

Empower. Maximise. Potential.

What is Empowerment?



Some may be familiar with Bethel Community Services' mission of organisational existence, which in summary is to "Reach out and empower our community to maximise the potential of each individual".

We could break down our mission further into three main parts— Empower. Maximise. Potential. To have a better understanding of our mission, we attempt to discuss each part separately over the next issues of our iCan newsletter, so hope that you would continue this read with us.

According to a research jointly produced by the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) and Agency of Integrated Care (AIC), empowerment is increasing a person's ability to participate in and influence matters that affect his or her life, allowing the person to make decisions and take responsibility for their own issues.

One common misinterpretation of empowering is that power must be given and that the person giving has more power than the person receiving it. This could be partially true when considering the context of empowerment in a work or organisational setting. However, empowerment is not limited to just that. As the paper suggests, empowerment refers to the act of building another's capabilities adequately to the point where they can confidently influence decisions that affect their own lives.

Bethel Community Services views empowerment similarly to that of NCSS and AIC, and as an organisation, we have been trying to empower our community from when we were first founded. Currently, we seek to empower our community in various ways; by reducing physiological worries for them to focus on working on themselves, developing and upskilling our community to improve livelihood and living conditions, improving the community's access to professional help, building social capital within the community so that community members support each other.

All of what we do, we do with the lofty goal of putting members of our community in an empowered position that propels them upward.

Yes, we know our goals are imposing, but it will not stop us from continuing to do what we can to initiate more efforts in empowering our community. We continue to pray that we are constantly reminded to avoid misconceptions and to focus on journeying alongside our community.

YOU are certainly part of our community, no matter how much you can contribute. Maybe you are seeking help yourself—reach out to us and join us to be empowered in our endeavour of empowering.

Together, we will blossom.



Gregory Yeo
Social Worker

Greetings From the Chairman

Issue 1: Jan 2023—Jun 2023

Keep the Loneliness Away!

My colleagues and I do regular walks in visiting the blocks of flats near our church at Aljunied Avenue 2. We noticed some elderly living alone and some rarely leave home due to mobility challenges.

Our nation appreciates the Pioneer Generation (PG) and Merdeka Generation (MG) for contributing to the building of our nation. Many of these generations are facing the challenge of loneliness in this phase of their lives.

Loneliness can lead to health challenges. A survey with general practitioners in England reported that three quarters said, they are seeing between one and five people a day suffering with loneliness, which is linked to a range of damaging health impacts, like heart disease, strokes and Alzheimer's disease. Around 200,000 older people have not had a conversation with a friend or relative in more than a month. ("Press Release: PM Launches Government First Loneliness Strategy." <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-launches-governments-first-loneliness-strategy>, accessed on January 5, 2023.)

We have many PG and MG individuals who are experiencing loneliness right in our neighbourhood too. During the last quarter of 2022, BCS piloted an activity day to reach the lonely elderly in our community. We invited some of these elderly and their caregivers to join our activity day fortnightly for a couple of hours of activities to promote social and mental wellness. While our volunteers spend time with the elderly, the caregivers who accompanied them were given time to interact with volunteers in a separate room. We hope to see more elderly joining our activity day in the new year, keeping loneliness away.

May God bless everyone in our community with a bountiful year!

我和我的同事经常去阿裕尼二道教堂附近的公寓楼散步。我们注意到一些老人独居，还有一些人由于行动不便而很少离开家。

我们国家感谢建国一代和立国一代为我们的国家建设做出的贡献。这些世代中的许多人在他们生命的这个阶段都面临着孤独的挑战。

孤独会导致健康挑战。一项针对英国全科医生的调查报告称，四分之三的人表示，他们每天看到一到五个人遭受孤独之苦，这与一系列破坏性健康影响有关，例如心脏病、中风和阿尔茨海默症。大约 200,000 名老年人在一个多月内没有和朋友或亲戚交谈过。（“新闻稿：PM 启动政府优先孤独战略。” <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-launches-governments-first-loneliness-strategy>, 2023 年 1 月 5 日访问。）

我们附近也有许多建国一代和立国一代正在经历孤独。在 2022 年最后一个季度，伯特利社区服务 (BCS) 试行了一个活动日，以帮助我们社区中的孤独老人。我们邀请其中一些长者和他们的照顾者参加我们每两周一次的活动日，进行几个小时的活动，以促进社交和心理健康。当我们的义工花时间陪伴长者时，陪伴他们的照顾者有时间在单独的房间与义工互动。我们希望在新的看到更多的长者加入我们的活动日，让他们远离孤独。

愿上帝保佑我们社区的每个人度过丰收的一年！



Rev Dr Chia Beng Hock
Chairman

Greetings From the Executive Director

Issue 1: Jan 2023—Jun 2023

From the ED's Desk...

As we enter the new year, we wish everyone a blessed 2023, and we count our blessings in the amazing year of 2022. Looking ahead to 2023, we are reminded of a verse recorded in the Bible that encourages, "Don't forget to do good and to share with those in need..." (Hebrews 13:16a, New Living Translation). Let this be our maxim in 2023. God is always good, and in Bethel Community Services (BCS), we want to continue to share His goodness.

Amidst the difficulties, 2022 was an amazing year and BCS has achieved a couple of milestones of which I would like to share just two. I mentioned in our July 2022 iCan magazine that we had started a fundraising campaign, "Going the Distance 100k". The campaign was successfully completed, and funds raised will go towards supporting more of our works. In addition, we had our first Charity Gala Dinner on 4th December 2022. Although we had planned a gala dinner in 2020, it was derailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, we were glad to finally have our gala dinner after the lifting of COVID restrictions in 2022. The dinner was a resounding success, and we had the honour of having our Member of Parliament (MP) for MacPherson SMC, Ms Tin Pei Ling, grace the occasion. Everyone was full of praises for the programme and food. Our guests went away feeling full and happy with the unforgettable evening.

With regards to our gala dinner, I would like to make special mention of the "Tokens" for our sponsors, MP Tin and Speaker of Parliament, Mr Tan Chuan-Jin. The tokens were framed paintings of koi fish and a beautiful flower for MP Tin. There is a story behind these paintings. As we planned for our gala dinner, we thought about what would be a meaningful gift to show our appreciation to our supporters. In the end, we decided to approach Ms Hannah Café Moh Jing Ru, who is the daughter of our BCS cook. Hannah joined our Bethel Student Care Centre as a young child in primary one. On the day of writing, a good 7 years has passed since she joined us, and she has blossomed into a 13-year-old teenager. Two years ago, Hannah participated in a painting class organised by our centre. The class was conducted by an artist based in Shanghai who happened to be back in Singapore for a limited period. Despite the short time in Singapore, he volunteered to conduct a watercolour painting session for our Student Care Centre students. Hannah was an avid learner and displayed great talent for it. Two years later, when we approached Hannah to do the paintings, although hesitant at first, having only gone through that one lesson two years back, she agreed. She spent a total of three and a half days to complete six unique paintings of koi fish and the flower which eventually became the tokens of appreciation. Upon receiving them, all the recipients loved the gift and all sang praises for the fine work by Hannah.



Hannah's story beautifully illustrates our aspiration to develop and maximise the potential of every child and individual enrolled in any of our programmes. By the same token, I would like to share with our readers an exciting enrichment programme that we started this year known as "Bethel Study Hall". For a nominal fee, students enrolled in this programme receive the academic guidance from experienced teachers. On top of that, they receive free access to special electives such as music and arts lessons. In the future, these will include sports lessons and many others. Using a holistic approach in enrichment, we hope to raise and develop the potential of every student enrolled in the programme. Feel free to enquire for more details on this exciting new programme with us.

On a final note, I wish every one of you good health and blessing ahead.



Lilian Sze
Executive Director

Greetings From the Executive Director

Issue 1: Jan 2023—Jun 2023

From the ED's Desk...

在进入新的一年，我们祝愿每个人都有一个幸福的 2023 年。2022 年是我们领受令人惊叹、祝福的一年。展望 2023 年，我们想起了圣经希伯来书中记载的一节经文，它鼓励我们“不要忘记做好事并与有需要的人分享……”（希伯来书 13:16a，新版译本）。让这成为我们 2023 年的格言。上帝永远是善良的，在伯特利社区服务 (BCS)，我们希望继续分享他的善良。

尽管困难重重，但 2022 年是了不起的一年，BCS 已经实现了几个里程碑，我只想分享其中两个。我在 2022 年 7 月的 iCan 杂志中提到，我们已经开始筹款活动，“Going the Distance 100k”。活动圆满结束，募集资金将用于支持我们更多的工作。此外，我们于 2022 年 12 月 4 日举办了首场慈善晚宴。尽管我们原计划在 2020 年举行晚宴，但由于冠病大流行而未能如愿。在这方面，我们很高兴在 2022 年冠病限制解除后，终于举行了晚宴。晚宴取得了巨大的成功，我们有幸邀请到我们的麦波中国会议员 (MP) 陈佩玲女士的莅临，为晚宴增光。每个人都对节目和食物赞不绝口，我们的客人在度过一个难忘的夜晚时感到饱腹和快乐。

关于我们的晚宴，我想特别提一下我们对我们的赞助商、麦波中国会议员 (MP) 陈佩玲女士和国会议员陈川仁先生的谢意。这些信物是镶框的“锦鲤”和“花”的画作给国会议员陈川仁先生和麦波中国会议员 (MP) 陈佩玲女士的，这些画作的背后有一个故事。当我们计划庆祝晚宴时，我们考虑了一份有意义的礼物来表达我们对支持者的感激之情。最后，我们决定找 BCS 厨师的女儿 Ms Hannah Cafe Moh Jing Ru。Hannah 还是小学生时就加入了我们的伯特利学生托管中心，在撰写本文的那一天，她加入我们已经过去了整整 7 年，她已经长成了一个 13 岁的少女。Hannah 参加了两年前的在我们中心举办的绘画班。该课程由一位常驻上海的艺术师主持，他恰好有限的时间内回到新加坡，尽管在新加坡的时间很短，但他自愿为我们的学生关怀中心的学生进行一次水彩画课程，而 Hannah 是一个热心的学习者，并展现了非凡的才华。两年后，当我们找 Hannah 画画时，虽然一开始有些犹豫，但尽管两年前只上过一节课，她还是欣然同意了。她一共花了三天半的时间，完成了六幅别具一格的“锦鲤”画作，以及最终成为信物的“花”画作。收到礼物后，所有收件人都非常喜欢这份礼物，并对 Hannah 的精美作品给予了高度评价。



Hannah 的故事很好地说明了我们希望开发和最大限度地发挥每个孩子和参加我们项目的人的潜力。

有鉴于此，我想与我们的读者分享我们今年开始的一项激动人心的充实计划，即“伯特利学习室”。在这个项目中，注册学生将接受经验丰富的教师的学术指导，除此之外，还可以免费参加音乐/艺术等特殊选修课以及未来体育等课程。“伯特利书房”的学术科目收取象征性的费用，但提供免费选修课！我们希望采用全面的充实方法，提高和发展每个参加该计划的学生的潜力。请随时与我们联系，了解有关这一激动人心的新计划的更多详情。

最后，祝大家身体健康，前程似锦。



Lilian Sze
Executive Director

Bethel Child Development Centre

Issue 1: Jan 2023—Jun 2023

BCDC's Annual K2 Graduation cum concert 2022

Since COVID-19 started in 2020, school events have had to adapt. Executing programs include mask wearing, ART tests, PCR tests, social distancing, frequent use of hand sanitisers, class separations, sudden cancellation of classes etc. The K2 graduation and concert for the past two years had been unusually quiet without parents' participation. We are grateful and glad that in last year's K2 graduation, we were finally able to have a live audience to witness our 25 K2 children graduating on 12 November 2022!



The theme for the concert was "God's Promises". Indeed, we are thankful for His protection over each and every one of us, and for blessing us in every way. We know all is well in God's promises. The regulations only allowed the K2 class for the graduation procession, so it was a cosy and warm gathering. Everyone, including the teachers, were very touched by the graduation, as they witnessed how the children have grown and progressed bit by bit. The montage that showed them growing from their toddler years into promising K2 children was exceptionally moving and brought tears to ours eyes.



The teachers and children worked very hard, rehearsing the flow of events, decorating the hall, practising the dance steps, memorising the song lyrics and also the thank you speeches. All the hard work paid off when we saw the K2 graduands presenting themselves proudly on graduation day.



No pain, no gain; well done K2s!

All the best in your future undertakings in your primary schools!



Mrs Eden Chau
Principal

Bethel Tots Centre

Tummy Tummy!

Tummy time is important and good for infants.

For newborns and infants who are developing neck control, tummy time helps develop the muscles they will require for their gross motor developmental milestones like rolling over, sitting up, crawling and walking.



Newborns and infants are encouraged to do tummy time in small pockets of time. Start from a minute or so each day and slowly increase the duration, keeping the first few sessions brief. As they get used to it, you can slowly extend the time. Infants require time to build strength and endurance. It is perfectly normal if they cry, as they may feel uncomfortable at the start. However with practice, they will get better at it!

To help your baby with tummy time, make some noises or shake a rattle to get your child to look up and push up. Place a favourite toy in front of your baby to encourage reaching and forward movement.

Older babies, 4–7 months old, should still spend time on their bellies, even if they can roll over and sit with some help. Tummy time helps them practise lifting their heads and chests further by straightening their arms. This helps to strengthen their arm, chest and back muscles which will help them lift up their bodies from a lying to crawling position.



Day by day, through practices of exercises like tummy time, your baby will get stronger and stronger and eventually achieving each developmental milestone to the next!

We at Bethel Tots Centre eagerly look forward to celebrating together with you parents, more and more milestones of your babies!



Li Peixuan
Principal

Bethel Student Care Centre

Issue 1: Jan 2023—Jun 2023

School Based & Community Based

Hi everyone, I am Teacher Qiu Yue from Bethel Student Care Centre (BSCC) and the students know me as “Teacher Q”. I am a new addition to this big family in Bethel Student Care and I was previously working in a school-based centre before joining BSCC. I believed many parents would be wondering what the differences between a school-based centre and a community-based centre like Bethel Student Care are, and I would like to use this opportunity to share about some of the differences based on my observations.



2. In-Centre Activities

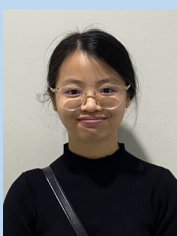
Activities conducted by school-based student care centres are generally academical centric. These activities are great as it allows students time outside of formal curriculum to expand on their academic knowledge, activities such as science experiments etc. Activities are conducted by the student care teachers who do their best to support the child's learning.

Activities in community-based student care centres are a mixture of academical and more exploration-based activities like learning new interest skills like the ukulele, discussing the recent news or relatable topics, doing hands-on art and crafts etc. The student care teachers have the chance to explore new hobbies with the students and give the students an avenue to express their creativity with guidance.

3. Student's Preference

From my general observations, students seem to be happier in a community-based environment. Often, in the school environment, I find students complain that it is boring and put on a grumpy face, largely because the structure and activities are very similar to school time. The students may act up on purpose due to boredom, creating problems to their teachers, family members and peers alike. When spoken to some of the students, they lament about being stuck in school from 6 to even 12 hours which to them is a rigid environment. In a community-based centre, because it is a different environment out of school, although there are still academics within the curriculum, it is not as stifling, and students enjoy better relationships with their teachers and able to enjoy playtime their friends.

These are just some of my own observations having experienced both the school-based and community-based centres. Both types of centres have its merits and I do not mean either centre are better. If you are a parent considering to enroll your child into a student care centre, these are some factors for your consideration for your child.



Qiu Yue
BSCC Teacher

1. Environment and Teacher-Student Ratio

School-based student care centre located in the student's own schools tend to have big groups of students per class and level, with an approximate teacher-student ratio of 1:20. Students are familiar with the area because it is their own school and adjustment periods tend to be shorter. The ratios though can make it tougher for the student care teachers to attend to individual students' needs.

Community-based student care centres are normally located in a separate location at neighbourhoods nearby the schools, students may come from different schools so sometimes students take a little longer to adjust. The teacher-student ratios tend to be smaller at approximately 2:25. With a smaller ratio, student care teachers have more time to focus on individual students' needs and provide individualised care if need be.



Bethel Study Hall

Issue 1: Jan 2023—Jun 2023

Reshaping the Developmental Box

Bethel Study Hall program was initiated in 2022 which aims to provide all children with equal opportunities for academic support, non-academic enrichment, and community building. In March 2022, the program was first made available to students at the Bethel student care centre. The academic support not only created an opportunity to reinforce what had been taught in school, but it also provided the educators an opportunity to motivate each child to reach their academic potential.

Some of the other activities offered to our Study Hall students include ukulele and Chinese gong lessons, wellbeing workshops and various craft workshops. One of our upcoming programs includes an art workshop conducted by an art therapist! We believe that these programmes will pique the children’s curiosity to explore their non-academic interests.



In 2023, we are excited to extend our Study Hall program to our community students. This is in line with our aim to provide equal opportunities to all children. The goal is to meet the diverse needs of all students through a customised academic and non-academic curriculum. This approach is supported by the Minister for Education, Mr Chan Chun Sing, who stated, “We must have a plethora of teaching methods and learning experiences in order to meet the needs of our diverse learners. We must start to explore ways to customise the learning experience en masse for our learners.” at the Singapore University of Social Sciences' Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Symposium on 29 November 2022. Through our study hall program, we not only aim to reach out to a diverse group of learners but constantly pursue to bring out the potential of each and every child we reach out to. This is guided by our belief that humans are made in the image of God with unlimited potential.

You can help too! We are actively recruiting academic volunteer facilitators and industry experts to run interesting electives for our children. To cater for our students’ diverse developmental needs, similarly we need diversity from the community to help reshape boxes. If you have a heart for moulding the future generations, join us!



Sangeetha Alagappasamy
Bethel Study Hall Teacher (Eng/Math)

Community Projects / Volunteers

Issue 1: Jan 2023—Jun 2023

What is Social Isolation?

Loneliness is the subjective state of mind of an individual when one’s actual social circles deviate from his/ her desired social relationships. Humans are social creatures and the excellence of humans in the animal kingdom can be strongly attributed to our ability to interact amongst each other. The lack of social relationships goes against our innate need for social interactions, hence, leading to loneliness which is an effect of social isolation.

Decades-long studies have informed us about the negative physical consequences of loneliness, especially for seniors. What is more worrying is a more recent study by the Centre for Ageing Research and Education (CARE) from Duke-NUS that found that older people are more susceptible to loneliness, and seniors who stay alone have a 10 percent higher chance of experiencing loneliness.

This is worrying, especially for BCS, as pointed out by Adviser to MacPherson Constituency, MP Tin Pei Ling, during a speech given at the Bethel Community Services’ Charity Gala Dinner 2022. MP Tin highlighted that the MacPherson community where BCS calls home is also home to many seniors. Amongst these seniors, a good number of them either live alone or with a few others in a confined space. To add on, the community also falls in the lower economic brackets of the nation. She also gave an estimate that in the MacPherson estate, approximately 1 in 3 residents are seniors, and the numbers will continue to grow.



How is BCS trying to contribute towards a solution of this problem?



Along with the easing of COVID-19 pandemic measures, BCS has started to engage the seniors of the community through two senior-centric programmes; the resumption of the Monthly Haircut and Birthday Celebration and the formation of Bethel Activity Group (BAG).

Both of these programmes are targeted to give seniors an opportunity to have social interactions amongst themselves and with a bunch of dedicated and passionate volunteers who are willing to build relationships with our seniors. Our Monthly Haircut and Birthday Celebration happens on the last Friday of every month, and our BAG gathers every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month. If you know of any seniors within our community who may wish to take part, feel free to bring them or let them walk in to either program.

Truth be told, both programs are not unique to BCS. Yet, the reason for starting such services is that we hope to have a platform of engagement. Through these initiatives, when our volunteers lead outreach programs into the houses of potentially isolated seniors, we have a community ready to welcome these seniors whenever they are ready.

Our participant numbers are growing, and we hope to have you as part of it to help engage our seniors. If you are willing, join us to engage them in their homes to invite them out of their potential loneliness.



Elijah & Gregory
Social Workers

Management Committee and New Staff

Issue 1: Jan 2023—Jun 2023

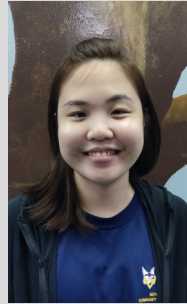
Getting to know our New Staff!



Ms Valentine Low
BCDC Teacher



Ms Nurul Jannah
BCDC Early Years
Educator



Ms Clarissa Low
BCS Programme
Coordinator



Ms Chan Qiu Yue
BSCC Teacher



Ms Ivy Ng Siew Gim
BTC Infant Educator



Ms Sng Geok Tin
BTC Infant Educator

Management Committee (2021- 2023)

Chairman:	Rev Dr. Chia Beng Hock
Vice Chairman:	Rev Dr. Moses Pi
Hon Secretary:	Mr. Phillip Teo
Hon Treasurer:	Mr. Thomas Foo
Members:	Dr. Ong Pui Sim
	Mr. Chia Eng Giap
	Mr. Steven Foo
	Dr. Tan Eng Chun
	Ms. Yvonne Tan
	Mr. Lim Kok Tiong

In light of the lifting of Covid-19 safety measures, many of our services and volunteering opportunities have resumed. For more information or if you know of someone in need of our services, please visit our website or give us a call at 6744 7422

Contact Us @ 6744 7422

Our Website: www.bethelcs.org.sg

Bethel Tots Centre (2 mths – 18 mths)

Opening Hours:

- Mon – Fri: 7am – 7pm
- Closed on Sat, Sun & Public Holidays

Address: Blk 100 Aljunied
Crescent #01-369, Singapore
380100

Tel: 6841 8762

Bethel Child Development Centre

- Playgroup (18 mths – 30 mths)
- Nursery 1 (30 mths – 3yrs)
- Nursery 2 (3 yrs – 4 yrs)
- Kindergarten 1 (4 yrs – 5 yrs)
- Kindergarten 2 (5 yrs – 6 yrs)

Opening Hours:

- Mon – Fri: 7am – 7pm
- Sat: 7am – 2pm
- Closed on Sun & Public Holiday

Address: Blk 111 Aljunied
Crescent #01-110, Singapore
380111

Tel: 6846 9287

Bethel Student Care Centre

Opening Hours:

- Mon – Fri: 1.30pm – 7pm
7am – 7pm (school
holiday)
- Closed on Sat, Sun &
Public Holidays

Address: Blk 114 Aljunied Ave
2 #03-75, Singapore 380114

Tel: 6744 7422

Bethel Study Hall

Opening Hours:

- Mon – Fri Daily
- 2.30pm to 4.00pm
- 4.30pm to 6pm

Address: Blk 114 Aljunied
Ave 2 #03-75, Singapore
380114

Tel: 6744 7422

