces, their children's school or even the Malay stall holders in the markets or hawker centres they frequently patronize. Once a week, the mothers would troop down to Filos to learn English in the evening. Each week, without fail, they

come in prepared, with questions and with a high level of enthusiasm. This makes it all worthwhile. Afterall, our mission is to empower individuals, and with a better grasp of English, they are more confident too!

Mdm Tan said: "Teacher you know, my friend learn outside very jialat. Her worksheet all no use because cannot use. I come here improved a lot then I dare to speak English. Thank you!" ♦

The Least Are Considered

'The strength of a community lies in each person, young or old, rich or poor, coming together hand in hand, to help, cheer & encourage each other on in the journey of life.'

Blessings project

Each festive season is a time of gathering with families, relatives and friends. For those staying at the one-room flat, many times, there is no one to visit them during this period. Filos organises blessing

projects, where volunteers come to plan the program, prepare goodie bags and then deliver them to these needy families and lonely elderly. ♦

Chinese New Year Blessing project



Christmas Blessing project



Hari Raya Blessing project



Filos Flag Day

Filos Flag Day was held on 16 March 2013. Over 1,000 volunteers were selling flags on the streets on that day. A total of \$ 84,162 was raised through the event. Prior to the

event date, many of our elderly beneficiaries who are still fit physically also put their hands together and helped out with the preparation for the event. ♦



Students helping in the selling of flags for Filos Flag Day.



Our elderly beneficiaries doing their bit to help the community



Mdm Enah
Age : 67 years old

Mdm Enah, an ethnic Chinese, was born in Bandung and adopted by a poor Indonesian farmer and his wife from Aceh when she was a baby. Both adopted parents however passed away due to malaria when she was 2 years old. She was then brought up by her adopted mother's sister. She was 7 years old when her aunt passed away during childbirth. She ran away from home after that and fended for herself by doing odd jobs. When she was 15 years old, a poor couple took her in. It was difficult to find a decent livelihood in Aceh and so in 1970, at 25 years old, she took a boat to Singapore with a relative of this couple to look for a job as a domestic helper. However, she ended up cooking for a Japanese family for 2 years.

She met her husband, a cleaner, through a matchmaker. He worked at the airport and Mdm Enah joined him there as a cleaner. Her husband was already about 60 years old and had 3 children with his first wife who had by then passed on when she married him. He passed away in 1985 due to illness. She continued to work at the airport till she retired about 10 years ago. Her income then was about \$300 and with overtime, about \$500. So there was not much to save after all the expenses. Thereafter, she made cakes to sell to make ends meet. Only one stepson is in contact with her and helps out irregularly over these years.

About one and a half years ago, Mdm Enah had to stop making cakes for sale as she found it difficult to walk due to poor health and weak legs. She had gone for checkups at the polyclinic in late 2011 but due to poor family support, lack of funds and illiteracy, she did not continue follow up with the doctors.

Filos started befriending her some time in Nov 2011. Our befriending services have assisted Mdm Enah in the following ways:

- Escort to the polyclinic for follow up with the doctors for her chronic diseases (hypertension and hypercholesterolaemia)
- Help her to comply with medications for hypertension and high cholesterol through weekly pill minding
- Apply for public assistance funding from SECDC – this eventually came through successfully in Jan 2013
- Provide monthly groceries whilst waiting for PA funding approval to come through
- Referral for geriatric assessment for dementia (Filos' home based mental health screening assessed her for depression and dementia)
- Referral for orthopaedic assessment for her knee pain – she was diagnosed to have osteoarthritis and given steroid injections to ease the pain. She was offered a knee operation but Mdm Enah is afraid and doesn't want to go for surgery. ♦

Love is spelt T-I-M-E



In the movie 'I Not Stupid 2', there is a scene which shows a family sitting down to their evening meal after a hard day's work.

• **Scenario 1:**

The children wish their father a Happy Father's Day and pull out their presents for him. The younger son, a primary school aged child, gives him a personalised hand drawn picture, which shows the blackened shadow of his father. When his father asks him what the picture is all about, the boy switches off the lights of the room and asks everyone to look at the father. Indeed, all that is seen of the father is a black shadow of his profile. The child quips that this is what his perception of his father is like, as his father often comes back late at night, when the house lights have all been turned off.

• **Scenario 2:**

The older son, a teenager, then pulls out his present for his dad. He has bought his dad a shaver. The dad opens it, and instead of showing appreciation, the teenager gets a scolding for having wasted his money on buying the shaver, which his dad already has, and does not need. The teenager unhappily sulks in his corner.

• **Scenario 3:**

The family finally get down to eating. Before long, the teenage son receives a call on his mobile. He is immediately reprimanded and told to put away his phone. Even as this word is spoken, dad's phone begins to ring. Dad is engrossed in the conversation with his friend about where the best rojak and kueh tu-tu stalls in Singapore are located. Shortly after, mum's phone rings too, and she engages in a conversation about the latest shopping sale spots in Singapore. Even grandma's phone goes off, and the Filipino maid who serves them, also gets a call on her mobile. The scene ends with the 2 boys heaping food onto their plates and walking off to their own rooms.

This scene may well reflect the challenges that parents face juggling work life and family commitments, especially the task of bringing up kids rooted in character and values. 4 important principles may be learnt from this story and they spell : T-I-M-E.

Time

In our busy and fast paced society, time is a rare commodity, especially when parents have to face demanding work schedules that take them away from the home for long hours. (The child in

scenario 1 envisions his dad as a black shadow.) Yet the benefits of spending time with our children, especially in their developmental years, remains undisputed : we build precious bonds of relationship with our children when we spend time together with them, we begin to understand them better as we communicate with them and share their world, we build a store of happy memories that build into our children's emotional health and positive experience of family life and relationships that in turn will affect their own relationships with others.

How can we prioritise time for our family so that they receive the best of our energy and efforts, instead of the crumbs we have to offer after we are spent at the office? A good way would be to block out sacred time for your spouse and your children. This will help to bring balance to a crowded calendar of events. Our appointment with our family is as important as the boardroom meeting with our clients or directors. As far as possible, lock into your diary, the time you want to give to your family on a daily or weekly basis. Build in your holiday plans early too, so that your calendar doesn't get crowded out with other commitments and you find that there is no slot of time left for your family. They should have your priority!

Influence

The window of opportunity to influence our children in their formative years closes very quickly. With post modern influences encroaching on the mindset of our children, with the paradigm of relative truth holding the hearts and minds of our next generation, it becomes urgent that parents inculcate time honoured values in their children from a young age. Younger children especially are very receptive to teaching and coaching. The wise King Solomon has said : 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.' Keeping a warm and close relationship with our children is also important, so that we can continue to influence them, even when they are in the older teenage years. Keep communication channels open and manage conflicts wisely, keep anger in reign and check your parenting style, so that you remain an approachable and askable parent to your children.

Modelling

Character is more caught than taught. The parents in scenario 3 were trying to inculcate

good dinner habits to their children by telling them to refrain from using the mobile phone at the dining table. However, the parents did not themselves do what they were trying to tell their children. And that became a major setback, as the children did not see action borne out of instruction. Children very often are not listening to the words we speak, but are most receptive to the actions we display. Children See. Children Do. There is no shortage of negative role models for our children in today's society. The media, arts and entertainment industries have very powerful messages for our next generation that are attractive and alluring. Unfortunately, media messages may not promote positive family values or pro-social behaviour for our children. If we do not role model for our children, the media will. As parents, we need to intentionally model values like integrity, responsibility, respect, compassion, empathy, passion and resiliency to our children.

Encouragement

When the teenager in scenario 2 tries to show appreciation to his dad, he is scolded instead. What a downer to his good intentions! As parents we form the first line of emotional support to our children, especially when they are young. Many of us will remember the early days of childhood when we applauded and celebrated the milestone achievements of our children when they took their first steps or when they spoke their first words. Yet, these words of praise and encouragement grow less as the years go by, replaced by harsher words of reprimands and nagging reminders to be on better behaviour. We need to remember that our children need to be encouraged and appreciated, just like plants need sunshine to grow healthily. When our children have a healthy self esteem, it will enable them to face the challenges of life with better resilience. Alvin Price has said, "Parents need to fill a child's bucket of self esteem so high that the rest of the world can't poke enough holes to drain it dry." Fill the emotional tank of your child and watch him conquer the world! Parenting is ultimately a journey of love for a lifetime with your child.

And LOVE to a child spells T-I-M-E! ◆

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Filos' programs and activities are funded largely by contributions from donors. Your contribution will help FILOS improve the well being of the less fortunate in our midst as we endeavour to reach many more individuals in the community.

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Cash donation can be made at our office.

For cheques, kindly make cheques payable to "Filos Community Services Ltd" and mail to 408B Upper East Coast Road, Singapore 466484.

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