

Another Week Beyond - 1309

Dear Team

74 final year students from Henderson Secondary School spent Monday morning in the Henderson neighbourhood visiting its residents. This activity was part of their "Values in Action" Programme and they were helping us to make contact with some homes that we have yet to reach.

Understandably, it was not the most exciting thing on a Monday morning for some 16 and 17 year olds. Before the task at hand began, we overheard some expressing that visiting a children's home or helping a child with his homework would have been time more meaningfully spent. Others blatantly said that being there was a waste of time. Anyway, our fears that the morning would go awry were not founded. The teachers were more than capable in ensuring that it was a meaningful learning experience for the students and for us as well.

Before the students set off, a teacher gently reminded them that they were to put their heart and soul into the exercise. He explained that the residents were not obliged to open their doors when they knocked let alone speak to them. Hence, engaging a resident in conversation would be a privilege they should not take for granted. They should honour the attention residents are giving them by being respectful, interested and concerned. "Wow!" We thought to ourselves as we observed the students listening attentively and reflecting on their teacher's message.

The students did a fine job and the teachers led by example. One teacher was continually encouraging and cajoling everyone to keep going and the students who followed him ended up being the most productive. They knocked on 20 doors and had conversations with 11 residents who were home. When the task was completed, all the students decided to pick up the litter around the neighbourhood as a gesture of appreciation for the hospitality they had received.

Back at school, the students penned their thoughts on paper and a few were randomly asked to share. Several shared that they found the morning more meaningful than they had imagined. One shared that she never thought that she could enjoy being in a friendly conversation with an elderly person. Another said that it felt good to have made friends with the people who lived around his school. Yet another declared that she will contact us to explore how she could volunteer.

Of course, not every student was positive about the experience but by respecting their views and appreciating their honesty, it would be our demonstration of "Values in Action."

Enjoy your weekend.

Gerard

"Fear less, hope more; Eat less, chew more; Whine less, breath more; Talk less, say more; Love more, and all good things will be yours! "-A Swedish Proverb

Gerard Ee
Executive Director
BEYOND SOCIAL SERVICES

Another Week Beyond - 1309

26 Jalan Klinik #01-42/52
Singapore 160026
DID: (65) 6664-8571
Fax: (65) 6274-0633
HP : (65) 9788-5700
www.beyond.org.sg
ged@beyond.org.sg