

Newsworthy

A NEWSLETTER OF THE HCD INSTITUTE
Connecting you to child advocacy and development



Newsworthy contains news and information about our work and also the fellowship of the student alumni. It is published three times a year in English.

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The Holistic Child Development (HCD) Institute of the Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary (MBTS) is a department for training, research and networking in holistic ministries to children. We seek to transform and enable the Church to do child advocacy and development through Christian-based theological education, research and awareness raising. The Seminary is part of the Global Alliance for Advancing Holistic Child Development, a network of theological institutions seeking to promote HCD programs worldwide.

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All I really need to know, I learned in kindergarten!

A reflection on Robert Fulghum's quote and what it means for early years educators in the 21st century.



A few words...

Dear friends,

Greetings!

Newsworthy begins 2011 with the theme "Open hearts, Open hands." Inspired by Psalms 24, the phrase expresses our desire to come before God, seek his leadership for ourselves, and for those whom we work with. It also indicates willingness to care and share for the benefit of others who live and labour in difficult environments. As we look back on how we were blessed in our formative years by the kind sharing of labour and resources, we hope that this year, we will make a significant contribution to those we work with.

This issue updates you on how the HCD Institute is learning to be open in heart and hands to the children and our co-workers. Also, 2011 issues will include articles on education of children as a number of our readers are involved in this ministry.

For what God is doing in our lives, we give thanks! Read on...

Blessings,

Rosalind Tam

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Blessing our children through caring

"AND if a man from another country is living in your land with you, do not make life hard for him; let him be to you as one of your countrymen and have love for him as for yourself ..." (Leviticus 19:33-34)

Finally, the child is born!

For over a year, Melanie (YWAM), Stanley (POHD – Catholic Church social arm) and Meng Eng (The PsALM Ministry) and a few others have been carrying a 'baby'... *the School for the Urban Poor*. On Jan 3, 2011 the 'baby' was delivered and will be registered with the UNHCR. As Malaysia is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol, UNHCR is the main actor of protection and assistance for asylum-seekers and refugees in Malaysia. A total of 39 children is registered at this stage at the school and will be streamed into Primary 1 to 4.

The *School for the Urban Poor* will come under the Love Penang Network Education Taskforce as part of the comprehensive attempt to influence education in the city of Penang,

Malaysia. The administration is looking at a possible maximum of 45 children funded by faith-giving. For now, the children are mostly Rohingya refugees -- stateless and without opportunities for education. Later, the school may include children from other migrant groups.

The HCD Institute is glad to be part of this ministry through sponsorship of 10 children for 2011 under the Safe Place Funds. The sponsorship will provide the fees needed for school supplies and food for recess and lunch.

For details, please write to us and we will forward your concern to Rev. Albert Tan of Love Penang Network. ■



Blessing our neighbours through sharing



GOD had begun the work long before we even considered that someday, we will be training the Burmese children's ministry workers.

In 2007, He sent 2 Burmese ladies to be trained at the MBTS campus. These two ladies graduated with a Diploma in Child Studies and went home to train others. Sensing the need for a more consistent training program, the pastor persistently asked the HCD Institute to consider a Myanmar training program.

However, we were hesitant as we think of the resources and manpower. By end of 2010, the Lord brought a conviction that if the institution will not do it, he will raise another agency to answer the need.

Repentance is the first step towards recovery. A proposal was soon drafted which included a training curriculum. The Lord provided the funds through a network partner to run the pilot project. All in all, we look forward to the first module of *Training the Trainers* which will begin in May 2011. The training program seeks to equip the Burmese leaders to become trainers of the local children ministry workers in their own dialect. 25 trainers have been selected by the local churches.

The HCDI is privileged to work with Compassion Asia and the St Matthews Orphanage Center to co-ordinate this program. ■

Blessing our co-workers through training



From left: Tryphena Chin, Barbara Ruegger, S. Rabindranath Samuel, Yosephine Evelyn, MBTS academic dean Dr Sunny Tan, Pranee Runroadsataporn, HCD Institute director Dr Rosalind Lim-Tan, Susanti Kowinto, Alipin and Thomos Sihombing. Kevin Stout is not pictured.

ONCE again, the Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary (MBTS) had the privilege of convening its 55th Graduation service, this time for some 150 graduates.

The Graduation Service was held on Nov 12, 2010 at Kompleks Masyarakat Penyayang, Penang. The HCD program under the HCD Institute graduated 9 students, with 8 at the Master level and 1 at the certificate level.

"What a wonderful learning experience!" said HCD graduate Thomos Sihombing of Indonesia. "The HCD program has really opened my eyes to see the beauty of children from God's sight."

For S. Rabindranath Samuel of India, the program has enabled him to "understand, reflect and put into practice God's way of ministry to children." Meanwhile, Barbara Ruegger of Switzerland said that the program has enabled her to consolidate her learning experiences in the past 20 years of her ministry. It has also given her a more solid and deeper understanding of ministry to and with children.

"Now I know that God's priority is child focused – to nurture, guide and protect the children and helping them participate in being active agents of change," said Yosephine Evelyn of Indonesia. ■

Receiving His blessings for us



THIS year, we welcome two new team members to our office:

Alice Shin Hyun Ju is a Korean missionary who graduated from the HCD program in 2008. She has been in the mission field for almost 8 years and was working with the Sudanese refugee children in Egypt before she joined us. Alice will oversee our field ministry projects.

Samuel Lee hails from Cambodia and is an MBTS graduate (2010). He joins us as an intern, working towards his Diploma in Child Studies while being mentored to be a leader for the children's ministry in his church. This is the first time the HCDI is experimenting with an internship program. He will be involved in our Mandarin ministry.

We also give thanks for the team that has held the fort for the past years...

Tryphena Chin serves as the HCDI office administrator as well as co-ordinate the Chinese track training both locally and in China. This will be her seventh year with the office and a testimony of her dedication to the ministry.

Kok Chik Bu is in charge of the office communications and is also the web manager for the HCD Global Alliance. He is part of the team that edits and publishes literature disseminated from our office.

Rosalind Tan heads the office, networks with other agencies to grow the ministry, and writes curriculums and training materials for the HCD programs. She also supports the HCD Global Alliance partners in South East Asia.



A personal journey in Early Years Education: Then, now, and next

Rosalind Tan

ONE of Robert Fulghum's famous quotes is, "All I really need to know I learned in kindergarten." In his writings, Fulghum expounded on the values of early years learning and that everything a person needs to know about living – wisdom, the Golden Rule, love, basic sanitation, ecology, politics, equality, and sane living; the person learned them as a child at kindergarten. Going beyond the 3Rs, kindergarten education is first and foremost, to provide the platform where young children can learn together with others on "how to live and what to do and how to be" (Robert Fulghum, 1988). As long as there are children there will be kindergartens; some kindergartens offer good quality age-appropriate education while others operate with little knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices. While the latter lacks knowledge of best practices, they may however still deliver what the Asian parents want – a string of As in the kindergarten report card, daily homework to occupy the child, coloring skills within

the lines, reading, writing, and counting beyond one's age abilities. So parents and kindergartens put the children through the daily grind with little awareness of the stress children can handle. Some children survive the ordeal while others burn out before they can even complete primary education.

At the virtual pace that our society is going where interpersonal relationships are expressed by a mere touch of the keyboard (otherwise known as Facebook); where accelerated learning is punctuated by gaps that need mending in later years, it comes as no surprise that the kindergarten curriculum of the future will be a return to the basics -- hands-on sensorial learning, personal wellness of the child, and acquisition of people relationship skills. The kindergarten worth its name will be a place where children are allowed to behave age appropriately as children; play as children would play; and where there is mutual respect and learning between teachers and learners.

Of course, academic learning will take place; but only because the learning of ABC and 1-2-3 brings meaning to everyday functioning. The agenda will be to bring out the best in every boy and girl; to teach them how to live as people; positively handle life situations; and be the best they can be. In summary, the basics children need to know for living and relationships; they would learn them in kindergarten.

Reiterating Frederick Froebel's words in the *Education of Children*, -- "the longer we consider and examine the present day methods of education, the more clearly we recognize that children lack the care and consideration which would be in accord with their present and future needs, a care which considers equally the child's mental and physical needs and capacities. We notice that if children are not given the care which takes their stage of human development into consideration, they will lack the foundation for the task ahead in school and for their later lives in general." ■

PROGRAM OFFERING 2011

CERTIFICATE IN CHILD STUDIES
Mandarin track
in Penang and Kuala Lumpur (12 credits).

DIPLOMA IN CHILD STUDIES
English track at the Penang MBTS campus.
Based on formal and informal learning approaches; this program is offered to individuals by request only (24 credits).

GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN HCD / MASTER OF ARTS IN HCD
All modules are offered simultaneously from June 6 – July 1.

Interested persons, please contact the HCDI office at 604-8812462 or email hcd.institute@gmail.com