

SMALL CHANGES, BIG DIFFERENCE

EQUAL-ARK Youth Programme

MS JANE LIM,

*School Counsellor,
Bukit Batok Secondary School*

Yani was known to teachers as a student who was impulsive and unaware of the consequences of her actions. She was also unable to focus on her work and had a tendency to use inappropriate language and vulgarities.

However, that changed when she joined the EQUAL-ARK Youth Programme. Her love for animals helped her connect with the horses she worked with immediately. Yani was very sensitive towards the horses and was able to identify the personality of the horses through her interactions with them. In the same way, Yani also developed a greater awareness and ability to read the emotions and triggers of her peers.

"Yani was a participant of the EQUAL-ARK Youth Programme. As she journeyed through the 10-week programme, her ability to regulate her emotions improved greatly. This was apparent in her interactions with the horses, especially Kary, a horse she has established a deep connection with. Yani amazed all the instructors with her transformation."

Ms Er Wan Ling, EQUAL Instructor¹

Over the course of the programme, Yani has learnt to analyse problems and was encouraged to take initiative and manage tasks assigned to the entire group of students in the programme. In the past, when faced with challenges, Yani would shy away and give up easily. Today, with courage, she confronts challenges and leads her teammates in co-creating solutions.

"I got to do many activities like feed, walk and groom Kary. I enjoyed the time spent with Kary and the group projects given to us by the instructor. I have also learnt to persevere to achieve the goals I have set for myself."

*Miss Yani Arini Binte Mohammad Ridzuan,
Student, Bukit Batok*

¹ EQUAL Instructors deliver equine-assisted learning through the programme, which involves various horsemanship, mindfulness and group-related play and learning activities that are designed to teach youths life skills.



Her relationships with her schoolmates have improved as well. **She stood up for a classmate who was being teased and encouraged the others to stop the teasing - proving her sensitivity to her peers' needs and ability to be a positive influence to her peers.**

Overtime, she has also made an effort to use appropriate language to express how she feels instead and has learnt to manage her emotions.

● "Yani has learnt to be more aware of her emotions, remain calm and step away from the situation to cool down before returning with a calmer mind and heart. She has also developed more patience for her schoolmates."

● *Ms Lee Yah Mei, Allied Educator
(Learning and Behavioural Support)²*

● "My daughter has become much more responsible these days. She studies harder in school and takes responsibility for the work that is assigned to her. She has also become wiser in her use of time. She even puts in the time and effort to bond with and be more helpful towards the family members."

● *Mr Ridzuan, Yani's father*

² Allied Educators (Learning and Behavioural Support) provide support to students with mild special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools to enable them to integrate better in the mainstream schools.