

Have we ever agreed to do something for someone else and forgot? After which, did we have all sorts of “valid” reasons that justified why we forgot or why that agreement was not so important in the first place? If so, we have not been responsible.

49 persons comprising 34 care-givers and their teenage children and 15 staff members were introduced to the problem of self-deception during the **Arbinger Core in Relationships and Family Programme** last weekend. In all, 16 families comprising 66 persons were present for a weekend stay to learn how to improve our relationships within our families. For the staff present, apart from learning the Arbinger model, being there inevitably got us thinking about the effectiveness of our relationships at work too.

The Arbinger Institute helps organisations, families, individuals, and communities worldwide to correct the trouble created by the little known but pervasive problem of self-deception. Arbinger is headquartered in the United States but has operations around the world. Last weekend, they donated their expertise and worked with us to bring their programme to our families.

We expected twice the number of families and participants but on Saturday morning, 9 out of 10 of those with infants did not show up. Thus, we had a bunch of volunteers waiting to care for the babies who were left disappointed with the no-show. As the people who rallied their support, moments like that do put us in an awkward position and cast a doubt over the whole notion of community and volunteering. Hence, we are most grateful that even though their time and energy were not utilised well, these volunteers continued to give us their understanding and friendship.

We were expecting at least 60 children and had more than 60 volunteers scheduled to care for them through the day while their care-givers and elder siblings were attending the Arbinger training. Even though there were a lot less children, volunteers from Bank of America Merrill Lynch, the Institute of Technical Education, National University of Singapore, National Institute of Education and several others who came as individuals did not let the poor attendance get to them. They were here to give the children a safe and enjoyable time and they made sure they did it responsibly.

Getting last weekend’s event going was actually getting people in a community coming together in happiness and cooperation and as such, it felt like we were getting a celebration going. Personally, I celebrated the unintended outcome of being in the same classroom with families who utilised our services. Learning together as fellow students; trying to understand the teacher somehow got us understanding each other a little better and seeing each other as people.

Enjoy your weekend.

Gerard

*Being hard and firm in my behaviours is often the way I help people be their best. In fact it is often the way I see others as people. - The Arbinger Institute*