



Nothing's Impossible

15 boys took part in a leadership programme and pushed their limits during a sponsored four-day mountain hiking expedition on Mount Rinjani, Indonesia, during the June school holidays.

Training lasted for three months and the team worked on technique, overall fitness and team unity. In the mountain range, they walked across several peaks and ridges each day in the freezing wind and staying overnight in outdoor campsites.

Programme supervisor Suresh said, "Everyone was tired after enduring over 25 hours of uphill trekking. But even on the last day, we persevered. Many boys readily extended a hand to others, including myself, when it got difficult moving up the steep and slippery slopes. I was really moved."

As they closed in to the summit, the team stopped at the mountain's crater lake, Segara Anak, to enjoy a beautiful view of the blue waters and the island of Lombok stretching far below.

To make the extra 1,000m ascent to the very top requires a considerably higher level of fitness and strength of spirit. For every three steps up the steep rocky slope, they had to take one step backwards, clawing with their hands to maintain a grip.

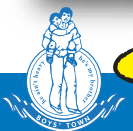
Our youngest climber, 14-year-old Eric* said, "It got really tough but I did not want to give up. I told myself not to think about the pain and took one step after another, even getting on all fours to crawl. Everyone kept encouraging me until I made it to the summit!"

On the way back from Mount Rinjani, the group of 14 to 19-year-olds had a celebration lunch with the staff at Senaru village, which was very reflective and emotional.

Expedition leader and Head of Boys' Town Residential Services, David Lim said, "I cannot say thank you enough to our sponsors for their much appreciated help and support.

The climb was a journey for the boys to better understand themselves and what they can achieve."

**Not their real names.*



NEW ADDRESS

Notice: Visitors to enter by Assumption Pathway School, 30 Cashew Road, until further notice (est end 2015).

Message from the Executive Director

Dear Supporters of Boys' Town

Through the years, we have enjoyed working with like-minded individuals to create a climate teeming with possibilities, and instill a positive attitude in our youth and help break mental barriers that constrain them.

In these pages, you will see our youth take a step outside into a larger world. You will meet the hurt and helplessness they faced, and the healing they experienced through those who have unselfishly and lovingly stood beside them.

In the stories, may you discover the reality of life these youngsters face, and the moments which compel our staff and volunteers to give their best to the children whom others would rather forget.

By the grace of God, and with your help, the youth can emerge with new confidence and fresh perspectives to fuel their passion, plus stories and memories to enrich them for life.

Irene Loi
Executive Director, Boys' Town



First-aid for our boys



Volunteer Liam shows the boys how treat a fractured arm

Before embarking on the mountain expedition, the boys were given two evenings of first-aid training thanks to volunteer Shiling and her husband, Liam.

Both of them are trained doctors and approached Boys' Town earlier in the year to offer their help. After finding out about the climb, Liam put together a customised lesson plan on treating wounds commonly sustained during rigorous activities.

Together with his wife, they taught the boys how to assess injuries and use first aid supplies to treat sprains, burns, deep cuts and broken bones. The room was full of laughter during the hand-on lessons where the boys got to 'patch up' their buddies.

Look at the stars

Jason* and Navin*, both 11, were amongst the few shelter boys who became junior astronomers in May.

They attended a special programme by Stargazing Singapore which aims to get children interested in our universe. In a two-hour session, each participant got to learn about planets, stars, constellations, and many other astronomical wonders.

After an interactive theory class, volunteers Gerarddyn and Desmond, armed with telescopes, brought the boys outdoors to gain practical knowledge of the solar system.

It was a huge night for stargazers in May where Mars made its closest approach to Earth in six years, just ahead of a total eclipse of the moon. Even with such a spectacle, stargazing does require a bit of patience to see why sitting around on a cool dark night and looking up can be fun.

To make the process of learning even more enjoyable, the volunteers taught the boys how to build their own mini telescope kits. Everyone had a great time.

Navin said, "I saw the moon and it had some small grey dots... next to it was an orange planet called Mars. I also spotted Jupiter!"

Hands-on experiences like these encourages the boys to have fun discussing about everything under the sun, and supports them to learn and enjoy learning.

Boys' Town staff Jarren and Hafidz who observed that the children were very interested and could not wait until the next class, have arranged with the organiser to offer the programme several times this year.



Having fun using a telescope

**Not their real names.*

Boys' Town orientation camp

In April, about 50 boys gathered for Boys' Town's annual orientation camp where they got a chance to bond with the staff and one another over food and games.

About 10 per cent of the campers were 15 years or older and served in leadership roles, taking care of the younger boys and encouraging participation during the ice-breakers.

The 4-day event also allowed the boys to grow their confidence while enjoying the outdoors. It had the traditional camp activities such as abseiling, flying fox and rock climbing, but with a focus on reflective activities to teach campers how to empower themselves when things do not go as they planned.

16-year-old Desmond*, a tall and tough young man, had to face his fear of heights during a high element course. Zack, the camp commander said, "Everyone tried to encourage him. When he eventually made the jump and landed safely on the ground, he was in disbelief. The boys asked if he was all right and gave him a pat on the back. It was great to see them looking out for one another."



An older boy helping the younger one up the rock wall



(From left) Manoeuvring through a rope obstacle; Playing "Chase the tail", an ice-breaker game; Campfire night

YouthReach

The road ahead....

James* was your average student – impressionable and susceptible to peer influence. He started smoking with his classmates at the age of 13. Their influence coupled with his curiosity led him to experiment with other drugs over the next few years.

This caused him to have paranoia and hallucinations. He was also fearful of getting caught. Tired of having his life controlled by drugs, James shared with youth worker Shafiee that he wanted to quit his addiction and start doing good.

Under Shafiee's mentorship, James is taking personal responsibility to do all he can to fight temptation. He came to appreciate YouthReach's skateboarding programme and is working with the team to teach the sport to the community.

In July, Shafiee brought James and the skateboard team on a learning trip to Pertapis Halfway House. They met several ex-drug addicts who cautioned them on how substance abuse have led to jail time, chronic illnesses and suicidal thoughts. They encouraged the youth to have a strong resolve to stay away from drugs.



YouthReach skaters took part in Skatesport Singapore Competition

James, 15, was able to relate to their testimonies and it brought a positive change in his mindset and attitude. He thanked Shafiee and said, "I'm more aware of what my future might be like if I choose the wrong path. I hope we can have more sharing sessions with them because their stories are inspiring and motivated me."

The road ahead is filled with challenges but our youth worker is resilient and believes his support and faith in the youth will help them to choose the better option.

**Not their real names.*

Who WE ARE...

Boys' Town is a non-profit organisation started in 1948 by the Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel. Each year, we reach out to 300 children and youth typically between the ages of 10 and 21 who come from disadvantaged and disengaged families, and may have suffered domestic violence, abandonment or the lack of care and financial support.

We are an Institution of a Public Character (IPC) and a member of the National Council of Social Service. We depend largely on the support of public and corporate donations for our daily operations which include residential care, street outreach (YouthReach), and community and school-based programmes.

If you have an enquiry, would like to make a donation or volunteer with us, please contact our Community Partnerships Department at 66905420, email info@boystown.org.sg or visit our website www.boystown.org.sg for more details.

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

Finding strength

Angela* comes from a single-parent family and lives in a rental flat. Her mother has to work long hours to pay the bills, leaving Angela alone most of the time.

Due to the lack of parental figures, Angela sought love and attention by dressing promiscuously and engaging in sexual activity with her male friends. She got her first tattoo when she was Primary Six.

In 2012, something miraculous happened. She started secondary school and met a group of friends who brought her to church. Finding faith in God impacted Angela greatly. She discarded her revealing clothes and focussed on becoming a good student.

However, the road to making amends was filled with obstacles. Angela felt rejected by her peers because of her past and had no friends in school.

Last year, youth worker Genevieve invited her to join our outreach centre's dance programme. The constructive and encouraging climate was a boost to Angela's self-confidence and she was happy to make new friends who do not judge her for her past.

Genevieve met with Angela weekly as part of befriending the girl and providing psycho-emotional support. Her counselling helped Angela discover her strengths in basketball, dance and having perseverance.



(Top) Girls in YouthReach's dance room trying out "baby freeze" breakdance move; (Bottom) Dance camp practice session with volunteer instructor, Zarina

Angela's hard work paid off in 2013 when she did well and was promoted from Normal Academic to Express stream. Genevieve arranged for free tuition classes at the outreach centre and with the Chinese Development Assistance Council (CDAC) to help Angela cope with the new pace in class.

Today, 15-year-old Angela is no longer the lonely girl in school. She confides in people close to her including her church leaders, dance group and family. From a wayward and self-conscious girl, she has grown to become more confident and focussed.

More importantly, she sees the optimistic side of her past choices and has learnt from it. Angela said, "The past few months of practice have taught me to be more self-disciplined. This has helped with my school revision at home. I'm also more sociable and am glad to have made new friends."

**Not their real names.*



Thank you supporters!

We would like to say a big 'thank you' to all volunteers, churches, schools and companies for helping with the Boys' Town Flag Day on 4 June. Over 1800 people were mobilised for this island-wide street collection and raised \$92,000.

We would also like to express our gratitude to all sponsors and ticket patrons who have demonstrated their support for our inaugural Charity Movie on 26 June, Transformers: Age of Extinction, and contributing a total of \$60,000 to help transform lives right here at home.