



St Nick's News

St. Nicholas' Home Penang (NOVEMBER 2012)

St. Nick's News

The year 2012 has been a year filled with lots of joy and sadness, ups and down, achievements and shortcomings but despite it all, we have had a year that we can truly be proud of.

So, as we say goodbye to 2012 and as we bid farewell to the last edition of the year, we would like to wish everyone thank you for everything and a wonderful new year ahead!

As a treat to everyone, we are also very pleased to introduce to you, Nicky! Read on to find out more!



DEAFBLINDNESS

Losing one's sight is difficult but imagine losing your sight and hearing?

Deafblindness is a separate and unique disability. Sometimes known as dual sensory impairment or multi-sensory impairment, deafblindness is more than a combination of visual and hearing impairment or loss. An individual who is deafblind can use neither their sight nor hearing to compensate for the impairment of the other sense and neither sense can be used as a primary source for accessing information.

People suffering from Deafblindness can communicate in a number of different ways. It's common for someone who grew up deaf and suffered from vision loss in later life to use a type of sign language. Similarly those who grew up blind and lost their hearing in later life usually use a tactile mode of their spoken or written language. The main methods of communication include:

Using any residual hearing or sight. Such as speaking clearly, using hearing aids, being able to use sign language despite having restricted vision and using writing in a large print.

Tactile signing - Such as sign language or a manual alphabet (like the DeafBlind Alphabet) with certain visual or tactile changes.

Interpreting - Use of services such as sign language interpreters or communication aides.

Communication devices - Such as Tellatouch or the computerised version; the Telebraille

There are over 70 known causes of deafblindness and these are usually split up into two main groups; acquired and congenital:

Acquired - Most people suffering from deafblindness have had use of both their sight & hearing throughout the majority of their lives. The loss of these senses occurs through injury, illness or age. Around 4% of people of 60 in the UK have experienced both auditory and visual impairments. The majority of people with acquired deafblindness are able to retain a useful amount of their sight and/or hearing. Many people with deafblindness have a congenital sensory impairment, meaning they were born without either sight or sound. They then go on to acquire the loss of the other sense, such as being born with

congenital deafness and acquiring blindness through glaucoma in later life.

Congenital - Those who are born deaf & blind are said to have congenital deafblindness. This can occur for several reasons; prenatal infections such as rubella, chromosomal or genetic syndromes (such as Down syndrome), excessive use of drugs and/or alcohol during pregnancy and trauma occurring during childbirth. Due to widespread vaccinations, rubella, which was once the major cause of congenital deafblindness is now exceedingly rare. Another major factor is Usher syndrome. This is a genetic condition where the sufferer is born deaf and then gradually begins to lose their sight. This typically occurs in late childhood and is due to a condition known as Retinitis Pigmentosa. Early warning signs of Usher syndrome include a loss of peripheral vision and night blindness.

Losing your sight and hearing is indeed something that is difficult and painful but with the proper knowledge and training, it is possible for a deafblind person and his/her family to overcome the barriers.

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Hello! I'm Nicky!
Nice to meet you!

Global Giving

SNH has been serving the blind for the past 86 years. Over the years, we have evolved by improving on our services, training and rehabilitation of the blind and visually impaired (BVI) trainees. Every year, we try our best to spread the word about SNH and the services we provide for the BVI trainees and at the same time, coming up with ways that will allow people from different parts of the world such as the US or UK to contribute via online donation.

Global Giving is a platform that allows us to reach out to this group of people. It is a charity fundraising web site that gives social entrepreneurs and non-profits from anywhere in the world a chance to raise the money that they need to improve their communities. SNH has two projects on the Global Giving website.

The first project is "Equip Deafblind Children with Skills for Life". This project will support free on-site and residential training for SNH blind children with multiple disabilities. The latest project to be introduced is "Educating young blind children for a better future" which encourages parents of visually impaired children to join the Early Intervention Programme. With sites such as Global Giving, it has provided a platform to share about the free services and training provided to continue enriching the lives of the BVI children in SNH.

FROM BITES TO KISSES

His wrist bones are deformed. His thumbs do not function at all. He would bite his caregivers if he was uncomfortable. He would roll around on the floor and throw tantrums. That was Muhammad Eisma Daniel two years ago.

Today, Daniel is a changed boy, all thanks to the training he received in the Deaf Blind Multi-handicapped (DBMH) program at SNH. These days, though he still does not talk much and communicates mostly through touch and sound, he still smiles and approaches his caregivers to give kisses when he approves of something.

Daniel has learnt to adapt to using only 4 fingers on each hand, eats and drinks independently and is slowly learning how to rinse his utensils with the help of his teachers. He is also very accurate in his sense of direction and no longer needs help or guidance to walk to his class. "Daniel has very good concentration and retention and we do not have to repeat it many times," his teacher comments proudly. Daniel is one of the many examples of the children that has benefitted through Global Giving. With Daniel's good progress and with donations pouring; we can continue to help Daniel and other children in the DBMH program towards improving their lives for a bigger and brighter future!

HELLO! I'M NICKY!

After months of secrecy and planning, our big St Nicholas' Home secret is now out in the open! We officially have a mascot to call our own!

One of the goals of St. Nicholas' Home (SNH) is to be recognized as a multi-service institution catering to the visually-impaired community in Malaysia. To get a bit closer to this goal we would like to introduce to you the mascot of St. Nicholas' Home, Nicky the Tapir.

This animal is a distinctive species from the Malay Archipelago and has poor vision with very good olfactory and hearing skills.

The name Nicky refers to St. Nicholas' Home. Our goal is that whenever someone in Malaysia and maybe in the future other countries see our mascot, they immediately know that it is the mascot of St. Nicholas' Home, a multi-service institution catering to the

visually-impaired community in Malaysia.

The tapir is a very independent animal and being independent and confident is something that we incorporate in our training and rehabilitation to our blind and visually impaired trainees. In addition to being independent, the Tapir is also an athletic animal despite its chubby and cute appearance. Just like our trainees here at SNH, the Tapir is an animal that teaches us not to judge a book by its cover as we have even had some of our former trainees scale Mount Kinabalu!

The tapir truly personifies the vision of a mascot for St Nicholas' Home Penang and as we introduce Nicky to the world, let this be a new journey towards making St Nicholas' Home known to the public!