

Spotlight on CHARIS Affiliate Project Kyrie

Established since December 2004



The seeds for Project Kyrie (pronounced Kee-ree-eh) or the Lord's Project were sown in December 2004, when Millicent Tan went on a two week mission trip to Cambodia to visit a friend who was teaching at a Don Bosco Vocational school there.

She was then a busy executive with a well paying job, who had grown up in the comfortable, sheltered environment of Singapore. The trip was not only an eye opening experience, it triggered the start of a series of activities that continues to drive the growth and reach of Project Kyrie today. Millicent believes passionately that if it is the Lord's will for a project to be done, it will be done, and all glory without exception belongs solely to God!

For her first project, Millicent was given a wish list of needs such as doctors for the poor, clean water for the children, text books and monies needed to sponsor children to stay in school, as required by the nuns at Don Bosco when she left Cambodia. Most fortuitously, she had over 20 years of working experience in retailing & logistics and rose to the occasion to fulfill every request on the list.

There is a sense of serendipity in Millicent's work for God. In Project Kyrie's early years, she discovered various needs and calls for help in her travels, in places as diverse as Poland, Ukraine and Indonesia. And with each request, she further honed her natural ability to marshal different resources to get things done. She believes that there are many who wish to help, that they just need an opportunity to do what they can, in whatever place or position in life they are presently in, as not everyone needs to or can be in the front line of mission work. To her, everyone can do one small thing – be it to give time, money or offer a contact. And together, another of God's projects will be completed.

Project Kyrie does work also in Singapore. Kyrie Kitchen started in 2008 with food lovingly prepared and delivered by her mother and a team of parishioners from St Ignatius Church, provided meals for 500 people once to twice a month for 3 years. Kyrie Kitchen also oversees the distribution of monthly food rations provided by kind donors for 20 families from churches like St Vincent de Paul, St Anthony and other referral cases from other organisations. The effort is driven by the belief that no one should go without food, especially when there is so much excess everywhere.

Millicent and her volunteers are also working with the Salvation Army on a home furnishing scheme called 'Project Room for Improvement' – where families are given the opportunity to own 7 pieces of furniture with a monthly payment of \$20 for 2 years. This project is based on the principle of teaching people to fish, rather than giving them the fish, and the respect for human dignity, where people find pride in working for what they own, rather than to live solely on handouts. In this scheme, donors are called to underwrite a \$480 micro loan to these poor families who are not able to afford buying furniture for their homes.

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Millicent feels that being blessed with a relatively privileged life has fueled her need to give, and the passion to provide others with the opportunity for them to be who they can be. Sometimes, this requires very simple items like a pair of jeans or shoes, or some clean water. Other times, it may require more long term effort and attention. Whatever it is, every project undertaken by Project Kyrie is guided by desire to love God with all our hearts, and to love our brothers and sisters as we would love ourselves.

Did You Know...

If you want to help the poor, you have to fight the poor to help them as it is always a struggle to put them on the right path. As Mother Theresa says, it is between us and God – 'Our eyes must always be on Christ' to sustain us in our work.



People often feel they are not ready or are unable to help. Project Kyrie needs people exactly where they are, doing what they are doing. Not everyone can or will be a missionary. All it takes is to say 'Yes, I will help'. It only takes a minute to help make a phone call, or put in a donation, or recommend a friend.



Helping others is a responsibility. We need to think for the ones we are helping, instead of doing things from our own perspective, and to impart the skill of fishing, instead of providing the fish. Otherwise, we may foster bad practices, attitudes or habits which are often a result of us solving problems expediently with money.



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2012 Key Activities...



- Equipping villagers in Daw Tuang Ku, Myanmar with the resources to build a playground for their children and to refurbish a dilapidated church to include a study area, with electricity generated by solar panels
- Starting a library for children 7 to 12 years for 2 schools in Jogjakarta, Indonesia
- Bringing donated goods to orphanages in Malaysia and Surabaya
- Providing daily necessities to those in need in Singapore at a lowered/subsidized cost to encourage people to pay for things they need and not depend on handouts
- Distributing food rations to poor families in Singapore
- Securing more underwriting donors to support Project Room for Improvement
- Recruiting a pool of skilled individuals who are willing to do pro bono work when needed
- Building awareness amongst business owners and executives that excesses can be re-distributed to make a positive difference to the lives of others