

Making of small Calendar 2012

(Sharing by Sister Xu of the Loving Care Center, Hunan)

This is our second time at the Hunan Loving Care Center workshop to receive calendar order from Casa Ricci Social Service. The calendar was larger than the previous order by half with a theme of "Love". Based on the production experience last year, we have full confidence to handle this order and are thankful of the order from Casa Ricci and all those concerned. When the HIV-affected people (herein called workers) held the finished products at their hands, they were over-joy with hopes in their life that are meaningful. They reinvented themselves continuously throughout the process. We as serving companions can adequately feel the mutual love and care in their life sharing.

This year the bamboo material we selected are from local Hunan province. Some are from the home of some of our workers. We specifically wanted to help them and order the bamboos from them. The workers were also trustworthy and delivered us their best bamboos that are 3 to 5 years old.

The process of making the calendar were as below:

1. The workers and sisters formed a team to design the 2012 calendar. The final design was passed to the publishing house for printing.
2. Bamboo selection (for the best bamboo by worker themselves) and transported to the center.



Transportation of bamboo



Bamboos



Each bamboo was about 10 plus meters. Our workers have to select and cut with a saw the right size of bamboo diameter as they differ in sizes.

3. There was a Chinese knot in each of the calendar. Our center workers have to tie each of the 2000 knots themselves. The knot was very delicate and beautiful, with unique Chinese style.



Two workers were busy un-tying the threads used in the Chinese knots



A worker teaching a couple of volunteers how to tie the Chinese knot

4. Peeling off the green skin by a professional wooden master



Peeling bamboo skin



Peeled bamboo

5. Cut the peeled bamboo into small sections according to their joints.



6. Cut in the middle the bamboo sections into halves.



7. According to local custom, workers soaked the bamboo into lime water to avoid moth eating. Dried after washing.



Workers washing the bamboos



Drying

8. Draw the dried bamboo sections into standard size by a Sister.
9. Cut and polish into standard size by a worker



After polishing, a worker (professional wood master) drilled holes on the bamboo

10. A volunteer & sister printed the wordings on the polished bamboo. Another sister ironed the side.



Preparing printing of wordings by a volunteer

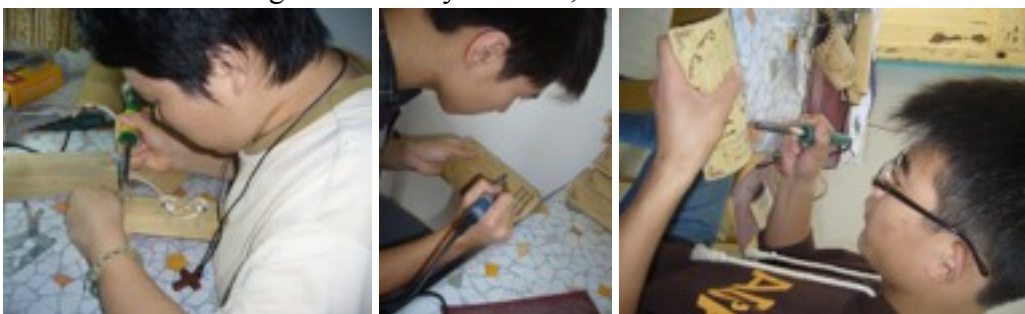


A sister was printing the wordings

11. Ironing of words were done by two workers, one volunteer and two sisters. Due to the larger number of words (than last year), it was more difficult than before. The workers however, were confident despite sometimes their hands may be trembling and not as skillful. They were serious in doing each stroke right. To bridge the gap of end-September delivery, the workers took initiatives to perform overtime. Everyone was fill with happiness in mobilizing his/her own resources.



Ironing the words by workers, sisters and volunteer



12. The small calendars were ready as scheduled when we have done half of our work. We performed a quality check to select and sort by the month, ready for fixing with the bamboo.



Quality check of the small calendars

13. Paint Spray : A departure from our usual manual spraying, we introduced a spraying machine (compressed air type) thanks to suggestion by a new worker that is a professional wood master himself. So we purchase one and the effect was great...fast and efficient with beautiful result and smooth coloring. This has leapfrog our center capability and broadened our horizons according to talent of each worker.



Preparing for the spray



Spraying

14. “Love” Trimming: This was the most difficult process. Using a wired cutter, the Chinese character “Love” was manually formed by drilling away the extra woods on the bamboo plate. This beautiful character “Love” was the result by the heart of the worker, a creation in its lively making.



“Love” character trimming

15. Fitting the small calendar



16. Counting the number of finished products



17. Packaging



18. Boxing and quality inspection



19. Sealing, weighting and preparation for mailing



Volunteers

This was the second time the Ricci volunteers come to our center. Their energetic participation has brought much life to our center. The center workers (namely the HIV-affected patients) felt their love through their companionship and were surprised by such young volunteers willing to come to live with them and integrated into their large family. This does not only increase their life energy but also make them moved by their love and support from so many friends and volunteers.

Two interludes in our making of the calendars

Interlude 1

There were many angels and numerous support and assistance in the making of these calendars. During the production period, there were many sisters from all over the country to participate in a working training. These sisters also joined the production work in their spare time. This small gesture was a great encouragement to our workers.

Interlude 2

Many difficulties arose when we were only half done. First the cutting wire for the word “Love” broke and after deliberation we have to purchase a new one. That pushed back our production schedule by more than a week. However, the new cutter broke again when we were near the finish. This time we were really nervous as we would be late in delivering the products. So we have to ask the opinion to Fr. Fernando. Fortunately, Fr. Fernando gave us sufficient time as grace period. Through this experience and communication, we can feel that there was a big force supporting us in our work. Fr. Fernando gave us his encouragement and rapport. He said “these types of problem are common in production works” and said we did not need to be rush. He gave us advice and even suggested us to purchase spare ones for those important machines as standby. Our difficulty was overcome with ease just like that. This incident broadens our minds and gives us more work experience.

Sr. Xu
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