

Dear Team

Youth United Day was meaningful for me in more ways than one. Building Futures through Friendships is what we have been saying and it was really most heartening to know that these friendships have lasted. Several young adults, who were in our guidance and residential programmes some years ago, came by last Sunday to say “hello.” One of them told me that the first Sunday of July will always remind him of his time at Beyond and so he thought that he should drop by just to catch up with old friends.

A young mother who will be turning 21 soon, shared with me her plans to get a flat of her own. She is looking forward to having her 2 year old child back home with her husband and her. At the moment her child is in foster care but she stressed that she always discharges her parental responsibilities within the fostering framework. She told me of trips to the doctor and the precious weekend meetings with her child. She also shared that she is training to be an early childhood educator and this has helped her become a confident young parent.

Another young man shared that he was now a fitness instructor. With a smile, I asked him about the tattoo he had that said “alcohol-fuelled.” He laughed and assured me it is still there but it is covered up when he is working. Several others came by to speak about their studies or their jobs and their presence was a present to all of us who had extended our friendship to them.

It was also most encouraging to see more than 80 people comprising partners, donors, volunteers, youths and their families enjoying a conversation and sharing their experiences at Beyond. In one small group, a parent shared that having wasted many years of his life incarcerated; he was now “catching up” by trying to be a good father and a helpful member of the community. As he elaborated by sharing about a food distribution exercise he was involved in, a volunteer from a corporation interjected and said that she was there too and she remembered him. The parent looked at her briefly and then said yes, he remembered her too and both started reminiscing about the day like old friends.

Building Futures through Friendships. When people come together in friendship, we truly celebrate the joys of today, the memories of yesterday, and the hopes of tomorrow. You may be interested to view the conversation trigger we used that was produced by volunteers. <http://youtu.be/kr8ycFTc8-o>

Enjoy your weekend.

Gerard

*“There are good ships and wood ships, ships that sail the sea, but the best ships are friendships, may they always be!” - Irish Proverb*