

Racial Harmony Day

Celebrating Singapore!



This was my first time signing up as a parent volunteer for a CHIJ school event. I felt very happy that I could take time off from work to help at this year's Racial Harmony Day observance in school.

Racial Harmony Day is held every year on July 21 to mark Singapore's 1964 race riots, reminding everyone of the importance of maintaining racial and religious harmony in our country. Students were encouraged to dress in traditional costumes, and they were encouraged to try out a variety of traditional games during their recess periods.

It was very heartening seeing the children so interested in trying out and learning to play the old-school games that I used to play when I was a child of their age.

There were several games stations set up at the National Education Gallery – paper cutting, congkak, kuti-kuti, five stones and pick-up sticks; and two more stations outside – zero point and chapteh. A total of 27 parents volunteered their time to help on this meaningful day.

I was assigned to help with the kuti-kuti game, together with two other parent volunteers. To be honest, even I got excited when the teachers passed me the packets of colourful, plastic animal kutis, as the last time I saw these tiny toys was during my own primary school days! Happy memories filled my mind each time the children asked me "How do you play these?" as they were at first attracted to the colourful kutis when they walked past our station. There was a constant crowd throughout each recess period, and it was very fulfilling seeing the happy faces of the girls when they were each given a few kutis to "battle" against each other. Sometimes cheap and simple childhood games do indeed bring more joy and contentment than expensive "smart" devices, as these games require the girls to interact with each other.



I am very impressed and thankful to CHIJ for coming up with this great idea to introduce these games on Racial Harmony Day, and I am certain that many of the girls had a great time, albeit having limited time to try out every game. I hope the school will have the same, or more, traditional games for the girls to play at future Racial Harmony Days, as they are both educational and fun!

By Emily Tan, mom of Gillian Wee (P5 Orchid) & Eliza Wee (P4 Daisy)

