

GREETINGS FROM BOLD!

Dear Friends,

2004 was a very busy year for BOLD, our busiest since we started in 1998!

Our thanks to the PSDC & the Penang State Government for the additional funding which made this higher level of activities possible. Thanks also to the JPN Pulau Pinang for their cooperation & support.

We have now developed a clearer vision of our long term direction and goals. In 2005, we have more office & work space. We hope to recruit and train more volunteers.

We hope you will enjoy this newsletter which tells you about our work in 2004 & activities planned for 2005. Do stay in touch with us and support BOLD's work.

Tan Liok Ee, Chairperson

5 MAIN AREAS OF WORK IN 2004

1. Awareness raising, Education, Outreach

Between March and October 2004, BOLD organized 12 workshops. All were well attended, indicating that more people want to know how to help children with learning difficulties. In addition, we gave talks in kindergartens, schools, teachers' training colleges and also participated in 10 workshops organized by other organizations. Education and outreach will continue to be one of our main goals.

2. Learning Support for Basic Literacy Skills

Continuing the concept tested during our Pilot Project in 2003, BOLD's volunteers worked as Learning Support Assistants in 2 children's homes in Penang this year. BOLD also organized and supervised a Pilot Learning Support Program in SK Bayan Baru. The 2 parents and 1 BOLD volunteer in this project will continue in 2005 as they found it both interesting and rewarding. We will continue to promote child-centred teaching methods and to train more volunteers as Learning Support. Our long term objective is to have a pool of volunteers able to help children of different ages to learn the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics. (cont.on p.3)

BOLD is a project of the Penang Educational Consultative Council (PECC) under the Portfolio of the State Education Committee. Its activities are organized by a Working Committee of the PECC. The PECC Executive Secretariat is SERI (Socio-Economic and Environmental Research Institute), No 10 Brown Road, 10350 Penang. Contact Mr. Lee Shok Mee, PECC Exec.Sec. Tel: 2283306; Fax: 2267402.

BOLD/PACE staff at CO-3-GF at the Caring Society Complex:

Ms Leong Min See (BOLD Programme Coordinator)

Mr Brandon Leong (BOLD Assistant Programme Coordinator)

Ms Teoh Soo Keow (PACE Assistant Programme Coordinator)

Activities – March to May 2005

2 Day Workshop on Play Therapy

Through Play Therapy, a skilled facilitator can help children who are distressed, grieving, ill, hospitalized or disabled; or have been traumatized or abused. Play sessions support the child's self-healing as children express themselves, explore their feelings and make sense of their experiences through play. Find out more about Play Therapy, how it works and who it can help. Understand the role of the Therapist and learn some of the basic techniques and skills of conducting Play Therapy.

Date: March 5 & 6 (Sat.& Sunday) Time: 9.30 am to 4.30 pm.

**Facilitator: Ms Leong Min See (BOLD Programme Coordinator,
Certified Play Therapist)**

Fees: 40/= for 2 days



Speech & Language Therapy for Special Needs Children: Introductory Workshop

What are the causes of speech and language delays/disorders in children? How can we observe and assess the nature or extent of the problem? What kinds of intervention methods can be used? Learn from this introductory workshop – with video clips as illustrations and small group discussions to stimulate audience participation. More detailed and intensive workshops, in either English or Mandarin, will be arranged later if there is sufficient participant interest.

Date: 16 April 2005 Time: 2.30 – 5.30 pm

Fees: RM20/=

Facilitators: Ms Phoon Hooi San and Ms Low Hui Min.

Both are Speech-language Pathologists who work with children as well as adults with various kinds of speech, language and communication problems.

One Day Workshop on Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that affects 4-10% of school age children. It is important for parents and teachers to understand what is dyslexia and how it affects children. This workshop aims to provide participants with a basic understanding of dyslexia, how it can be recognized and diagnosed, and what parents and teachers can do to help dyslexic children.

Date: April 24 (Sunday) Time: 9.30 am – 5.30 pm

Fees: RM60/=

Facilitators: Dr. Tan Liok Ee (BOLD Chairperson); Ms Sheila Devaraj from Federal Territory Dyslexia Association, M.Ed on Dyslexia; Ms Lee Lay Wah, School of Education, USM.



CALLING PARENTS/TEACHERS INTERESTED IN CHILDREN WITH ADD/ADHD!!

Attend this first meeting to form a Support Group – the objective is to bring parents & teachers together to share experiences & problems; learn from each other; and work for better support services for ADD/ADHD children in Penang.

Date: 26 March (Saturday)

Time: 2.30 pm

Venue for All Events: Seminar Room, Caring Society Complex

Special Cat

A therapeutic story by Leong Min See

Once upon a time there was a small village nestled in a valley. The people there were farmers. Children in the village don't go to school. Every-day, they run about freely in the valley, climb the trees, swim in the river, play hide and seek in the jungle. Most of the time, they just play.

One day, the government sent some soldiers to the village with a terrible declaration. The government wanted all the young men to join the army because the country is going to declare war on a neighbouring country suspected to have developed some complicated weapons. Nobody dared to object to the government's plan. So, all the young men have to leave the village and join the army.

One week after the war began, terrible news began to reach the village. Some children learnt that their fathers had died in the war. Some learnt that their brothers or cousins were badly injured.

Another week went by and the children began to have nightmares. Some children could not go to sleep at all. Once they fell asleep, the images of their fathers, killed brutally by sharp weapons, would appear. Some even said they could see their fathers' amputated bodies. Some children thought that they themselves were going to be killed or tortured to death. (cont. p. 4)



MAIN ACTIVITIES, 2004 (cont from p.1)

3. *Play as Intervention & Therapy*

A third important area of BOLD's work is promoting Play as a medium for helping children with various types of difficulties. Play is effective as a mode of intervention for children with developmental problems. Play is also well-known as a mode of therapy for counselling children who are distressed, troubled, or traumatised. BOLD volunteers run Play Intervention or Play Therapy sessions, depending on the nature of the child's problems. Led by Ms Leong Min See, BOLD volunteers also conduct Therapeutic Play Groups for children with poor self-esteem and other emotional/psychological problems. Ms Leong trains BOLD volunteers and is also helping to train school counsellors and clinic staff to use Play Therapy to counsel children in Penang who were traumatized by the Tsunami of December 2004.

4. *Bringing Specialized Skills to Special Classes*

BOLD proposed and coordinated a Pilot Project in which 2 teams of Occupational Therapists, from the Penang General Hospital and the Seberang Jaya General Hospital, visited 5 Special Classes in Penang to conduct assessments and recommend intervention programs for 5 children in each Special Class. The objective is to bring some intervention to the children, help upgrade teachers' skills, and also establish a model for input from specialized personnel to contribute to the effectiveness of the Special Classes. This project began in July 2004 and will continue till July 2005.

5. *Resource & Referral Centre*

Last, but not least, we continue our work as a resource and referral centre – we meet with or talk to parents and teachers about children with learning difficulties. Our collection of books continues to expand slowly but steadily.



Office: CO-3-GF Caring Society Complex. Tel: 2278611.. Office hrs: Tues.
Wed. Thur. Sat. & Sun, 2-6 pm.

Email: boldpace@yahoo.com; Website: <http://www.seri.com.my/boldpace>

CONTACT US

Bureau on Learning Difficulties
RM CO-3-GF
Penang Caring Society Complex
Jalan Utama, 10450 Penang
Malaysia

Contact us:

- If you think your child/student may have a learning/emotional/behavioural difficulty
- If you would like to know how play therapy/intervention can help children with learning/emotional/behavioural difficulties
- If you need to know the services/centres/professionals who can help children with learning difficulties
- If you enjoy working with children & have a few hours a week to spare
- If your school/institution would like us to give a talk on dyslexia, ADD/ADHD, emotional/behavioural problems, other learning difficulties faced by children
- If you know someone who can share their expertise by giving a talk or conducting a workshop
- If you need materials/resources to help children with learning difficulties, check out our collection of books, articles, news cuttings, videotapes.

(from p. 3)

The people in the village were very worried. They gathered together to find a way to help the children get rid of their nightmares. One old woman recalled a tale told by her grandmother when she was a child.

'Once upon a time, there is a special cat living in the village. The cat looks just like any other cat. But, it is different from ordinary cats because it has special powers. It eats nightmares. However, this special cat needs special attention in order to use its power. It needs cuddles and attention from children. If this special cat is given enough attention during the day, at night when everybody goes to sleep, it will transform itself into a 'nightmare eater'. It will go into every child's dream and eat up all the nightmares that trouble children.'

So, the children in the village were told this tale. Soon, every child was seen cuddling or talking to a cat. And the miracle happened!. The children in the village began to have less nightmares. They began to talk about which is the special cat. Some said it is the black cat because they remember talking or cuddling it on the days when they don't have nightmares. Some said it was the brown cat. The children were engrossed in the game of 'Finding the Special Cat'. And, guess what, they never reached a conclusion. So, the game never ended.