



YEAR IN REVIEW
2017

CROSSING OVER

The term crossing over represents a transition between where you are now, and where you want to be. We cross over from old to new, from known to unknown, from life to death. In most cases, it is about taking a bold step. A step that is intentional and requires courage. We never know what the future holds. But unless we are bold enough to take the step, to cross over, we will never find out.

For Awful Grace, 2017 has been about preparation for that bold step in 2018. We launched two key initiatives that reflect who we fundamentally are. We are about redeeming our essential humanity. Toki Formation took us on a beautiful journey with inmates in the Singapore Prison. In our journey with inmates since August last year, we have lived the reality that authenticity is "when we let go of who we think we're supposed to be, and embrace who we are." This is Awful Grace. That in the space of brokenness and imperfection, there is an authentic community. One which we will continue to build in 2018.

Projek Namaste, took us on a different yet equally significant journey. The community development project in Nepal resulted in 20 families receiving the skills needed in goat farming and the animals to start their own goat farms. We cross over into 2018 with boldness. Our focus on the community development project in Nepal continues, with the families in Pokhara who will benefit from this year's goat farming project.

To our volunteers and donors, thank you for your partnership and your continuing engagement with us this year. We are already looking forward to the 2018 mission in fulfilment forging ahead with this social purpose movement. For more information about our activities this year, please contact me at christine.tan@awfulgrace.org.

Grace and peace,



Christine Tan
Founder

Note: All photos in this report are used with permission from Victim Support & Rehabilitation Program (VSRP). For confidentiality reasons, names of children have not been included in this report.

“Vulnerability
is not
weakness;
it’s our
greatest
measure of
courage.”

- Brene Brown -

TOKI FORMATION

Art has been a powerful tool for Awful Grace. Since August 2017, we have experienced how art has enabled us to engage with communities that we journey with. Awful Grace celebrates yet another milestone when we were recognised for Toki Formation, by the Singapore Prison Service in its appreciation event in September 2017. We were honoured to have received the recognition award from Parliamentary Secretary from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Mr Amrin Amin.

Toki Formation is an expression of Awful Grace which focuses on forming character traits and acquiring life skills through the art form of pottery making. It is a holistic and person-centred approach to journeying with inmates during their time in prison and after their release. This approach of attending to each individual enables volunteers to work with each person in the areas of emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being. Toki Formation is slated to run in other organisations in 2018.

Phase One is known as Toki Foundation, which is the 12-session programme in fashioning clay pottery and the formation of character and acquisition of life skills. Phase Two introduces Toki Community which is the processing of learning in a group framework.

In December 2017, we celebrated the completion of Phase One with an exhibition in prison, of the pottery pieces made by the inmates.

HEAR FROM THE INMATES AT TOKI FORMATION

It is a platform for me to change my life: from rock bottom to an awesome individual. It's knowledge that is related to the internal and external in us.

Through Toki Formation I discover myself, know my hidden abilities and capacity to first realise the connection between pottery and life.

I learned that through patience, hard work and effort, you can get results. I would like to thank Awful Grace for showing me that there is always a way.

Toki Formation is a place to know myself. About my strength and my weakness. Toki Formation helps me reflect a lot, think about my life. It is therapeutic. There is openness, willingness and sincerity. It opens the door to hope. It cultivates new thought and attitude, making us love ourselves, and the people around us. Every week I look forward to attend the class. I feel safe, secure, loved and hope to be in the Toki Community.

Toki Formation is a place to know myself. About my strength and my weakness. I enjoy myself here by doing pottery.

From nothing to becoming creative and exploring who we are. Toki Formation allows me to stop and think, to become more positive. It encourages bonding, and it helps me to be more focused in helping others and being patient.

TOKI FORMATION WORK OF ART



CINTA MATI

*This comes straight from the heart.
There is no replacement for you.*



STEADFAST

*Staying calm and focused, regardless of what bad things
may come. I must always remind myself of the beauty that
is there, no matter how bad the situation may be.*



CONCEALED

*My life was largely concealed from the world, but perhaps
more tragic is that it was even concealed from myself.
Things are different now.*



CIRCLE OF LIFE

*The coils of the pot will always be a reminder to me that
I desire and am working toward consistency in my life.*



FUNNEL SHELL

*Finding my way out of darkness is difficult but so
rewarding. I can see more clearly the closer I get to
the openness at the top.*



BREATH

*The leaf is a symbol of purification and purity. It purifies
the air that we breath. It is always saved and saving.
It takes in impure air but gives off pure air.*

REFLECTIONS OF TOKI FORMATION VOLUNTEERS

I had misgivings about my participation in this programme at the outset. I was apprehensive about making any impact on the group of men who had signed up for it. How could I possibly effectively communicate with men who had been hardened by incarceration and existed, rather than lived, a normal life outside prison walls, and help them come to terms with not only their past but their future?

My fears were misplaced. Our sessions have been so very humbling. I have witnessed each one of these men open their eyes and their hearts to reflect on their past and their future in ways I would never have thought possible. In the process, they have produced inspirational pieces of pottery which have effectively translated the concepts introduced to them each week. It has been a privilege working with them and being given the opportunity to catch a glimpse of the path they hope to follow when released.



Being a volunteer with Awful Grace and taking the Toki Formation and Toki Community Programme into prison has been a privilege. I have seen the men grow in their pottery skills and talents and through this kinaesthetic experience learn important things about their character and personality, self reflecting in a way that I initially did not think was possible. They have responded positively to having their abilities recognised and have been open and honest about themselves. It has been a valuable learning experience for me.

Toki Formation with the men at Admiralty West Prison has been a life-changing experience. The essence of Awful Grace, celebrating our common humanity despite our differences, was a consistent theme throughout our 12-week engagement with the men. Their depth of insight about themselves taught us about ourselves. I can only hope that they received as much from us as we did from them!



PROJEK NAMASTE 2017

Projek Namaste is an ongoing commitment which started in 2015 to restore broken communities and bring hope to the families and children in Nepal who were affected by the earthquake. It is a collaborative partnership between Awful Grace (AG), Victim Support & Rehabilitation Program (VSRP), the Singapore Red Cross Society, and the people of Singapore.

In the 2017 mission, 15 volunteers from Singapore arrived on November 19, 2017 in Kathmandu. 12 were new to Nepal. Together with more than 30 Nepali volunteers stationed in Kathmandu, Chitwan and Pokhara, We strengthened our partnerships, and established and deepened friendships.

Our medical stop was Chitwan where we ran health screening and dental clinics for more than 200 villagers. Children who visited the clinics were treated to a day of fun-filled activities such as art and craft, music and movement, and games. We also witnessed the completion of the training and the closing ceremony of the community development project in goat farming. 20 families in Chitwan received 2 goats and a cow each at the closing ceremony. This gift will enable each family to start their own goat farm, resulting in having sustainable income.

Our next stop was Pokhara, where we ran the dental and mobile clinics for 420 male and female prisoners, and 122 villagers. The time with the prisoners was especially fulfilling and enriching. Our final stop was back in Kathmandu, where about 200 villagers visited the clinics. In total 948 people went through the health and dental screening. 130 children received school bags and essential supplies which will last them for the next 9 to 12 months.

1. 948 adults and children benefitted from the health and dental clinics.
2. More than 130 children received school materials and essentials.
3. 30 volunteers and staff of Victim Support & Rehabilitation Program (VSRP) were involved in the activities.
4. 15 volunteers from Singapore including doctors, nurses, a dental specialist, a teacher, a student, and an avid photographer.

NEXT STEPS

We were encouraged to witness the sense of ownership by the families who benefitted from the community development project. Projek Namaste's objective of lifting the poverty level in these villages would continue for the next two years. In the meantime, we will continue to build our friendship with the people of Nepal.

TIMELINE 2018 -2019

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE

February - July

Monitor progress of the community development project.

November/December (Phase Two)

Phase Two is the launch of the goat farming project in Pokhara

March 2019

Planning of Phase Two

More information is available upon request. Please email us at awed@awfulgrace.org

REFLECTIONS OF PROJEK NAMASTE VOLUNTEERS

I'm really not good at going out of my comfort zone. Some nights in Nepal especially high on a remote mountain you may not get any high pressure hot showers and other times you trek a dirt path or have to use the public (squat down) toilet. However, I have to say it was also the most fun and most value-worthy trip I've been on for years. New FFL (friends for life) unbeatable. Food and company exceptional. Experience priceless. I think we worked hard and were of some help too. When's the next trip?

- RG Lau., Manager -

This is my first time volunteering in medical clinics. The villagers do not seek treatment because of the high cost and certain medical facilities may not be accessible to them. Hence, this trip allowed me to better appreciate what we have in Singapore. I will never forget my experience in Projek Namaste where 15 strangers coming together for the trip and became friends in 12 days. I am also very impressed with what great plans Awful Grace and the Victim Support Rehabilitation Program had for the Nepalese. Projek Namaste should continue so more Nepalese could benefit from the excellent works! I would love to volunteer again!

- Chong ST, Nurse -

12 days in Nepal was eye-opening, thought-provoking and predominantly rewarding. As a dental representative from Singapore, it was challenging - from packing of boxes, logistics, sterilising the instruments and treating patients. Without doubt, we learnt new things everyday, discovering ourselves better, exploring new feelings and understanding people and their culture. Being flexible and adaptable are essential for such a mission. The Nepalese have impacted my life significantly. Despite their difficult circumstances, they were able to give me their genuine smiles. This has given me hope to become a better human being. With that, thank you Nepal for allowing me not to see rainy days as I used to before.

- N Halim, Oral Health Therapist -

Our trip to Nepal was memorable for the camaraderie that persists until after the trip, forged through jokes shared on bumpy ride between villages, suppers enjoyed together after long days of work and inspiring life stories we learned from one another. We are in the process of creating some real impact for the locals amidst the chaotic remnants of the 2015 earthquake. What distinguishes Awful Grace is the conscious effort to engage local expertise and empower beneficiaries economically, or simply put, "working ourselves out of work" in the long run, a vision that still few grassroots non-profits are eager to uphold.

- Nguen PY, Pharmacy Student -



CHITWAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (GOAT FARMING)



CHITWAN MOBILE CLINICS AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES



POKHARA PRISON MOBILE CLINICS



POKHARA MOBILE CLINICS AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES



KATHMANDU MOBILE CLINICS AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES



KATHMANDU MOBILE CLINICS AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES





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