

By Mr David Miller



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Learning from Our Kids

Writing this in October, one would think that Christmas is still way off. But if you are in the charity sector, you would know that the yuletide season starts early.

Many organisations begin making their calls to charities as early as August to plan activities for the less fortunate. These include parties galore, presents and outings. Everyone wants to do something a little different, a little more memorable especially for the little ones.

On the surface, the children at Club Rainbow are no different from any others. They too get caught up in the festivities and like children everywhere, they are never short of gift ideas!

But if you take the time to get to know them, you will find that their world is understandably a little different. Born with a range of chronic illnesses, their hopes and dreams for the future hover under a cloud of uncertainty. But fate has

made these children resilient and we can learn much from them about what is really important especially during this holiday season when we all try a little harder to better appreciate those around us.

I remember it was about this time last year that a magazine asked us to contribute a "Christmas Wish" story. One of our kids took up the challenge and wrote a piece straight from the heart. His simple wish was for people to be more understanding towards children with illnesses and offer their friendship as life, even for a child, can be lonely.

He related how his schoolmates were always teasing him. To them, his life was easy. Skipping school was a breeze and he was always excused from arduous PE lessons. Little did they realise that each time the boy who suffers from Thalassaemia Major was absent from school, it was because he was in hospital receiving a blood

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transfusion. And every time he was left out of a game because somebody thought that it might be too rough for him, the exclusion hurt even more than the pain of being injured.

There was another child who wrote an essay about being a gentleman “even in this modern age”. He wrote that a gentleman is always kind and thoughtful of others. He is always helpful because he knows that one day he may need a stranger’s help. In an age where children in Singapore seem to be taught “me first”, it was certainly a refreshing read. I would have liked to meet him one day but I will never get that chance. Suffering from a congenital heart disease, he passed away a few weeks ago.

And it is not just our Rainbow Children who can inspire us. A few months ago, I was contacted by a girl who wanted to know more about Club Rainbow. So over many emails, I told her about the charity, the illnesses of our kids and the work that we do.

We get calls like these all the time and I did not think much more about it until a couple of weeks later when she dropped by the office. Since we last communicated, she had made a presentation to her class about Club Rainbow, rallied friends and relatives to make donations

and with her mother’s help, she bought more than 10 bags of various food provisions, rice and cereals for our social workers to distribute to needy families. This girl was just 10-years-old and even though she had never met a Rainbow Child, her heart still went out to them.

Yes, we can certainly learn much from kids and they have much to offer us in return. If you surround yourself with children, the magic of their youth will surely rub off and your spirit will never grow old. This is perhaps the best Christmas gift you can give yourself.

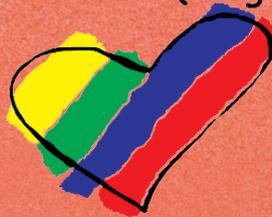
Over the past few months, it has been our honour to be given this space in the *SMA News* to reach out to you – the members of Singapore’s medical fraternity. We have been touched by your generosity, friendship and faith in us by choosing Club Rainbow as your adopted charity.

We hope in turn to touch your lives by inviting you to be part of this charity and to get to really know our children outside of the hospital. And our Christmas wish is that you will remain supportive of our work and a friend to our Rainbow Family for years to come.

From our family to yours, we wish you good health in mind, body and spirit.

Seasons Greetings! ■

Club Rainbow (Singapore)



Providing **Compassionate Relevant Services**
for chronically ill children and their families

Club Rainbow’s new base, the Rainbow Family Care Centre is due to be operational in early January 2007. We are still looking for some equipment for the programmes we intend to run. In particular, we need:

- 1) Two new/used laptops (Pentium III and above) in good working order.
- 2) New/used digital cameras (2 mp and above) in good working order. These will be for our digital photography course.
- 3) One new/used digital projector in good working order.

If you can help with the above, please contact David Miller of Club Rainbow at **6377 1789** or email: mktg@clubrainbow.org.

Thank you! ■