

## A month of changes and movements

In this issue, read about:

- our departure from Nassim Road
- information about our new locations
- exciting fundraising news
- help for Philippine flood victims
- inspiring stories about our students and volunteer of the month
- volunteering opportunities

We hope you enjoy this edition of aidha singapore. For feedback or comments, please email us anytime at [communications@aidha.org](mailto:communications@aidha.org). Happy reading!

*Thank you, Nassim Road!*



It was just a stone's throw away from the bustling noise of Orchard Road, and its oasis-like atmosphere was the setting for many transformational journeys - for students, volunteers, and aidha staff alike.

Alas, 2nd September marked our last Sunday holding classes at the lovely one-storey bungalow that served as aidha's home for the last six years.

We may feel nostalgia for all the memories that have taken place inside its tree-shaden embrace - the garden where students performed the different Club exercises; the Glass Room where numerous sharing sessions took place amidst empathetic listeners; the laughter that fills the halls as folks got together to rave about the latest Project Makan menu; the busy afternoons in the Breezeway as students rushed back and forth between classes; or the late nights in the Light Room as we prepared for the next Sunday's classes. And so many, many more.

Our individual and collective hopes and dreams for aidha had their inception within the quaint wooden halls of #2 Nassim Road. But it seems their fulfillment lies somewhere else. Nevertheless we will always be grateful for that charming house and the big part it has played in enriching the lives of everyone who had the privilege of walking through its doors.

Thank you, Nassim Road!

*\*For more about our new locations, see column below.*

### *schoolhouse happenings*

#### **aidha moves to new locations**

Starting September 9, aidha will now be at these locations:



Sunday schoolhouse  
NTUC Trade Union House  
73 Bras Basah, 4th Floor  
Singapore 189556  
Tel. No. 9789 4041

#### **Help for Philippine flood victims**



*(top photo): aidha team on the last day of the donation drive with all the goods they collected. (bottom photo): the team packing the supplies at the LBC branch in*



Weekday office & postal address

Beacon International College  
1A Short Street  
Unit# 01-08  
Singapore 188210  
Tel. No. 6884 9938

*fundraising*

**Barclays continues fundraising efforts**

A series of fundraising activities since July has kept Barclays, aidha's corporate benefactor, very busy. As the adopted charity of Barclays' WiN (Women's Initiative Network), aidha received a \$100,000 grant earlier this year. This on top of the support various groups in Barclays have already given to aidha's own fundraising activities in the past.

Recently, the Barclays' Ops Charity Committee spearheaded some very innovative fundraising projects, such as spinning classes and gourmet coffee day, both of which featured Barclays' directors as the main attractions. One of the most successful fund generators so far has been last month's 'Food-lympics' which saw employees cooking and sharing cuisine from around the globe. All in the all, the fundraising projects raised \$14,500, an amount that will be matched by Barclays and brings the total amount of donations to \$29,000. Thank you, Barclays for your amazing support!

*Lucky Plaza.*

In response to news about the devastating floods that affected many of aidha's friends and families in Manila, Philippines, the aidha team initiated a Philippines Flood Relief effort by acting as a collection point for donations. Supplies collected included over 20kg of rice, large numbers of toiletries, baby diapers, mats and blankets and instant noodles. The donated items were delivered by our volunteers to the LBC branch office at Lucky Plaza. LBC is a 60-year old established courier, parcel and remittance service to the Philippines, and their CSR arm, LBC Foundations, had offered to ship all donations for flood victims to Manila pro bono. Four large boxes containing the generous donations of the aidha community are now on their way to the Philippine Red Cross Evacuation Centres. We'd like to thank everyone who supported this endeavour: our dear friends who donated supplies, our hardworking student interns who helped bring the goods to LBC, and the LBC staff who assisted in packing. Not only did we help others who've been beset by misfortune, but we experienced the strength of the aidha community. As Helen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much".

*by kate vickery*

**digna reyes**  
*student of the month*

**Peers help support success at aidha**



*Barclays employees in Mexican attire at 'Foodlympics' a fundraising initiative by Barclays for aidha.*



*Digna manning the Project Makan table on a Sunday*

## **Water for Women recap**

Last July, aidha teamed up with the Singapore Committee of UN Women, to launch "Water for Women", a fundraising and awareness initiative in partnership with leading restaurants in Singapore. Restaurant patrons were encouraged to donate a minimum of \$1 for every glass of tap water served during their meal.

Thanks to the participation of the staff and customers of our partner establishments, WfW raised over \$5,000. It was the first time an awareness and fundraising campaign like this had ever been done in Singapore.

A big thank you to everyone who supported, especially to [Intangible Communications](#) who designed the WfW logo, as well as the posters, flyers and tent cards.



## **A donation made in loving memory**

One of our dear Sunday volunteers, Sonja Wittenberg, sadly lost her father a few weeks ago. **Sonja and her family have very generously decided to direct all the donations to aidha, and raised over \$5,000.** Our deepest sympathies go out

Prior to joining aidha, Digna worked as a housekeeper in the Philippines: "I was earning a sufficient amount of money to provide for my family but I lacked the knowledge on how to save and grow it. I felt that the huge amount of effort I exerted at work was wasted because I did not manage my money properly. I was not aware about where my income was going to."

Upon coming to Singapore, Digna aimed to earn back what she had lost but with no clear-cut vision on how to do so. She has been working as a domestic worker in Singapore for 18 years but she feels as if the past was just repeating itself, until she heard about aidha from her employer.

Digna joined aidha and recently finished Module 1 and did the Project Makan programme, as well. According to her, aidha has transformed her into a wiser and better person, "aidha has helped me build my self-confidence. It has also taught me how to save as much money as I could and how to start my own business. Now, I am more aware of my cash flows. In fact, I aim to open a *sari-sari* store (provision store) in the Philippines in two years."

In aidha, Compass Clubs are structured as a peer support group, where ladies learn, share and help one another to put their learning into practice with the

to Sonja and family, even as we are touched by their generous gesture.

*contributed by Virginie Labbe*

**thank you, leslie!**



Leslie Swanson is not new to volunteer work. Having volunteered for AWARE in Singapore and Engender/ Unifem had given her exposure to various women's issues. So when the opportunity to volunteer at aidha came by, the decision was easy. "I was looking for something else to do that made a difference and fit in with my work schedule," says Leslie, who works as a change manager.

Since joining, Leslie has clocked in more than 50 hours of volunteering work and has adopted the Nov'11 batch as their computer workshop leader for all 18 sessions, and as their Leadership Club mentor. This on top of filling in for other workshop leaders who can't make their class.

When asked what fuels her dedication, Leslie replied, "You mean, 'who' keeps me coming back... and that would be - everyone!" Leslie loves working with the students and is impressed by their strength, eagerness to learn, and

guidance of a trained mentor. This was reflected through Digna's friendship with Jovelle, her classmate.



*Digna and Jovelle, at the end of the Module 1 course.*

Jovelle played a supportive role in Digna's aidha experience, "We help each other when we have doubts during class. Recently, we even volunteered to help manage Project Makan groups together. It really makes a difference when you have a friend to motivate you."

In retrospect, Digna testifies that her aidha experience was fun and fruitful. She says that sometimes, the tasks given entail a bit of sacrifice and challenge but it is part of learning and it will be worth it in the end. "I am really grateful for aidha. I especially want to thank Calista, who has been a great motivator and a patient, knowledgeable mentor."

A famous Wicked song says, " So much of me is made from what I learned from you. You'll be with me like a handprint on my heart." The people who help us and those we learn from, definitely leave an indelible mark on us. Digna, we hope that aidha has done the same and we believe that you will achieve your goals!

openness to help one another. "I feel proud of what they're doing and how much they change their lives in ways that matter. As a change manager, it's often hard in a corporation to see this much solid change in any one individual. At aidha, I see it in the women in my leadership course in just 8 months!" she excitedly enthuses.

Furthermore, Leslie says the aidha staff (both paid and volunteer) have made it all so easy to want to come back. "Such great energy on a Sunday! How can you not be hooked?"

When asked about her most favourite moments at aidha, Leslie told us about Session 4 of her Leadership Club:

"I think it was Leadership Session 4. I had no idea while reading the material that it would be such an emotional session. During the sharing time, their willingness to open up about difficult stories in their lives was incredible. And the support they showed one another was amazing. The notes for the mentor say this is going to be a difficult session but I didn't realize the power of it until I experienced it with them. I felt even more committed to them after that session."

Her message to her fellow volunteers? "Enjoy the adventure!"

Thank you, Leslie, for choosing to have your adventure with aidha.

by ting claravall

#### aidha editorial team

magali muria  
mariana da silva marques  
kayla faith umali  
ting claravall  
yina song



Digna and her Project Makan batchmates, and their mentors, at the graduation a few months ago

by kayla faith umali

## volunteering opportunities

Besides these, there are many other exciting projects available at aidha. To learn more, just shoot out an email to: [volunteer@aidha.org](mailto:volunteer@aidha.org).

### research

aidha's is looking for energetic and motivated volunteers interested in research to help us transcribe interviews and focus groups, that will be held on the weeks of 7, 14 and 21 October. You can choose to work on one or more interviews. Hours are flexible and you can work from home. If you are interested, please email: [magali.muria@aidha.org](mailto:magali.muria@aidha.org).

### project manager for communications

the communications team is looking for individuals who are interested to do project management to handle ad hoc communications projects for aidha. These projects usually entail executing promotional materials used for aidha's fundraising and student recruitment

**for feedback or comments**  
communications@aidha.org

activities. If you're someone who is proactive, resourceful, has good organisational skills with a flair for writing, you just might be what we're looking for!

**If you want to volunteer but cannot come on Sundays, you can also come on weekdays or join us on our Tuesday 'late nights at aidha'! Please send an email to info@aidha.org if you're interested.**