



Outward Bound
Singapore

LEADING COMMUNITY CHANGE THROUGH ADVENTURE LEARNING

Key Highlights 2013



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As we take stock of how OBS has, in line with our vision, Inspired Individuals and Transformed Communities, we note how, increasingly, youths who have completed their OBS journeys are daringly taking on new roles in the community and encouraging their peers to do the same.”

Galvanising our youths through adventure learning to take up active citizenry and serve our community's needs is a key objective of Outward Bound Singapore (OBS). This generation of youths has proportionately received the greatest education, is globally and technologically savvy, and is empowered to create powerful outcomes for the causes close to their hearts. As very special outdoor educators, we have certainly made this serious business. Acting Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Lawrence Wong underscored this aptly – harnessing the energies of our youths through meaningful service opportunities could well be “a vehicle to serve community needs as well as our national goals.”

As we take stock of how OBS has, in line with our vision, *Inspired Individuals and Transformed Communities*, we note how youths who have completed their OBS journeys are increasingly, daringly taking on new roles in the community and encouraging their peers to do the same. 24-year old Mr. Lim Kay Choong is a stunning example of how being wheelchair-bound does not stop one from empowering others with the outdoors, as we shall see within these pages. With an active volunteer base established, our role forward will be to actively promote the multiplier effect for a bigger youth movement.

In partnership with other divisions of the People's Association (PA), OBS has also been involved in community-related projects, such as treating intellectually-disabled beneficiaries to a day of outdoor games in the PA Public Service Week and busting bed bugs for

the elderly in Toa Payoh with the Central Singapore CDC. In addition, the first-ever OBS-The Merlion Charity Abseil was held in partnership with Sentosa to raise awareness and funds for disadvantaged children.

Of course, just as we teach youths in the *7 Habits* programme, no experience is complete without “sharpening the saw” – the final stage for self-reflection and improvement in the learning cycle – OBS has committed to deepening its expertise in order to achieve further progress; and we invite you to share in our journey in this issue of the OBS Key Highlights.

Yours sincerely,

Nicholas Conceicao
Director, Outward Bound Singapore

igniting passion for the community with the OBS leadership and service award (LSA)

32-year old Koh Zhi Yu never understood what it felt to be homeless until her shelter was nearly destroyed in a thunderstorm during her OBS 21-day Classic Challenge. The LSA recipient shared, “My heart went out to the people in disaster-stricken places while I was withstanding the merciless storm that rained relentlessly on my shelter. It struck me how it must be the same for these people - powerless.”

It's often said that the real Outward Bound journey begins after the OBS programme ends. For Zhi Yu, she returned from her camp persuading her brother, the owner-chef of 7-Inch Square Pizza, to organise a series of “Kids Pizza-Making Workshops”. Aimed at encouraging children's creativity and strengthening family bonds, it was a huge success. But it didn't stop there.

“Having overcome my fears and experienced success with the first workshop, I'm currently making new plans to hold a free pizza workshop so that financially-needy children can experience the same fun and love that I believe every child deserves,” Zhi Yu shared. “I also hope to be able to influence my brother to set up a social enterprise arm in his pizza business, focusing on encouraging creativity, and spreading the fun and love back to the community in a sustainable way.”

The annual Leadership and Service Award celebrates youths with outstanding contributions to our community. It empowers youths with greater leadership skills and helps realize their potential as youth leaders. If you know of anyone in the age range of 17 –

35 who fits the bill, nominate him or her for the OBS LSA! Visit the OBS website (www.obs.pa.gov.sg) for more details.



Parent-child bonding in pizza-making workshops

bringing youths global with adventure challenge oman

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

TO DEVELOP:
An adventurous spirit;
an enterprising outlook;
an international perspective



The OBS team on the reconnaissance trip in February 2013

Come February 2014, youths seeking a different kind of learning exposure will be able to experience the first-ever OBS global programme that is a desert adventure. Co-conducted with Outward Bound Oman, this 11-day programme is the latest addition to the list of global challenges such as Adventure Challenge South Africa, Croatia and the Philippines.

Participants will begin their Arabian adventure from Muscat and trek across



the Jabel Akhder Mountain to meet the local village in Souqrah. They will traverse the golden desert and emerald wadis in the day, and camp under the starry sky at night. Besides boasting mountains, sea and desert all at once, Oman promises an enriching cultural experience that will fully engage the senses for optimum learning.

bridging inspired youths with the community

28 Feb



Giant Skip
More than 200 students from Manjusri Secondary School earned 140 food products for needy elderly and families by completing a giant skip challenge during their OBS programme.

18 Mar



Camp Include
13 OBS Alumni partnered 15 intellectually disabled students from MINDS Fernvale Garden School to tackle high ropes and navigate in dimly lit mazes.

7 Sep



Coastal Cleanup
68 OBS Alumni cleared Pulau Ubin beaches of more than a tonne of trash and collected valuable data for International Coastal Cleanup Singapore.

Feb

2013

Mar

Sept

May

Gungho seniors

Nine OBS Alumni accompanied 72 seniors between the ages of 42 and 79 as they trekked through Pulau Ubin and even scaled a rock wall at OBS.

Willing Hearts

20 OBS Alumni paid a visit to the Willing Hearts' Soup Kitchen to prepare and deliver food to low-income residents.

Sundown Ultra-marathon

60 OBS Alumni members and staff ran a combined distance of 229 Km to create awareness for children from disadvantaged families.

9 Mar



16 May



14 Sep



rising above disability to enable others



Kay Choong (left) participating in a ball transfer activity during an OBS programme

24-year-old OBS Alumni Lim Kay Choong may be wheelchair-bound, but that did not stop him from guiding other disabled youths like him. In June this year, he took on the role of a Camp Mentor at an OBS camp, serving as an important bridge between the older camp facilitators and the younger wheelchair-bound participants from the Muscular Dystrophy

“I see myself as a big brother to them and I try to talk to them and make jokes so that they have fun.”

Association (Singapore). Smiling shyly, he said, “I see myself as a big brother to them and I try to talk to them and make jokes so that they have fun.”

Kay Choong is not new to OBS. Last November, this adventurous young man had embarked on a nature trek on Pulau Ubin on his wheelchair with the help of OBS participants. When interviewed by the Straits Times and Mediacorp Radio 93.8 Live, he encouraged others to join in such events and not be limited by their disabilities.

To others who may be living with some form of disability, Kay Choong has this to share, “Going to camps takes us out of our comfort zones and we will learn more about ourselves when we overcome obstacles. Often, people might think it takes a lot of effort to go out and they don’t know what to expect. But we shouldn’t be hindered by such thoughts because out there, it’s so beautiful.”

leveraging the OBS alumni network to rally support for disabled athletes

15-year-old Eyu Yan Yan has a dream that local disabled athletes will be given better opportunities to compete. With that, she formed Team Sportsabled with three like-minded schoolmates from Raffles Girls School to rally support for athletes from the Singapore Disability Sports Council (SDSC).

An OBS alumna, she was excited to discover the strong support OBS gives to alumni-initiated community projects. Through the OBS Alumni, she rallied 14 other youths to assist in a number of street sales selling handmade crafts such as friendship bracelets, notebooks,

bookmarks and t-shirts. All proceeds went to the funding of disabled athletes’ coaching, transportation and overseas competition fees.

The OBS Alumni is a youth body that enables participants to achieve continuity in their journey of personal development. As Yan Yan attests, “We fostered new friendships and increased awareness for SDSC with the help of our new-found OBS Alumni friends.” So if you think you can make a difference with your pet project, contact the OBS Alumni office now for a discussion on how we can support your cause!



Yan Yan (middle) and her friends raising funds for disabled athletes

height for heroes: OBS-the merlion charity abseil 2013

The blazing sun, stifling heat and weekend crowd didn't stop members of the public from heading down to Sentosa - to abseil the iconic Merlion for a good cause!

Over 100 people signed up to take part in the OBS-The Merlion Charity Abseil 2013 in July which challenged them to abseil the Merlion with a donation to adopted charity Life Community Services Society (LCSS). LCSS is a registered charity that supports disadvantaged children and whose parents are incarcerated.

For the first time in history, we saw the young and old, sports enthusiasts and also nervous first-timers steel their nerves and step off the Merlion to raise awareness for charity. Everyone successfully completed the challenge.

Participant Tan Ai Lay shared, "The scariest part was leaving the edge when I suddenly felt all on my own and

terrified. I realized the children we're raising funds for must feel the same growing up alone and without their parents. I hope to encourage these children to stay strong and positive."

Including the sale of handmade crafts by the OBS Alumni, over \$7000 was raised. Mike Barclay, CEO of Sentosa Development Corporation said, "Sentosa is delighted to support Outward Bound Singapore in this unique, fun and meaningful event. Above all, we are pleased that Sentosa's Merlion Tower is being used as a platform for contributing to this group of deserving children."

Participants and beneficiary shared how they were personally moved by the experience and its impact, with some calling for another run next year. We're glad to have touched lives through the combination of the outdoors, youths and community. Now that's one more step closer to our vision "Inspired Individuals, Transformed Communities!"



Participants making history as they abseil the Merlion for a cause

bringing out a smile - OBS community service day 2013



Staff sorting linen to be packed and sent to the laundromat



Elderly residents having fun with interactive games at the Activity Centre

OBS believes in personally making a difference to the community. Every year, staff form a committee to spearhead the OBS Community Service Day in August. Past years have seen OBS organize programmes for the hearing-impaired, and for children with intellectual and physical disabilities. This year, about 100 staff worked with Central Singapore CDC (CSCDC) to help elderly residents in Toa Payoh living in one and two-room flats clean their bedbug-infested homes. While some staff prepared the

flats for fumigation, the others engaged the elderly with interactive games and taught them how to prevent future bedbug infestations. As an added measure, clothes and linen were sent to the Laundromat and mattresses were replaced for free, thanks to sponsors working with CSCDC.

TS Balasubramaniam, an elderly resident who lives alone in a one-room HDB rental flat wiped away tears of appreciation as he thanked the staff volunteers, "Our age and lack of mobility don't allow us to actively clean up our homes. Some of us cannot even afford our own washing machine and have to do our laundry by hand. We are very grateful for all the assistance we are receiving from the staff and very appreciative of their dedication and commitment".

With service as one of the pillars in the OBS philosophy, this won't be the last time you see OBS staff in action. We're looking forward to next year's programme already!



Our staff encouraging an elderly resident during the games



A happy resident with his new mattress

“We are very grateful for all the assistance we are receiving from the staff and very appreciative of their dedication and commitment.”

Instagram Quips

“My first time abseiling and down the 37m Merlion! Such an awesome experience - to get to bless the less fortunate and do sth fun at the same time!!”
- favoured

“A great opportunity to gather friends to bond for a good cause!”
- elvyprecious

“For charity, for the people who needed our help! I challenged myself with the heights!”
- runffrun

“I stand tall. I aint perfect but my country celebrates who I am” - Clarice Song

paving the way for professional leadership

building leaders and teams who safeguard our home



SCDF officers forming strong bonds while on expedition

What do OBS and the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) have in common? Both are firm believers of the unmistakable impact of experiential learning. A trusted training partner of the SCDF, OBS helps our fire-fighting officers understand Situational Leadership through adventure learning. For SCDF, the OBS programme is also a key assessing component of the officers' character and mettle.

Conducted in Sabah and Brunei, the officers explore new roles in leadership

and team management through activities such as the Tyrolean traverse – crossing a river via a high line and having to safely transport every member and luggage across as a team. They also hone their technical competencies with Search and Rescue, and wilderness evacuation exercises. Through purposeful facilitation, OBS trainers help the officers discover values and develop leadership styles in a way that ordinary learning simply cannot.

helping leaders lead

What happens when bands of leaders come together? In August, 38 post-graduate students from INSEAD's Global Executive MBA programme came to OBS for a leadership development programme. The participants, who were senior management personnel in their respective organizations, found themselves enriched with the trainers'

candid and constructive feedback, and walked away with a better understanding of themselves and their leadership styles.

One of the participants shared, "OBS did a great job of tailoring the exercises in that I could see real life scenarios playing out that are not far from what we did in the exercises."



Jubilant INSEAD participants at the end of their programme

sharing domain knowledge with the industry

Numerous studies have proven that people with higher emotional intelligence make better decisions, connect more effectively and are generally more successful. OBS advocates EQ-EL (EQ-infused experiential learning) and long-time clients such as the mainboard-listed Teckwah Group have benefited from these unique OBS programmes. They discover how the power of emotions can swing both ways, and how they can

leverage emotions as a key resource in both effective business decisions and cross-functional collaborations. As Angela Tan, Teckwah's Director of Organizational Development attests, "The Combining Experiential Learning with EQ Workshop is definitely a very powerful methodology to bring out the content of the latter. The impact on the participant would NOT be as great if the EQ Workshop is conducted without experiential activities."

OBS' corporate training arm Outward Bound Professional shared their expertise in EQ-EL at the NexusEQ 2013 conference in Boston in June, and will be presenting this powerful learning vehicle



Participants from Teckwah cheering fellow team mates on in a climbing activity

at the Six Seconds Asia Regional EQ Conference in November to update and educate the industry on this new learning methodology.

achieving greater synergy with more PA-rtnerships

Recognizing the cross-functional synergies of divisions across the People's Association, OBS works closely with our sister divisions to build social capital through outdoor learning.

PA Divisional Synergies at a Glance		
Types of PA programmes	Number of runs	Outreach
Camp Include (CSCDC)	2	27 beneficiaries & 30 volunteers
Community Emergency Preparedness	13	280 community leaders
Leadership in Community Programme (NACLI)	2	66 community leaders
Camp Include (CSCDC)	2	27 beneficiaries & 30 volunteers
Young ChangeMakers (NYC)	1	25 community leaders
Staff Induction (PA HR)	13	366 PA staff
Staff Milestone (PA HR)	9	212 PA staff

The People's Association consists of multi-functional divisions that target a diverse range of community segments. From youths to community leaders in emergency preparedness, OBS works closely with the various divisions to develop individual character, build close community bonds, and promote social cohesion and resilience through outdoor learning.

an OBS-PA human resource-PA staff club joint effort

On 27 May 2013, as part of the Public Service Week Observance Ceremony, 120 PA staff provided a day of outdoor fun for 48 beneficiaries from the Movement of the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore (MINDS). The beneficiaries were guided through outdoor team activities such as bouldering – a style of rock-climbing along a horizontal course without a rope. The meaningful experience helped staff reaffirm their

commitment to serve Singapore and Singaporeans.

30-year old Mr. Brayden Hon, Senior Programme Officer from the PA's Neighbourhood Committee Coordinating Unit, was appreciative of the opportunity to make a difference, "I realize that they are very gentle, and simple games can actually bring them so much happiness. We should do more of such programmes."



CED Mr Ang Hak Seng passing a Moonball to an excited beneficiary

staff expedition 2013 – titiwangsa range



In the pursuit of constantly challenging and upgrading themselves, OBS trainers took on a 6D5N trek along the Trans Titiwangsa Version 1 as part of their annual staff expedition. The trail, which begins from Ulu Kinta Dam in Perak and ends at Kampung Raja (Cameron Highlands), is said to be one of the most challenging treks in Peninsular Malaysia.

An annual “pilgrimage”, the OBS staff expedition is an avenue for staff to not only refresh their technical skills in the outdoors, but more importantly, remind them of the experience of going Outward Bound. The mental and physical challenges faced in the expedition also enhance their empathy with participants in unfamiliar and uncomfortable situations. The annual OBS Staff Expedition is always an impactful and valuable training experience, even for seasoned instructors, as they reflect on their own learning and facilitation styles, strengths and weaknesses.

OBS obtains BCLS training centre accreditation

As of July this year, OBS was recognised as an accredited Basic Cardiac Life Support (BCLS) training centre. This means that OBS can now conduct in-house BCLS training for staff, resulting in nearly 70% cost savings from the amount usually spent on staff’s BCLS training.

The committed and dedicated OBS medical personnel achieved this accreditation in record time, taking a mere 2 months instead of the usual 6 to 12 months most organisations require. Within this short time, medical staff had to set examination papers that were in line with the National Resuscitation Council’s guidelines and source for all the necessary equipment to be used during BCLS training sessions. The result of this intensive exercise is evidently worth the hard work.

This accomplishment, besides adding another feather to the cap of OBS’ medical competencies and proficiencies, is also testament to OBS’ commitment to safety and operational efficiency. A hearty “Well done!” to our Medical Services and Training Unit!



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what’s new in 2014?

2014 is expected to be a significantly busy period; programmes for both youths and corporate organizations are already heavily scheduled into the new year, in which OBS aims to enable more than 20,000 participants to experience their very own, personal Outward Bound journeys. We also look forward to more of the synergies with our partners that have enabled interesting programme components and service initiatives for the OBS community.

In 2014, the Ministry of Education (MOE) will be enabling a five-fold increase of aspiring student leaders to embark on their own Outward Bound journey with additional funding that will increase the outreach to 5,000 students coming from more than 30 secondary schools in Singapore. With OBS’ successful facilitation of the Poly Forum 2013 at Pulau Ubin, we have also received interest in potential programmes from the various Institutes of Higher Learning.

On the corporate front, Outward Bound Professional will be extending the new learning vehicle “Emotional Intelligence – Experiential Learning” (EQ-EL) to more organizations. This will enable them to leverage EQ as a powerful business tool. Existing clients who have experienced this are already strong advocates and we are confident that more will benefit from the EQ-EL perspective.

Of course, the real journey begins after the OBS programme. With the OBS Alumni stepping up its community involvement, the Outward Bound journey continues as a powerful catalyst for inspired youths to contribute to causes of their choice. OBS’ partnership with the National Youth Council to drive the Volunteer Youth Corps will also open new opportunities for our local youths with support from the OBS Alumni network.

As an advocate of community development, OBS will also be supporting the various social causes which range from low-income families and special-needs groups to the environment. Should any of these causes be in line with your own interest, do get in touch with us, and join us in educating our next generation of youth leaders!

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