

Dear Team

Schools are pillars in the community that support the growth of young people in more ways than one. Hence, we seek ways to cooperate and to nurture a meaningful working relationship with them.

Recently, a school for children with special needs sent 7 of their students to us for an opportunity to do a good deed. After welcoming them, we showed them the large bundles of food staples that were donated and how we had to repack them into food hampers for families who had little. These students listened attentively and one of them spontaneously assured us “I know lah! My family also received food before. We do for you!” After 2 hours, the job was done but what really made our day was the enthusiasm and joy these children brought to the task. They cooperated well, were diligent and in good spirits. Being among the happy and motivated lifted our spirits.

A school for post-secondary students invited us to have a conversation with 13 students who held leadership roles. We walked into a noisy room and after struggling to get their attention, we showed a 20 second trailer advertising our teenage pregnancy helpline. We then asked if anyone had any views on teenage pregnancy and suddenly it was so quiet we could hear a pin drop.

Eventually, a girl said that it was usually unplanned, unexpected and sometimes unwanted. This got the conversation going as another bravely shared that she was a teen mom and she only plucked up enough courage to seek her parents’ support near her due date. Her parents were upset but supported her and all was well. She was so relieved after telling her parents as she had carried the burden of secrecy for 8 months. Then, a male student joined in by expressing that he would not know what to do if a friend confided in him that his girlfriend was pregnant. He felt that couples in such a situation should seek assistance. Almost everyone in the room knew someone who was pregnant and they shared their thoughts and feelings about the matter.

When the session was over, a girl came up to us and asked if she could speak to us in private. After leading us to a quiet corner, she shared that she still struggles with an abortion she had 4 years ago and wondered where she could get some help. She added that she could not speak to family and friends as they cannot make sense of her struggle, believing that time has already healed her.

This girl has now been linked to appropriate support and such is the work of Babes, our teen pregnancy helpline that facilitates informed decision-making. Since 21 February 2005, we have journeyed with more than 320 girls face-to-face. Many others we communicated online and through SMS. It has been most meaningful work and we are proud that from 1 August 2013, this work will be given more focus and taken to the next level. The Babes Programme will no longer be under our umbrella and will operate as a separate entity named the Babes Pregnancy Crisis Support Ltd.

Enjoy your weekend.

Gerard

*When schools flourish, all flourishes. - Martin Luther*