

radiance

2016



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OUR COMMUNITY

By Eugene Nai, MINDSMYG Chairperson

Over the past years, I have attended a couple of weddings between MINDS MYG Volunteers. A large portion of their guests were MINDS MYG volunteers too.

Since 1972, MINDS MYG has grown from being a motley crew of impassioned and earnest volunteers, to an entire community of volunteers, where folks meet, bond over our voluntary purpose, become friends, some of whom then tie the knot.

It is no secret that I am terribly proud to be associated with our community of volunteers.

Our MINDS MYG community of volunteers is one that shoulders being a source of comfort, support and fellowship for our beneficiaries and their parents, over and above the individual personal battles that we all fight.

One of my greatest identity in life is being part of this MINDS MYG community - being with like-minded folks who are not just chasing after their own dreams in society's rat race, but are willing to slow down to walk alongside those that need a little bit of help to chase their own.

Indeed, if I am to be judged by the community I keep, I must be one of the luckiest folks in town. I am sure that some (if not all) of you might feel the same way too.

In this new year, may I wish our entire community of MINDS MYG volunteers, our beneficiaries and their caregivers, all the happiness, peace and contentment, that you can have for yourself and will share with others.

Yours Faithfully,
Eugene
MINDS MYG Chairperson

I FIT, U FIT, WE FIT

By Peiqi and Pei Yong, Westend

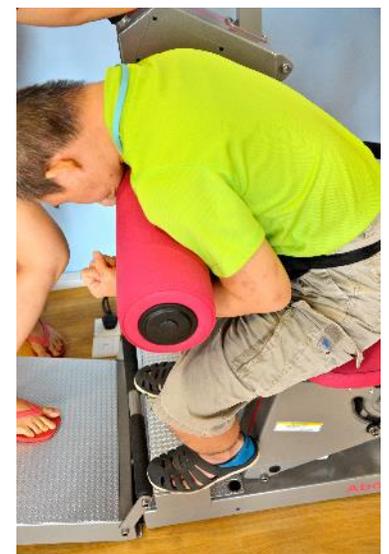
Doing adequate exercise is something that we have been routinely preaching to our trainees for their well-being. Understanding that the chances of our trainees doing workout during weekdays are slim, we hope to include as much exercise into our weekly sessions as possible. And this time round, we were glad to have our experience fitness activities in a brand new way with the latest gym equipment at iFIT in the Enabling Village. iFIT allows PwIDs and the elderly engage in fitness activities alongside able-bodied individuals.



Of course, fitness activities may not be everyone's cup of tea and it is shown evidently on their faces. Some of them cringe even before lifting the load bar whilst others clench their jaws with sweat beads rolling down their foreheads. Regardless, every one of their faces beamed with a sense of achievement after each task. This is when you know that sometimes all they need is just some encouragement to pull through the tasks, just like you and I ☺

More importantly, working on the machines allowed us to better understand our trainees' physical abilities. For example, we noticed how one of our trainees had one leg that was much stronger than the other. These information will help us formulate more focused and customised activities during sessions to train up our trainees' muscles and strength.

We encourage projects to visit iFIT if you have the chance.



SPORTS DAY 2016

By Eugene, MINDSMYG Chairperson

I've always loved the idea of sports day. Indeed, as the Chinese saying goes, “不打不相识” (it is only through battle, does one truly know the other).

Over the years, volunteers and beneficiaries have been treated to multiple varieties of sports days, to challenge themselves and to find out about each other.

One that springs to mind was the 2013 track-and-field themed Sports Day. Both beneficiaries and volunteers had their day in the sun with vigorous physical activities. Tug-of-war, especially!



The 2016 Sports Day was admittedly less focused on the volunteers (no focus at all), and more on our beneficiaries. Held at ITE Central in May 2016, the idea was to have multiple station games, experiences and memories for our beneficiaries. These included:

Life-sized bowling!



Life-sized LUDO!



The highlight may have been the **Angry Birds Station**, which our trainees used modified catapults to fire on.



It could have been the **Indoor Pacman maze**, which our beneficiaries navigated inside life-sized minions. Each minion was painstakingly assembled using pipes fitted out with roller wheels.



Or it could have just been the **Bouncy Castle**. The perennial crowd favorite.



But surely, one of the key highlights would have been the **family bikes** that our trainees could cycle on, within the ITE Central Compound. It was thoroughly heart-warming to see our beneficiaries so thrilled whilst cycling on the bicycles.



Every major MINDS MYG event is put together through the blood, sweat, toil and tears of a few volunteers. And I would particularly like to express my gratitude to my co-chairperson, Elwin and our fantastic team of volunteers that painstakingly organized this event.

The late nights, frantic scurrying, panic and desperate last-minute troubleshooting were all not in vain. Together, we have continued the fine MINDS MYG tradition of building beautiful memories for our beneficiaries.

Credits:



FIRST TIME ACID CAMPER

By Dewi Yunny, FV Chair 2016/17

ACID 2016 was the first ACID camp for me, and with no prior expectations, I was eager to experience what the camp had in store for us. Personally, I felt that ACID was a good opportunity to spend time and bond with our trainees and fellow volunteers. Additionally, interactions with trainees from other projects has exposed me to their wonderfully vibrant individualities and this was a pleasant experience to gain from ACID.



The first day of the camp was a tiring yet fun-filled one. The trainees got to enjoy activities including water paddling, rock climbing and station games all over the OCBC Arena at Kallang. As the trainees had to break into groups that consisted of trainees from different project groups, they were given the opportunity to engage with those outside their social circles. It was a pity that the slight drizzle required the wet weather plan to be activated as this limited the array of station games that could be played and stretched the waiting times between the games. Nonetheless, this also gave us the chance to have light conversations with the trainees to get to know them better.

At night, our trainees got to engage in carnival-like games at Pioneer Junior College, our abode for the duration of the 2 days 1 night camp, followed by disco night. Our trainees particularly liked this year's ACID dance to "Top Girl" and have requested several times to incorporate it into our Music & Movement segment of our regular sessions. The first day was an eventful day and most of our trainees fell asleep fast that night, out of sheer exhaustion.



The second day started out with morning exercise and a hearty breakfast, followed by more games at the PJC field, this time relay-based. The variety of games that were organised impressed me, and what was even more heartening was the GLs' enthusiasm and cheeriness throughout the camp. They showed no signs of weariness despite having to work hard to ensure our trainees have a great time engaging in the games.

Overall, ACID 2016 was well done and FV would like to thank the ACID 2016 Committee as well as the GLs for all your efforts and dedication. It was a memorable experience for me, since it was my first ACID camp, and I'm sure it was memorable for our trainees as well.

ACID 2016, MORE THAN JUST AN ADVENTURE

By Westend



The morning of 5th June 2016 was one filled with excitement and anticipation. West End trainees and volunteers, armed with their backpacks and sleeping beds, walked into the Hall of Pioneer Junior College, looking more than ready for the 2 days 1 night challenge ahead.

The air was filled with a mix of familiarity and excitement. It is the time of the year for the big reunion once again but the activities ahead remain a mystery to the trainees.

What lies ahead?

Conquering the walls

Looking at our trainees transform right in front of our very own eyes makes all our time and effort with them, including all the administrative work required, worth it.

From looking at the rock walls apprehensively to conquering those “scary” walls confidently– this was how most of our trainees behaved. They listened to words of encouragement and assurance and gave the rock walls a shot and proved many of us wrong. We looked up at them and felt our chests swell. We wanted to point to them and say, that's our trainees!

They gave it their all, with smiles and laughter. That was all we could remember as we walked proudly away from the rock walls.



Paddling against the odds

Some of our trainees have fears. Being in or on water is one of them. The constant movement creates this feeling of uncertainty. Convincing them to go on the paddling boat itself is no easy feat. Or so we thought.

We were prepared to hold their hands tight. We were prepared for long talks made up of words of assurance and encouragement. We were prepared to bring them for walks if they didn't want to board the boat.

But many trainees surprised us and more than once were we shocked by their eagerness to climb onboard and paddle without any hesitation. They paddled with ease, enjoying the scenery and breeze. We chatted with them, took turns to paddle and tried our best to take photos of their best smiles.

Aside from these challenging activities, our trainees went through other things during the camp as well. The bustling night carnival and the mass Pokemon challenge were some of the other highlights.



We don't want to make this seem like a list of things our trainees went through at the camp. We just want to describe how our trainees can be pushed out of their comfort zones and how, we, as volunteers, can help them achieve that sense of accomplishment. It doesn't have to be during a mass event like ACID. Indeed, we can all start small with our own personal initiatives and efforts.

THOUGHTS ON ACID 2016

By Zhihao, AMK



Every June marks a major event for MYG: Our ACID Camp. Without exception, the ACID Committee (COMM) has planned yet another memorable camp for most to remember. For me, being involved in both sides, as the COMM in previous years and a participant of the camp, has given me a more holistic perspective of the camp. No camp is perfect and there is no one size that fits all. But we know our best shot is always given.

This time, the COMM brought us to the Sports Hub on the first day. It was a great feat being able to coordinate and facilitate so many activities. Of course, our beneficiaries were elated to try out water activities such as water pedaling and the lazy pool. In fact, water activities are quite well-liked by our trainees (we should have more water activities but not compromising on safety!)

Another highlight I would say was the rock climbing as most of our trainees would not have had the chance to try it on their own. I think we should applaud the COMM for making this happen for the trainees. Not only was it an opportunity for the trainees to challenge themselves, it was also a good platform to raise public awareness of the challenges our trainees are capable of conquering. This ties in with our long-term objective of increasing social awareness and acceptance of Persons with Intellectual Disability. 8 years ago, I was just like another face in the public, skeptical about Persons with Intellectual Disability (PWIDs). Hence when we create more awareness, hopefully these stereotypes and stigma can be reduced.

Another initiative was that the separation of the food waste from the paper box after every meal. This is a good way to educate our trainees on waste management and environmental friendliness.

While some commented that Sports Hub was too huge, which made movement very tough for physically challenged trainees, at the same time challenging for volunteers attached to trainees with have boundless energy to run around, all the volunteers were certainly trained to handle the trainees well.

Overall I would say that the activities were well-coordinated despite the fact that it was outdoors. Through the camp, volunteers got to bond with their trainees and understand them better.

Personal thought:

Water activities are well liked by the trainees, we should do it often!!

Many think that we volunteer merely to create fun for our trainees. Intrinsically trainees also bring joy to ours and at the same time, the caregivers are being given this allocated time to do their own things not having to worry about their children. They trust they are in good hands.



THE VOICE OF MINDSVILLE VOLUNTEER FAMILY

By Felix Chia, Terra Hope

On 3rd September 2016, MINDS MYG Terra Hope Project (TH) and NUS CSC Mindsville celebrated our MINDSville Volunteer Family 11TH Anniversary (MVF11) at MINDSville@Napiri. It was an epic night of singing and dancing, as coaches and beneficiaries competed to see who would be the Voice of MVF!!

The Voice of MVF!!, an adaptation of Voice of China (which makes it a rip-off of a rip-off), is a karaoke and dance competition to showcase the talents of our beneficiaries. Auditions were held weeks before the event, where contestants chose their coaches (group leaders) and joined their teams.



We didn't have the budget to get red chairs which could auto rotate and emit smoke with the press of a button, so our coaches (Na Yeat, SS Singing and Jie Chou) had to make do with pressing on their water bottle button and manually rotating their blue chairs. The coaches only had 2 weeks to organize, train and rehearse their teams before competing to be the Voice of MVF!!, which includes preparing an opening, solo singing and group dance performance. We were very lucky to have a very professional and capable video team that produced an opening video showcasing highlights from the auditions and rehearsals, so our audience could get an idea of what went on behind the scenes for the past few weeks, and helped to set the right mood for the night.

Our emcee, stage crew and floor crew members worked very hard and well together to put up an intimate and heartwarming show. Each team put up a very strong performance - on this special night, everyone was a winner, for each and every performance won our hearts.

Some words from our MVF11 Chair Felix, "The success rate of the event is 99%, as no one had "failed" before, so I think true success is graded by the memories created and inspiring volunteers to help organize events (again)...so time will tell if MVF11 was indeed a huge success... Hopefully, MVF11 will be remembered by new MINDSville volunteers, as their 1st step in volunteering and staying with MVF!"



Trivia: It was the first anniversary event that was celebrated on the actual day, 3rd September. MVF10 was celebrated in Bowen Secondary School, due to ongoing renovations at MINDSville@Napiri. Like SG51, we are back at our nostalgic venue, after a year of renovations, with upgraded facilities, like a better projector, which would otherwise do a great disservice to our opening video.

MID AUTUMN FESTIVAL CELEBRATIONS

By Guilly

Mid-Autumn Festival Celebrations was held at Katong CC's Hall once again this year on 17th September 2016 and kindly sponsored by Katong CC's Management Committee. This year's celebrations were conducted slightly differently from the preceding ones as Guillemard Project invited Ang Mo Kio (AMK), Basic Knowledge Training Group (BKTG), Children's Wing (CW), Fernvale (FV) and Reach Out (RO) project. Furthermore, another VWO also volunteered at the event, giving goodie bags to our beneficiaries and participants. A big thank you to everyone who came down to assistance in ways they could.

The celebrations kicked off with mooncake making, whereby our attendees got to try their hands at molding the dough and filling the pastry with its signature lotus seed paste. Mooncakes are usually eaten in small wedges accompanied by Chinese tea. No Chinese tea was provided but our beneficiaries still enjoyed their fruits of labour nonetheless.



Following that, a sumptuous buffet dinner was ready for consumption. Second servings were given to the ever-hungry beneficiaries with relatively positive feedback from the volunteers.

With their stomachs filled, our attendees moved around the community centre, looking for our carnival games.



The celebrations ended with our Volunteer Guitar Connection group putting up a medley of Chinese and English songs for our attendees. With the familiar tunes in the air, our beneficiaries danced to it and our volunteers sang along, bringing a closure to a wonderful evening for the 2016 Mid-Autumn Festival Celebrations.



Being at the helm conducting this event, the stress and deadlines definitely came into play. Running around frantically trying to get things in place was part of the process but all was really worth it when I see our beneficiaries and volunteers having so much fun doing the programmes, enjoying themselves. The adrenaline rush from doing the event did not allow my tiredness to set in till the next day. I have never felt this excited yet anxious for such an event and for it to be this successful truly amazed me at how capable our volunteers are at accomplishing such a feat. Thank you to everyone once again and I hope to see you all next year for Mid-Autumn Festival Celebrations 2017!

MEALS ON WHEELS

By Zhong Wei, East Point

On the 8th of October, EP participated in our 4th meals on wheels event with TH. Being a new volunteer who had barely been exposed to such activities, I decided to give it a go with my friends. It turned out to be one of my best and saddest experience ever.

Being born into a family where there are always meals on the table makes it easy for us to take things for granted. "Mom, can I get the happy meal toy from Mcdonalds?" the 5 year old-me would ask my mom every time we walk pass the Mcdonalds in my neighbourhood, every Sunday morning. Fast forward 20 years, we look for the best when satisfying our stomachs, even the food at the Kopitiam are becoming more fanciful, Ba chor mee, Char kway teow? Or that cool chicken raclette at that western food shop in the corner? "Zhong Wei, bubble tea? Koi or Gong cha?" the other million-dollar question I get every other day.



But for these folks that we deliver food to, porridge, or a very plain lunch that only consists of rice, one vegetable dish and one thin slice of egg is enough to get them to flash that megawatt smile. "Zhong Wei, block 31, 32" I was instructed. Together with Keith I picked out the meals allocated for that particular block, walking through the alleyway that was almost completely devoid of any lighting, I can't help but wonder how these old folks navigate their way around this place, it was dirty and old, albeit the railings that were put in place for the old folks to hold on to while walking down the slope, what good can it do if the lighting wasn't good enough for them to even get there in the first place. The only other good thing was the lifts that were only implemented very recently judging by the glossy linings of the lift window.

Upon reaching the first unit on our list I knock lightly on the door, an Indian man opened. "Good morning uncle! Lunch is here!" I chirped. He stood at the door for a moment reaching out to the table and started to feel around for his keys. "Wait boy!" he replied. Even with eyes shut and wrinkles all over his face, he was smiling ear to ear. Keith was slightly afraid but nevertheless took the chance to chat this friendly stranger up. "Hello Uncle!" his raspy voice filled the corridors. I was overwhelmed with emotions, knowing that the uncle was blind and standing at the door unable to help him with picking up the keys that I could so clearly see, but at the same time, contented to know that our gesture of helping to deliver food to this old man who is living alone, made his day that much better. He finally managed to get his keys and opened the door to receive the "package", and while we handed the food over to him, he reached down to pat Keith on the head, "good boy" he said with a steady voice. We exchanged goodbyes and moved on to our next unit.



We knocked at the next unit but the door didn't open. I knocked again, a sense of worry washed over me, but there was a hook at the door so I hanged the food at the door and moved on. "There is much to be done with the improvement of the living conditions of these folks," I mumbled to myself.

We knocked on so many doors, different folks greeted us, different races, religions, living conditions, health conditions and the list goes on, but one thing that remains constant is that radiant smile and endless appreciation that they show, some were silent and others flamboyant. For me, I'm just happy I made their Saturday morning that much better knowing they will not go hungry that day.

MYG FAMILY DAY @ GARDENS BY THE BAY

By Natalie Quah, Children's Wing

Nature has always been my passion, so it comes without surprise that I was exhilarated to hear that Family Day would be held at Gardens By The Bay. In the volunteer sessions prior to the trip, I noticed that the kids seemed to have an interest in animals and flowers, especially NA, who even helps MINDSville tend to their garden. That gave me really high hopes for the event.

When the day finally came, I could tell that everyone's spirits were soaring as they were excited to enter the domes for the first time. While walking to the domes, they chattered endlessly about previous visits to the Gardens, and I even learnt a thing or two from them as they spoke about the solar panels on the Supertrees! There was an activity sheet given to us, which I was really grateful for as it helped guide us through the domes. The children had never seen such plants before and many of them were clearly quite enchanted by the variety of colours in the domes.



Many of us know that when people see pretty things, they tend to want to touch them, or maybe even take them. That was my greatest fear of the day. And it seemed that it was about to come true! Towards the end of flower dome, S, who normally keeps to herself, asked me to help her take pictures of a beautiful rose. After the picture, she suddenly cupped the rose with her hands, despite the "Do Not Touch" signs around.

As she closed her hands around the flower, I immediately exclaimed, thinking that she'd crush the rose. "Wait." She said, and continued cupping the rose as I held my breath, expecting the worst. However, as I watched her, I noticed a gentleness in her actions. Albeit not adhering to the signs, she was not harming the flower. Rather, she was genuinely admiring it. As she let go, I chided her for disrespecting the rules, but with a sort-of-heaviness within me, knowing that I had completely misunderstood her.



I think this served as a true reminder to myself not to make assumptions and pass such quick judgement on others. I'm not saying that she was right to disobey the rules, but sometimes, we might misinterpret the purest of intentions. This also showed me that, if you watch and really take in what's happening, you might just realise things you've never noticed before.

Towards the end, I was given a pleasant surprise when NA commented "I learnt something today!" and proceeded to talk about ferns, which I had mentioned during my constant chatter during the day. It is truly a sweet feeling to know that you have taught someone something, no matter how small it is.

Nature always reminds me of the beauty that is all around us. It is also one of the greatest joys to share our passion, and at the same time, give our hearts to those in need and see the smiles on their faces blossom. This year's family day was truly a wonderful opportunity for the kids to bond and engage their senses as they experienced the natural beauty of our world. It was definitely a fruitful day for both volunteers and trainees alike ☺



Looking back at 2016, are there any memories that are close to your heart which perhaps you would like to share with the rest of the volunteers?

Feel free to pen down your thoughts/quotes/feelings and mail it to us at [publicity @ myg.org.sg](mailto:publicity@myg.org.sg)

