



St Nick's News

St. Nicholas' Home Penang (September 2012)

St. Nick's News

86 years of passion, 86 years of love, 86 years of service and 86 years of giving.

There is a saying that the walls of a building hold many secrets that not many people know. At St Nicholas' Home (SNH), it is the people who hold the key to the wonderful history and secret of the Home.

So, sit back, relax and let us take you on a journey through the secrets and happenings at SNH.



HISTORIC JOURNEY

Did you know that SNH used to be a school? Do you know that some of our blind trainees have scaled Mount Kinabalu?

Yes, despite our challenges, SNH has carved its name well into the heart and soul of the community.

Established in 1926 in Malacca, SNH first took in blind children who were orphans, abandoned or had parents who could not look after them. Year by year, the number of children in the home began to increase and they moved to a bigger premise in Penang where the home has been ever since.

The Management decided to concentrate on education for the blind of all races and creed in Malaysia and so, started a kindergarten for 28 blind children. Thus, SNH became the first institution in Malaysia to provide formal education and rehabilitate blind people!

By 1959, the Home had 74 children and a completed primary school for the Blind in session. Over the years, blind students started attending Secondary school through the integrated school program adopted by the Ministry

of Education (MOE). Meanwhile, the Home also started many other rehabilitation programs to meet the needs of the blind of all ages, races, beliefs and walks of life in Malaysia.

As years passed, we received tremendous amounts of support from generous people with hearts of gold. With their blessings and contribution, SNH continued to grow and expand.

In 1997, the primary school that was fully sponsored by the MOE moved to a new premise at Alma, Bukit Mertajam. Over the next 5 years, the Home adopted its vision and mission statements, successfully upgraded its computer training program and in 2002, began the massage training centre.

To strengthen the bond between the Home, trainees and their family, we held our first ever family camp for the deaf/blind and multi-handicapped children in 2003. In the same year, a 5 year Strategic Directions was launched for the home. 2005 proved to be a good year for us. The former Malaysian PM, (YAB) Dato' Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi donated 35 brailers and 80 white canes to our Home. The Samsung

Eyes IT Laboratory was also sponsored by a USD 50,000 grant from Samsung Malaysia (M) Bhd. which was officiated by the former Penang CM, YAB Tan Sri Dr. Koh Tsu Khoon.

We achieved a milestone when we celebrated our 80th anniversary in 2006, complete with an anniversary magazine to share our achievements with all our supporters and contributors. In 2010, SNH Low Vision Centre was revamped and officially launched on 13th May. On the 24th of July, we were certified ISO 9001-2008 for quality in training services for the blind and visually impaired and in November, SNH Open Air Sculpture Gallery was launched.

In the next 2 years, we had the privilege of having our very own Tactile Library, organised a few successful events such as Braille on The Beach, Ride for Sight and Walk for Sight & Sound. But, most importantly, in the 86 years that we have been running, we are most proud of our blind trainees who have defied all odds to overcome their disabilities and achieve success in life.

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Ride for Sight 2012



Walk for Sight &
Sound 2012

86 YEARS IN THE MAKING

The time has come for SNH to make history. After more than 8 decades, we are ready to have our 1st ever big carnival. It is bound to be a joyous affair with over 80 stalls ranging from food to drinks and game stalls at the carnival!

To add to the excitement, not only are we carving our names into SNH history, but we will also be revealing something big. This secret has been kept under lock and key for several months and only a few lucky "chosen ones" have the honor of knowing the secret.

The goal of this carnival is to raise RM100, 000. Through this, we can continue our efforts in being financially secure to continue providing the best for the visually impaired trainees of our Home. The booklets for the carnival, at RM20 each, are already on sale at SNH. Any hawker vendors, individuals or companies that are interested to sponsor a stall of their own or to contribute in cash or kind are welcomed to approach us. The profits gained from these stalls will be in aid of SNH. You've been with us every step of the way, so join us here for all the fun and laughter!

BRaille ON THE BEACH

Ever since Louise Braille invented the system of reading and writing for the blind or visually impaired, Braille has become an indispensable tool for them. Therefore, SNH decided to organise this unique event to introduce Braille to the sighted community. Sighted people know Braille as dots that blind people use to read and write. BOTB is primarily a sand-sculpturing competition comprising of 10 sighted participants per team, forming an inspiring message of their choice with large blind dots in the sand. In addition to raising awareness & emphasizing on the educational factor, it was also a fun activity for all those involved.

For non-participating visitors, there are also beach games such as sea-shell coloring & beach ball for children and adults to share in the fun. Rarely do our trainees get the opportunity to have fun at the beach. An event such as this naturally becomes much anticipated not only for the trainees, but for everyone at the Home. With the resounding success of our previous BOTB events, we plan to make it a yearly event!

WALK FOR SIGHT & SOUND (WFSS)

A person can never fully understand the plight of a blind & deaf person until they are put in a similar situation. For 4 years running, the WFSS Blind-folded Charity Walk has been creating awareness among the people about the importance of sight and it also allows the participants to experience what it is like to be blind and deaf.

Every year since its inception by the Lions Club of Perdana, Malaysia, WFSS has been a resounding success with people from all walks of life, for 4 years running. The first WFSS in 2009 was held at Polo Ground. We recorded a good number of participants because it was the first walk of its kind and people were really excited to take part as it gave them the opportunity to learn and experience the ways of the blind. This year, with Beach Street declared a car free zone area on Sundays, the organising committee thought this would be the perfect place for the walk! With over 1700 participants this year and with fantastic lucky draw prizes, WFSS is certainly shaping up to be one of our signature events!

Ride for sight (rfs)

SNH has always strived to do its best to serve the blind community and provide them with opportunities to participate in activities that they otherwise would not be able to do. Since 2011, co-organized by G Club Penang Cyclist and supported by MPPP, RFS has become one of our annual signature events. The aim of the event is to emphasize the blind's right to choose. In addition, RFS also aims to promote healthy living & nurture Mother Nature.

While cycling may be a norm for the sighted, it is surely a new & exciting experience for our trainees. Paired with a sighted person, the BVI trainees have the opportunity to cycle on a 2-person tandem bike, ridden by the sighted partner. The first RFS was held in Balik Pulau. This year, it was held at Straits Quay. With over 700 participants this year, it was truly a sight to behold. Our CM flagged off the event and he joined in on the fun as well! People from all walks of life, regardless of age or color, came together for a common purpose. What lay beneath all the fun & excitement was a united community coming together to serve the blind and we at SNH could not have asked for more!