

Elijah Xu
Social Worker, HOD

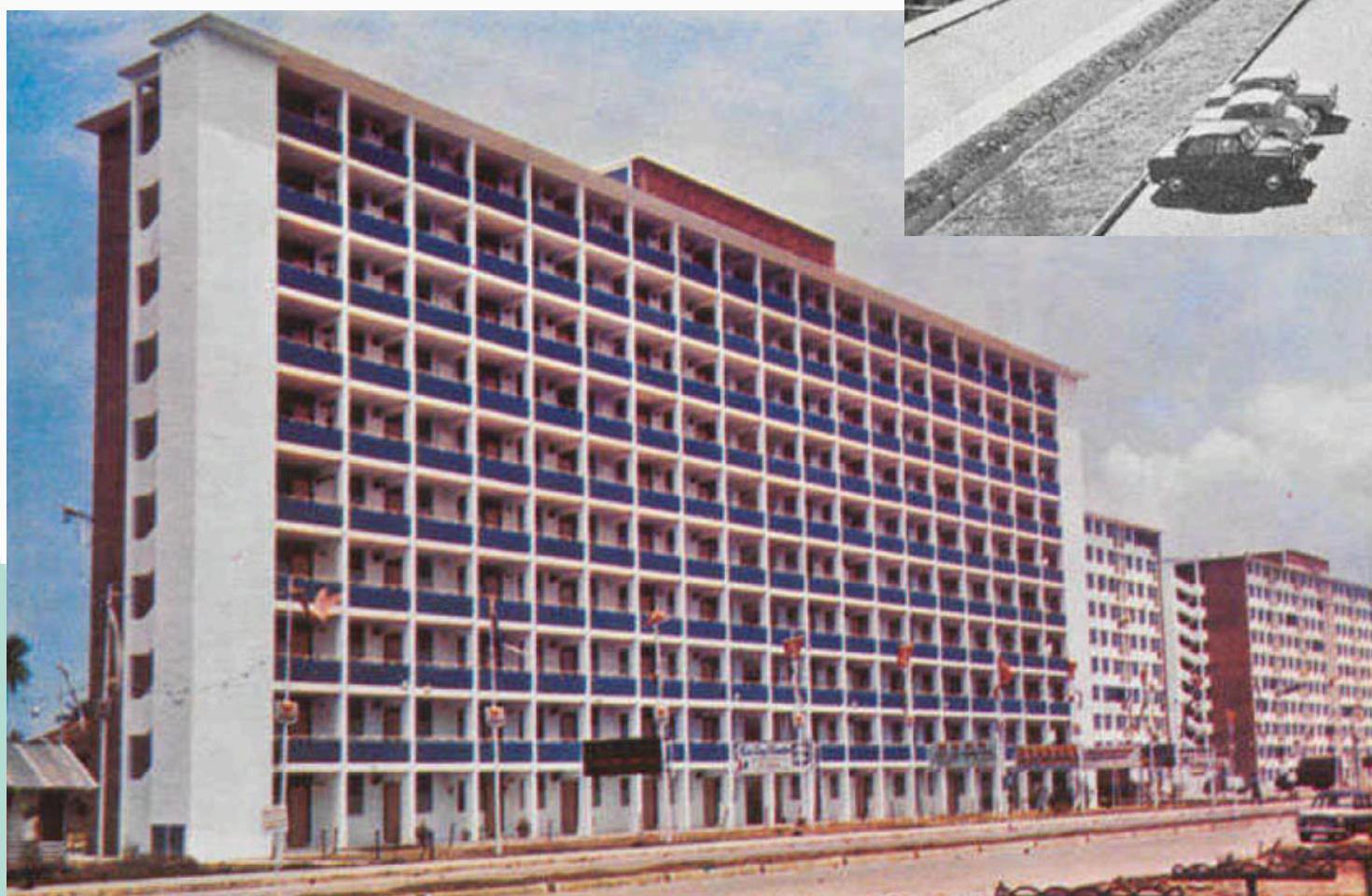
Pause, Look and Appreciate: Discovering the Hidden Charms of Our Community

In the whirlwind of Singapore's fast-paced life, how often do we pause to appreciate the unique charm of our neighbourhoods? Bethel Community Services (BCS), nestled between Aljunied and MacPherson, lends a refreshing perspective of our community.

Moving in and out of office each day, I'm struck by the contrasts and beauty of the surrounding neighbourhoods. On one side, Aljunied, once home to thriving kampungs, has transformed into a modernised residential hub. Today, it's a vibrant tapestry of modern life; the aroma of local delicacies wafting from nearby hawker centres meld with the chatter of diverse communities that fill the air.

On the other side, MacPherson stands as one of Singapore's oldest public housing estates—a living museum of our nation's progress. Blocks of flats from the 1960s standing next to sleek new Built-to-Order flats is a testament to Singapore's evolution. Amidst the visual contrasts of the neighbourhood, there is something deeper that captivates me.

Thinking back on a conversation I had with a resident a few months ago, I recall being enchanted by his story of how our neighbourhood has changed over the decades. Despite all the changes he mentioned, one constant remained: the relationships. He spoke of how he and his wife had journeyed through the years in this neighbourhood alongside friends, neighbours and people they meet daily.



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Through his sharing, I learnt that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. An old coffee shop might look worn, but it's where neighbours become friends over kopi and kaya toast. These encounters and sights remind me that the real charm and character of our community lie in its people and the bonds forged between them amidst groundbreaking changes— our stories, the connections, having shared experiences. This unity is what BCS hopes to help nurture and cultivate, believing it is key to empowering each community member and enhancing their everyday lives.

Each person, from the elderly uncles and aunties tending to the community garden to young families enjoying the playgrounds and people from all walks of life coming together to exercise, adds to the conversation and contributes to our community's unique charm. By engaging with our community, we become active participants in writing its story.

Thank you for taking time to read thus far, but I hope you would indulge me further. I issue a friendly challenge to anyone reading: take some time, be it alone or with your family, to slow down and observe our neighbourhood. Enjoy the sights, listen to the sounds and admire our people. Remember that this is your neighbourhood too; we just need to choose to be part of it. Say hello to a neighbour you've never spoken to, or even to me if you see me. Try out that local hawker stall you always pass by, and offer a word of thanks to the cook. Look around and appreciate the mix of the old and young around us. I guarantee that these small actions will enrich your life and contribute to the ongoing narrative of our remarkable neighbourhood.



So, the next time you find yourself rushing through your day, remember to pause, look around, appreciate the hidden charms of our community. You might be surprised by the beauty you find and the connections you make. After all, it's these moments that transform a neighbourhood into a home.



Pause. Look. Appreciate



Rev Dr Chia Beng Hock
Chairman

Stay Healthy, Live Longer

Every birthday we celebrate reminds us that we are one year older - yes, we are aging. We cannot stop aging but we can choose to stay healthy. Mark Twain said, “Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don’t mind, it doesn’t matter.”

According to a Straits Times report on 6 May 2023, “the number of centenarians in Singapore – those aged 100 and above – was 1,500 in June 2020, having more than doubled from 700 in June 2010.” In other words, Singaporeans are living longer. The Department of Statistics of Singapore reported that the life expectancy of males and females in 2023 is 80.7 years for males and 85.2 years for females.

While we are expected to live longer, staying healthy begins now. It will help prevent poor health and illness in later years. What can we do to stay healthy? Let me suggest that we practise these three simple letters: R E D.

- **Rest well** – Recommended 7-9 hours of sleep for those who are 18 years old and above. “Men who get adequate sleep live five years longer than men who don’t. For women, it’s two years”. (<https://mcpres.mayoclinic.org/healthy-aging/how-quality-sleep-impacts-your-lifespan/>)
- **Exercise regularly** – as easy as doing a 30-minute walk a day. Exercise helps prevent illness, strengthens bones and generates positive mood. Aerobic fitness may help extend life expectancy too. (<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/can-exercise-extend-your-life-2019031316207>)
- **Diet** – eat rightly. HealthHub recommends eating more fruits and vegetables, whole grains and good sources of protein. Eat less salt, sugar, carbs, and trans and saturated fats. The headline of an article by CNN states, “Changing your diet could add up to 13 years to your life, study says”. (<https://amp.cnn.com/cnn/2022/02/08/health/longer-life-diet-wellness>)

So, to stay healthy and live longer, simply remember to practise R E D! I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well (3 John 2).

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Rev Dr Chia Beng Hock

Mark Twain

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Health Hub

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R E D

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Grace Tan
Executive Director

Intergenerational Relations, is it Possible?

Being in this community for the past 20 years, Bethel Community Services (BCS) is honoured and privileged to have made friends with many families over the years. Some of those children whom we've known way back many years ago, they are now parents themselves and their parents have also been "promoted" to be grandparents.

In today's busy world, finding time for family can be challenging, but it's important and necessary to prioritize these connections and foster strong relationships, especially across generations. These intergenerational connections - those between different age groups, such as grandparents, parents, and children - play a crucial role in enriching our lives, preserving family heritage, and creating a sense of continuity and belonging. By 2030, one in four Singaporeans will be aged 65 years and above. As the saying goes, old is gold, fostering intergenerational relationship is something we cannot neglect, but rather, we should place emphasize in building it.

3 "whys" of fostering intergenerational relationships:

- **Bridging The Generational Gaps**

Intergenerational relationships help bridge the gap between different age groups. The younger generations will be able to gain insights from the experiences and wisdom of older generations, while older individuals can stay connected to the current trends as they hear & learn from the younger generation. This mutual exchange can foster understanding and respect across the ages.

- **Preserving Family Heritage**

Grandparents often hold the key to family history, cultural practices, and cherished traditions. Through the sharing of their life stories, family traditions, and values, younger family members get to learn about their roots and the experiences that shaped their family's identity and through these, may they carry on their family traditions and values and bring it through generations after generations.

- **Enhancing Emotional Well-being**

Strong family connections contribute significantly to one's emotional well-being. Older individuals who spend time with younger family members can combat feelings of loneliness and isolation while the younger generation can benefit from the stability and support that comes from close family bonds.

Therefore, fostering intergenerational relationships is vital for nurturing strong family and community bonds and enriching our lives. Each family member equally important and having these connections bridge generational gaps, preserve family and cultural heritage, and enhance emotional well-being. BCS sees intergenerational relationships as an important ingredient in fostering a cohesive and supportive community and will be initiating more opportunities at fostering such ties within families and within the community.

BCS aside, I hope to take the chance to encourage you if possible, amidst our busy schedules, put aside some time to allow yourself and family to have get-togethers, share family meals and engage in meaningful interactions within the whole family. For those of us who unfortunately have loved ones who are no longer with us, it is okay. You could tell stories of the ones you miss and I'm certain that those feelings of yearning could also touch those listening.

Together, let's build lasting relationships that is supportive, comforting and one that has a deep sense of belonging.

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Grace Tan
Executive Director

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Moa
English Teacher

Shine High and Bright for God is Good!

Every morning at the Bethel Child Development Centre, we have a special time where our teachers become farmers and sow precious seeds among the children. We call this special time “Assembly”, led by our many talented teachers and attended by all our children from PG to K2.

During this special time, the children listen to stories, read meaningful passages, and foster positive character-building values. They also sing and dance to inspiring songs.



This dedicated time is set aside to expose our children to life-defining character values such as courage and perseverance. Through fun activities like exercising, singing, and dancing, our children learn and grow. Occasionally, they also learn about their broader environment when teachers share interesting current affairs.

Moving forward, teachers will introduce common societal identities like our National Pledge and the National Anthem to build our children’s sense of belonging to their community and nation.

Why the need for such a special time?

Within a preschool setting, our teachers might not always see the immediate results of their efforts, but we cherish every moment to play our part in developing our children. We constantly look for more avenues to nurture our young seedlings. The special time allows children to gather as one school, one small community, and explore learnings that may hopefully spark a lifetime of growth.

We will continue to toil and sow these precious seeds, praying that in due time, they produce good fruits within the children, their families, and their communities.



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Teacher Chen
BCDC Language Teacher

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Ms Peixuan
BCDC & BTC Principal

Saying NO! 🤔

Saying no to our kids is often frowned upon in this generation where couples are having fewer babies. We are thankful to God for the little ones that He has bestowed on each family and see them as precious gifts. At Bethel Tots Centre, we are very privileged to have parents and families entrust us with their babies as young as 2 months old. In this technology-filled world, spending quality time is the best gift a child could ask for.

Being an educator is a job not all are called to. We see it not just as a job, but as building relationships and caring for the little ones under our care. At Bethel Tots Centre, we meet their physical needs (planning their daily routine, taking care of their milk and solids, cleaning them up when they have soiled themselves), as well as their social and emotional needs, allowing them to develop a sense of self and learn to express themselves appropriately.



Setting boundaries helps children feel secure. They build trust with adults when their needs are met. Being assertive helps children know their limits and learn to respect rules. When they grow up with healthy boundaries from hearing the word "no," they learn to self-regulate and accept rejection. Saying no is not a bad thing when done intentionally with careful thought. It is not just about saying no because "I said so," but rather, "I love you, and I want the best for you." There are different ways of loving a child, and saying no is one of them. Saying no does not mean we love them any less.

As children learn to accept no as an answer, it helps them make sense of the world. They learn to appropriately say no in challenging situations they face as they grow up, such as saying no to strangers or walking away when faced with a bully.



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Teacher Siew Hong
BTC Senior Teacher





Teacher Catherine
BSCC Teacher

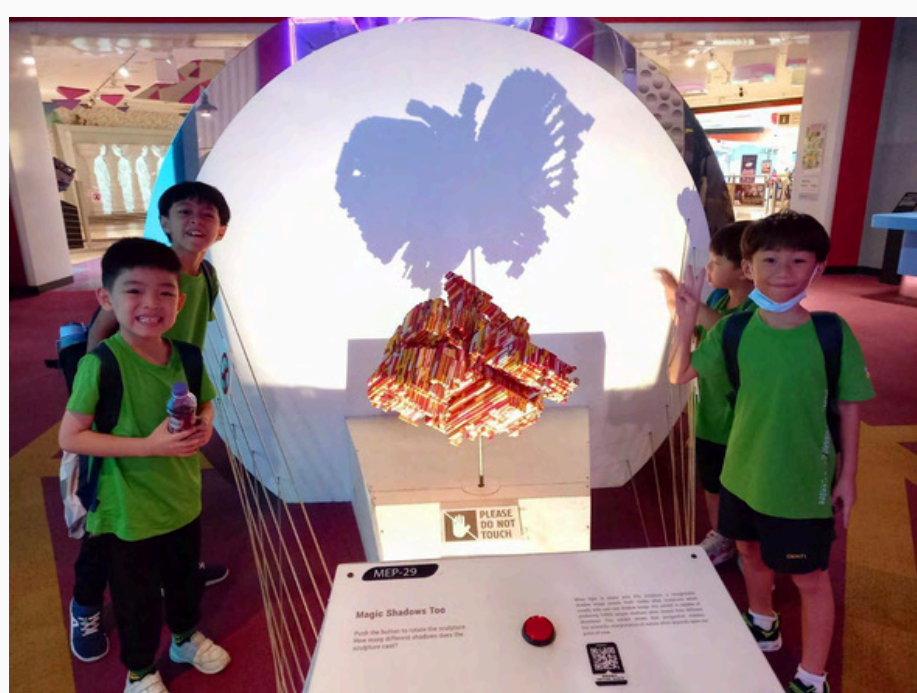
WHERE FUN AND LEARNING COME TOGETHER!

After going through several months of academic grind, school holidays are a time for students to take a slower pace, recharge and hopefully tip the balance away from stressors. It is a time for students to take a break from their regular academic routines, and at Bethel Student Care Centre, we always hope to use the time to let our students develop in other areas, have fun and experience unforgettable moments with their friends during these breaks.



However, it being the mid-year holidays, we also do not want our children to lose momentum in their academics. As such, we seek to maintain a balance, having a mixture of fun and educational activities as part of our holiday programs. This June holiday, we ended up doing so much together with our students. We had our trusty, ever-adored and creative arts and crafts activities, got our children moving through sports like swimming and badminton, and pooled our creativity together to organise different indoor games, including spelling challenges and even science quizzes.

This time, we were also fortunate to have older brothers and sisters from Chung Cheng High School volunteer to conduct surprise craft activities for our students. They made Butterfly Bookmarks and even had a Skyscraper Building Challenge.



In line with the theme of balancing fun and academics, we brought our students on a learning journey to Science Centre Singapore. Our students were presented with many informative and interesting exhibits. They had a really fun time participating in the various interactive activities like the Laser Maze Experience, Mirror Maze Experience, Typhoon Simulator and The Fire Tornado show.

The holidays are a treasured period for us teachers at BSCC, as it allows us to help students grow beyond their academics. In our fast-paced society, it is easy to forget that students are children who are still developing holistically. We hope that through the exciting activities planned and executed by our teachers, our students will strengthen their friendships, build confidence, and create memories that last a lifetime. Ensuring every child feels included, supported, and encouraged to explore new things is what warms our hearts. It is a sincere hope that we teachers strive towards.

Cheers to all students for good health and high spirits for the second half of 2024!



Evania
Case Coordinator

“Welcome Aboard the Bethelship!”

Over the years, various research has shed light on the immense untapped potential of children who grow up in less privileged environments. Their familial circumstances aside, it is important that our community recognise that each child is precious and should be given equal opportunities to be empowered at maximising their potential and talents.

In response, BCS sees the need to present more opportunities and experiences for children who may need them. We also understood from the practice wisdom of our sector partners that children tend to hang around their neighbourhoods after school hours until late in the evening. Hence, we began looking out for them in our neighbourhood and knocking on doors of flats in our vicinity. In September 2023, BCS launched Journeys By Night, an evening engagement programme, tailored for children with immense untapped potential. This program aims to support their development of interpersonal and social-emotional skills, foster healthy relationships with their self and others, and explore new and desired experiences.



Every Thursday evening, our office transforms into the thematic Bethelship. Journeys By Night offers our young ones, known as Sailors, structured activities and guided reflections, supported by positive adult role models, known as Anchors.



So far, we have played countless team games, like fort wars and rescue missions, made our own mini pizzas, learnt new team sports, and gone on outings to a giant toilet exhibition and Bird Paradise. The whole crew participates. Through team games and collaborative activities, our Sailors have many opportunities to develop social support networks and essential coping skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership. These skill help them to navigate challenges.

Academically, integrating cognitive challenges within the planned activities (e.g. problem-solving tasks in team games) can also enhance the Sailors’ cognitive skills, boosting self-esteem and academic confidence.

The Anchors have been key to shaping the culture in Journeys By Night. They are trusted adults who possess key traits including being trustworthy, empathic, reliable, and genuine. The Anchors exemplify care and respect, and guide rather than dictate, allowing the Sailors to take ownership of their decisions and experiences aboard the Bethelship. Furthermore, the crew actively shapes the narratives of their shared experiences on the Bethelship during post-activity reflections and in gratitude notes for one another at the end of a “voyage”. Through intentional adult-child interactions in a culture promoting healthy prosocial and emotional development, the Sailors can grow in resilience.

Journeys By Night is simple in its design yet faithful in its intention to provide a safe and supportive environment for our children. It is our hope that some of the life skills learnt, alongside experiences and relationships built in Journeys By Night become every Sailor’s personal armament and refuge, that will help him/ her navigate and brave the seas of his/her life going on to shine as bright as lighthouses would.

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Getting to Know Our New Staff



Aaron Toke
BCS Case
Coordinator



Benjamin Lim
BCS Case
Coordinator



Agnes Fam
BCDC Teacher



Nicole Lee
BCDC Teacher



Alvin Quek
BSCC Driver cum
Maintenance

Management Committee (2023 - 2025)

Chairman: Rev Dr. Chia Beng Hock
Vice Chairman: Snr. Pastor Wong Yew Keong
Hon Secretary: Mr. Philip Teo
Hon Treasurer: Mr. Thomas Foo
Members: Dr. Ong Pui Sim
 Mr. Chia Eng Giap
 Mr. Steven Foo
 Dr. Tan Eng Chun
 Rev Dr. Moses Pi

Scan for our Latest Video



CONTACT US @ 6744 7422

OUR WEBSITE : WWW.BETHELCS.ORG.SG

Bethel Tots Centre

(2 mths - 18 mths)

Address:

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

Tel: **6841 8762**

Bethel Child Development Centre

(18 months to 6 years)

Address:

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

Tel: **68469287**

Bethel Student Care Centre

(Primary school)

Address:

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

Tel: **6744 4243**

National Silver Academy Courses

(Seniors)

Address:

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

Contact Us: **6744 7422**

Social Services

Bethel Activity Group

(Seniors)

Every first and third Wednesday of the month
10.00 am to 12.30pm

Traditional Chinese Medical Clinic

(Seniors)

Every Wednesday Morning
9.30 am to 11.30 am

Bethel Study Room

(Primary School)

Eng, Chinese, Math, Science
Weekday 4.30 pm to 6.00pm

Monthly Haircut cum Birthday Celebration

(Seniors)

Every last Friday of the month
8.30 am to 11.30am

Functional Fitness Exercise

(Seniors)

Every Thursday Morning
9.30 am - 10.30 am

Journeys by Night

(Children)

Every Thursday Evening
6.00 pm to 9.00 pm

Bethel Community Services (BCS) was registered with the Registrar of Societies in August 2004. It became a charity under the Charities Act in September 2004. BCS was admitted as a member of the National Council of Social Service in July 2007 and granted the Institution of a Public Character status. Donors can give to Bethel Community Services and receive tax deduction for their donations.

EMPOWER. MAXIMISE. POTENTIAL.