



OUR SOCIAL MISSION

BY CARITAS SINGAPORE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

A teenage girl who gets pregnant is counselled, with her parents and the boyfriend. Rather than take the fast way out to abort, they decide to keep the baby to full term and then give the infant up for adoption.

A distraught wife seeks help after she finds that her husband has had an affair. They come for counselling. Many months later, they remain together and are starting to mend their marriage.

These are examples of people who benefit from the Family Life Society's programmes. FLS was set up as a society in 1985 to promote understanding and respect for marriage, family and human life.

It is directed by the Archbishop and has an executive committee of lay people with full-time professionals to run its 14 programmes. Father Joachim Chang is the spiritual director.

The Family Life Society is a member organisation of Caritas Singapore Community Council. Its key programmes include:

Professional counselling in family and marital issues

FLS has four trained therapists led by Mrs Sue Richmond. In 2008, FLS therapists handled 348 cases, most requiring marital or family therapy.

Pregnancy Crisis Service

This began in 1987 to cater to women with unwanted or unplanned pregnancies. It was started by Redemptorist Fr Edmund Dunne, assisted by a group of dedicated lay people. Among its early volunteers is Rose Boon, who remains active today.

The Pregnancy Crisis Service runs a 24-hour hotline for pregnant women. It continues to provide counselling, care and support to women with unwanted pregnancies, many of whom are unmarried teenagers.

In 2008, it received 431 calls, and counselled 50 women. Twenty babies were saved from abortion when their mothers decided to carry the baby to full term. For women who needed a place during their pregnancy, FLS provided them with a suitable shelter.

In the works is an abortion healing programme, Rachel's Vineyard, to start in 2010.

Counselling in parishes

The Family Life Society has trained more than 50 lay people to be para-counsellors. They are attached to more than 10 parishes in different parts of Singapore. They receive ongoing training and supervision from FLS' professional therapists and a network of highly qualified practitioners. In 2008, they handled 469 cases.

The counselling offered by para-counsellors is free. Clients come from all walks of life and seek a listening ear to talk through personal, relationship, work or family issues. To make an appointment, call 6382 0688.

The team of para-counsellors will move beyond parishes and will begin to represent FLS to help in other Church ministries and Church organisations with their counselling skills.

Outreach programmes

FLS also runs outreach programmes in schools to promote family and marriage. Among others, it conducts a sexuality education programme for youths in churches and schools.

Coming up

FLS continues to seek new avenues to promote its message. FLS president Bernard Yu said: "FLS is also targeting new areas in the family life cycle that need to be better covered. We have already formed an alliance with other voluntary welfare organisations and Church groups that are concerned about the importance of parenting in Singapore, with the objective of being a coordinated body to better utilise our resources and reach out to more through projects and events that we can all work together. We are also working with the Singapore Pastoral Institute and others on programmes to address the needs of the elderly in an ageing population."

FAMILY LIFE SOCIETY

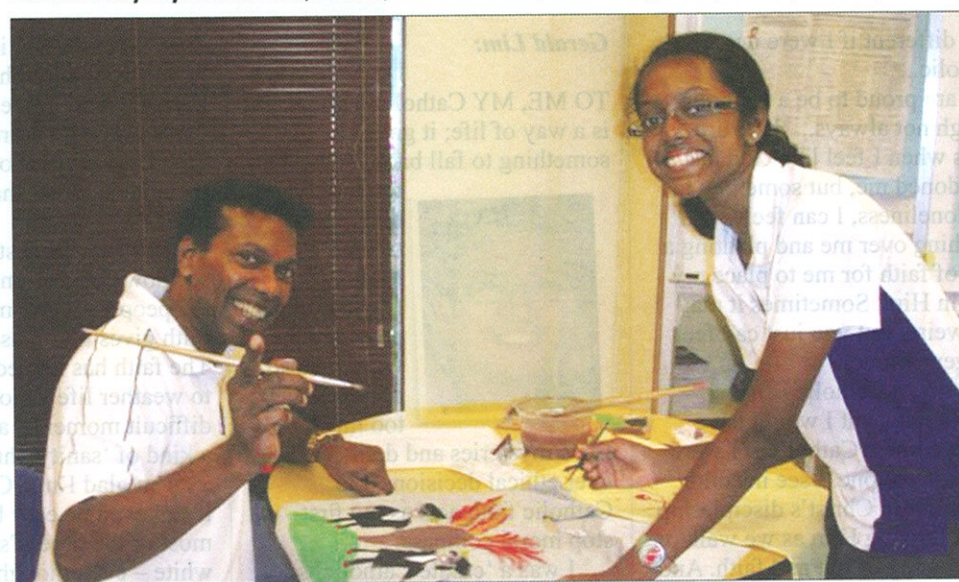
A lifeline for families



Innova team building: Family Life Society facilitated the team-building exercise for parents and teachers at Innova Primary School.



Pei Hwa Family Day: Paint Your Family T-Shirt Day at Pei Hwa Secondary School was organised by the Family Life Society.



St Theresa's Dad and Daughter Day: To help parents bond with their children, a Dad and Daughter Day at CHIJ St Theresa's Convent, was organised by the Family Life Society.



Contact details

Family Life Society: 6488 0278
 Mon-Fri: 9.00am – 5.30pm
 (Also for appointments for counselling by professional therapists)
 Pregnancy Crisis Service: 6339 9770
 (24-hour helpline)
 Counselling at parishes (by volunteer para-counsellors): 6382 0688
 To make appointments, call Mon-Fri: 10.00am – 4.00pm. Counselling is offered in the evenings and some weekdays, at over 10 parishes.
 Website: www.familylife.sg

Programmes of FLS

- Celebration of Life
- Family & Marital Counselling
- Joyful Parenting
- Pregnancy Crisis Service
- School Family Education

Affiliated Programmes

- Beginning Experience
- Catholic Engaged Encounter
- Choice Singapore
- Couple Empowerment Programme
- Couples for Christ
- Marriage Preparation Course
- Natural Family Planning
- Retrouvaille
- Worldwide Marriage Encounter