

Heart 2 Heart

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BCCS Newsletter issue #2017/4



What do you know about BCCS?

OK, you know that BCCS stands for Bartley Community Care Services. What else do you know about it? What does it do? Why do they do what they do? Who funds it?

Every year for the past four years, BCCS has made it a point to create a buzz over 3–4 weeks around BCCS to address these very questions and more. The main objective of creating this buzz is to raise awareness amongst the congregation of Bartley Christian Church of BCCS' mission, vision, programmes as well as its challenges. Through its messaging and its activities, it hopes to muster support any which way—financially, physically and spiritually from the congregation of Bartley Christian Church, the main source of BCCS' volunteers, donors and supporters

This year was no different, in that, no effort was spared in putting together three weeks of activities which though similar in objective was to be different from previous years so as to cause many to sit up, do some soul searching and

hopefully, rise to the call if and when they hear it. The fact that so many came forth to help out in the activities of the BCCS awareness month was in itself heart-warming.

The theme this year was "Celebrating God's Goodness".

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The Awareness Month began with a sermon by Senior Pastor Alvin Tan of Bartley Christian Church, reminding audience of great things God has done in their lives and because of that, they are to be ambassadors of light to their community. The following week, guest speaker, Pastor Eugene Seow, Executive Director of Touch International reinforced and drove home the message that 'greater

things are yet to come'. He added that acts of faith when seen by God will lead to desired results and to greater things and made the call to listeners to be agents of blessings to the community regardless of race or religion.

For the first time, BCCS held a forum on the third week where leaders, Mr Michael Chay, (Chairman of BCCS Board), Mr Kenneth Teo (Director of Programmes and Services), Ms Low Lye See (Director of Operations) were asked some 'hard' questions such as whether what BCCS has done is good enough by moderator, Ms Olivia Siong. Programme volunteers were also represented by Mrs Grace Soh and Ms Katherine Koh who were asked about the motivation, the intangible rewards and challenges behind their volunteer work with BCCS. Feedback from the audience was positive as answers they heard revealed the depth of the heart of BCCS and its volunteers.

Mr Michael Chay, Chairman of BCCS wrapped up the awareness campaign by reminding all that each is capable of doing

greater things if they 'abide in God and He in them' as 'God can do great works in and through them'.

A costume jewellery station selling pieces creatively and skilfully hand-made by Madam Sandra Teong was a major draw for the crowd, especially the ladies, to the BCCS exhibition over three weeks. Sandra and her husband Mr Chong Chung Nee generously donated all proceeds from three weeks of sales to BCCS.

BCCS' beneficiaries were also present for two weeks to showcase and sell handicrafts they had learnt to make in the HOPE programme.



▲ Costume Jewellery by Sandra at station manned by young volunteers.



▲ Beneficiaries beaming proudly behind their handicrafts.

The BCCS Awareness campaign can also be seen as a platform which brought together leaders, volunteers, beneficiaries, donors and supporters of BCCS bonding as fellow human beings.



▲ Happy sampling of food prepared with pride and joy by beneficiaries. ►





▲ Beneficiaries 'sharing the goodness' with their yummy homemade food.

Another highlight of the three-week campaign was a novel hamper packing contest. Families, friends, cell group members came together to create hampers which after the judging were presented to needy families that BCCS is supporting. The contest drew out not just the creative juices of the contestants but more importantly, the warmth and generosity in them towards the disadvantaged.

The BCCS Awareness campaign can also be seen as a platform which brought together leaders, volunteers, beneficiaries, donors and supporters of BCCS bonding as fellow human beings. The 2017 BCCS awareness campaign may be over but the work of BCCS is never done. Many will press on with its work to touch hearts and to build lives.

Generous donations were dropped into this box each week ▲



▲ Part of the 31 beautiful hampers submitted for the hamper packing contest.

And there is HOPE

A new programme by BCCS took off in April after several months of survey to identify unmet needs of disadvantaged groups BCCS had had contact with. Called HOPE for short, this 'Holistic Outreach Program to Empower' aims to reach out to both parents and children from disadvantaged families with multiple challenges.

HOPE comprises four key areas of support for the beneficiaries—**Life Skills Training, Counselling & Guidance, Child Befriending, and Tuition.**

Under **Life Skills Training**, specially designed training programs for Literacy Skills, Career Skills and Personal Development Skills were introduced to equip parents with skills to make meaningful contribution to society and more importantly, to empower them to be independent.

Creative Handicrafts held from 3rd April to 15th May 2017 taught participants the making of hairclips, fabric flower toilet roll holder and basic Crochet. Objective here is to give them a skill to bring in supplementary income.

Family Household Economics talk held on 21st April 2017 served to impress upon them the importance of having a household budget and managing it well.

Basic Hairdressing course was conducted from 12th June 2017 to 28th September 2017 in the hope that beneficiaries upon learning this skill can either take up a hairdressing job or provide hairdressing services under the home-based small scale business scheme.



▲ Engrossed in learning creative handicraft.

The beneficiaries of this course has started since September to provide free hair cut to elderly residents of Econ Medicare Centre with a plan to do so monthly—a clear example of sharing the goodness.

Other courses in the pipeline include **Basic Computer Skills, Communication Skills, Baking and Beauty Therapy.**

Under **Counselling and Guidance**, families are being counselled privately on their specific family issues, a much needed support that is hard to come by.

Under **Child Befriending**, a big brother/sister (thanks to our young adult volunteers) is assigned to befriend and encourage a child at risk through monthly indoor and/or outdoor activities. BCCS

hopes that through regular interaction, the child can develop trust in the volunteer, to confide in him/her and to look up to him/her. Based on feedback of parents, the pairing of 2 girls with a big sister each and 2 boys with a big brother each after their first outing to National Gallery Museum, and to the 'Piece of Peace' Exhibition respectively seem to have been a big hit with the children.

Under **Tuition**, BCCS provides academic help to both primary and secondary school students from these families on weekdays at HOPE Centre.

BCCS believes this holistic approach in supporting each member of disadvantaged families will be more effective in getting them out of the vicious cycle of poverty.



▲ Learning the ropes of the trade—hairdressing.

"I am touched to see how strangers have become friends as a result of encouraging one another to talk about their problems. I have learnt precious life's lessons and about how giving a little help can go a long way."

HOPE's programme executive, Tiffany Yong says of her work.

We can COPE!

Groundwork for yet another programme targeting specifically at the elderly living within the Lorong Lew Lian estate is in progress.

Since the agreement to partner the Southeast CDC to run COPE (Community Outreach Programme for Elderly) earlier in the year, much work has gone into recruiting new volunteers. Their first task was to go out to do surveys on the health and living conditions, identify needs and preferences of the elderly so that services and activities can be tailored accordingly.

To kick-start the COPE program, an outreach event, "Let's Move Together" was held on 27 May 2017 where a free physical mobility test was offered to assess level of mobility and to gather basic data & health concerns of the elderly present. Prior to event, volunteers went door to door painstakingly to invite and persuade the elderly to this event, dangling the incentive of a goodie bag for attendance. Thankfully, 92 turned up.

Another event, this time a health check on blood pressure & for diabetes conducted by the National Health Group in collaboration with Southeast CDC and Braddell Heights Senior Citizens' Active Aging group on 14 July gave the BCCS' team of surveyors the opportunity to interview & gather data on the health condition of 30 odd elderly present as they awaited their turns for the check-up.



▲ 'Team supporting the 'Let's Move Together' event.

"When I witness the simple joy of the elderly when we take them to a meal or visit a place of the past in their memory, I am inspired to do more for them! What is tough in my job is the demise of the elderly that I have become so fond of!"

Keith Chew, programme executive for Family Zone and COPE has this to say of his job.



Training is being rolled out to prepare and qualify volunteers for COPE, the new BCCS programme slated to commence officially only in 2018.

Meanwhile, the elderly who have attended the health screening and physical mobility assessment events will be included in age-appropriate activities being organized to give the volunteers an opportunity to meet and connect with them.

▲ Elderly showing their appreciation at the Let's Move Together' event.

Out of classroom Fun and Enrichment

This year, as part of the KidsAglow's programme, children and their families were taken to Night Safari in June to experience closer contact with nature and wild life. In August, it was another outing to the National Museum to connect with history all as part of their enrichment programme.

Objective for outings is to let glimpses into the past and new experiences of the present enrich their learning, their lives.

Under the CAPLE programme, children and parents were given the opportunity to bond through joint exploration and observation at the National Orchid Garden in July with emphasis on the letter 'N' associating items with words like 'nation', 'national'.



▲ At the museum.



▲ Kids posing at Orchid Garden, Singapore Botanical Gardens.

Objective for outings is to let glimpses into the past and new experiences of the present enrich their learning, their lives.

The field trip to Pasir Ris Park in August was disrupted due to a heavy downpour but turned into a great time of fun and bonding for eager parents and children through games at Bartley Church instead.



▲ Children and parents and volunteers make a happy sight!



▲ Taking instructions attentively from programme head, Deborah Pay before the action.

Search and shoot—Laser Tag excitement! ▼

The **Tuition @ Bartley** group had their share of fun and bonding on 9th September at the open space and community hall near BCCS' Hope Centre, playing thrilling team games like LaserTag, Captain's Ball and more.

Ten innovative game stations were set up and manned by some 70 young adult volunteers. Objective of event was to promote the 'Study hard, Play hard' ethos for students. It was to be "back to hard work" preparing for the year end examinations after this break.



▲ Smiling faces say it all—"We had a great time!"

Whodunnit?

Have you ever wondered who are the people behind the posters and materials that you see online and offline promoting or showcasing BCCS' activities? Well, this issue of Heart2Heart is pleased to give you a little peep into the personalities behind these creative pieces of work. First, what do these BCCS' creative designers have in common?



Tan Wee Ling, a freelance graphic designer, was responsible for the design of BCCS' corporate brochure, the 2016 Annual Report, newsletters, and all BCCS Walkathon 2017 publicity collaterals

How would you describe yourself?

I am a true blue introvert who loves to sit at home. I may not do well with crowds, but enjoy one-to-one sharing.

What do you think is/are your strength(s)?

I like aesthetically pleasing things and seek to make nice things. I enjoy thinking of ways to make things look nicer.

What do you enjoy doing most?

Watching TV, surfing on the internet, spending time with my family.

How long have you been involved with BCCS and in which area did you first serve?

I have been doing what I am doing now, supporting BCCS in graphics since 2015.

Well, for a start, all 3 carry the surname 'Tan', they are all female and they have a heart for doing what they believe is for the glory of God. Read on to know them better as they answer questions about themselves and their involvement with BCCS.

Is designing for BCCS your first brush with designing for a charity? What motivated you?

I have been a designer since 2001 and had a brief project with World Vision once. I believe God gave me an eye for the aesthetics, and my vocation was gifted to me by God supernatural way. There is no doubt that I would serve God in this area.

Is design work for BCCS any different from design work for commercial organisations?

Yes, as a small business owner, with my in commercial projects, the relationship is purely client focussed. For BCCS, there is a larger purpose. I have a chance to be part of something bigger, to see a bigger picture and have more leeway to sell my idea as I have a stake in the project.

Where do you get your inspiration for the graphic designs you do for BCCS materials?

Everywhere, what I see on the TV, on the road in my travels, in books and magazines, and the internet.

What were the challenges and your greatest satisfaction when doing design work for BCCS?

It is always nice to see my designs, especially those I like, up. I always hope that these graphic collateral will serve to inspire others to support the BCCS cause.



Vania Tan, a designer by profession was responsible for all of BCCS' programme logos and also for the look and feel of the revamped BCCS website

How would you describe yourself?

I'm both an introverted and an extroverted person depending on what I'm doing or where I am. I'm quite a people's person and love a good time of chat and sharing. Sometimes it's nice to get out there to have some fun but other times to just find a quiet place to relax and be by myself. I'm known to be carefree and always up for a good laugh. I've never been a sporty person but ask me out to walk in nature or along the marina bay and I'm up for it!

What do you think is/are your strength(s)?

I think being able to communicate and connect with people would be my strength.

What do you enjoy doing most?

I enjoy doing art. Having the time and luxury of materials would be a blessing.

How long have you been involved with BCCS and in which area did you first serve?

I was involved in BCCS just a year back. It was a period of time that BCCS was looking into having a website to showcase all their programs and activities as well as to aid volunteer registration. Along with that was to spruce up their Facebook page too. I served in the area I was most familiar with and that was in designing. It was a privilege to have worked on the overall feel and look of the BCCS website, the program logos and various publicity images.

Is designing for BCCS your first brush with designing for a charity? What motivated you?

Using my design skills for BCCS is not my first brush with designing for a charitable organisation. In fact, I am serving full time in YMI which is an initiative for young people aged 18-25 under Our Daily

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Tan Qiu Ling, a social worker, designed the publicity materials for the 2017 BCCS Awareness month and the new programme flyers.

How would you describe yourself?

I am an ambivert with a penchant for coffee (iced lattes please!). I enjoy going to art museums and reading anything from poetry to history.

What do you think is/are your strength(s)?

I don't think I have much remarkable strengths as I'm quite ordinary!

What do you enjoy doing most?

I enjoy catching up with friends as well as having reflective and authentic conversations with anyone who's willing to share. I also enjoy the drawing, writing poetry and listening to "emo" music.

How long have you been involved with BCCS and in which area did you first serve?

I first signed up to help in CAPLE but started volunteering in April 2017 to come up with publicity materials for the BCCS Awareness month.

Is designing for BCCS your first brush with designing for a charity? What motivated you?

I've done graphic design first in my maiden church where I designed posters for outreach events as well as publicity materials for in-house bulletins. Thereafter, I've also had the chance to serve in varsity fellowship as an exco member for the publicity department where I designed posters for fellowship events.

Vania Tan (con't)

Bread Ministries as a graphic designer. I've always been involved one way or another for churches and friends. I believe if I am able to help and have the capacity to provide my design services, then I'll do so gladly. It's especially encouraging when I get to see how it benefits the work or the person and that to me is one way the Lord has equipped me to bless and serve and glorify Him ultimately.

Is design work for BCCS any different from design work for commercial organisations?

Designing for BCCS is no different from a commercial organisation in the skill front of things. Design and delivery of concept remains crucial for its intended purpose. The only big difference is the purpose they hold.

Where do you get your inspiration for the graphic designs you do for BCCS materials?

My inspiration comes from hearing about the vision and nature of

I first picked up design as a mass communications student in a local polytechnic and have been fiddling and experimenting with design ever since. I was motivated to help out in graphic designing since God has allowed me to refine my skills and creativity through various projects in different settings throughout the years. I also believed that my prior training in communications is a gift from God, equipping me to contribute to His ministry.

Is design work for BCCS any different from design work for commercial organisations?

I wouldn't know, as I've only done design work for church and fellowship groups and occasionally, as a freelancer. My experience working on the promotional materials during the BCCS month was that everyone is very willing to accept ideas as well as share knowledge and feedback about the design concepts proposed.

Where do you get your inspiration for the graphic designs you do for BCCS materials?

I gather inspiration by letting the theme incubate for a period of time. I would think of various ideas and try to visualize them in my mind without acting on it. After I've reached a certain saturation of ideas, I would then sit down and try to re-create them on the computer.

What were the challenges and your greatest satisfaction when doing design work for BCCS?

To me, the greatest challenge was in the amendment process where various details and changes had to be done incrementally as we pass through different levels of vetting. As I am not detail-oriented, I tend to get a bit overwhelmed trying to follow through on the changes.

The greatest fulfilment for me was being able to learn some tips of the trade from those I partnered with, such as Lye See (with regard to design concept) and Doreen (with regard to technical details for printing). Their constructive feedback and generosity to share made the learning process fun and engaging for me.

BCCS. I knew it had to be vibrant and applicable to the young and yet obvious to the older what the programme's about. Icons act as great visual clues to help the viewer know what each programme is about. Inspiration are often found from a scribbling on paper to searching Pinterest and thinking in the shower.

What were the challenges and your greatest satisfaction when doing design work for BCCS?

One of the biggest challenges is how the graphics look on the web. As I am not entirely proficient in web design, it took me a while to ensure things look decent. Also, time taken to do it outside of work and ensuring it meets the deadline. However, usually the project that takes the most time and thereafter yielding the greatest response is always the most satisfying. This BCCS EZ-link card was one such project.

Overall, the greatest challenge has always been the self-doubt in me to achieve the task at hand.



Of Discovery, Learning And Change

By Low Lye See

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step (Lao Tzu).

My first step into community work with BCCS was taken in 2009 when I volunteered with the Learning Family Program. Unknowingly, I had stepped into a sphere of life that hardly intersected with mine. Given the nature of the program, I did know I would be interacting with people of a different social class. But little did I realise how ill-prepared I was to encounter the various ethnic groups, each with behaviours and values so unlike mine I was not necessarily always comfortable.

An inner struggle began as I privately acknowledged the reproachable feelings of bias, racism and superiority that started to surface. Emotional baggage from my past had certain racial resentment buried that was unaddressed, now emerging. A self-righteous attitude had me judging certain behaviours unfavourably. My inability to accept certain cultural practices bred silent disapproval.

But, these were the very people loved by God and He had invited me to join His work of caring for them.

So I persevered despite my personal misgivings, and continued to do the work faithfully. I was soon to discover that the

more interactions and experiences I had with the beneficiaries, the more my eyes opened while my heart chastened and softened.

I learnt that behind each individual, there is a story:

The ill-mannered child so greedily devouring the communal snacks at our tea-break, was in fact just famished and having his first meal of the day at 3pm.

The clueless, naive young mother who could not articulate her husband's job

prejudice began to give way to acceptance and love. To my amazement, field trips, festive events, and simple day-to-day interactions actually became joy-filled. I came to conclude that as much as this is a work of caring for the poor and needy in the community, it is simultaneously a journey of God's gentle teaching and moulding of my flawed character.

There have been many more steps taken since, leading me to be more deeply involved and dedicated to BCCS' cause: caring for disadvantaged individuals and families in the hope of touching their hearts and building their lives.

When my journey finally ends with that last step into heaven for eternity with God, I look forward

to seeing the many who had served with me, as well as the many whose lives had been touched because of this community care work that we are doing today through BCCS.

Writer volunteered with BCCS in 2009, was co-opted into the BCCS Board in 2013 and appointed to the position of Director of Operations in Jan 2016. She continues to serve as a volunteer in the BCCS' CAPLE programme. Her passion for the work of BCCS is widely recognised and highly contagious.

I also saw that I did not choose to serve out of compassion, but that I am learning compassion as I serve

and educational level was actually an illiterate foreigner.

And the thrice-married mother with a blended family was only driven by desperate circumstances.

I also saw that I did not choose to serve out of compassion, but that I am learning compassion as I serve. I saw that I had not looked at each as a fellow human, but I am learning to see past ethnicity and background.

With countless more divine teaching moments handed me along the way, the

More Than Just A Walk



Oct 18th, 2017, 'Sharing the Goodness' Walkathon was finally upon BCCS. After five months of detailed planning, laborious rounds of dealing with authorities, suppliers, sponsors, designers, registration and lots of prayers, the organising team led by Ms Low Lye See and Mr Kenneth Teo could not have been more pleased with the outcome.

Weather was near perfect, much appreciated especially since it had been raining almost every day in the prior week. Blessed with sunny, clear blue skies, five hundred or so participant, young and old (from those under a year old and in strollers to many above 60 years or even over 70 years) assembled at St Gabriel's Secondary School before 8am. After short welcoming and thank you speeches by Mr Kenneth Teo, BCCS' Director Of Programmes and Services, Mr Michael Chay, Chairman of BCCS, and Guest of Honour, Mr Seah Kian Peng, MP for Marine Parade GRC, the participants were sent off with the blasting of air-horns and the release of balloons.

Bedecked with sunshades, hats and umbrellas, participants took a leisurely walk from Serangoon Ave 1, to Sunshine Terrace. At the first check point, they were to guess the number of durian trees in Lorong Lew Lian before proceeding

to Eden Grove to admire the well shaded children's playground. Then, on to Upper Serangoon Road passing Youngberg Memorial Hospital on the way and stopping at Checkpoint 2, a Malay cementary called 'Bidadari'. Now, do you know the meaning of 'Bidadari'? Well, neither did most of the participants. 'Fairy' was the answer as suggested by one of the Malay participants.

The participants were then directed by route marshals to cross over to Upper Aljunied Road passing by Alkaff Lake Gardens which was once opened to



the public (1929), the Gurkha Mount Vernon Camp before going underground through Bartley MRT station and finally back to St Gabriel's School on Serangoon Avenue 1 through Bartley Road, not before answering more quizzes.

Back from the 5Km walk, participants were greeted with snacks and more drinks including refreshing and invigorating cold Milo from the familiar, ubiquitous Milo van!

All were welcomed to join in the Fun Day activities that followed, organised and sponsored by Bartley Christian Church to encourage interaction and bonding between family members, between church members, between BCCS beneficiaries and Bartley Christian Church members who are the primary supporters of BCCS.

Besides the mass workout, the young sought entertainment at the many games stalls set up. For the not so young, Telematch races and soccer games provided adrenalin pumping fun. The more elderly were not forgotten. Masseurs from SAVH (Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped) were on hand to give shoulder and foot massage. What a treat!

Like all mass events, this event ended on a high note with a lucky draw. Fortuitously,

Madam Ho Geok Eng, who is BCCS' first beneficiary of 'The Learning Family' programme back in 2008, walked away with the top prize of a 32 inch TV set. Madam Ho and her youngest child are also part of CAPLE's 2017 intake.

Apart from feedback solicited (see below), overheard were positive comments such as 'Walk was a heritage trail...knowledge gained from questions asked along the way', 'Walk route was well planned and enjoyable', 'Definitely better than lazing at home on this public holiday'.

Fund-raising target reached, walk was enjoyed by all, people bonded as intended. BCCS can proudly say, 'Mission accomplished!'



WHAT PARTICIPANTS AND VOLUNTEERS HAD TO SAY



Youth volunteers from Bartley Church and BCCS' KidsZone had lots to say of what they saw as route marshals. 'Cardio without doing anything', 'Legit family bonding—rarely seen', 'People actually looking happy walking under the hot sun', 'participants were very friendly'... Seriously, they found it heartening that this event had brought people together, bonding, burning it out and in the process got to be more aware of what BCCS is all about. Great job volunteers, wise words too! Proud of you all guys!



Grace, 12 was grateful for this time to catch up with Gwen, 14 as they haven't had the opportunity to chat since their parents went to different cell groups. While Grace's parents signed her up for the walkathon, Gwen said she wanted to show support for BCCS, and saw this an opportunity to walk with beneficiaries and to get to know them. Did she get to know any beneficiary? Perhaps, they were too busy catching up?



Mummy Ruby likes to walk, so daddy Wei Yao acquiesced to signing up for the Walkathon. Ruby and Wei Yao mindful too that this a fund raising project for BCCS, worked at collecting donations while Charis and Daryl chipped in with their own money. Daryl was amazed by the number of millipedes and centipedes he saw along the route and was certain that Singapore has the most bugs in the world!



Rozilaini with two of her triplets, Nabila and Nadia who are with Tuition@Bartley programme signed up as she thought this would be a great way to meet friends and to walk with the family. They had fun seeing many places especially buildings they had never noticed before.



G.O.H., Mr Seah Kian Peng, just before bidding farewell, said that he found the event most heart-warming as he could see so many people including beneficiaries taking time to come together to bond. Mr Seah and his wife, Jean walked the entire 5km route and even sportingly 'grooved' in the mass workout that followed.

Bartley
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