

prisonnews

OCTOBER ISSUE 2023
CAPTAINS OF LIVES
REHAB • RENEW • RESTART

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CARE NETWORK SUMMIT 2023 – DESISTANCE IN THE COMMUNITY

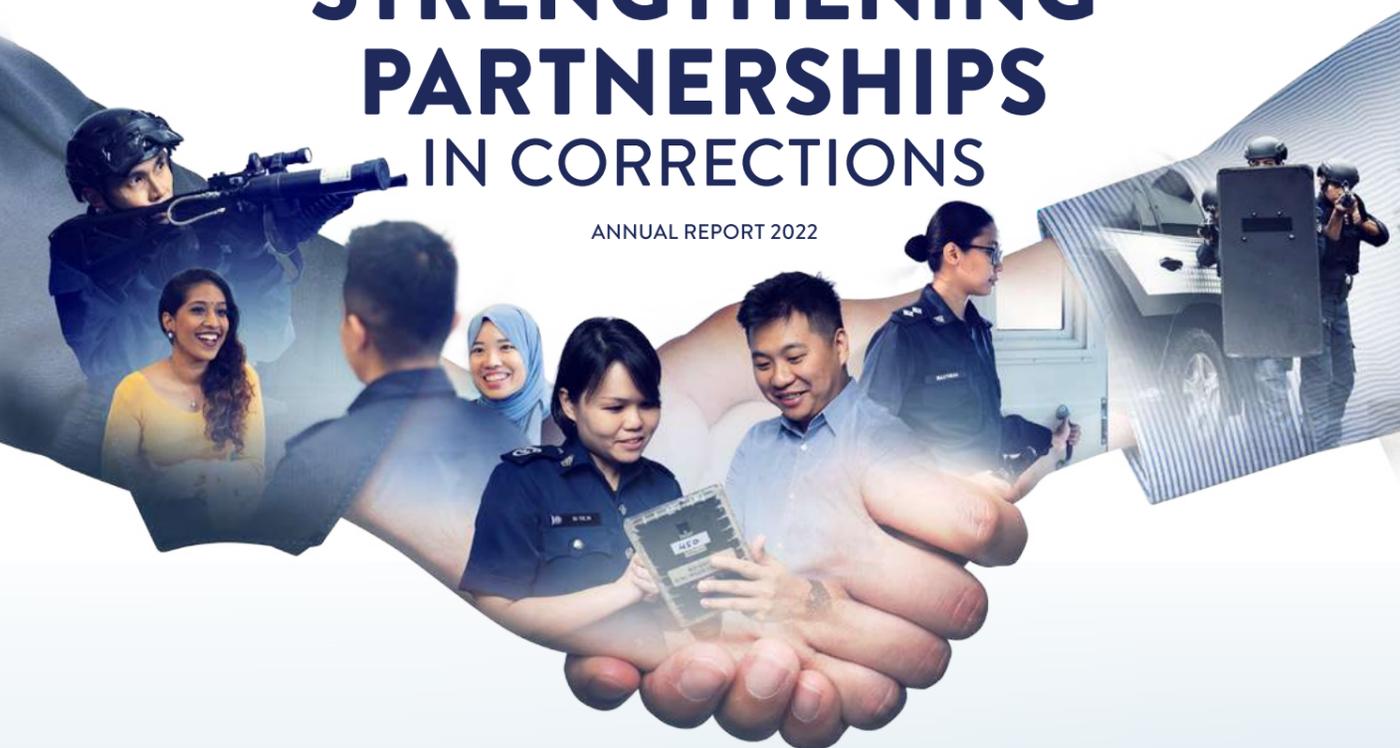
MAIN FEATURE



SINGAPORE
PRISON SERVICE

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS IN CORRECTIONS

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



COMMISSIONER'S FOREWORD | DIRECTORATE MEMBERS | HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR | DESISTANCE PURSUITS | CORRECTIONS COLLABORATION | FUTURE-FIT CAPTAINS OF LIVES | ADVANCING CORRECTIONS GLOBALLY | **STATISTICS** | ALMANAC

STATISTICS

Two-Year Recidivism Remained Low and Stable

The two-year recidivism rate for the 2020 release cohort remained low and stable at about 20 per cent (see Figure 1a).¹ It remains amongst the lowest globally (see Figure 1b).



Figure 1a: Two-Year Recidivism Rates for 2016-2020 Release Cohorts

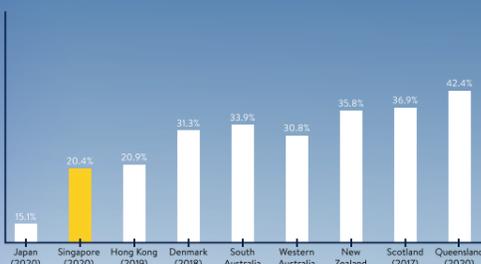


Figure 1b: International Comparison of Two-Year Recidivism Rate

The low two-year recidivism rate is indicative of the effectiveness of the rehabilitation programmes provided to inmates while they served their sentence in prison, followed by structured community supervision by SPS and aftercare assistance provided by SPS's community partners after they were released into the community.

¹ Recidivism rate is defined as the percentage of local offenders under the custody of the Singapore Prison Service, who were subsequently detained or sentenced to imprisonment or day reporting order within two years of release into the community.

Promoting Long-term Desistance

Ex-offenders may not remain crime or drug-free in the longer term. This is evident from the five-year recidivism rate that has remained around 40 per cent, albeit improving slightly for the two most recent release cohorts (see Figure 2). To address this, SPS and Yellow Ribbon Singapore (YRSG) will work with our community partners to increase longer term support to ex-offenders.



Figure 2: Five-Year Recidivism Rates for 2013-2017 Release Cohorts

Read our SPS Annual Report 2022 here - Strengthening Partnerships in Corrections



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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers

In our latest edition of Prison News, we showcase a range of thought-provoking topics, highlighting the individuals and organisations dedicated to making a difference in the field of corrections.

First and foremost, we bring you the **CARE Network Summit 2023** that was held in July. The Summit highlighted the significance of community collaboration in supporting our inmates and ex-offenders' journey toward desistance.

In an exciting feature, we conducted exclusive interviews and went **behind-the-scenes** with the organising committee of the **Yellow Ribbon Prison Run 2023**. The run held on 24 September 2023, returned to its fully physical format for the first time after COVID-19! Through our reporting, you will witness the passion and dedication of those involved in making this event a symbol of hope and support beyond second chances.

We also peek into the extraordinary work of a **State Courts Lock-Up Officer** and feature interviews with the **Chairman Board of Visiting Justices & Board of Inspection and Chairman Board of Visitors (Drug Rehabilitation Centres and Anti-Inhalant Abuse Centres)**, and a **Prison Fellowship volunteer**. These in-depth articles will shed light on the contributions of SPS officers and our partners, who foster positive change in the criminal justice system.

Lastly, as we celebrate excellence in the field of corrections, we speak to our **MHA National Day Awardees** whose commitment to rehabilitation and reintegration earned them the well-deserved recognition. Their sharing serves as an inspiring example of how compassion and dedication can effectively drive transformation in our correctional system.

As you immerse yourself in the pages of our magazine, we hope you will be inspired by the strength of communities, passion of individuals, and the endless potential for positive change within the correctional system. Thank you for your continued support and I wish you a pleasant read.

RO2 Justine Mok
Editor, Prison News

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Desistance IN THE CommUNITY

The annual Community Action for the Rehabilitation of Ex-Offenders (CARE) Network Summit 2023 was held at Fairmont Hotel on 27 July 2023. Themed "Desistance in the CommUNITY", around 400 CARE Network partners and attendees from various rehabilitation and aftercare agencies gathered for a day of sharing and discussions. The Summit focused on ways to enhance community involvement, better coordinate aftercare initiatives, and improve the quality of services provided to ex-offenders and their families towards supporting desistance in the community.

The Summit was graced by Guest-of-Honour, Mr K Shanmugam, Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law, who affirmed the CARE Network's commitment towards aftercare for offenders. In his address, Mr K Shanmugam underscored the pivotal role that preventive efforts play in deterring crime, emphasising the need for robust community partnerships and strong family support systems. One such initiative was the setting up of the National Committee of Prevention, Rehabilitation and Recidivism (NCPR) in 2018 to oversee national efforts in preventing offending and enhancing the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-offenders. Three key areas that the NCPR has been studying include:

-  Breaking the cycle of intergenerational offending;
-  Preventing substance abuse amongst youths; and
-  Preventing youth sexual offending



Guest-of-Honour Mr K Shanmugam's opening speech at the CARE Network Summit 2023.

Mr K Shanmugam acknowledged the aspirations of ex-offenders to lead crime-free lives while recognising the persistent challenges they face in areas such as employment, family reconciliation, and societal acceptance. Since its inception in 2000, the CARE Network has guided offenders through their rehabilitation and reintegration journey.

The Summit also included a heartfelt commitment activity where Mr K Shanmugam, Commissioner of Prisons Ms Shie Yong Lee, select CARE Network representatives and other attendees inscribed messages of support for the desistance movement, collectively forming a striking honeycomb motif. This motif symbolises unity, strength, and a shared commitment towards second chances.



Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law, Mr K Shanmugam, Commissioner of Prisons, Ms Shie Yong Lee, and CARE Network Representatives participating in the commitment activity.

LAUNCH OF YRSG-UNIQLO PARTNERSHIP

The active participation of the private sector and employers are paramount in supporting the desistance journey of ex-offenders. Many companies have established operations in prisons under the Private Partnership Scheme with Yellow Ribbon Singapore (YRSG), offering training and employment opportunities to inmates and ex-offenders. The Summit witnessed the launch of a partnership between YRSG and the fashion brand UNIQLO. Through this collaboration, members of the public can donate their pre-owned UNIQLO clothing at the brand's stores. Yellow Ribbon Industries Pte Ltd will then process these garments for redistribution to vulnerable communities across Singapore. Among the communities set to benefit from this initiative are the residents of the Selarang Halfway House, thereby promoting a sense of dignity and a promising start to their new chapter in life.



Partnership between YRSG and Uniqlo, launched by Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Minister of State, Ministry of Home Affairs & Ministry of National Development, CEO (YRSG) and Senior Director (UNIQLO SG).

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY PROFESSOR SHADD MARUNA

Anchored on the concept of desistance, the Summit's keynote address was delivered by renowned researcher in the field of desistance, Professor Shadd Maruna. Professor Maruna holds the position of Professor of Criminology at Queen's University Belfast in Northern Ireland and serves as the President of the American Society of Criminology.

In his address, Professor Maruna introduced the concept of desistance, emphasising its role as a social movement that hinges on collaborative efforts with community partners. Based on his extensive research spanning two decades, key factors that sustain desistance from crime, include stable relationships, employment, responsibility, hope, self-belief, and concern for others.

PRESENTATIONS AND PANEL DISCUSSION WITH PROFESSOR BETH WEAVER, MS SALINA SAMION, CARE NETWORK MEMBERS FROM ISCOS & SANA ON "COPRODUCING DESISTANCE IN THE COMMUNITY"

The Summit was also honoured to virtually welcome Professor Beth Weaver, Professor of Criminal and Social Justice in the School of Social Work and Social Policy from the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. She shared insights on co-creating desistance, describing desistance as a relational process centred around a sense of belonging and social recognition. She shared that the relational connection with an individual's social network can ignite a transformative desire and eventually promote sustained desistance.



Professor Weaver's work highlighted the importance of the CARE Network, and the collaborative efforts of all community partners in enabling desistance. Together, they provide vital support for ex-offenders, expanding their social networks, cultivating social capital, and creating meaningful opportunities that empower these individuals to live differently.



Ms. Salina Samion, Deputy Director of SPS's Psychological and Correctional Rehabilitation Division (PCRD), offered insights on desistance in the context of Singapore, outlining strategies for long-term support. She identified factors such as prosocial relationships, family support, religious communities, employment, and avoiding drug triggers as crucial contributors to desistance. Ms. Samion emphasised the need for support structures at different stages, including skill development to help desistors sustain employment, community corrections, and strengthening pro-social networks.



(From left to right) Mr Karam Singh, Professor Shadd Maruna, Ms Salina Samion, Mr Ravan Kumar, and Mr Anderson Neo.
(Not pictured) Professor Beth Weaver joined the panel discussion virtually.

These presentations were followed by an engaging panel discussion featuring Professor, Maruna, Professor Weaver, Ms Samion, Mr Ravan Kumar (Assistant Manager, Support & Guidance, ISCOS), and Mr. Anderson Neo (Senior Social Worker, Aftercare, Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association). All panellists unanimously affirmed the vital role of social and community support groups in empowering ex-offenders on their journey to successful reintegration. While acknowledging that individuals bear the ultimate responsibility for their personal journeys, these community networks play an indispensable role in facilitating and sustaining the change process, ultimately helping to promote long-term desistance and lower the five-year recidivism rate.

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Breakout Room #1

Breakout Room #1, titled *Building Social Capital — Creating New Opportunities*, was moderated by Ms. Charlotte Stephen, Head of Clinical Services, SANA. Desistors, who were onstage with their family and mentors, shared their personal stories and insights on their journeys towards positive change, emphasising the pivotal role played by robust prosocial support systems. They highlighted the transformative impact of encouragement and support from their families, colleagues, mentors, and friends, as well as the invaluable opportunities they had to give back to the community.



Desistors turned up with their families and mentors to share about the importance of prosocial support systems in supporting desistance.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS AND BIG GROUP SHARING

Breakout Room #2

Focusing on the topic of employment, Breakout Room #2, titled *Hard Truths — Adopting Flexible Mindsets for Employment*, was presented by Mr. Tan Yick Loong, Senior Assistant Director, Partnership/YRSG and moderated by Ms. Siti Aishah Nussin, Assistant Director, Careers/YRSG. Both employers and desistors candidly shared their personal success stories, shedding light on how they overcame obstacles and flourished in the workplace. Furthermore, participants and presenters engaged in a productive dialogue on the strategies and resources essential to better support desistors in their career journeys.



Desistors sharing their employment challenges, and how they overcame these challenges.

Breakout Room #3

Breakout Room #3, themed *Fostering the Power of Agency and Personal Transformation* was moderated by Mr. William Soh (Programme Head, Organisational Development, SACA). Desistors shared their personal experiences in developing their own sense of personal responsibility and empowerment by contributing back to society. This included participating in support groups and helping others facing challenges like those they had encountered in the past. This sense of agency allowed the desistors to actively steer their own reintegration process. They also emphasised the transformative mindset shifts that allowed them to evolve into valuable and contributing members of society.



Opportunities to contribute back to society provided the Desistors a driving force to develop their personal agency and steer their own reintegration journey.

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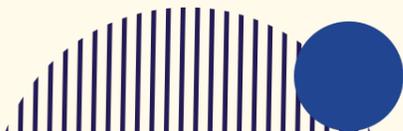
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The summit concluded with a strong sense of unity, dedication and commitment to supporting ex-offenders and desistors. Participants gathered in front of the camera, expressing their commitment to champion the cause of **Desistance in the CommUNITY**. This heartfelt demonstration serves as a reminder and reiterates the CARE Network's commitment to the journey of desistance, transcending boundaries and igniting lasting transformation for all. Together, we remain steadfast in our mission to creating a society that supports second chances.



We support Desistance in the CommUNITY!



Yellow Ribbon Prison Run 2023

Reported by
RO2 Muhamad Asfadly Bin Aspar and RO2 Gan Zi Xing

The annual Yellow Ribbon Prison Run (YRPR) 2023, held on September 24th, was a resounding success, bringing together more than 6,500 local and international participants who gathered to pledge their support for second chances and social inclusion. The event, themed "Run Beyond 2nd Chances," was graced by Guest-of-Honour, Ms. Grace Fu, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment. Follow the Prison News team, as we take you behind the scenes to uncover the remarkable efforts that made this year's YRPR a memorable and impactful event.

UNITING FOR A CAUSE



YRPR 2023, themed "Run Beyond 2nd Chances", brought together both local and international participants.

Themed "Run Beyond 2nd Chances," YRPR 2023 aimed to symbolise hope and gather community support for ex-offenders and their families along their reintegration journey. The run featured two categories: a competitive 10km run and a non-competitive 6km run. Both routes started at Farnborough Road at Changi Village, and culminated at the iconic Old Changi Prison Wall, where a vibrant Yellow Ribbon Project-themed carnival awaited participants.

INMATE PARTICIPATION

One of the most meaningful aspects of YRPR 2023 was the participation of inmates themselves. A total of 137 inmates displayed their determination for change by running 6km within the prison grounds, to raise funds for the Yellow Ribbon cause. Corporate donors had pledged \$10 for every kilometre completed by the inmates, which would be directed towards supporting ex-offenders and their families. Inmates who participated in the initiative reflected that this opportunity to give back to society further strengthened their resolve and determination to make changes in their lives, and support ex-offenders in rebuilding their lives.

A CARNIVAL OF INCLUSIVITY

The carnival, a central attraction of YRPR 2023, hosted a variety of interactive activities and performances. For the first time, the event showcased performances from the Women Police Pipes & Drums and Gurkha Contingent Pipes & Drums from the Singapore Police Force, adding to the festive atmosphere.



The carnival showcased performances by the Women Police Pipes & Drums and Gurkha Contingent Pipes & Drums from the Singapore Police Force.

Visitors to the carnival exhibition learned about the support available for inmates and ex-offenders throughout their rehabilitation and reintegration journey. Following the journey from incare to aftercare, participants discovered more about the Yellow Ribbon Project (YRP), and the initiatives which aim to change society's mindset to give ex-offenders a second chance in life. Many visitors also penned notes of encouragement to inmates, motivating them along their journey of rehabilitation and reintegration.



Participants eagerly queuing up to participate in the interactive activities at the carnival.

BEHIND THE SCENES: PREPARATIONS AND INTERVIEWING THE COMMITTEE

The Prison News team had the privilege of getting a glimpse into the meticulous planning and dedication that went into organising YRPR 2023. The YRPR organising committee, SPS and YRSG staff members with diverse skills and expertise, played a crucial role in bringing the event to life. They oversaw every facet of the event to ensure that every detail was well planned and executed.

The Logistics of Success

Behind the scenes, much hard work and careful planning went into making sure the event would run smoothly. The committee shared with us some of these work processes:



Run Route and Logistics:

The run route was meticulously planned, considering factors like capacity of roads, distance, terrain, safety, and the symbolic and scenic appeal of the run. Coordinating logistics, such as road closures, transportation, parking, and medical services, was essential to ensure a smooth event.



Permits and Regulations:

Obtaining the necessary permits and complying with local regulations involved meticulous coordination with other relevant agencies to ensure event compliance and safety.



Registration and Participant Management:

The team needed to create a user-friendly registration system for participants. This included participant communication, bib issuance, coordinating and managing the race pack collection.



Security and Safety:

Ensuring the safety of participants and their loved ones was a top priority for the committee. This involved consultation with SPS's elite SPEAR force on security procedures and coordinating with other law enforcement agencies on emergency response procedures.

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Building Partnerships and Publicity

The success of YRPR 2023 was not just due to meticulous planning, but also strong partnerships and community support:



Sponsorship, Partnerships and Volunteer Recruitment:

The committee oversaw the recruiting and training of volunteers to assist with various aspects of the event like race marshalling, manning water stations, and crowd management. Their dedication and enthusiasm were invaluable to the event's success.



Publicity and Promotion:

To attract participants, the committee designed promotional materials, leveraged social media, and collaborated with sponsors, partners and ambassadors to increase awareness of the run and its cause.

Creating an Impact

We caught up with a few committee members to hear what they had to say:



Secretariat team from Yellow Ribbon Project (YRP Secy) — Nicholas Chan and Nurain Ahmad

COULD YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR ROLE IN THE YRPR COMMITTEE AND THE CHALLENGES YOU FACED ORGANISING THE EVENT?

The role of the YRP Secy involves providing guidance to ensure that the event's narrative and thematic elements remain consistent with YRP's overarching purpose and theme. This was also one of the biggest challenges as we had to curate many creative ideas and suggestions to ensure they remained aligned with YRP's narrative.

We also play a crucial role by sharing valuable insights from past YRP events, highlighting pitfalls and best practices to guide the committee's decision-making. This is to maintain the standards of excellence of YRP events. We also ensured synergy across each sub-committee so that the event would be a success.

PLEASE SHARE WITH US MORE ABOUT THE BACKGROUND OF THIS YEAR'S YRPR THEME?

YRP's 20th anniversary will take place next year in 2024, and the YRP has gradually evolved from mere public education to inspiring and co-creating activities with the community. YRP's goal is to amplify advocacy efforts, portraying ex-offenders as active contributors who give back to their community, and not just recipients. Thus, our theme of moving beyond second chances.

As YRP's flagship event, the YRPR will emphasise community ownership and the interconnected roles of partners and volunteers in supporting ex-offender reintegration.



Logistics Sub Committee — CW1 Lim See Kim

COULD YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR ROLE IN THE LOGISTICS SUB-COMMITTEE AND SPECIFIC CHALLENGES THAT YOU FACED?

My role was the set-up IC, and this involved coordinating with vendors to ensure the event's success. We could not have done this without the involvement of the community. The support and enthusiasm we received from our participants, community and corporate partners was our driving force behind our determination to make this event a success. One challenge I remember during the event was the delay in the arrival of baggage vehicles, possibly due to congestion on the roads and heavy rain. This meant that participants could not receive their baggage on time. We made sure to keep all affected participants informed to minimise the impact of the delay. Then, we worked doubly hard to expedite the entry of the baggage vehicle into the carnival to ensure the event continued running smoothly.



Security Sub Committee — SGT3 Mohamad Azri Mohd Kamar

COULD YOU SHARE MORE ABOUT YOUR ROLE AS PART OF THE SECURITY SUB-COMMITTEE AND HOW YOU OVERCAME ANY CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED?

One major part of my role was ensuring the safety and security of the Performing Arts Centre inmates during their performance for the event. To do so, we leveraged Conducted Energy Devices (CEDs), a less lethal alternative to firearms, which were an integral part of our security measures. We had to ensure the competency of all close escort officers in using this device. Coordinating the schedules of the team in ensuring that a refresher training could be conducted was one of our biggest hurdles. However, with the support of our supervisors and colleagues, who assisted in covering our main duties, the training was successfully conducted.

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**Publicity Sub Committee — RO2
Mohamed Rizwan Hussain**

RO2 Rizwan was the Publicity Sub Committee 3IC for YRPR 2023. His role involved enhancing the visibility and awareness of the YRPR by implementing strategies that promote the event.

COULD YOU SHARE ONE MEMORABLE MOMENT YOU HAVE OF THE EVENT?

A memorable moment for me was recognising the immense scale of the event when we started the extensive planning, brainstorming, and implementation process. This allowed me to appreciate the support from my exceptional team, who adapted throughout the process to deliver positive results.

The YRPR is a meaningful event as it aims to be a symbol of hope, and an avenue to rally community support towards ex-offenders and their families beyond a second chance. Being part of the YRPR journey will remain a memorable experience for me.



Reception Sub Committee — Shina Tham

COULD YOU SHARE MORE WITH US ON YOUR ROLE IN THE COMMITTEE AND YOUR MOTIVATIONS WHILE WORKING ON THIS PROJECT?

As the overall in-charge of the Reception Committee, my role included planning and ensuring that there were proper arrangements (including parking) for at least 500 esteemed guests — one of the largest turnouts at the YRPR.

As shared by other committee members, the run is a symbol of hope and platform to amplify advocacy efforts. YRPR has also garnered strong community support through participation in the run and donations at the Yellow Ribbon Fund (YRF), making this a truly meaningful project.



**Programme Sub Committee — DSP2
Keonz Quek**

WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE IN THE YRPR 23 COMMITTEE AND THE CHALLENGES THAT YOU FACED IN YOUR ROLE?

As the Overall In-Charge of the Programme Sub-Committee, I oversaw the planning and execution of the run route, stage programme, games, and end-point carnival & exhibition. One of my key challenges was to come up with fresh and creative exhibition concepts and themes that were unique compared to previous years.

COULD YOU SHARE WITH US ONE FUN FACT ABOUT YRPR THAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT?

The themes Rings of Support, Ripples of Hope and the overall layout of the exhibition started off from a simple wind chime meant to be an interactive activity along the run route! Subsequently, the idea of the sound waves produced by the chime became a source of inspiration for the exhibition concept. Ironically, since then, we always had cheezels, super rings and roller coaster potato rings as our snacks for our main committee meetings!

COULD YOU SHARE WITH US MORE ABOUT THE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP SUB COMMITTEE AND A KEY HIGHLIGHT FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE?

My role in the committee requires establishing connections with community partners to foster meaningful collaborations and to mobilise volunteers to support Yellow Ribbon Prison Run 2023.

Recognising the important role of community partners and volunteers in the run's success, the Community Partnership sub-committee was newly formed this year. As a new sub-committee, there were unique challenges, such as initial uncertainty about our roles. We had to maintain constant communication within the committee, clarify and de-conflict our responsibilities to make sure everyone understood their tasks, to avoid any duplicated efforts.

A key highlight for me was bringing in partners like Green Haven Halfway House to share their horticulture know-how. This allowed the event to shine a spotlight on the positive work happening within the prison system and in the community, where ex-offenders receive the opportunity for upskilling, supporting their reintegration journey.



Community Partnership Sub Committee — Cheryl Cher

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE

As YRPR 2023 concludes on a high note, it leaves behind a trail of stories of resilience, hope, and transformation. The event not only showed the importance and power of second chances but has also demonstrated that when a community rallies behind a meaningful cause, it can bring about lasting change.

With the 20th year of the Yellow Ribbon Project approaching next year, we look forward to continuing this incredible journey toward building a more inclusive society for all, together with the remarkable individuals who make it all possible.



A big shout-out to the organising committee, and all participants who made this event possible!

OF A STATE COURTS LOCK-UP OFFICER



Reported by
RO2 Muhamad Asfadly Bin Aspar



CW1 MOHD RIZAL BIN MOHD HARITH

Wing Officer, IC, standing at the male Wing. His role involves managing the Wing lock-up operations in SCLU.

Ever wondered what it's like working in the State Courts Lock-Up (SCLU)? It's been almost 12 years since the Singapore Prison Service (SPS) took over guardianship of the SCLU operations from the Singapore Police Force (SPF) in 2011. Back then, SCLU's work primarily revolved around escort and lock-up duties. However, much has changed in SCLU's operations as upstreaming administrative processes such as admission interview, property collection and prison attire change were introduced, and SCLU began to leverage the use of technology.

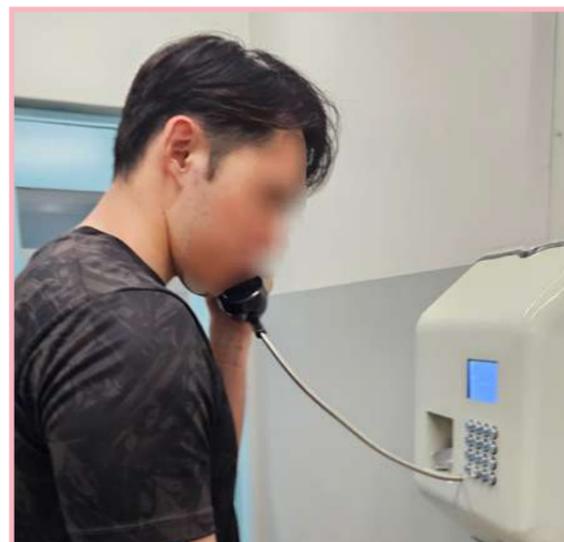
In 2019, SCLU relocated its operations from the old Subordinate Courts building to the new State Courts building next door. SCLU plays a crucial role in providing temporary housing for Persons-In Custody (PIC) from court walk-ins and accused individuals from various external agencies while they await bail approval and complete fine payment transactions. Subsequently, PICs are escorted to Changi Prison Complex (CPC) to be remanded or to serve their sentence, or to undergo psychiatric assessment at the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), as per the decision of the Court.

Over the years, SCLU has developed strong partnerships with various stakeholders, including Auxiliary Police Officer (APO), Court Police, State Courts security, Court Officers, Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), and more. This collective effort ensures the smooth and efficient operations of the SCLU. In this edition of Prison News, we bring you exclusive insights into operations of the SCLU, featuring State Courts Lock-Up Officer and Wing In-Charge, CW1 Mohd Rizal Bin Mohd Harith. Join us as we delve deeper into his experiences working within the SCLU, gaining a unique perspective on this integral aspect of the criminal justice system.

COULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR DAILY WORK AS A WING OFFICER AT STATE COURTS LOCK-UP (SCLU)?

As a Wing In-Charge (IC) at SCLU, my daily responsibilities centre around the efficient operation of our facility, where I oversee the day-to-day operations that provide temporary housing for PICs under the custody of the Singapore Prison Service (SPS). These duties encompass ensuring the safe and secure admission and custody of PICs until they are escorted out of the Court.

In the diverse and dynamic environment of SCLU, we encounter individuals with varying backgrounds, needs, and sometimes even health conditions. Upon a PIC's arrival at the wing, the initial admission process commences, involving a brief interview, physical bodily checks, and property inventory. We then ascertain the correct PIC is admitted to SCLU based on their identification documents. Additionally, we carefully document any medical requirements and physical conditions that require our attention. During this process, the personal belongings and properties of PICs are sifted, packed, and securely stored in self-storage blue metal cabinets.



LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY: Offenders can now make calls directly from the cell through the Telephony system.

One relatively new technological innovation at the SCLU is the telephony system. PICs are granted the opportunity to make outgoing phone calls through the telephony system. This allows them to notify their family or friends for bail or fine-related matters and communicate any important information during their time here in the SCLU before they go to prison. Previously, an officer had to physically go around the wing with a telephone to facilitate phone-calls for the PICs. With this new system, PICs do not have to wait to make their important phone-calls. To enhance operational efficiency, PICs undergo further processing by the Sentence Management staff and the ST Logistics vendor within SCLU before they are escorted to CPC.

I am also responsible for ensuring that the cells and facilities at SCLU remain in optimal working condition. I personally believe that a clean cell and functional cell environment is crucial for the physical and mental well-being of the PICs, thus enabling me to focus on addressing their other needs and better prepare them for their rehabilitation journey in prison.

In addition to my duties related to PIC management, I actively engage in improving work processes within the wing and participate in contingency planning within SCLU, collaborating

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closely with other stakeholders from the State Courts. Leveraging technology is a key aspect of our efforts to enhance SCLU operations. Technological enhancements include the telephony system, self-storage metal cabinets, and the use of Microsoft Teams to streamline data entry processes in SCLU, ultimately contributing to a more efficient, and smoother operations of the SCLU.



ENSURING SAFE & SECURED ADMISSION PROCESS: CW1 Rizal confirming PIC's properties during admission to the Wing.

WHAT ARE SOME UNIQUE CHALLENGES YOU FACE WORKING IN SPS AND HOW DO YOU OVERCOME THEM?

My role at the SCLU provides me with the opportunity to interact with individuals from diverse backgrounds every day. Many of them are entering prison for the first time, and often carry unresolved issues and emotions. With my years of experience and training, I am thankful that I am well-equipped to handle these situations professionally. I try my best to understand their needs and offer assistance within my capacity as a Prison Officer.

Being geographically separated from the SPS's main premises in Changi, SCLU also collaborates closely with State Courts and our SPF counterparts to plan and prepare for contingencies. We have participated in joint fire drills and table-top exercises

to ensure a clear understanding of each units' roles and responsibilities during crises. Working alongside various stakeholders does present challenges, but through regular discussions and communication, we have been able to streamline processes and resolve issues, ultimately finding common ground to work harmoniously.

In SCLU, APOs assist us in our daily operations, administrative, security and escorting duties. Under the guidance and supervision of our officers, APOs execute their tasks diligently, significantly contributing to the smooth operation of the SCLU. In the wing, where I oversee a team of dedicated APOs, it is essential that they are well-versed in SCLU's operational routines to ensure safety and efficiency of our operations. Whenever there are new directives or work processes, I actively provide formal briefings and explanations to the APOs. I also encourage them to provide regular feedback if they identify areas where improvements can be made. This two-way communication demonstrates our care for their well-being and underscores the value of their inputs in our operations.



FOSTERING SYNERGY & CARE: CW1 Rizal ensures 2-way communication between APOs and Prison Officers through briefings at Wing.



EXPLORATION THROUGH TRAVELLING: CW1 Rizal with his beloved family.

WHAT KEEPS YOU GOING?

I have been proudly in the service for almost 23 years, and I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to continue contributing to the department. While working in a prison may not be considered glamorous by some, I derive profound satisfaction from being a part of someone's transformative journey, instilling positive change to both his life and that of his loved ones. Whenever I face a challenging day at work, I will reflect upon the 'starfish story' to remind and ground myself to the purpose of why I chose this path with SPS.

My family is also my pillar of strength. They are an endless source of motivation and support that keep me going. Their unwavering encouragement fuel my commitment as a Prison Officer. Coming home to a loving family is an incomparable joy, and I relish moments of travelling and exploring new places with my wife and children. Witnessing their happiness brings me immense joy and fulfilment.

At work, I am blessed to be surrounded by caring superiors and helpful teammates who make it easier to navigate the challenges. I often share the proverb "all work and no play make Jack a dull boy" with my team to emphasise the importance of balance. We actively create opportunities for fun and camaraderie through team gatherings and recreational activities.

Lastly, I cherish the moments of 'me time' when I engage in my passion for outdoor activities, such as long walks, running, and cycling. This personal time serves as a valuable opportunity for self-reflection and healing, ensuring that I am both mentally and physically prepared to meet the demands of my role.



NURTURING STRONG BONDS: CW1 Rizal enjoys recreational activity with his teammates.

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MR SOH CHEE KEONG

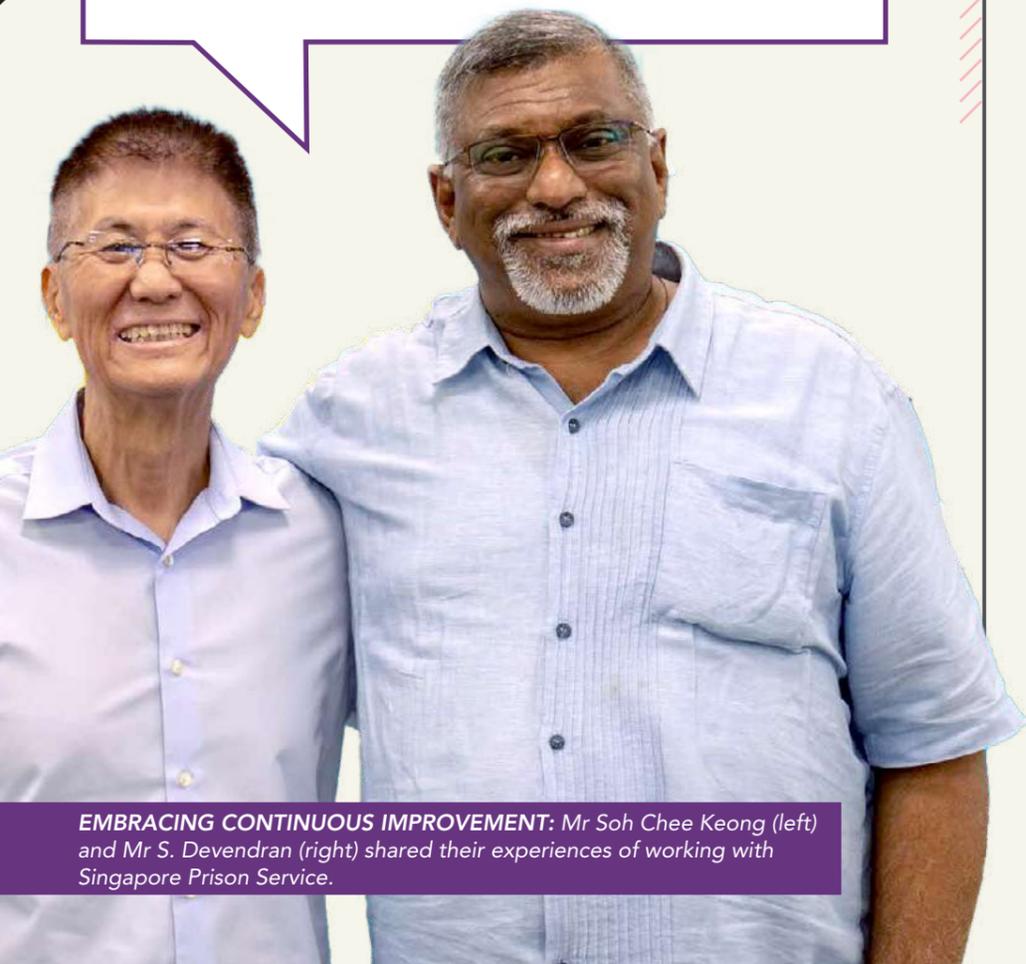
Chairman Board of Visiting Justices & Board of Inspection (BOVJ & BOI)

MR S. DEVENDRAN

Chairman Board of Visitors (Drug Rehabilitation Centres and Anti-Inhalant Abuse Centres) (BOV (DRC & AIAC))

Reported by
RO2 Gan Zi Xing

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EMBRACING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: Mr Soh Chee Keong (left) and Mr S. Devendran (right) shared their experiences of working with Singapore Prison Service.

The criminal justice system plays a vital role in maintaining societal order and ensuring the protection of citizen's rights. In Singapore, the Board of Visiting Justices (BOVJ) and Board of Visitors (BOV) are important pillars in the justice landscape that contribute to the accountability, transparency, and fairness of our corrections system. Appointed by the Minister for Home Affairs, these boards comprise of eminent figures who dedicate themselves to overseeing the system's integrity and the well-being of inmates.

The Prison News team had the privilege of sitting down with Mr Soh Chee Keong, Chairman of the BOVJ & BOI, and Mr S. Devendran, Chairman of the BOV (DRC & AIAC), to gain insights into their roles, memorable moments, and the dynamic landscape of our correctional system.

Q1 PLEASE SHARE WITH US MORE ABOUT YOUR ROLES AS CHAIRMAN BOVJ & BOI AND CHAIRMAN BOV (DRC & AIAC)?



UPHOLDING RIGHTS WHILE MAINTAINING DISCIPLINE: Mr S. Devendran, pictured here with the old Changi Prison bell in the SPS Heritage Gallery, has served with the BOV for 10 years and was appointed Chairman BOV (DRC & AIAC) in September 2022.

Mr S. Devendran: I have served with the BOV for 10 years and was appointed Chairman BOV in September 2022. I also served in the Home Detention Advisory Committee for several years.

The primary focus of the BOV (Drug Rehabilitation Centres and Anti-Inhalant Abuse Centres) is to ensure that individuals enter prison to serve their sentence with a purpose, upholding their rights, while maintaining the necessary discipline. Our provisions might not be lavish, but they are adequate. Our prison system is world-class, and we are privileged as volunteers to support the Singapore Prison Service (SPS) in carrying out its work and giving inmates a second chance.

We play a crucial role in ensuring transparency, professionalism, and fair treatment of inmates according to the law.

Mr Soh Chee Keong: The members of the BOVJ and BOV are prominent leaders in their respective fields, and they share a desire to do more for society. Over the years, there are diverse views on prison living conditions, including concerns about mattresses and inmate freedom within prison walls, or support for a stricter approach to discourage recidivism. As Chairman BOVJ or BOV, it is our responsibility to guide our board members in shaping a culture and environment that meets inmates' needs, finding the equilibrium between prison security and inmate rehabilitation, while collaborating with partners such as Yellow Ribbon Singapore.

Q2 WHAT ARE THE MAJOR CHALLENGES THAT YOU FACE IN YOUR RESPECTIVE ROLES?

Mr S. Devendran: Challenges are minimal as every distinguished Board member approaches their appointment with a sense of honour and earnest commitment. During unannounced prison visits, the support from SPS is remarkable, where officers at all levels assist to facilitate our work.

If I must pinpoint a single challenge, it would be gently reminding our board members to remain impartial and focused on their designated responsibilities. I encourage our Board members to use their positions in the community to aid SPS in its efforts to engage with the broader society. Effective reintegration is a collective effort, requiring support from many to help these individuals contribute positively to Singapore again.

Q3 BASED ON YOUR OBSERVATIONS, HOW HAS THE PRISON ENVIRONMENT AND WELFARE CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

Mr S. Devendran: I have dedicated a decade to my role within the BOV and I have seen practical suggestions from BOVJ and BOV lead to tangible improvements. My colleagues and I would sometimes request to taste the inmate food and suggest improvements like better food carriers and ventilation systems. SPS embraced these suggestions as part of their commitment to excellence. The "Captains of

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BALANCING SECURITY AND REHABILITATION: Mr Soh Chee Keong, pictured here with the Old Changi Prison Clock in the SPS Heritage gallery, serves as Chairman BOVJ & BOI.

Lives" ethos is clearly a driving force. Additionally, foreign counterparts are impressed by our efficient land use to accommodate a substantial inmate population. Another testament to SPS's proactive approach is their pre-emptive initiatives to enhance the infrastructure of Cluster A and B long before they approach the end of their lifespan. This reflects their deep commitment to continuous improvement, characterized by their extensive training, competence, and, and empathetic approach.

Mr Soh Chee Keong: A recurring concern has been the feasibility of providing mattresses in inmate cells. While this appears to improve living conditions, it poses security and hygiene concerns due to potential contraband concealment and Singapore's humid climate.

Throughout our journey, we've consistently offered suggestions to refine the system, with many improvements implemented. SPS staff are not only well-trained, but also dedicated to corrections. Conversations with them consistently revolve around the shared objective of encouraging desistance. It is worth acknowledging that our government has allocated considerable resources towards inmate well-being, including facilities for an ageing inmate population.

Q4 HOW DO YOU BALANCE A SAFE, SECURE CUSTODY OF INMATES IN PRISONS WHILE TAKING CARE OF THEIR REHABILITATIVE NEEDS?

Mr Soh Chee Keong: The outcome of a criminal justice system is very important. While a liberal approach may

work in some foreign systems, it may not align with the culture dynamics of an Asian context like ours. Our system must retain a punitive aspect to prevent potential inmate exploitation. Our current approach demands a delicate equilibrium — one that prioritises care without veering into an excessive state of "over care".

Mr S. Devendran: A well-functioning society requires rules and consequences for lawbreakers. The custodial sentence meted out by the courts through an equitable and just legal system already represents a compromise on an individual's fundamental rights due to their incarceration which operates on a framework of privilege limitations. Overseas visits show a liberal approach may not work in Singapore. We study the best practices, adapt, and innovate to our local context.

In a nation like Singapore, where human resources are of paramount importance, each incarcerated individual represents a potential loss to the workforce. Thankfully, SPS officers, efficient ministries and dedicated volunteers ensure the system's effectiveness. While current system works well for us, it remains adaptable and open to changes as society's needs evolve in the future.

Q5 WHAT IS ONE MEMORABLE MOMENT IN YOUR TIME IN YOUR RESPECTIVE ROLES?

Mr S. Devendran: Reading the success stories shared by SPS fills me with immense satisfaction, knowing we have played a modest role in facilitating inmates' successful reintegration into society. These moments become cherished moments for me, and I feel privileged to lead a board of like-minded individuals who share the same values.

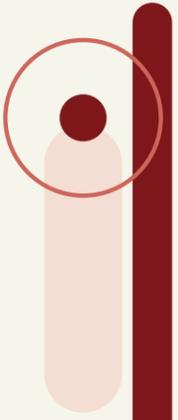
Mr Soh Chee Keong: Previously when I was appointed as Vice-Chairman BOVJ, I was pleasantly surprised by the exceptional achievements of our board members in their respective domains. It is very memorable to represent a Board of distinguished figures who represent the pinnacle of industries and organisations in Singapore. I take great pride in uniting them to contribute even more, given their influential positions.

DID YOU KNOW?

Members of the **Board of Visiting Justices and Board of Inspection** are Justices of the Peace who are appointed by the Minister for Home Affairs onto the Board. The members inspect the prisons and ensure that the basic welfare of prisoners is taken care of.

Members of the **Board of Visitors (Drug Rehabilitation Centres and Anti-Inhalant Abuse Centres)** are appointed by the Minister for Home Affairs to advise and make recommendations to ensure that the health, maintenance, recreation, and discipline of Drug Rehabilitation Centre (DRC) inmates are satisfactory and that an efficient standard is maintained throughout each DRC.

By providing an independent oversight through regular inspections, the Boards contribute by upholding the rights and dignity of prisoners. The Boards also reinforce Singapore's dedication towards ensuring a just society, whereby those under correctional supervision are given the environment for rehabilitation and reintegration.

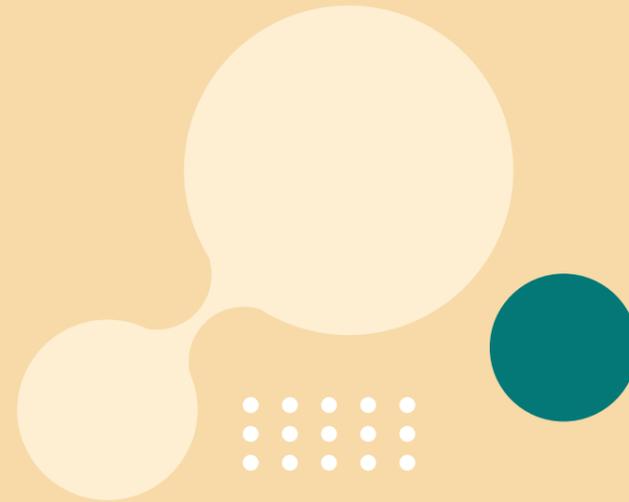


OUR REFLECTIONS

Presenting Our MHA National Day Awardees

Reported by
RO2 Mo Fujie

Congratulations to the recipients of the Minister for Home Affairs National Day Awards (MNDA) 2023! We are proud to celebrate their accomplishments in recognition of their outstanding efficiency and significant achievements in administrative and / or operational areas of work for the Home Team. Let's hear from our eight SPS Officers who have received the MNDA 2023 on what keeps them going as they continue to inspire us towards greater workplace efficacy and excellence!



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RO1 CHIA THONG KHOON
Community Corrections Command / Investigation

“ Firstly, the workplace environment and colleagues around me have an immense impact on my motivation at work. I am appreciative of my team and supervisor who are always there to support me in my career and provide guidance whenever I need it. Without my team, I can only do so much but with the unity of the team, we progress as ‘ONE’ and achieve success together. The unwavering support from my family also encourages me to give my best at work. Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to the Singapore Prison Service (SPS) and Community Corrections Command (COMC) management in giving me the honour of receiving this distinguished award on their behalf. ”



ASP2 TAN EE PING
Cluster C / Investigation

“ At work, we are frequently faced with many tasks with tight deadlines, which prompted my teammates and I to brainstorm various strategies to streamline and enhance our work processes. The support and recognition from our supervisors and bosses for successfully cutting unnecessary work, saving time, and adopting innovative approaches motivates us to consistently explore unconventional solutions. Additionally, the regular broadcast emails from the Organisation Planning & Development Branch regarding the various innovation excellence awards, along with enticing prizes, serve as a constant inspiration for us to continue cultivating the spirit of innovation. ”



CW2 LOW WEI QI, GAVYN
Cluster B / Operations

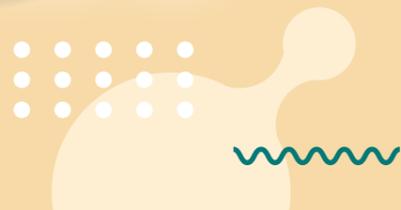
“ I believe that teamwork makes the dream work, therefore one of the aspects that keeps me going would be the camaraderie that is constantly present in the department. Over the years, I've been to various postings, and regardless of the posting, it was always the strong teamwork that kept me going. We are not here merely to work together, but we also provide peer support and look out for each other's mental and physical wellbeing, and I am grateful for that. ”



CW2 NOORDIMAS YUNOS
Operations Division /
Sentence Management Branch

“ Connecting with friends and family when you are going through tough times can help ease stress, boost your mood, and make sense of all the change and disruption. Instead of feeling like you are facing your problems alone, you can draw strength and build resilience from having others to lean on.

Stay Positive: Life is not the way it's supposed to be, it's the way it is. The way you cope is what makes a difference. ”



CW1 AHMAD PRAYITNA PAMUJO
Cluster A / A3

“ PEOPLE. Being around beautiful people with positive vibes really makes a difference.

I fondly remember the ‘Mortal and Angel’ game I played during my training days, which impacted me till today. No matter how bad the situation we are facing, we know that there is always an ‘Angel’ looking over us who will help us overcome our difficulties. Personally, I believe that whatever we do, we should do it sincerely and honestly, because money can only take you so far. I will leave you with a quote: “Do things that not only benefit you but do things that benefit others too”. ”



CW1 CHEAH YOKE MOOI
Cluster B / B5

“ First, I am humbled and honoured to receive this year’s MHA National Day Award. Each time I don my uniform, I carry out my role as a Captain Of Lives (COL) with the 3 Cs in my heart. They are *Cornerstone*, *Commitment*, and *Courage*.

Faith is the *Cornerstone* of my life. It gives me a sense of purpose, helps me practise gratitude, and guides me to make the right decisions. In my job, these point towards how I can make a difference to the people I work with, both staff and inmates.

Commitment helps me to work with enthusiasm and dedication. I am willing to work hard and go beyond what is necessary to see things through, no matter how difficult the task may be.

Courage helps me to step out of my comfort zone and maintain a positive attitude even when I am facing tough work situations or failures. Combined with faith, I take all challenges at work as opportunities for learning and growth.

These 3Cs have shaped me into a passionate COL who Cares and Dares. ”



CW2 XU YULIN
Cluster A / A4

“ My motivation thrives on the robust teamwork and positive staff culture that fosters knowledge exchange and professional development, helping us become ‘future-fit’ COLs. Witnessing the transformative progress in inmates’ rehabilitation under our guidance brings a profound sense of fulfilment. This collaborative environment, coupled with the gratification of contributing to positive change, fuels my drive at work. ”



CW1 NG AIK WEE
Operations & Security Command
/ Prison External Operations

“ Find a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life. I feel blessed to work for SPS and it has been a wonderful journey. The work has been so enriching and enjoyable because of the people I have worked with. I have been surrounded by colleagues who have been kind to me and very supportive. The purpose of the job and the kinship makes my work feel like play. ”



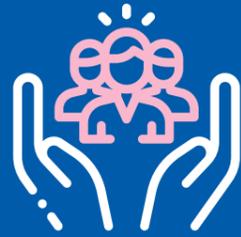
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Commissioner of Prisons, Ms Shie Yong Lee, together with the Minister for Home Affairs National Day Awards recipients from SPS, Directorate members and religious community leaders.

RESTORING LIVES FROM WITHIN: A VOLUNTEER'S STORY

Reported by
MX12 Dylan Lee



The Singapore Prison Service has a dedicated force of over 2,500 volunteers from diverse backgrounds, including corporate businesses, social services, private organisations, schools, and government. These volunteers play a crucial role in an inmate's rehabilitation and desistance journey by engaging inmates, ex-offenders and their families through many impactful programmes and services.

In this issue, Prison News had the privilege of interviewing one remarkable volunteer, Mr. Daniel Bey. Besides juggling his family commitments as a father and his demanding position as the Asia Pacific Regional Director at Prison Fellowship International (PFI), Daniel volunteers at Institution A3. His mission is to study the Bible with inmates, equipping them with essential life skills for recovery, inner healing, and attitude transformation.

Daniel's passion for volunteering stems from his mother, who devoted herself as a volunteer with Prison Fellowship Singapore (PFS). Her positive experiences of witnessing inmates find a renewed purpose in life spurred Daniel to serve the inmate population in both his professional and personal capacity.

Daniel Bey

Volunteer from Prison Fellowship International (PFI). While travelling is part of Daniel's work, he enjoys exploring the beauty of nature.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR ROLE AS ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL DIRECTOR AT PRISON FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL (PFI), AND THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN PRISON FELLOWSHIP SINGAPORE (PFS) AND SPS?

PFI is a global organisation dedicated to transforming the lives of inmates, their families, and crime victims. With access to 65% of the global prison population, we serve almost 1 million inmates annually. As the largest faith-based organisation in the criminal justice field, we are committed to serve all inmates, regardless of their background.

As the Asia Pacific Regional Director, I provide strategic leadership and capacity building to our 121 chartered affiliates, including PFS, which has been serving SPS inmates since 1952.

PFS employs a holistic and beneficiary-centric approach, guiding inmates through their rehabilitation and reintegration journey, providing family support and offering Incare Programmes like weekly Chapel Services, Bible Studies, and a nine-month Christian Intensive Religious Counselling Programme (CIRCP). We also run an inclusive initiative facilitating Victim Empathy, Counselling and Gang Desistance Programmes, aiming to support ex-offenders and their families on their path to healing.

CAN YOU SHARE THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF YOUR VOLUNTEER WORK WITH SPS AND ANY ENDURING INSIGHTS YOU'VE GAINED?

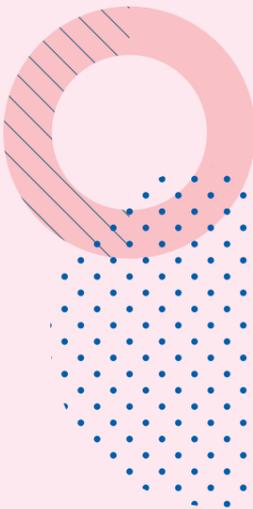
I had an encounter with an inmate who found deep peace through our Bible Study programme. He had carried a strong sense of guilt for not being there for his family especially during his children's formative years. Our session inspired him to make amends and be a positive influence on his kids. This reinforced the transformative power of our volunteer work in guiding inmates toward a crime-free life.

However, inmate rehabilitation and reintegration extend beyond their incarceration in prison. Family acceptance and community support are critical to reducing reoffending. PFS is actively expanding its network of Family Care volunteers to help inmates reconcile with their families, fostering collective efforts in empowering inmates towards desisting from crime.



Daniel (last row, fifth from the left) together with the Prison Fellowship Singapore team.

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WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED WHILE VOLUNTEERING WITH THE INMATES, AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?

One challenge is the inmates' readiness to accept advice. As a volunteer, I've learned the importance of patience and meeting them where they are in their individual rehabilitation journey. This means understanding that everyone progresses at their own pace, and approaching each individual with empathy and trust-building to foster positive change.

HAVING VISITED DIFFERENT PRISONS AROUND THE WORLD, CAN YOU SHARE WITH US SOME OF THE MAIN DIFFERENCES YOU OBSERVED IN SPS COMPARED TO OTHER PRISON SYSTEMS?

Many prison systems worldwide emphasize punishment over rehabilitation. In contrast, SPS is committed to meaningful inmate engagement and supporting reintegration through programmes such as Community-Based Programmes. Expanding the pool of community volunteers is also essential for better support towards desistance.

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE TO ENCOURAGE MORE VOLUNTEERS TO COME ONBOARD TO VOLUNTEER WITH SPS?

Being a prison volunteer can be both challenging and rewarding. Witnessing the positive impact on inmates' rehabilitation is incredibly fulfilling. I would encourage potential volunteers to consider the transformative potential of your service and the meaningful difference you can make in inmates' rehabilitation and reintegration journey.

While we volunteer our time and resources, the truth is we gain so much more than what we are giving. Thank you for all you do for the inmates, SPS and volunteers!



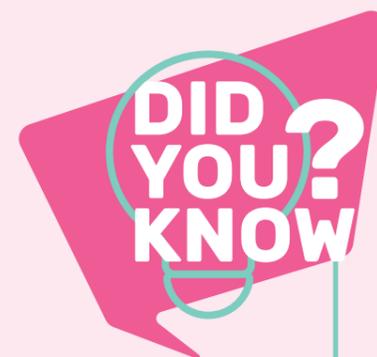
Daniel (fifth from the right) visiting the Seoul Dongbu Detention Center.



Daniel (third from the left) visiting the Taipei Prison.



Daniel (fourth from the right) Visit to the SPS Heritage Gallery.



SPS offers diverse volunteer opportunities, including befriending, academic tutoring, facilitating religious, family, and personal development programmes, as well as programmes under the Yellow Ribbon Community Project (YRCP)!

The dedication and commitment of volunteers like Daniel highlight the value they bring to the lives of inmates, playing a crucial role in the success of rehabilitation programmes.

As we celebrate the transformative power of community collaborations in this issue, we hope to inspire more individuals and organisations to join us in making a positive difference in the lives of those seeking a second chance.

Click or scan the QR code to discover more about **volunteering opportunities with SPS!**



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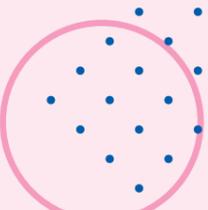
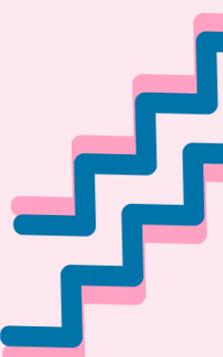
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