

Every child deserves a home
Feng, our new boy, on his first leadership trip
Interview with social work assistant Angelin
Boys' Town Charity Movie Night
Youth support groups



“Every child deserves a home”

Mrs Irene Loi addressing the media on the new fostering service

As a child, you would have memories growing up, going for outings with your parents and enjoying a meal together.

There are children in Singapore waiting for a home where they can share the warmth of a family that treasures them.

These are newborns, preschoolers or secondary school students who are unable to remain with their natural families for the time being or even permanently due to absent parents or the danger of abuse and neglect.

Boys' Town will be working closely with the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) on a new fostering service in 2015 to close this gap. There are about 330 children on MSF's Fostering Scheme today.

As one of the first voluntary welfare organisations selected to be a fostering agency, we will be helping to recruit more foster parents to help achieve safety

and well-being in a family-focused environment for children in need.

If their applications are successful, foster parents can indicate the age and gender of children whom they feel they can best care for. They will be matched to a child according to the child's needs and their ability to care for the child.

If you have room for love and are open to inviting these children to be part of your family, please contact us at our fostering hotline 9113 7612 for more information.



Minister Chan Chun Sing's visit to Boys' Town on 26 Feb to announce the launch of the fostering agencies

Types of foster care

- **Short-term**
Carers look after children for a few months while plans are being made for their future.
- **Respite care**
When children stay for a while with a foster family, allowing parents or usual foster carers to have a rest period.
- **Long-term**
When children stay with a family for a year or more until their parents are able to care for them.

Help available

Training to ensure you are clear about your responsibilities

Hotline and support to ensure you are able to ask for help and are aware of the child's needs, behaviours and background

Access to financial support for the child's basic essentials such as food, clothing and school fees

Who can apply?

- Singaporeans or PRs
- At least 25 years old, preferably married
- Must be medically fit to care for children
- Attained secondary school education
- Preferably have experience caring for and living with children
- Have a minimum monthly household income of \$2,000
- Prepared to protect and maintain the child's privacy
- Agree to participate in training organised by the Ministry

Find out more: www.msf.gov.sg/fostering

Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends and Benefactors' of Boys' Town

The needs of the poor and vulnerable are great with hundreds of youths in residential homes and more cases of children experiencing abuse and domestic violence.

Against great odds, we choose to invest in these young lives to make a difference. With your partnership and enduring commitment, we are able to expand our work to ensure they can always find a shoulder to lean on and the resilience to press on.

As we meet more children facing complex traumas, we have rolled out plans to introduce adventure therapy to help them overcome challenges and gain confidence in their abilities, while promoting healthy and effective psychological and social development.

Also in the pipeline is a new fostering service with the Ministry of Social and Family Development to find safe and loving homes for children whose parents are unable to provide care and support.

In this issue, we share more about the new fostering service and how we help empower our children and their families who are in conditions of need or hardship.

We seek your support to defend the weak and the fatherless with us and uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed (*Psalm 82:3*). Together, we can restore broken lives and heal hidden hurts.



Irene Loi
Executive Director
Boys' Town



Feng, our new boy, on his first leadership trip



Discussion and journaling time

One of the most fascinating and fulfilling things about youth work is watching our young people grow and develop as individuals.

Earlier in March, 18 boys were brought on a trip to Balai, Indonesia, sponsored by EMC Corporation. Together with EMC volunteers, they worked to build a small canteen for a school which reaches out to the community kids and orphans.

The boys were also taken on a camping trip where senior leaders were tasked to take on a guiding role and teach the newer leaders how to pitch a tent. The experience allowed the boys to realize that their role as a leader is to serve those they lead.

Feng, an articulate and helpful boy, was one of the new leaders. His parents enrolled into Boys' Town five months ago as they were concerned over him skipping school.

"I am not sure why I behaved that way," he says. "I think it could be partly rebellion and partly disinterest in studies."

Spending time here has allowed Feng to confide in other boys. "I felt relieved when I shared my stories and we could relate to one another."

Feng found the Camp Solo Night the most memorable. During this time, senior boys and staff patrolled the campsite but the boys were left alone for the most part to rest and reflect. "It was really dark and all I had was a small head lamp. I made a mental map of where the other boys were so I won't feel alone."

When journaling, Feng said the experience in darkness brought back the thought of being surrounded by problems. "There will always be challenges around us, but I learnt that I can choose to overcome them and walk confidently."



(From left) Older leaders conducting a lesson; Solo night

Social Work

Interview with social work assistant Angelin

Angelin Pereira, 24, is a new social work assistant who joined us in October 2014.

“Being the only child, I had to learn to make friends and build my own companions,” she says. That developed her interest in relationships and reaching out to others in need.

After completing her diploma in Psychology and Community Services in a local polytechnic, she worked as a special education teacher supporting children with autism. She then became a child development officer in a children’s home, taking care of the day-to-day programmes.

Her passion for helping others grew stronger. But Angelin’s meaningful progress was not without personal frustration. She often felt handicapped by her diploma amongst her colleagues who were social work degree holders. Despite feeling left behind, she worked hard to keep her spirits up and saved up money to take up her social work degree this year.

When she landed a job in Boys’ Town, she took it as a stepping stone to help with her university course. Her supervisor, head of the social work department, was a source of inspiration and offered constructive feedback that helped boost her confidence.



Angelin catching up with a boy

“One afternoon, after I consolidated some of our boys’ details for an audit report, she turned to me and said with a smile, ‘You are enough.’ It was a simple message but it really encouraged me to know that I could contribute.”



One of Angelin’s current projects involves packing rations for boys from needy families. Before the end of each month, she would meet with the operations manager to

prepare food and basic essentials for the boys to bring home.

“The rations are based on family size and income and usually comprises rice, noodles, breakfast cereals, canned food and bath essentials,” she says. “They are important to ensure the boys and their families get what is needed to have good health.”

BOYS’ TOWN CHARITY MOVIE NIGHT

18 JUNE 2015 (screening date for both movies)

FILMGARDE BUGIS+ (former Illuma, opp Bugis MRT)

ESTIMATED START TIME: 7-8PM (to be confirmed by the cinema)

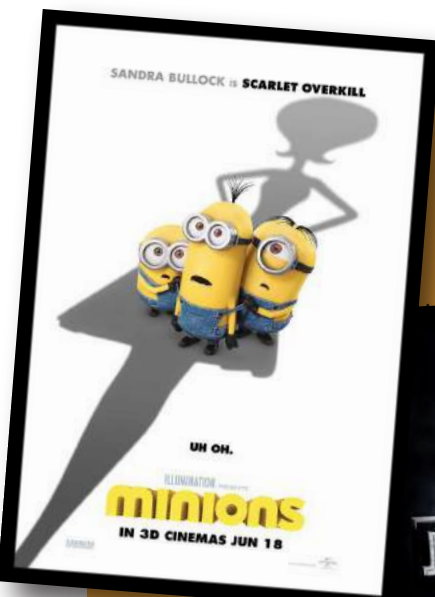
This June, join forces with the minions and dinosaurs to help Boys’ Town! All donations will go to over 300 needy children and youths, and are entitled to 300% tax exemption and 1-for-1 government matching in 2015.

Here’s how you can help:

INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS

- Make a \$50 donation (which entitles you to a movie ticket and combo set)
- Pick a movie (Jurassic World or Minions)
- Grab your tickets at Boys’ Town or at the event. Combo sets will be at your seats.

Interested parties can call our Community Partnerships Department at 6690 5420 for more information or to request for the charity movie donation form.



Who WE ARE...

Boys' Town is a charity started in 1948 by the Brothers of St. Gabriel. We provide residential care, street outreach, community and school-based programmes for over 300 youth-in-need from disadvantaged and disengaged families. We are an institution of a Public Charter (IPC) and a member of the National Council of Social Service.

HELP EMPOWER YOUNG LIVES FOR THE FUTURE

Donate now at www.boystown.org.sg



For enquiries: 6690 5420 or info@boystown.org.sg

IMPORTANT NOTICE

REPORT SCAMS

Boys' Town is not organising the sale of ice cream and handmade pencils to raise funds.

We have put up a notice on our website to notify the public of possible scams. The authorities would like to advise victims to lodge a police report.

If you encounter these peddlers, please check with us before making any donations. You may reach us at the contact details above during office hours Monday to Friday, 9am-6pm, or call our duty officer at 96234731.

YouthReach

Youth support groups



Futsal game with Lend Lease. Mohamad plays the goalkeeper (far left).

Mohamad, is one of the youths in our soccer team, East City Warriors. The 18-year-old is the youngest of four children and comes from a financially disadvantaged family.

His father passed away when he was nine and since then, his mother has been the sole-breadwinner. To help ease financial burdens, Mohamad took on part time jobs since Secondary 1, working as a waiter and a customer service officer.

“Since primary school, I have been going back home to no one except my grandmother, who is now 90,” says Mohamad. “I had to take care of her by bringing her medicine and cooking meals for her.”

But Mohamad shares that he feels lonely most of the time even though he stays with his siblings, mother and grandmother.

“Everyone seems to be on their own even though we live in the same house. Even when I want to talk to someone, there is no one at home I can turn to,” he says.

Mohamad, who is now studying nursing at a local polytechnic, says he usually stays out till 11pm, often studying and hanging out with friends at void decks. That was where he meet a YouthReach youth worker who introduced him to the centre’s soccer programme.

Here, Mohamad is able to find mutual support from his team mates, some of whom are able to relate to his struggles.

Through group work with their youth worker, common needs are addressed including the need to improve social relationships and to cope with feelings of loss and loneliness.

Gwen Koh, Principal Social Worker at YouthReach, shared that at times it is not the lack of supervision that causes a strain in family relationships. “What is key is whether parents have a trusting relationship with their children and spends time to guide them,” she says. “The children need to know what are expected of them and how to honour that.”



Group work by YouthReach allows youths to develop helping relationships. The mutual aid processes allows group members to experience their concerns and life issues as universal, learn from each other’s views and challenges, and reduces isolation and stigma.