Christmas: It’s About Giving

Christmas has never been so meaningful as in 2012. Choosing the theme “Community Family Christmas” the Women & Family Ministries of the Balestier Church assisted by the Adventist Community Services held a celebration of God’s Gift to humankind. Twenty needy families from the community were invited to join church members for an evening of food, fun and festivity.

Sharing

Each invited family was given a hamper comprising basic staples like rice, noodles, Milo, soya milk, oil and other provisions, as well as NTUC gift vouchers.

Responses

The guests relished the gesture of friendship and caring and were heard to respond, “I’m so happy to have been invited,” “This really shows your care for the community,” and “I felt warm and loved.”

Blessings

The event provided an opportunity for church members to unite and reach out to the community. All put their hands to the plough as it were, counting heads, giving hampers, serving the guests and finally when the evening came to a close, willingly escorted the hamper-laden families to their homes. This can be the beginning of our relationship with our commu

Jessy Quilindo, Women & Family Ministries Coordinator, Balestier Church.

Seeing their faces light up is reward enough.

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The intention is to move the church towards a more active and meaningful appreciation of the Christmas message which is one of love, hope, forgiveness and reconciliation. I believe we can build on this small beginning and become a beacon of hope for our community with more of such events.

Children from the Balestier Church Primary Sabbath School Department had a Christmas surprise for the residents of the Adventist Home for the Elders on December 22, 2012. The Home resonated with the sound of melodious Christmas carols as the children sang. They also donated six massage equipment and an ang pow.

Children’s effort

The presentation of the gifts marked the finale of the children’s Heartfelt Christmas project. They had made cards, bookmarks, gift tags, brooches and hair clips out of felt materials, and sold them to raise money for the massage equipment. The Heartfelt Christmas project was to put into action what the children had learnt about giving to the community. With an active pool of 6 children, the fundraising goal was $300. One boy voiced the hope of raising $500. God blessed the children’s efforts and the final amount raised was $729!

The initial plan was to buy two massage devices. However with God’s blessings, six were purchased—two sets each of a mini-massage chair, twin massage orbs and an oscillating massage device.

In-kind donations

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In retrospect

This has been a very meaningful journey for the children—planning, making the crafts, getting and delivering the orders and presenting the gifts. They had followed the Saviour’s example of giving and that is what Christmas is all about.

A Heartfelt Christmas

Rosie Ng, Primary Sabbath School Dept Leader, Balestier Church

Building bridges can be fun.

No greater satisfaction.

Sharing Christmas cheer through music.
A Heartfelt Christmas

Creative bookmarks crafted by the children.

Gifts for the women residents.

Something for the men residents, too.

Charity begins at a young age.

Smiling is infectious.

A moment to remember.
en kids do well at school, they earn goods grade, but when children attend a Character Building Camp, they learn valuable lessons that are good for life. At the Maranatha Church we strive to teach children character building skills that are values found in the Bible such as self-worth, caring and teamwork.

**Imparting values**

The five-day camp co-sponsored by the Adventist Community Services was attended by 22 campers (aged 6 to 12 years) of which 8 were from the neighborhood. The camp aimed at imbibing positive values into young minds via fun and interactive activities such as stories, drama, art and craft, music, life science, games and nature trip. The focus was on getting them to understand the fruits of the Spirit and emulate the example of Jesus.

**Follow-up**

At the end of the camp, parents were invited to attend the graduation and dinner. Campers were invited to join the Pathfinder and the Adventurer Clubs to receive continual reinforcement of those values that they had learnt during the camp. We are glad that two campers from the neighborhood have joined our Adventurer Club. Maranatha Church has positioned herself as a community place to help develop good character and positive youth development—to make our community a better and peaceful place.
Collaboration with CDAC

John Cheang, Adventist Community Services

Adventist Community Services (ACS) collaborated with the Chinese Development Assistance Council to provide health screening for their beneficiaries. This took place on December 2, 2012 at the Nanyang Junior College under their “Ready for School” project. In six hours close to 500 participants were screened.

Benefactions

Besides the usual body mass index (BMI) check, blood pressure, glucose as well as cholesterol levels were evaluated. Within three minutes participants got to know their cholesterol level. Health age (how healthy an individual is compared to others of similar age, based upon lifestyle factors) were estimated. Volunteers at counselling stations provided healthy living tips.

Volunteers

ACS is grateful for the 100 over volunteers who worked diligently to serve the overwhelming number of eager participants.

Guest of Honour, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister lending his support.

(The Chinese Development Assistance Council (CDAC) is a Government funded organization co-founded by Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCCI) and Singapore Federation of Chinese Clans Association (SFCCA), set out to assist the Chinese Community for educational advancement, self-reliance and self-improvement. The beneficiaries of CDAC are the less capable and lower income group and the academically weak student).
On the night of January 25, 2013, the first official Conference Youth Leadership Certification Training Camp was kick-started at the Boys’ Brigade Headquarters for some 35 youth leaders from our local churches.

The skills
Together with John Tan, the conference youth director, we experienced stimulating conversations—rich conversations that tickled the mind and challenge us to think in new ways. Communication skills, the process of youth development, the psychology of youth leaders, and even program planning skills were taught through an interactive way. Training sessions were aimed at bonding youth leaders through means such as games, singing and even talking to one another.

The application
Enthused with new ideas and filled with zest everyone got together on the last day of the camp to brainstorm and plan for 2013 Conference-wide youth events. Many youth leaders felt that this camp helped them to know better how to coordinate youth events among the local churches. It was also time well spent in acquiring practical skills to utilize in their ministry.

Leaders in the Making

Tan Jia Hong, Assistant Pastor

Rich conversations that tickled the mind and challenge us to think in new ways.
Geylang Serai Christmas

John Cheang, Adventist Community Services

The Adventist Community Services together with the Maranatha Adventist Church members organised a Christmas party in Geylang Serai. The joy of Christmas was shared with some 70 seniors as well as youths from the needy families of different ethnic groups.

The fun begins

The party began with a photography session with Santa Claus and the participants. The games led by Brother Jimmy Wee had the senior citizens in stitches. Christmas carols filled the hall from the lovely voices of the youth and the children of the Maranatha Church. The exciting part for the seniors was picking a lucky number and getting to choose a prize from a selection of various goodies of foodstuffs and kitchenwares, courtesy of Maranatha Church members.

The best served at the end

Enjoying a good meal at the end left a pleasant feeling in the tummy. Appreciation goes to the team led by Jill Quek, Jenny Lai and Pastor Jerry Jacob for their untiring effort. Christmas takes on a totally new meaning when spent to bless others.
emphasized the evangelistic thrust of the church especially to the cities throughout the world.

**LEAD Conference with Ted Wilson**

The annual LEAD (leadership) Conference to empower and equip church officers and leaders was held in Manado, Indonesia. This time it was a Tri-Union meeting where attendees from the Southeast Asia Union Mission met with those from the East Indonesia Union Conference and the West Indonesia Union Mission.

**Wilson visits Indonesia**

It was planned to coincide with the arrival of the General Conference president, Elder Ted N. C. Wilson. He was in Indonesia to visit the institutions and churches (membership is about 250,000). At the LEAD Conference Wilson focused on the need for unity of the church. He furthered emphasized the evangelistic thrust of the church especially to the cities throughout the world.

**Highlight & issues**

The highlight of the conference was the combined worship on Sabbath held in an Adventist high school located some two hours from the city of Manado. An estimated 20,000 Adventists congregated for the Sabbath worship service. Wilson and other church leaders led in the worship. Adding to the grandeur of the occasion were awesome renditions of praise and adoration from the numerous choirs and singing groups of the Sulawesi region. In the afternoon church leaders deliberated on a very difficult issue — the rise of various independent ministries in Indonesia. Much concerns were expressed for the invariable threats these independent ministries posed to divide the Church (some churches have left the official Church) and siphon valuable financial resources from it.

**Met and prayed for President Yudhoyono**

Elder Wilson also had the opportunity to call on the country’s President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. He prayed for the President and his country that religious freedom will always be upheld and cherished. The Adventist Church operates several healthcare institutions in Indonesia and runs more than 370 schools.

**Singapore Conference**

The Singapore Conference was represented by its officers, a pastor and the administrators of the San Yu Adventist School. It is important to remember that while the Singapore Conference faithfully does its part on this island to witness to the 5 million people, it is also part of the global movement God has raised to finish his work before He returns.