

KSF PROJECTS FOR HAPPINESS: GIVING REFUGEE CHILDREN A CHANCE

SUMMARY

In 2017, the Sunway Student Volunteers embarked on a year-long community-service project at a local refugee learning centre named Chin Student Organisation (CSO). Two Saturdays per month, a group of 15-20 university students tutored the children of CSO on their school subjects, and in the process, they built relationships with the children with the simple goal: Giving refugee children a chance.

FUND-RAISING EFFORTS

In addition to the generous investment by KSF, the CSO centre itself has innovatively generated fund-raising money through a lucky draw lottery. This initiative was spearheaded by the Principal of the centre, and was carried out by the teachers of the centre as well as by the Sunway Student Volunteers on the university campus.

DETAILS: HOW IT WORKED

Sunway University is a large private university whose resources include a collective body that governs student clubs and services. Among this body is Sunway Student Volunteers. The young men and women of SSV embraced this tutoring effort quite enthusiastically, and never encountered difficulties finding willing tutors for the Saturday morning visits.

However, the Chin Student Organisation actually is comprised of four centres. Due to the limits of locations and transportation, Sunway Student Volunteers only managed to provide tutoring for the largest CSO centre, in Puchong, Selangor. Naturally, when presented with the potential to obtain such a generous donation from KSF, the centres immediately came up with a wish list that was far too broad, and so the decision was made to curtail the funding for only critical school supplies.

The tutoring has been a success. As mentioned above, relationships have been built and the tutors and students have developed mutual care for each other. The language and cultural barriers, although ever present, became part of the mutual learning. Altogether, 40-50 CSO children have benefitted from the one-on-one tutoring sessions by Sunway University students, but moreover, about 150 children (all four centres combined) have received school supplies from the contributions from Khind Starfish Foundation!

In the long term, Sunway volunteers will continue to provide regularly-scheduled tutors indefinitely, and it will continue taking the lead from CSO in terms of future sustainability fund-raising initiatives. Now that one effort has been successful, Sunway University is eager and proud to assist the CSO refugee learning centre to continue helping itself.

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO HAPPINESS & REFLECTIONS

Sunway University's volunteer tutors have kept a simple theme in mind during the Saturday morning visits. The priority from the beginning has always been to instil happiness and self-worth in the children.

Although the Sunway University faculty liaisons, Ms Niranjana Dhawan and Mr Erik Bles from the Centre for English Language Studies, offered brief coaching regarding the finer points of academic tutoring, the primary aim has always been to create an atmosphere of positivity, laughter and care in the tutoring in order to develop in the children a sense of affection for learning, for English, and for school, and most of all, to develop self-esteem in themselves. Sunway Student Volunteers hope this project for happiness, Giving Refugee Children a Chance, has contributed to the week-to-week positive well-being of these kids.

There is no substitute for community involvement with the culture of extreme poverty in terms of considering the effects not only on the recipient, but on the practitioner. Through this type of sustained, regular volunteer efforts and fund-raising is a natural and simple source of enrichment. The Sunway Student Volunteers hope this effort and others like it will continue to provide enriching cultural learning experiences for future students in coming years.

FINAL THOUGHTS: PERSONAL STATEMENT

"We have learnt to interact and build strong relationships with these kids, who are of totally different backgrounds from us. We really enjoyed having tutoring sessions with these kids as well. We learned a lot about their culture by listening to folktales and watching them present their magic tricks during breaks in between classes. We felt motivated and the satisfaction of teaching the kids when they really engaged and took interest in learning from us throughout each lesson."

- N. Locshiny



WhatsApp Video 2017-12-01 at 6.46.08 PM (1).mp4



WhatsApp Video 2017-12-01 at 6.30.47 PM.mp4