

Part Two: A Meaningful 48 hours of Your life - Day 1

Apr 2013, 70 boxes, 40 volunteers, cabin crews, engineers, graphic designer, pilots, housewives...



They had one thing in common - to spend a meaningful 48 hours of their life to bring the children a piece of beautiful memory.

They may rarely cook at home, they may grumble about a five-star crew hotel; but for the children, they were bustling among the houseflies in a



warm and smoky (cooked by firewood) kitchen, fumbling with oversized cooker to prepare a feast in time for 240 eagerly waiting mouths.

At last, lunch was served! "Mountains and mountains" of rice piles sat on the children's tray. Luncheon meat, sausages, curry, prata etc were once a year "festive cuisine" only available when celebrity chefs (volunteers) were in town.

To feed 240 growing children, the orphanage already had problems in some months to find money for 5 sacks of rice, let alone worry about the resources to prepare such a sumptuous feast. The children's trays were



emptied in no time leaving them licking their fingers with satisfaction, savoring away the last taste of the banquet.



cleaned up the mess and helped fan away houseflies!

Once the children were fed, they were sorted into teams of different colors and were numbered from 1-25 for ease of identification and safety. This year, we brought them to the National Park!

To Singaporean children, it may be MacRitchie Reservoir in the 60s, but to those whose furthest excursions were the 45min walk to school, it was a



rare expedition. Only the well behaved and hardworking children were rewarded.

Time was not wasted for those who stayed behind. As their creative juices flowed, pieces and pieces of exclusive Thank-You cards were churned up to show their gratitude to the generous donors.



The lucky ones bubbled with excitement and packed into 2 "bone shakers", the rusty archaic buses, one of them with no door! These

antique grand-daddies ruffled the branches, panting along the rutted and bumpy park road; and before we knew it, the older bus broke down! Twice, with the help of fellow park visitors, it was resuscitated (push-started)!!!



The girl that sat on Madeline's lap could feel the motherly warmth which she yearned for years, she wrapped Madeline's hands around herself to enjoy a short paternity moment. For the rest of the days, you could see her eyes brimming with affection whenever she looked at Madeline. The children treasured the little little things that you gave to them, they made you feel like a celebrity and an angel of joy.

We finally parked ourselves by the lake. A little shy initially, but soon the place was exploded with giggles.



The war of water pistols had begun! The latent energy of these children burst into happiness and rippled the National Park with joy. Even the local visitors sought permission to take pictures with these cheerful kids.

We managed to squeeze in a few exhilarative hours before the park was closed. After the children were sent back to the orphanage, exhaustion kicked in. Worn-out by the scorching 39 degree day, satisfied volunteers slept in their 2 hour journey back to the hotel.



A Meaningful 48 hours of Your life - Day 2



The cloudless blue sky continued to flush the orphanage in a blaze of 40 degree warm air. Tirelessly, the volunteers decorated the place with colorful balloons and paper chains. Today was the carnival, the highlight of the trip!



This was the 5th year for some volunteers.

Pairs and pairs of round, bright eyes awaited anxiously to see their pictures brought back by us.

Fond memory churned into gales of laughter with some chirped away grinning from ear to ear. All of a sudden, the library turned into a buzzing frame factory.

Used carton boxes were cut into pieces, what seemed to be trash to us were miraculously recycled into beautiful photo frames.



After lunch, the carnival went into full swing. There were basketball, bow-ling, ping pong toss and windmill making, etc. Something for everyone.





Exclamations of pure stunned joy were heard repeated from winners, overwhelm many times by the cheering crowd.

For those who could not stand the heat of game challenge, our makeup artists were there to provide a refreshing make over.



While the rest were engrossed in winning attractive game prizes or anxiously queuing up for a make-over; there were two demure young ladies who took pride in arranging the volunteers shoes. Times and times, the shoes were stumbled across and messed up by the bustling crowd, but this did not deter their dauntless diligence.



While the children were bubbling up in exhilaration, 11 of our volunteers quietly slipped away to brave a grueling 8-hour trip to the more remote villages. They stayed with them to give out clothing, food and used toys. Desperately poor no doubt, but that did not stop them from hosting a great meal for our volunteers.



Back to the carnival, the best games like balloon storm and tele-matches were served for the last. Carnival spirit reached its pinnacle with children hopping with whoops of shrieks and joy.

Worried about the safety of their "siblings", two other girls wiped the wet floor repeatedly in the triumphant crowd.



The malleable good natured Burmese children had not change since I met them in 1993.



At the end of the carnival, we had a lot of leftover water balloons from the telematches and very quietly, water guns were loaded. Before one could blink, water guns were drawn and water balloons were flung, drawing squeals of surprise and glee from the dripping wet volunteers. We were over-

whelmed! Very soon, water guns were dropped in favor of pails. Everybody was thoroughly soaked.



You may be a clown for that day, just to drown the children in joy. The satisfaction that you enjoy makes you feel on top of the world.



We ended the evening with the volunteers and children holding hands in a wide circle, singing and shaking hands. It was a tearful farewell as friendships had blossomed and bonds were strengthened. Faces of gratitude and hope, amidst tears and poignant smiles, the children waved and shouted hearty goodbyes, gazing at our departing bus. Totally drenched and worn, volunteers tumbled onto the seats like rag dolls, dozed off with fulfilling grinds. It had been a wonderful and meaningful 48hrs of our lives.



According to the Buddhists, the old lady in 1992 would have left her shackle and re-incarnated. I am a free thinker who does not necessarily hold the same opinion. But when I saw the same tinge of sadness in this lovely girl, I wished she was her re-incarnation. At least in this life, I have the opportunity to do something for her.

I am glad that the children have walked out of their shackles of fate. They are all safe and well brought up by Father Joe, what they need now is the education for them to chart their destinies and contribute to the new Myanmar.

We like to sponsor 240 children to school.

**Would you like to be part of us,
to glitter up their life with hope?**

