ACS Pulau Betong Community Service

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INTRODUCTION

Things started off during IEM (Penang Branch) G&S visit to the Tsunami affected residential area at Pulau Betong earlier this year. The ACS (Asia Community Service) Pulau Betong Stepping Stone Centre is a workplace for people with intellectual disabilities in Balik Pulau, a rural district in Penang. The main focus of the workplace is to provide support for people with intellectual disabilities as they strive to lead a more independent life. As ACS plan to introduce the recycling activity to local residents and make recycling as a source of income to support the centre's daily operation, they decided to construct a recycling site to collect the recyclable materials from the local residents and preprocess it.

The construction of the recycling site started in December 2004 when ACS hosted a group of youth volunteers from the Yomiuri Light and Humanity Foundation, Japan. The 10-member group worked together with the Jawatankuasa Kecil Kampung Pulau Betong to prepare the foundation and build a concrete floor covering 300 sq feet.

IEM (Penang Branch) G&S hard at worr building the draining for the recycling site

Separate recycling bins for systematic collection of recycling materials

Later, YB Mohd Farid Haji Saad, ADUN Pulau Betong, who is an advisor on this project, acquired funds from his office for the awning shade. However, the construction of the retaining wall was put on hold, as the centre committee was worried that the retaining wall might collapse due to the lack of professional advice in terms of engineering structure design. This was where G&S came in.

G&S started to hold meetings with the central committee. After G&S understood the requirements and needs, three young engineers from G&S, Sdr. Andy Lian, Sdri. Catherine Sim and Sdr. Lim Chin Tat, came out with a draft of the retaining wall's structure design. At the same time, G&S managed to secure the funds for this project from IEM Penang Branch.

For two weekends in March, engineers from IEM (Penang Branch) G&S, residents from the local community and members from ACS centre labored in the hot sun to construct the retaining wall. The team took three working days to complete the retaining wall, including casting the stiffener, installing bricks, plastering, painting, and installing the plastic signboard.

Besides helping to build the retaining wall, G&S also built the drainage, which surrounds the recycling site and installed wooden shelf in an existing storeroom. The materials for the wooden shelf were 100% recycled. The wooden shelf was recycled from the plywood used to cast the stiffener while the L-angled iron from the original fence wall, were modified as the support structure. This is in line with the aim of the project to promote the recycling activity.

An opening ceremony hosted by the ACS centre took place at the end of the project. YB Mohd Farid and IEM Penang Branch's Honorary Secretary Ir. Paul Phor inaugurate the use of the recycling site. Although the project has ended, it actually marked a new beginning for IEM (Penang Branch) G&S to contribute in community service. ■