

Transforming the lives of the disabled



Tye (left) relaxing with some trainees at a playground. With them is Lee (blue shirt).

EDEN Handicap Service Centre has been a boon for disabled persons since the non-profit organisation was set up in Penang in 1991.

It has helped them to be independent and confident through the practical training it provides them.

All this brings the greatest joy to Bertie Tye who founded Eden and is its general manager.

“I have seen the lives of many disabled people changing in front of me which gives me true satisfaction,” Tye said in an interview.

He said it was Eden’s aim to train people with disabilities to help them realise their full potential.

“The centre is also a place where they can find acceptance, peace and joy,” he added.

Tye, 50, said that although Eden was a Christian-run organisation, it accepted everyone as trainees regardless of race and religion.

He said the centre started in 1991 in a single-storey terrace house in Jalan Sir Hussein where it provided training.

It has since expanded to provide hostel accommodation for disabled adults and children and a daycare centre for disabled children in Taylor Road and Philips Road.

It also has a recycling and cleaning service unit in Bayan Lepas where the trainees separate recyclable items and provide cleaning services as a job.

Tye said the centre helped the disabled in education, training, job placement and independent living skills.

“Currently, we are serving about 100 disabled children and adults,” he said, adding that Eden depended on donations from well-wishers.

One person who has seen his life change for the better is wheelchair user and polio victim Lee Sin Kok, 45, who is the training and sheltered workshop unit head at Eden

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Lee working with Choo at the centre.]

Lee, who is from a rural area in Perak, said he almost gave up on life due to his disability but spotted an advertisement on a computer training course offered at Eden about 20 years ago.

He signed up for the course but could not find a job after completing it and subsequently joined Eden as a trainee in the recycling unit.

“I have worked in all the units in this centre and was later appointed unit head here,” said Lee who got married in 2012.

Trainee Choo Li Lian, 46, who has a learning disability, said Eden had made her a more confident person.

“Before joining Eden, I worked at several places and my employers there could not accept me as I am so I developed low self-esteem and fear.

“At Eden, I feel much more comfortable and confident,” said Choo.

She said she hoped to explore the outside world in future and take up a job in an office like any normal person.

To find out more about Eden, call its administrative, finance and community services unit at 04-2282758 or Tye at 013-4387714.

