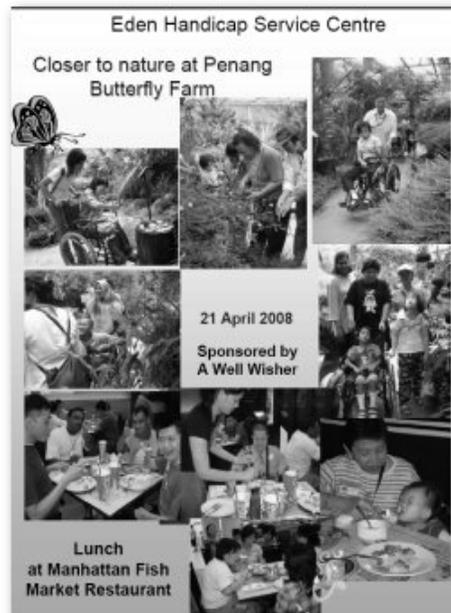




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Getting Closer to Nature



On 21 April 2008 as early as 8.30am, our disabled friends and helpers from the community began to gather at the Training Hostel, at Jalan Sir Hussein to register for the trip to Penang Butterfly Farm. Upon registration, each given a food pack before they could board the buses.

The excitement was great, the people were well behaved, the buses were quite new and spacious, the seats were comfortable, the inside of the buses were cooling and the weather was sunny as the buses began its journey weaving through the winding and sloping roads to Penang Butterfly Farm. Upon arrival our disabled friends impatiently disembark from the buses and virtually 'ran' to the entrance of the Farm. Their faces looked radiant with enthusiasm for this visit.

As they strutted in, their eyes wandered with wonder as myriads of beautiful butterflies

were flying so freely all over the place. Some looked frightened as the butterflies flew very close to them. Some watched with mouths opened as their eyeballs rotated. They clasped their hands in delight as they came across some cute little white ducks 'quacking' while swimming in the ponds. One gripped her teeth in eeriness as she saw 'giant' size millipedes squirming in a special enclosure. Some seemed to be enquiring to know more from their helpers as they aided them along. There were so many things to see, to watch, to admire, to marvel, to be able to be in a natural environment and most of all, to be able to feel and to experience such wonders of nature. There were no weary eyes as our disabled friends emerged from the Penang Butterfly Farm fully satisfied and flashing a little smile and some teeth.

Some looked sad as if they wanted to go back and see all over again as we journeyed down to Queensbay Mall. Upon arrival we went straight to Manhattan Fish Market restaurant for lunch. The music seemed loud, no, not from the shopping complex but from our stomachs and our salivary glands were acting strangely. Rich aroma of delicious food filled the air as we began to sniff in and some were seen licking their lips even before the food arrived.

We were served iced lemon tea, mushroom soup, garlic bread, salad, Fried Calamari, Fish n Chips and Fisherman Giant Platter. We could hear the sound of forks and spoons clinking against the ceramic plates. We could also hear the sound of teeth 'grinding' food and mouths slurping soups. Next we had Deli Manjoo specially baked cream cakes and our disabled friends easily gobbled them. Most of them by now were already crying enough as we could see some of them adjusting their belts and some stroking their stomachs! Their cries were in vain as New Zealand ice cream came landing unto their table. The stomachs were full but the eyes were not. The food were indeed delicious and far too much to enjoy.

We are thankful to Penang Butterfly Farm for waiving the entrance fees for our disabled friends and providing 20% discount for able-bodied care-givers and helpers. We also want to thank Manhattan Fish Market restaurant for giving us a special rate for the food. We also appreciate the free sponsorship of Deli Manjoo cakes and last but not least the New Zealand Ice Cream outlet for the free various variety of ice cream.

A burden no heavier than the cross to bear.

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