



Older boys showing their new hostel to guests during the open house tour.

BOYS' TOWN opens NEW CENTRE to help more BOYS & FAMILIES

Boys' Town opened its new integrated centre during its 65th anniversary on 16 August.

The new centre will not only cater to more boys across a wider age group, but also reach out to their families.

The previous two-storey building could house only 60 boys, but the new three-storey centre now has 63 beds for boys aged 11 to 18, a 10-bed shelter and a 10-bed hostel, making a total of 83 beds.

The 10-bed shelter provides a safe environment for victims of physical and sexual abuse. It admits boys 9 to 15 and has two rooms for families. These rooms specially cater to parents who have faced similar crises themselves, and wish to be near their child to help him overcome the same struggle. Currently, four boys – the youngest being 11 – are under this programme.

There is also another 10-bed hostel for older youths who have no family or other forms of social support, and require a place to stay while they complete their National Service or studies and learn to be independent.



Part of the new shelter for boys who have suffered multiple traumas.

These new facilities complement the existing facilities and programmes, and will provide greater help for boys like Mark* who have had a difficult past.

Mark came to Boys' Town after his mum died and his dad abandoned him. His grandmother continued to care for him but she, too, died when he was 13.



Boys enjoying the activity room and its new games presented by kind donors.

His uncle was unable to care for the by-then difficult teen who had started smoking and drinking, and sent him to Boys' Town.

Now 19, Mark is staying in the hostel with five other boys. He says he is glad to have found companions here, and a goal in life, thanks to encouragement from his supervisors and social workers.

Mark did well for his 'O' Level, scoring 18 points, and is currently studying electronic and computer engineering at a local polytechnic. He hopes to become a programmer at IBM one day.

Boys' Town is also opening up its counselling facilities to families referred to it by other social services, allowing these individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to have access to affordable, professional guidance.

Mrs Irene Loi, Executive Director of Boys' Town, said, "Boys' Town has traditionally been associated with residential care for boys aged 11 to 18, and this has been our mission for the past 65 years. However, we have come to realise that a wider spectrum of youth today are at risk, from children as young as six years old, who have suffered various traumas; to older teens who still require care and counselling."

"We seek the continuous support of the public and our generous benefactors, as we launch new programmes to continue our work of reaching out to more at-risk young people and their families in our community," added Mrs Loi.

*Not their real names.

MESSAGE from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends & Benefactors of Boys' Town

As we move into our new building, one fact stands out: the great diversity of facilities and services we have. While each youth's experience that led them to Boys' Town was unique, what brought them together was their need for holistic support that would enable them to overcome their challenges and lead productive lives in the community.

In 2012, we experienced an increase in the number of younger children who have suffered multiple traumas.

As these reports show, a wider spectrum of youth today are at risk, and your support really makes a difference for many of them and their families when they need it most.

To care for more youth and their families, we have launched three new services: Boys' Town Shelter, Boys' Town Hostel,

and counselling services by the Clinical Intervention Centre.

With your help, we can continue to expand our impact through these new and enhanced services in the year to come, working towards creating a far-reaching community of comfort and hope.

On behalf of all the youth and families we serve and will continue to serve, we thank you for your steadfast and generous support.



Irene Loi
Executive Director, Boys' Town



HOME MAKEOVER for ONE-ROOM FLAT FAMILIES



Briefing team mates on the various tasks. Giving the walls a new coat of paint.



Working together to move out a heavy cabinet.

You might have found yourself heartbroken, after reading stories of people housed in poor and painful conditions.

A family of six living in a one-room flat, and surviving on \$250 a month, while enduring loan shark harassments. Grandparents left to take care of their abandoned grandchildren aged 10 and 12. An unemployed woman burdened with having to look after three children and her husband who has stage-four brain tumour.

These are true stories the boys witnessed during a community service weekend on 27 July. They worked together to help families repaint rotten walls; replaced thin, dusty mattresses with new ones; and fixed broken ceiling lights, water taps and tables. They also took time to have a simple meal with the residents, and played games with their children; helping the boys realise how they can bring joy to others with such small acts of kindness, even as they themselves receive assistance from Boys' Town.

"I was humbled when I saw how these families lived," said Roy*, 15.

"It taught me not to take what I have for granted, and to be compassionate towards those in need," added his teammate Alan*, 14.

This activity was organised by our staff and ex-boy, Mr Joseph Chng, who hopes to encourage the boys to step out of their comfort zone, and think of others before themselves.

ONE-NIGHT ONLY PERFORMANCE WITH VERONICA YOUNG & FRIENDS

Let the good times roll with hits of yesteryear like "Stupid Cupid", "My Boy Lollipop" and "My Way".

Popularly known as Singapore's Connie Francis because of her powerhouse vocals, Veronica Young and her friends have kindly agreed to perform for one night to help raise funds for Boys' Town.

EVENT DATE: 9 Nov, Sat
TIME: 7pm-9.30pm. Dinner starts at 7pm.

Limited to 150 seats only. Details are subject to change. Please refer to our website www.boystown.org.sg for updates. To find out more or make a reservation, please contact us at 6690 5420 or info@boystown.org.sg.

*Not their real names.

SHOW some FAMILY LOVE



The boys helping out at the barbecue pit. Playing one of the outdoor games.

He may be a tough and determined triathlete pushing himself to the edge in torturous physical exertion against hundreds of competitors, but Donovan's* heart is as soft as it is strong. The 15-year-old loves being down to earth, and taking on his brotherly role as a leader in Boys' Town.

Putting aside his tough-as-nails persona for the day, he enjoyed some quality time with his parents and his younger brother and sister, on Family Day, 13 July. Throwing himself into the event, he played numerous games, and appeared determined to win a prize for his excited siblings.

Seemingly in high spirits, everyone tucked in to a barbecue lunch prepared by the boys, and took turns playing a line-up of exciting games.

14-year-old Jason* was seen showing off his strength as he carried his younger sister around in his arms. The four-year-old young princess responded with beaming smiles and chuckles while being transported around, caring, by her older brother.

Mrs Koh, one of the boys' mother, said, "I'm very happy to get a chance to spend more time together with my son and develop a stronger family bond."

"This is a perfect opportunity for us to express our love and appreciation for our families through our actions," said Junwei*, 16.

The effort to strengthen family bonds is not limited to such occasions. We encourage the youth to take ownership of their family, and believe they are the key to bridging the gap between themselves and their parents.

We are grateful to the public's contributions, allowing us to plan these family activities on a regular basis.



Teaming up with siblings in the jelly-making competition.

Climbing Malaysia's TALLEST MOUNTAIN



At the cool peak of Gunung Tahan. Hiking down the summit while surrounded by a sea of clouds.

Eight of our boys has conquered Malaysia's highest peak – the 2187 metre-high Mount Gunung Tahan. The group had been training for four months before setting off on their mission on 8 June with two Boys' Town staff and their expedition leader, Mr

David Lim, from Incredible Journeys.

"The moment the summit came within sight was incredible. We looked around and realised that, after three days of relentless climbing, after 60km of hiking up steep slopes, we had actually made it," said Randy*, 17.

"The aching muscles and blisters were all worth it," said

Johal*, 16. "I set out to climb Mount Tahan to redefine what's possible for me. I give up easily when I don't do well at school. This trip has taught me to persevere and overcome my obstacles."

"Reaching the peak of the mountain was the most mentally and physically challenging thing I have ever done. It reminded me of the importance of believing in yourself, and helping others along the way," said Wen Jun*, 14, the youngest climber.

This character development programme was made possible by the support from our partners. We would like to say a special thank you to Changi Airport Group for sponsoring the trip, Republic Polytechnic and Raffles Institution for lending us their cooking equipment and mountain climbing gear, and Tat Hui Pte Ltd for providing the dried foods which sustained the team during the climb.



Crossing one of the major rivers at mid-point of the climb.

Who WE ARE...

BOYS'TOWN was established in 1948 by the Brothers of St Gabriel. Our Home provides boarding and residential care for boys aged 11 to 18 who come primarily from troubled, single parent & financially needy families.

Despite being a registered charity with IPC status and also a member of the National Council of Social Services (NCSS), we depend highly on the generosity of our benefactors & supporters.

If you are interested to donate or volunteer your services you can contact our Community Partnerships Department at 6690 5420 or check out our website: www.boystown.org.sg for more information on how you can make a difference.

We thank you for making the lives of our boys at Boys' Town more meaningful & enriching.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

It has recently come to our attention that there are door-to-door ice-cream sellers claiming to be raising funds for Boys' Town.

We would like to inform you that these activities are not endorsed by us.

We have put up an Important Notice on our website at www.boystown.org.sg to notify members of the public.

If you encounter such peddlers, please do not hesitate to contact us through the email at info@boystown.org.sg and 6690 5420 or if it is after office hours, please contact this number 9623 4731 to check the validity of the fund-raising activity.

From the social worker's desk...

PLAYING with FIRE

"At a young age, I had already played with matches and set a dustbin on fire. In school, I often quarrelled with the teachers and refused to hand up my homework," said Xander*, 16.

His foray into rebellion had probably been fuelled by a variety of factors, including being a witness to domestic violence and having been manipulated by one of his parents to say hateful words.

He entered Boys' Town at age 11. During the initial stages of residential care, he would throw tantrums, and banged and kicked tables and doors.

However, the programme supervisors took him outdoors and exposed him to healthier outlets to express his stress and anger, including kayaking and outdoor photography.

Trust slowly built, and Xander soon opened up to his supervisors and social workers.

"The adults here encouraged and affirmed me," Xander said. "They gave me a feeling of assurance I had not experienced before."



Xander at one of the outdoor photoshoots in Chinatown.

He has also learnt not to judge people so quickly. "I realised that in Boys' Town, when quarrels broke out, people don't hold grudges. It taught me the value of forgiveness. It's like pressing the refresh button and starting over again," he said with a smile.

Xander is now studying hard for his 'O' level at a local secondary school and plans to go to Catholic Junior College.

YouthReach

EMBRACING BROKENNESS



Aaron catching up with a youth.

As one of three youth workers in Youthreach, Aaron Leng befriends youth in the Tampines neighbourhood, with the aim of helping them build their self-esteem, and steer them away from a harmful lifestyle.

Aaron starts his afternoon shift at 1 pm, chatting and playing games with young people hanging out around the estate.

He is regularly mistaken as a plainclothes policeman, so he finds himself having to build trust with the youth.

With patience and some working knowledge of their lingo, he gently pursues them, and waits till he gains their acceptance.

Often times they would test his values. For instance, the youngsters would play card games, and use cigarettes for gambling. Instead of joining in, he would suggest replacing the cigarettes with pull-ups. Taking away something unhealthy and offering appropriate alternatives summarises his mission.

"People ask how I work with these trouble-makers. They have not seen the scars these youths carry inside," he says. "It's about accepting the imperfections. This job changed my understanding of love. Some of them are really unlovable - but they're the ones who need it the most."

**Not their real names.*