

SANCTUARY CARE

Better Together: Living a Life Greater Than Ourselves

HEARTFELT TRIBUTES

Creating *Positive*
Transformation



**Stock image used

Sanctuary for the Little Ones

The cry of a newborn child is a call for not just basic necessities but also love and care. Unfortunately, not all children are able to turn to their parents, who may be struggling themselves. **Boys' Town Sanctuary Care steps in to provide emergency and short-term respite care to children whose parents are undergoing crises with the help of volunteer respite carers. Ruchi is one of these remarkable individuals who has stepped up to offer her time, energy, and love to children and families in distress.** Over the past five years, she has cared for infants as young as seven days old and children up to nine years old.

Ruchi's Support Network on This Journey

It was Ruchi's friend, Poornima, another respite carer, who inspired her to embark on this journey. Witnessing the joy and meaning behind respite care made Ruchi keen to take on the caregiving of vulnerable children. Together, they now walk this path, offering each other encouragement and support.

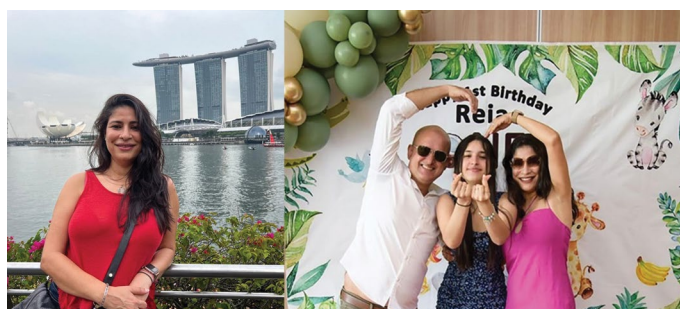
Ruchi admits that respite care does come with its challenges. She recalled a time when she cared for a 10-month-old Baby J while his mother recovered from surgery, where Baby J suffered from severe chest congestion. **While she was initially worried about Baby J's health, with the help of Sanctuary Care staff and other respite carers, Ruchi felt supported and became more experienced in managing the care needs of her respite care children.**

Beyond the community of volunteers, Ruchi attributes the support of her husband, Chetan, as vital in her ability to commit to serving as a respite carer. The tag team worked together to navigate the challenges of caretaking, from

diaper changes for infants, to guiding the children through processing their experiences. Ruchi also emphasises the invaluable support she receives from the social workers at Sanctuary Care, who are available around the clock for guidance.

Newfound Memories of Love & Compassion

The moments spent together leaves a lasting imprint on both Ruchi and her family, and the respite children themselves, as each child becomes a temporary yet cherished part of their family. **It has strengthened their family bonds, teaching them patience, empathy and a deeper appreciation for children's resilience.** By modelling compassion in caring for the children, Ruchi's daughter also became more compassionate and understanding of others. She even joined in for babysitting duties whenever her parents needed a break.



Every Small Act of Love, Goes a Long Way!

Ruchi's story reflects how opening our hearts and extending a helping hand to those in need within our communities, not only transforms the beneficiary's life but also enriches our own in many beautiful ways.

You too can make an impact to these precious lives!
To learn more about being a respite carer,
visit: <https://www.boystown.org.sg/sanctuary-care/>

Message from Brother Dominic

Dear Friends and Supporters of Boys' Town,

Lent begins this year on 5th March, ushering in a sacred season for reflection and renewal of our hearts. Through the three foundational practices of Lent—prayer, fasting, and almsgiving—we are called to embody love through intentional sacrifice. Sacrifice is often seen as something that costs us or takes away. Yet, when we reflect more deeply, we discover that within sacrifice lies the promise of a greater gift—one of love and fulfilment that far outweighs what we give.

Our theme this year, **“Generating Positive Impact,”** celebrates the generosity and commitment of those who, through their sacrifices—whether by dedicating their time or providing resources—have ignited hope and opened new possibilities for the clients we serve. The impact of their efforts not only transforms the lives of our clients but leaves a profound and personal mark for themselves, yielding unexpected and abundant blessings.

We are truly filled with gratitude for all our benefactors who have stood by us, pouring love and resources into the clients' lives. Your generosity is a beacon of hope, creating ripples of change that extend far beyond what the eye can see. As we look to the year ahead, we invite you to continue walking this journey with us. Your unwavering support and love will continue to pave the way for lasting change, transforming lives for the better. Let us embrace this season and the coming year with hearts united by a shared purpose and a vision of hope.

God Bless,

Bro. Dominic Yeo Koh
Spiritual Director
and Board Member



VOICES OF VOLUNTEERISM

CORPORATE PARTNERS *Inspiring* THE NEXT GENERATION



Hand-rolled sushi by residential boy, Fandi*

During the December holidays, our residential boys had the privilege of attending a specially crafted sushi-making workshop led by Chef Joshua Bedell, the Executive Chef of **CÉ LA VI**. This fun and interactive experience not only expanded their culinary knowledge but also encouraged personal growth, giving them valuable skills and memories they can carry with them for the future. We also interviewed Chef Joshua to hear more from him on what sparked his desire to host this lovely experience for our clients and how the experience was for him!

“ I wanted to share a message with the boys to stay positive and remain hopeful for the future! It felt like an important message I wanted to convey, that regardless of our backgrounds, like Dr. Seuss' work, *Oh, The Places You'll Go!*, it is through the pursuit of our dreams that we have a chance to enrich our lives. This enables us to find a foot hold in the world. Through my personal experiences as an orphan, I felt drawn to the good work at Boys' Town. The experience brought a sense of satisfaction to me, as the workshop helped some of the residential boys opened their eyes to another opportunity or path they could potentially navigate. ”



A heartfelt thank you to all our corporate partners for your unwavering support in 2024. Your generosity and dedication to making a positive impact has sown seeds of possibilities in our clients, which will go on to bear lasting fruits.

*Not his real name

FOSTERING SERVICES

2025 marks the 10th anniversary of Boys' Town Fostering Services, and we are planning a three-month campaign and celebration from April to June 2025. One of the key highlights is our virtual walkathon, which aims to rally the community around the theme **“We are the Village”** – inspired by the idea that every child thrives with the support of a caring community.

Information about the fostering scheme, foster parents' stories and details will be available on the virtual walkathon event landing page.

Walkathon Period: 31 May – 30 June 2025

Learn more about Fostering in Singapore as you accumulate your walk/run miles from 31 May to 30 June 2025 to receive e-badges.

Stay in the loop! Follow us on social media for all the latest updates on the walkathon – we'll be sharing exciting news regularly!

Boys' Town Fostering Services

@boystown.fostering-services



RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Adventure, Service and Impact Beyond Borders

The five-day overseas service-learning programme in Bintan, Indonesia, immersed our residential boys in both adventure activities and community service. They collaborated with the amazing team at LooLa Adventure Resort, who used their experience from past projects to combine fun with making a meaningful impact.

Our boys thoroughly enjoyed the climbing and kayaking activities, which provided them with valuable opportunities to challenge themselves and step outside their comfort zones. These activities not only helped them develop physical strength and coordination but also played a significant role in boosting their confidence.

The highlight of the Service-Learning trip was their contribution to the Safe Water Garden (SWG) project, where they were educated on issues faced by villagers who lacked access to treated water. Through the SWG project, they helped prevent diseases and provided essential social and environmental benefits by setting up a system that included a tank, a garden and connecting pipes. Through the experience, residents gained empathy for those facing daily struggles, which fostered a sense of social awareness and compassion.



“ During the trip in Bintan, I often reflected on how fortunate I am to have access to clean water in Singapore. It was heartbreaking to see the family we were helping lack this basic resource. I'm proud to have contributed to building the water garden with my peers and staff, knowing it will have a lasting positive impact on their lives. ”

Residential boy AD's reflection on the service-learning trip

OUR MILIEU PROJECT

Boys' Town's Role in Advancing Youth Mental Wellness



Panelists from the IAHC 2024

Boys' Town had the honour of presenting our mental health initiatives at the recent International Allied Health Conference (IAHC) at the Singapore EXPO from 1 to 2 November 2024. Over 1,100 Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) and industry partners in the field came together to network and witness the launch of the Global Allied Health Network, and shared learnings around the theme of “Advancing Allied Health: Diverse in Calling, United in Purpose”.

Our Director of Clinical Services, Ms Adrienne Sng, introduced Wander-Land, a novel community mental health event by Boys' Town,

as part of our newest initiative targeting children and youth mental health, Our Milieu Project (OMP) to the participants. Speaking on a panel, Ms Sng introduced OMP to experts and industry partners, and shared on the role of OMP as a touchpoint of the care continuum in global health.



Ms Adrienne Sng speaking at the IAHC 2024

In 2025, we hope to continue to bring Wander-Land, a mental health carnival with highly interactive, experiential and playful activities to schools and public spaces. Through the collaborative efforts of mental health practitioners together with community partners, we are dedicated to creating a positive and supportive society where mental wellness is actively encouraged and practised by Singaporeans!

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Boys' Town is honoured to be awarded the **Charity Transparency Award** on 14 November 2024, for the third time in a row. The Charity Transparency Award is an initiative by the Charity Council, recognising charities that have adopted good transparency standards.

We are incredibly grateful for the trust and support from our Board Members, donors, partners, volunteers and the community!



Who WE ARE...

Boys' Town is a charity started in 1948 by the Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel. We provide residential care, fostering, adventure therapy, youth outreach and other community and school-based programmes and services for over 1000 children and youths from disadvantaged and disengaged families. We are an Institution of a Public Character (IPC) and a member of the National Council of Social Service.

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 contact us during office hours, Monday to Friday, 9am - 6pm or call our duty officer at **9623 4731** outside office hours.

Canteen Conversations, Let's Talk about Mental Health!

YOUTHREACH

A 2024 nationwide survey by the Institute of Mental Health revealed that one in three youth have experienced severe symptoms of depression, anxiety or stress. However, one in three who were reported to have mental health problems did not seek help. These youths often go unnoticed within the school environment.

Inspired to make a change, YouthReach kicked off the Canteen Outreach Programme in late 2024 with the aim of increasing youth mental well-being awareness in schools across Singapore. As a pilot programme, YouthReach engaged 338 youths across two schools, and received positive reviews and feedback for the programme.

Here are some of the fun and engaging activities we organised for our youth!

Negativity Blaster

An arcade game where students "shoot down" negative self-statements on a stack of cups using a nerf gun.

Takeaway: This activity encourages students to eliminate negative thoughts, reminding them that they do not have to accept them as part of their identity



Mystery Box



Students are invited to reach into three mystery boxes containing various stimuli.

Takeaway: The inability to see what is in the box sparks a sense of uncertainty. This mirrors how one feels when facing the unknowns in life. By embracing it with courage, we may find that it is less daunting than we imagine it to be.

This year, YouthReach is expanding its Canteen Outreach Programme to six more schools. They will also launch a fun youth-friendly mental health screening tool to effectively assess and identify the socio-emotional-behavioural needs of youths. This allows them to provide tailored coping strategies and continue to be a trusted provider of youth support, building a generation of mentally resilient youths.

We appeal to your generosity and kindness to help us raise **\$150,000** from **3 March 2025 – 3 May 2025** through this Newsletter campaign. Donations received from this appeal will help to support Boys' Town's programmes and operations.

Every \$1,000 can help provide one of the following:



3 MONTHS OF DAILY MEALS
of daily meals for a residential youth



10 COUNSELLING SESSIONS
sessions for a child or youth in need



CASE MANAGEMENT
for 3-4 infants and young children

If you would like to donate digitally via:

PayNow

**BOYS' TOWN
FUND RAISING**

UEN: 201534576H007

For tax deduction purposes, kindly key in your information under reference:

NL <space> NRIC <space> Mobile No.



SCAN TO PAY



(Credit Card)

Boys' Town website
www.boystown.org.sg



Giving.sg

<https://tinyurl.com/BTNLMar2025>



Cheque

Alternatively, you can donate by issuing a crossed cheque made payable to "Boys' Town", and mail to:

624 Upper Bukit Timah Road, Singapore 678212

Kindly indicate 'NL' and include your **name, address, telephone number and identification number (for tax deduction)** on the reverse side of the cheque.

UNSUBSCRIBE

If you no longer wish to be on the Boys' Town mailing list, please e-mail us at info@boystown.org.sg or call **6690 5420**

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