



转换点

The Turning Point

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Advisors: Dr Toh See Kiat • Rev. Dr Quek Swee Hwa • Rev. Dr Michael Shen • Elder Goh Ewe Kheng • Dr Y. C. Lim • Miss Laura Seet • Ms Felicity Carter

The Turning Point Newsletter - September 2012

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As a youth in the 1970s, I used to hum to the melody of a 1973 hit song 'Tie A Yellow Ribbon Round The Old Oak Tree' by American pop group Dawn and Tony Orlando. It is based on a true story about a newly released ex-prisoner who had written to his loved one to ask for forgiveness and a chance to go home after being in prison for 3 years. The sign of her acceptance is just a yellow ribbon tied around an old oak tree in their hometown. The story goes that not only was he greeted with a single yellow ribbon but a hundred yellow ribbons around the oak tree when he arrived home. Little did I imagine that this song and story would become the inspiration for a nationwide campaign to bring about societal acceptance of ex-offenders in Singapore. The Yellow Ribbon Project(YRP) was officially launched in 2004 and the yellow ribbon was chosen as a symbol of our community's acceptance of ex-offenders and our willingness to give them a second chance to be re-integrated back to society. The YRP is into its ninth year in 2012.

This year, the annual Yellow Ribbon Street Sales Day was held on 29 August. Volunteers, ex-offenders and supporters were out in force to distribute the Yellow Ribbon packs to raise funds for the YRP beneficiaries, primarily ex-offenders from the Singapore Prisons and their families. After the street sale, the campaign will continue for the entire month of September with the 'Wear-A-Yellow-Ribbon' activity. The simple act of wearing a yellow ribbon is an indication of one's acceptance and support for ex-offenders and willingness to grant them second chances.

The Turning Point and her residents have been beneficiaries of the Yellow Ribbon Fund since its inception in 2004. We too were out in the street on 29 August, the Yellow Ribbon Street Sales Day. Two more activities are in the pipeline in September, namely (i) Yellow Ribbon Community Art Exhibition at the Singapore Art Museum from 14 to 30 September and (ii) Yellow Ribbon Prison Run 2012 on 16 September. We hope that you will offer your support not only by wearing a yellow ribbon but also by participating in these activities organized to encourage and upgrade the rehab and reintegration of ex-prisoners.

Here is a story of one of our ex-residents who has been given a new lease of life through the positive response of her family members who gave her another chance to change and regain their trust. *Kate* is a single mother with a teenage son and she currently does home-based admin work.



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Being the eldest in the family of four children, I felt greatly responsible for what was happening at home and yet couldn't do anything to help. I ran away from home at 15 to avoid my father's physical abuse on me and my mother. I stayed with a friend while finishing my O-level exams, working part-time to support myself. I started working full-time after the exams but got into bad company. I picked up smoking and started to drink. I befriended my ex-husband who was a heroin addict. He introduced me to heroin and very soon I was hooked. We got married and soon I was arrested together with him for the consumption of heroin.

After my release from the drug rehab centre, my sister brought me to church where I was offered a job. It was then that I accepted Christ. My recovery was short-lived as I went back to my ex-husband and gotten myself arrested one more time. During this incarceration, I was given the opportunity to do a Bible correspondence course. I had plenty of time then to reflect on my past wrongdoings. The correspondence course gave me a chance to read God's Words as I was given a Bible.

While in prison, one of my regrets was that I did not have any family visits as my mother was wheelchair bound and my siblings had given up on me. Towards the end of my prison term, I felt the Holy Spirit's prompting to pray for family visits. Although I was hesitant as I did not believe that anyone would visit me, I obeyed the prompting. I began to pray for family visits. A few days later, a miracle happened. My youngest sibling came to visit me. He was the most unlikely person to do so. It was a pleasant surprise but I knew deep down that God had answered my prayer. It encouraged me and strengthened my faith to pray more so I could experience more of God's miracles in my life. I prayed for a chance to go to The Turning Point and the Lord granted my prayer.

At The Turning Point, I grew deeper in my faith through the discipline of morning quiet times and sharing of God's Word by staff and volunteers. I knew that God was drawing me closer to Him. My relationship with family members also took a turn for the better as they visited me regularly at The Turning Point. I sought the Lord for guidance and direction for my future. By God's grace, I had the courage to leave my husband and found the strength to forgive him. His family returned my son to me without me fighting for custody. All this while, my family has been a stalwart support.

Our Lord is a God of hope and love. He has plans to prosper me and not to harm me. (Jer 29:11). It is not easy for me to be a single mother but I know that God cares for me. I am grateful to The Turning Point for helping me find employment and a church group after my discharge. I have been faithfully attending weekly church service and cell group meetings. My greatest love now is Jesus and I will obey and follow Him all the days of my life.



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We thank God for the support of Kate's family and a loving community that had help her to reintegrate back to society. Given the care and concern of her loved ones, we pray that Kate will remain strong in her faith and be a role model for other recovering individuals.

The last quarter of 2012 will be a busy one for the halfway house as our premises will undergo major upgrading, this being the five-year cyclical maintenance work. It is inevitable that it will lead to some inconvenience in scheduling our rehab programmes within the premises. In addition, we will be taking Christmas orders for our cookies starting November. With the upgrading work still in progress, we hope that we will be able to fulfill all the orders. We are also in the midst of revamping the website which we hope will be up by beginning of next year. Thus, we covet your prayers that God will grant us strength and grace to cope with these work challenges that are coming our way.

Together in His Service,

Chuen Yann

Director, The Turning Point

A note to our donors: *All donors are required to provide their full names and tax reference numbers(NRIC/FIN/UEN) to The Turning Point in order to be given tax deduction for their donations. IRAS will no longer accept claims for tax deduction based on donation receipts we sent you. Our staff will submit information on your donations to IRAS through a special portal they have created for this purpose so please let us have your full name and the tax reference numbers for our submission.*

Current Staff Workers:

Director : Foo Chuen Yann, Trinity Christian Centre

Case Manager : Grace Wong Yin Wah, Faith Community Baptist Church

Administrator : Violet Lim Siew Kiak, Trinity Christian Centre

Programme & Aftercare Executive : Paulene Ng Meow Yee, Covenant Evangelical Free Church

Admin & Operations Assistant : Sharon Law Lay Choo

Ops & Admin Executive cum Night Duty Staff : Emily Chua Bee Choon, Lighthouse Evangelism Church

Night Duty Staff : Wong Youk Kheng. Faith Community Baptist Church