



Festive Cheer Back At Jalan Berseh

+ BY VICTOR KWAN



Photos by Ho Tzin Yih

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas. That was certainly the feeling among many residents at Jalan Berseh as the annual Christmas Carnival returned after a pandemic-enforced break. Organised by the Christian Outreach and Social Concerns (COSC) ministry together with the Residents' Committee (RC) at Jalan Berseh, the event this year was held on the afternoon of 18 December 2022.

With an overcast sky that threatened heavy rain but never quite did, residents began arriving in earnest and with anticipation an hour ahead of the scheduled time. There was a good mix of people from all walks of life including the elderly, youth and parents with young children in tow, bringing with them an air of festive cheer that was distinctively Christmasy. Wesley members, mostly dressed in red and purple polo T-shirts, were out in force to greet everyone as well as run many



of the food and game stalls that lined the perimeter of Kelantan Court Pavilion. Since 2007, many of Wesley’s staff and volunteers have become familiar faces to residents in the vicinity through regular activities and engagements with Wesley Youth Centre and MWS (Methodist Welfare Services) Wesley Active Ageing Centre. The pavilion buzzed with activities as the young and elderly alike

enjoyed themselves snacking on delicious food, testing their dexterity at golf putting and picking as many marbles as possible with only a pair of chopsticks. Many prizes were given out to winners of these games.

“It’s my first time volunteering to help in this Christmas Carnival at Jalan Berseh and I didn’t expect so many people. It’s kind of overwhelming but the residents are so friendly, and I feel the excitement together with them,” said one of the volunteers Sarah Soo.



A resident (2nd from right) receiving her prize from (L-R) Alvin Chia (COSC Lay Leader Rep), Denise Phua (Mayor for Central Singapore District), Leow Kim Liat (former COSC LLR), Rev David Ho and Bernetta Tan (RC Chairperson)

“I’ve been participating in Wesley and Jalan Berseh RC’s Christmas Carnival for many years before the pandemic. It’s great to be back. These carnivals are full of fun and it’s even better coming with my friends who are all residents here for many years,” said Mdm Phua, a participant who was visibly having a whale of a time trying her skills (and luck) on a ring toss game at Sarah’s stall.



Christmas which marks the birth of Jesus Christ. Additionally, that this is a season of thanksgiving, of love without boundaries and churches without walls — acts of kindness that are especially important in multi-racial, multi-religious Singapore. She drew parallels between this love and the kind of unconditional love we shower on our children and grandchildren.

Ms Phua further stressed that we must love and look out for neighbours who need help, and nobody should be left behind. She also showed her appreciation for the many years of joint activities between her RC and Wesley Methodist Church. Along the way, she has also come to know many of our pastors from the church.



Besides food and games, singers from both Wesley and Jalan Berseh RC belted out Christmas songs and other familiar numbers in various languages on stage. Residents and volunteers moved with the tunes, caught up in the festive atmosphere. Before the lucky draw segment, Guest of Honour Ms Denise Phua, Member of Parliament, Mayor for Central Singapore District and Adviser to Jalan Besar GRC GROs (Kampong Glam) gave a speech, delivered in both Mandarin and English. She reminded everyone that Christmas is not just about parties and merry making. It is also equally important to remember the true meaning of





“These are the kind of heart-warming activities that we have been organising for our residents and it takes a lot of volunteers in action for this to happen,” said Ms Denise Phua when asked about her views on this year’s Christmas Carnival.

From the faces of everyone who participated in this event, the carnival certainly lived up to expectations. As the day drew to a close, the feeling of festivity began giving way to an air of anticipation for more of such activities in the many Christmases to come. 🎄



ABOUT COSC

Wesley COSC ministry was set up in the 1980s to help reach out to the least, last and lost in our community. Our vision is to be a vibrant, committed, and growing volunteer-based ministry in Wesley Methodist Church. Our mission is to share God’s love by reaching out to help the disadvantaged and those in need, as well as providing opportunities for volunteers to serve. If you are interested to join us or find out more about what we do at COSC, we would love to hear from you. Please email us at cosc@wesleymc.org



About the writer

Victor and his family have been worshipping in Wesley Methodist Church for over 20 years. He likes reading, writing and is grateful to serve by doing what he enjoys most.