

# Bethune House Narrative Report

## January to December 2015

### I. CLIENTS INTAKE

There are 595 women new intake for the period of January - December 2015. There are fifty two percent Filipinos, forty six percent Indonesians and two percent coming from other nationalities.

The average number of residents in each shelter is 22. We have to attend to 44 women at any given time. Seventy two percent (66%) have labor case, 9 % have police case, 2% Health-related and 23 percent need shelter but decided to file a case of illegal collection of fees against recruitment agencies.

### II. COUNSELING, EMERGENCY AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

#### HIGHLIGHTS

1. We rescued a Filipina domestic worker in Tseng Kwan O on 27 May 2015. The male employer allegedly forced the Filipina worker to perform oral sex. We arrived at the employers' house at 8pm. We had to stay in the police station until 2:30am. For two consecutive nights, the police took the statements from the victim and our staff.
2. Another Filipina was referred to us by the Methodist English speaking Church. She was raped by her male employer while the female employer and her son were out of the house. The police dismissed the case due to insufficient evidence. The monetary claim against the employer is still on-going. The victim is also undergoing counseling because of the trauma.
3. We assisted 5 Indonesian domestic workers who were accused of fraud. However, it was Carven recruitment Agency who arranged fake documents for them to sign. Nevertheless the court argued that they were aware of the fake documents. They were all convicted and had to serve 2 to 6 months imprisonment. We have provided assistance to the victims from accommodation and food, accompanying them to courts, talking to the Duty lawyers and counseling.
4. We referred medical cases to Dr. Kwong. Medical cases and assistance range from lump in the breast, problem with colon, tumor in the ovary, flu, swollen leg, tuberculosis, syphilis and skin problem. The health conditions of the patients improved while in the shelter. Bethune House provided medical assistance by paying for the medicines. However, the treatment stops when they return to their country of origin.
5. We have admitted on 5 January 2015, a mother and her 5-day old baby born on 31 December 2014 at QEH. The mother was convicted for theft. After she was discharged from the hospital, they did not know where to go. Pastor Maggie of Kowloon Union Church found her crying with her baby sitting outside the church. They were both immediately referred to Bethune House for shelter. Baby Bryce came with only a pair of clothes, the one he was wearing that day. An appeal for milk, baby's clothes and diaper was posted on facebook. The responses were overwhelming. In a few days' time, we were able to receive donations for the baby's need.
6. There were 18 cases that were carried over from 2014. Two cases were made to sleep in the kitchen alternately, 1 physical assault and 1 case against the recruitment agency. We are challenging the decision of MECAB, High Court and Legal Aid that the kitchen where these two Filipina workers sleep are quite "decent" by HK standard. MFMW is using the case to strengthen their advocacy for the No Live out policy. Safia, an Indian domestic worker

who was underpaid for several years was able to get \$80,000 only out of the \$300,000 she was claiming. There was a Filipina who was asked to push a piano up the stairs. Her shoulder was affected as a result of the heavy piano. A Filipina was bitten by a dog. An Indonesian was rape in 2012, the brother -in-law of her employer was convicted for 7 years.

7. An Indonesian was rescued on 17 November 2015. Ninety four (94) years old mother of her employer hurled hot milk over her body. She suffered burns on her shoulder, neck, chest and breast. This is the 3rd time that the popo did this to her. She did not report the first two incidents. We referred her to a doctor for medical treatment.



She has taken care of the popo for 3 years and 5 months already. She ran away and reported the incident to the police. She cannot endure the bad temperament of the popo any longer.

8. Barely 2 months employed in HK, Watun experienced abused from her employer in Tuen Mun. She sought refuge in Bethune House where 2 residents volunteered to accompany her to report the incident to the police station that night.

9. Tessie is recently diagnosed with stage 3 colon cancer. She stayed in Bethune House while she is on sick leave until 14 October 2015. She works for her employers for more than 2 years, taking care of two children, aged 3 and 1 year old aside from the household chores.



10. Samijem, finally returned to Indonesia on 5 October 2015, to be with her children. For 7 years she worked so hard in HK for her children. Now, she is fighting stage 4 breast cancer. We hope and pray, she will survive her ordeal!

11. Residents helping newly sheltered resident learning & getting strength from each other on 12 Oct 2015 @10:44pm.



Ir Su, 21 y/o, ran away around 7:30pm from Well Service agency in Sheung Shui because agency representative wants her to apply for a HK20, 000 loan as payment for the agency fee. On 9 October 2015, agency already applied Ir Su for a loan at CCSL. Same agency processed her 3 contracts within her 5 months stay in HK. She arrived in HK 1st time in May 2015. Entitlements were all taken by said agency, made her sign documents she didn't understand. In between contracts, agency sent her to work to somebody else's house and payments of her labour all went to that agency!

12. A 22 y/o Indonesian finally left her worksite in Ma On Shan after a 7-month ordeal of physical and verbal abused from her lady employer almost daily whenever



she comes home from work. On 12 Sept afternoon, her employer got angry again because she forgot to list down some items inside the refrigerator. Her hair was pulled and her head was pressed down on the floor. And when she's able to rise up, her forehead was punched and pressed it nearly unto the wall. Asked why she didn't report to the police before? She replied she's scared because her lady employer kept telling her, "if you report to your agency or to the police, I'm not afraid. I am a lawyer and I work in the court".

13. Prison Visitation at Lowu Correctional Institution. Former resident thanked Bethune House for the visit and for the help. Smiling and controlling her tears, she shared women inmates are mostly from Indonesia and Philippines; that they are assigned in various workshops and hers is in the kitchen to ensure supply of water. ~How many more women migrant workers must have to suffer due to greedy placement agencies in HK and in their country & due to inequalities in their place of origin?

### III. PSYCHO-SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND LIFE-SKILLS TRAINING

1. HerFund invited the residents to participate in the HerFund Race Walk 2015. The residents joined the team relay and individual race walk for senior & junior category, and as cheerers. Congratulations to team 4 who won 2nd prize for team relay & Ida who also got 2nd place for individual category!
2. Cooking lessons is a regular therapeutic activity and life skills training in the shelter. A domestic worker of one of our supporters taught the residents of both shelters how to cook several dishes from tasty Spanish Paella stuffed w/ shrimps, shells, & chicken wings, Chinese Dim sum, Japanese Sushi to Thai fried Beef with Basil.
3. Another successful Health Education and Health Check service by the Medical Outreachers for the residents of Bethune House and other shelters were held on 28 March and 23 May 2015.

The topic of the 2<sup>nd</sup> service was "Simple First Aid and Occupational Health". Domestic workers were able to learn simple first aid knowledge like last time, as well as some knowledge about occupational health! During the service, medical students and domestic helpers both enjoyed doing stretching exercises. Since domestic helpers are always too busy to stretch and exercise, they may easily get injured while working. The simple stretching exercises can help relax themselves and prevent injuries!

Simple health check was also given to the domestic workers during the service. Moreover, Dr. Tammy Leung and Dr. Joanne Chan also joined the service. They provided a lot of useful advice to our domestic workers with health-related problems.

4. Pastor Timothy Lam treated all the residents of Bethune House including Erwiana who was in HK at that time to a free tour to Ocean Park on 4 April 2015. More than 30 residents benefitted from this event. Bethune House shouldered the transportation of the residents.
5. Birthdays, winning cases and send -off are regular activities of the residents in the shelter as part of the stress reduction therapy
6. Sewing and Handicraft Project: New projects like friendship bracelets, key chain out of cloth scrap, new designs for our handmade cards and sewing are introduced by HandsOn Volunteers, interns from Finland and Zoe Coughlan.

7. Discovery College in HK had a week of “No Boundaries” where students are able to volunteer and help with community -service related activities on 16 - 20 November 2015.

We are happy to have Susan Park, Jona Puentespina and John Wong for a week. They are from Year 12. They helped with the production of Christmas cards for our handicraft project. See the original handcrafted Christmas cards made by these very talented students!



8. The Medical Outreachers HK for the residents of Bethune House and other shelters were held again on 25 July and 14 November 2015. Topics discussed were mental illness - suicide and depression and Women’s Health.



9. The HK University's Social Service Group led by former HKU Summer Justice Intern Emily Chun Ying Wong invited the residents of Bethune House to join an activity they initiated at HKU.

#### IV. INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS

Since January 2015, we received 37 Interns and volunteers from the following: Students from King George V, Chinese International School, HKU Social Work Department and Social Justice Volunteer, HK UST, Lingnan University, Diakonia University in Finland, Global Justice Volunteers (United Methodist Church - USA), HandsOn Volunteers, GBGM- YAMS Program and some individuals. It maybe time consuming to supervise the interns and volunteers and providing them insights of our work, but their presence take some of the workload from us. This allows us to devote more time and focus more on improving our services, raising funds for the programs, connecting with networks, government officials and other service providers.

1. Diakonia from Finland interns Tiina & Johanna taught Bethune House residents how to make key chains out from scrap of cloth. They also assisted in case work.
2. Jemima Barr, Cheryl Hiu Tsing Fok and Trini Cheuk Lam Ting of the Chinese International School with the Residents of Bethune House. The school aims to provide students with experience in volunteer work, hoping for long term partnership with us. For two days on 11 and 12 May, the students helped in case work i.e statement making, translation work, accompanying some of the residents to the Minor Employment Contract Adjudication Board (MECAB) and did a research.
3. Lingnan University, the Office of Service Learning Program hosted the Spring Dinner 2015 & mini exhibit of booths & posters based from their SL experience. We look forward to continuing the service learning, which is a mutually beneficial & empowering partnership.

4. Five students from King George V volunteer with us since January 2015. They organized self-defense and computer lessons, help with statement making and accompanying residents to hearings as well.
5. The Three (3) Global Justice Volunteers arrived in June for a 10 weeks internship with the shelter.
6. The two Diakonia Students from Finland served the shelter for 10 weeks from February to end of April 2015. They assisted in casework and handicraft making.
7. Our Young Adult Missionary, Beth Kauffman finally left HK in April 2015 after serving the migrants' community for 20 months.

We have more than 43 volunteers and interns during the second half of the year. Students from Chinese International School, Lingnan University, King George V, Discovery Bay College, HandsOn, HKU, Church of Sweden and General Board of the Global Ministries, students sent by Faith in Love Limited.

8. BEHIND CONCRETE WALLS- PHOTO EXHIBIT, 22 NOV 2015. Thanks to all the interns and volunteers behind the scene - HK International School - Celine Legaspi, Salonee Goel, Claudia Tung; CIS HK- Cheryl Fok, Gloria Schiavo, Catherine Cheng, CIS CPG- Cheryl Lynn Lee and Team, Deena Thinakaran of Lingnan University, Maren Boersma from the Netherlands, Laura Nunez of GBGM, Grace Vergara of Sweden, MISSION volunteers and other individuals ....they all lightened our load.. to make this event a success.
9. Twenty three (23) University scholars helped in cleaning the shelter and painting the gate of Bethune House. We are thankful to Faith in Love Limited for organizing the service day.



## V. FUND-RAISING EVENTS

1. The Coins for Bethune House Project counting was held on 8 March 2015. Several volunteers from King George V Schools, members of migrant organizations who participated in the fund-raising event assisted in the counting. We raised more than HK\$21,000.
2. The Sun Writers Club led by its president Jo Campos and its mentors The Sun editor Attorney Daisy Mandap & the Sun publisher Mr Leo Deocadiz sponsored the successful April 6 walk for a cause for the benefit of Bethune House. They donated HK\$6,100 from the proceeds of the Charity Walk.
3. On 11 February 2015, Anna Pendry, who organized Madhatters Charity Event in 2014 visited Bethune House to donate new towels for the residents courtesy of Manila based artist Ram Mallari Jr. Ram who transforms scrap metals into beautiful sculptures.
4. We helped the American Women Association (AWA) to solicit photos taken by Ms. Xyza Cruz Bacani, a multi -awarded street photographer for their fund -raising event



“Art on Line”. Xyza donated 5 pictures of Occupy Central. Xyza volunteers for Bethune House for our project with HerFund entitled “Behind Concrete Walls, Images of Women in Crisis”. As a result, AWA approved our application for grant for the Lighten their Load, Make them Smile Project. They donated HK\$25,000 for this project.

5. Several migrant organizations donated food and toiletries. Feeding Hong Kong delivers food and other groceries once a month.
6. Bethune House Executive Director thanked the Philippine Association of Hong Kong (PAHK) for their donation to the work of Bethune House Migrant Women's Refuge. The awarding was held during the PAHK event entitled “Rugby Sevens Team Rio 2016 meet greet Philippine Volcanoes in October 2015.” They donated \$40,000.
7. Food Drive and Grocery items were received from several organizations:
  - a. Discovery Bay Anglican Church
  - b. St. Stephen's Chapel
  - c. Confederation of Ilocano Association-Sorority International 61892 Inc
  - d. OFWs HK
  - e. Bonding True Friendship
  - f. Koplak for Peace
  - g. Indonesian Ladies Hikers



8. 26 August 2015 fund raising event of De LaSalle Alumni Association at HK at Drop in Hollywood Rd., Central. Shelter Executive Director presented a power point about our work. Bethune House is one of the beneficiaries of DLSAA HK.



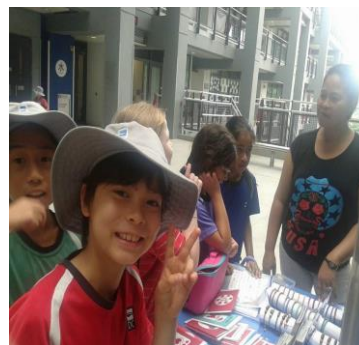
9. We sell our handmade Christmas cards at the Community Advice Bureau Charity Christmas Sale. A free table was provided by the organizer of the charity event.

## **VI. NETWORKING, ADVOCACY AND MEDIA INTERVIEWS**

1. Attended the Bradbury School activity entitled “Sharing the Planet” with some residents.
2. Invited in the Helper's Appreciation Tea at Beacon Hill International School.
3. Women migrant workers seeking justice in Bethune House are in solidarity with Mary Jane Veloso, for her ultimate freedom from jail of more than 5 years. Mary Jane is a mother of 2 boys.
4. Media interviews from SCMP, Next Magazine, Coconuts HK, AFP, CABLE TV, Philippine Star.

5. Recorded for Reflections of RTHK Radio FM 97.6. It was broadcasted from 9 - 13 November 2015. It focused on what can we do as a community to ease the suffering of foreign domestic workers. How do we stand in solidarity with them towards the attainment of God's kingdom of justice, peace and decent life here on earth? Reverend Judy Chan invited us to participate in this.

6. Thanks to Mr Peter Muir who invited Bethune House to their Discovery College Community Engagement Fair on 21/09/2015. Thanks to those who helped us and bought some of our products, our income from sold handicraft products of Bethune House is more or less HK\$800.00 😊



7. The HKU Service Group invited more than 20 residents to visit their school. After the tour, there were some games and a traditional Chinese soup was prepared for everyone.

8. Media interviews from Reporters Notebook. Behind Closed doors, Abuse of Domestic workers published by New York Times, picture of some of the residents of Bethune House was captured by the photographer Steve Mc Curry.



9. Bethune House and Mission For Migrant Workers joined the Renaissance College HK Service Fair on 27 August 2015. Residents of the shelter assisted in the distribution of materials. Thanks to Ms. Mandy Wong and the RCHK students who signed up as volunteers.

10. Interviews with students from HKU and Baptist University, Journalism students.

11. Bethune House watched the SUFFRAGETTE movie in The Grand Cinema! Thanks to HerFund for the complimentary tickets for the residents, staff, interns & volunteers.

## VII. VISITORS

1. Former member of the Dutch Parliament Kathleen Ferrier visited Bethune House on 15 May 2015. She and her husband moved to HK in 2013.

2. Visitors received from the Philippines Consulate General - HK: Three representatives from the Department of Social Welfare Department of the Phil. government, one posted as Social Welfare Attaché in PCG HK, and two from Assistance to Nationals headed by Vice Consul Chuck Macaspac.

3. American Women Association Charitable Fund -raising Committee visited Bethune House to learn more about our application for grant and our services.

4. The Filipino Christian Community - Methodist International Church HK Mission and Evangelism visits Bethune House on 11 October 2015. Mrs Virgie Lewis, Sonia Medite, Nora Asuit, Emily Anical and Violeta G Cariaga listen to the sharing of the residents and pray that they overcome their difficulties.



5. Manang Caring visited Bethune on mid-Autumn Day, 28 Sept 2015. She used to volunteers at Bethune House before going back to the Philippines for good.



6. IFI Diocese of Cagayan de Oro visited the two shelters to listen to the stories of our residents and to know how the church can support our work in HK. Nineteen priests were accompanied by Father Dwight dela Torre, chaplain of St. John's Cathedral during their visit.



**VIII. Audited Report 2015 ( see attachment)**