

Maryknollers Community Service (MCService)
English Language Support Programme for MCS Primary
By Judy Yuen, Co-ordinator

The English Language Support Programme was one of the inaugural projects instigated by the MCS Foundation under the auspices of Maryknollers Community Service with an aim to sustain the Maryknoll sisters' tradition in service, beginning with services "at home" with our alma mater. Following a meeting attended by Foundation members and teaching staff from both MCS Primary and Secondary School in November 2007, a general outline of the Programme for MCS Primary students was drawn up.

Under the Programme, former Maryknollers would provide support to MCS Primary students on 2 levels : (a) firstly, assistance and supervision of homework for P1 and P2 students; (b) secondly, oral practice for P6 students. It is hoped that such sessions held in more informal surroundings would provide a supportive environment for the students to readily practise their English language skills. In response to the Foundation's appeal for volunteers, over 20 Maryknollers have signed up on the Programme, either as a tutor for classes or as back-up tutors in case of need.

The Programme commenced in mid-January 2008 and continued through the months of February, March and ended in April 2008, prior to commencement of summer timetable of the primary students. Four groups each with five P1 or P2 students met three times a week where tutors focused on reading skills and assistance on dictation/spelling with the girls. For the three groups each with six to seven P6 students, a variety of activities were carried out to strengthen the students' English language skills. Such activities comprised of poem/script reading, general/topical discussions, show and tell session, pictures description, story telling, SRA comprehension exercises and so on.

During the 3-month duration of the Programme, a good rapport was established between the students and tutors. While tutors have noted a heightened level of confidence and improved language skills on a number of students concerned, the general feedback of the students on the Programme was also positive. The P6 students found the program useful and interesting while comments on the SRA comprehension exercises were less than positive. Suggestions on enriching the program with more language-focused learning activities, in-school field trips, role plays were also put forward by the students. The Programme has been a rewarding experience for the tutors as well, since much has been learnt in dealing with energetic young learners. Upon further discussion with the teaching staff, it was felt that resources may be better deployed to focus on P5 and P6 students in the next school term in order to strengthen

verbal language skills of these students in the last 2 years of their primary schooling. Pending further review of the Programme with school management, a broad framework of the Programme for the forthcoming school term should be ready by July/August 2008.

Given the enhanced contents of the Programme in the next school year, we now call upon all Maryknollers to volunteer their time and effort to assist our young fellow Maryknollers through this English Language Support Programme. If you are interested to take part in this worthwhile mission, please contact Judy Yuen, year of 1972 (email address : jjechan@netvigator.com) or Janet Chang, year of 1967 (email : innoview@netvigator.com).

A special vote of thanks is extended to all involved in the set up and implementation of the Programme, including but not limited to :

MCS Primary School Mrs Josephine Lo, Principal
 Ms Ivy Ng, Senior Teacher Ms Terry Wong, Senior Teacher

Maryknollers Helen Yu, Vice-Chairperson, MCS Foundation
 Janet Chang, MCS Foundation Council
 Belinda Li Colleen Yenson
 Corina Tsang Eileen Chiu
 Haminah Wahab Judy Yuen
 Laurentia Tai * May Wong
 Mary Law Michele Chan
 Prisca Woo Rosemary Chan
 Samantha Tam Sharon Tsui *
 Susan Louie Teresa Ling
 Velma Roberts

- Particular tribute is accorded to Laurentia, Susan and Sharon for their devotion and commitment in full attendance of the P1 and P6 classes respectively.

Below are pictures of the initial briefing in January 2008 and the various tutor groups in action :



Briefing of teaching staff and tutors
Jan08



Susan (centre) and Rosemary (left)
with P1 group



Laurentia and P1 group



Prisca (left) and Haminah (right) with
P2 group



Colleen with P2 group



Teresa with P2 group



May and Sharon with P6 group



Eileen (left) and Mary (right) with P6
group



Velma (left) and Judy (right) with P6
group