



Nathan

- Youth Hub Assistant Trainee -



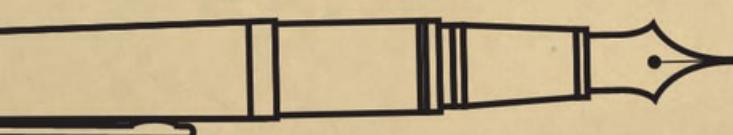
My journey began as a delinquent youth who was rough around the edges. Like every other youth, I had a season of malfeasance and committed crimes that not only hurt the people but their families as well.

Through this, crime was allied with HUG Community services (HCS). Through the process of mentorship and guidance from Ps Jeff and Ps Grace have learned that failures in our lives are events, not a person. It's important to keep our heads up and stay on the positive side, even when a situation arises where we don't feel very effective or successful.

How did I come to learn this?

From being on a case, volunteering and serving inside the prison I have learned to journey with people who have experienced this road before. Knowing how rough it can be I am willing to stick through thick and thin with them. There are many processes that are grueling yet satisfying and rich of fulfillment. It's only from going through it and experiencing the struggle first hand we learn the hardships and improve from them. After journeying with a variety of people I have come to understand this and its that all of us make mistakes in our lives. This is where the team of HCS does a splendid work in helping people get back on their feet to know what it means to truly find peace and happiness. They understand that there's more than what meets the eye and a second chance is truly deserving.

Thanks to Ps Jeff and Ps Grace, I now have a worthy goal to aim for which is being a competent youth worker. That success is not shown in the results but in the journey to achieve it. As long as we're working towards something we want to bring out in ourselves, it portrays in business, career and life. One thing i am sure about is that HCS transfigured my life in many ways and I would like to continue i work with them to help prosper HCS vision and mission.



'BEAUTY FROM ASHES' - A MOTHER'S HOPE FOR A WAYWARD SON

Every parent wants the best for their children and will make sacrifices to see their children grow up to have a healthy, happy, respectful, respected by others, and able to find their place in the world as well-behaved adults. Just like any other parents, I am no exception. Nobody wants to be accused of raising a son who broke the law. Nathan, my son is 24 years old, is serving in the prison for six months for scamming. My goal to see beauty in my son seems miles away from the current predicament. Instead, I see ashes. What are ashes? Ashes, I believe, are the wounded parts of our lives. Everybody has wounds; everybody has ashes- and all kinds of them. I think the hardest wounds are the ones that my son wounded himself with when he had done stupid things.

THE BEGINNING OF GOING ASTRAY

Nathan, a reserved and tender-hearted boy, who got along amicably with family, school and church friends, also well-liked by school teachers. In term of academic, he never excelled or showed keenness in bookish studies. The years of mounting pressure on my son and personal coaching in his studies just managed to get promotion to the next level. This had estranged our relationship to some extends. Like any typical mother, the greatest concern is to make sure that our child attained academic success. However, I failed to understand my son's bench- his natural strength and gifting, besides passing exams. He did decently well in the Indian school until he moved back to Singapore.

As a returning Singaporean overseas, Nathan struggled in coping with the Singapore high standard of education. Along with the cross-cultural adjustments of environment, friends, food, studies and language took a great toll on him. After two years of coping with the Singapore life and stressful educational standard, he failed miserably in the N level, and sent to ITE for the course which he had least interest. At this stage, he was cushioned with refined friends in school and church, until he joined ITE. This was the beginning of his exposure to friends from different backgrounds and bad habits. Dealing with low self-esteem and discouragement, he started with smoking with friends to get acceptance. He slipped into depression which required medical assistance, subsequently things took a bad turn when he left ITE and joined a private school to pursue his diploma.

Due to frustrations, lack of direction and low confidence, he actually gave up on life despite of strong family and church support. Being brought up by a strict mother, he wanted the freedom to explore life on his own. The entry to the private school was the beginning of his downhill of wayward life to no return. He met with a class friend who was involved in scamming business. In the temporary moments of temptation of fast cash to indulge in "fun", he succumbed into the criminal business. Seeing my son drifting from a refined, well-mannered and sober child into a bizarre, irrational and irresponsible person was heart breaking and depressing.

Watching him hanging out with the questionable friends, involving in questionable activities, staying late nights outside and away from home for days and weeks were agonizingly painful. The two years of efforts to warn him of the consequences of breaking the law, the fear of the unbecoming, the helplessness and anxiety every night of not seeing him home, and the loss of sleep to the worries of losing my son, were experiences that I hope that no mother should go through. My worst fear was realized when the police officers came home to take him. His life had to hit rock bottom before he began to turn around. The two years of police investigation and monthly reporting to the police station as his bailer, were draining for both of us. The case came to a closure in June 2021 and he started serving his reduced sentence to 6 months.

THE BEGINNING OF BEAUTY FROM ASHES

It is indeed true to say that 'it takes a village to raise a child'. In shaping a young's life and reforming them from delinquency, it requires not just the family's efforts but also the communities.

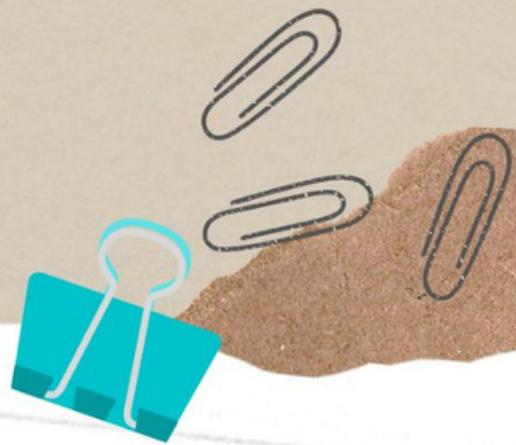
In my five years of restoring journey with Nathan, I realized that it was very easy to write him off as 'ashes' and give up on him. As a mother, it is the unconditional love, faith in God and a positive belief in what he would become, rather than what he is now that really matters. Inside every child who makes mistakes, is longing to be pardoned and accepted and given a second chance. I guess everybody deserves a second chance in life.

I am grateful to HUG Community which came along side with me to work through the healing and reformation journey with my son. His two years of attachment with the HUG Community helped him to get back his self-confidence, he began to understand himself, identify and build up his potentials by serving the community, grew in his leadership qualities and sense of purpose. This journey of brokenness has established his sense of purpose in life- to be trained in counselling and use his own personal experiences to reach out to the delinquent youths. The highest accolade is from the judge on the day of his sentencing, "Nathan, looking at the counselling report and your NS report, you have an optimistic future...." All the sacrifices, patience, tears, pains and relentless efforts have paid off to see Nathan coming out with a new life and purpose- TO MAKE BEAUTY FROM ASHES, TO REACH OUT TO THE BROKEN YOUTHS. Indeed, hope never fails..



Javier Lim

Currently Serving National Service



I CAME TO KNOW HUG AND MET P.JEFF 4 YEARS AGO. IN 2018, WHEN I WAS TROUBLED BY MY CASE. HE ALWAYS MADE HIMSELF AVAILABLE TO JOURNEY WITH ME. HE EVEN FOLLOWED ME TO THE CANTONMENT TO HEAR ABOUT THE RESULT OF THE OUTCOME, WHICH I FELT PRETTY TOUCHED BACK THEN. I ONLY KNEW HIM FOR ONLY A SHORT PERIOD BUT SEEMED TO HAVE A FEEL OF KNOWING HIM FOR A LONG TIME. THAT IS WHY I HAD CHOSEN TO REMAIN AND CONTINUE TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE HUG COMMUNITY.

WHAT INSPIRED ME TO KEEP COMING TO HUG IS THAT I SEE P.JEFF AND P.GRACE EFFORT PUT INTO HUG TO FULFILLED THE VISION SINCE DAY ONE THEY FOUNDED HUG AND NEVER GIVE UP REGARDLESS WHAT CHALLENGES THEY FACED, THEIR STRONG DETERMINATION TO HELP YOUTH, YOUNG ADULTS AND EDUCATE MORE PARENTS ON HOW THEY SHOULD APPROACH THEIR OFFSPRINGS AND THE UNDERSTANDING OF LANGUAGES AND LINGO KEEPS ME MOTIVATED.

JAVIER LIM
-YOUTH VOLUNTEER-



Lawrence Koh

- Youth Volunteer -



Previously a "lost soul" who didn't like studying. I got myself into trouble in school and legal-related too. I had no sense of direction at all, regardless of whether it was about life, studies or even a future career. Every day I lived blindly and meaninglessly.

All this had put a stop after I met HUG Community Services Ltd (HCSL). I found my passion, purpose and sense of belonging in my life that I am no longer feeling insecure.

Both the Founder (P.Jeff) and the Co-Founder (P.Grace) were excellent mentors. They are passionate, hardworking and sincere in everything they do and especially for the youths. They significantly impact me to start serving in the community, especially in reaching out to at-risk youth.

Therefore, I started as a regular volunteer. And it was becoming a "Youth Leader" helping youth like the "young me" (youths-at risk) on a later part. Journeying with the child and families through the cases it's never an easy task, and it is definitely more than just a task.

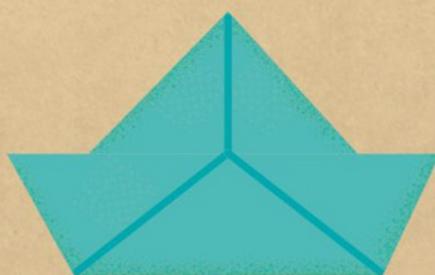
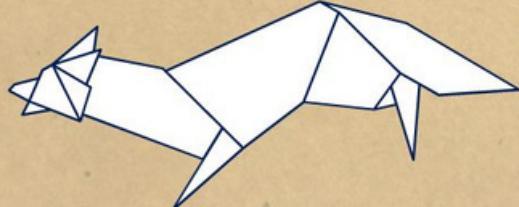
HCSL has completely transfigured my life, and they taught me that working in the social services sector isn't just about work. It is about journeying with another person's life. Either we don't start at all, or we put in 101% of the effort to give our best. So at the end of the day, no matter what outcome the cases are, I can answer to my heart when my right-hand touches on my heart.

The Team gave me hope for my future, helped me to unload my past, and encouraged me to go for the Goals that I have set for myself, just as what the HCSL slogan state.

Words cannot describe how blessed am I to be part of HCSL. It was a beautiful and memorable experience and relationship building with the Team. They are not just a team to me; throughout the years serving the community, I am ready rooted, and they are family to me. HCSL is as good as my home.



Lawrence Koh





- VOLUNTEER -
FOR SENIOR DIVISION



Chan Jia Hui Social Worker

It has been a very rewarding and heartwarming journey to be able to befriend seniors from Ang Mo Kio, alongside youths under HUG Community Services. Everyone has their own story to tell and it is my privilege to be able to hear theirs, both the seniors and the youths. Through their stories, I learnt to respect and appreciate individuals for who they are and for what I have.

In the upcoming years, I hope that the seniors that we serve will continue to be in good physical and emotional health and to be meaningfully engaged. As a community, I hope that we will be able to come together and contribute in whatever ways we can because:

"ALONE WE CAN DO SO LITTLE, TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH"

- HELEN KELLER.





Hong Yan

Volunteer Community Leader
Senior Division

Volunteering for the senior befriending activities has been truly enriching for me. Through volunteering, I got to know good friends and skills that can be applied to my daily life. For us, each visit could be casual chats or doing easy things like reading letters, changing of light bulb etc. But the seniors will have someone to speak to and seek help when they need it.

Volunteering with HUG Community Services started in mid-2018 when HUG took over the senior befriending activities for the block. From the beginning, I was touched by the leadership's efforts in getting to know the seniors and the considerations behind the activities planned. HUG's willingness to go an extra mile for the elderly's well-being was evident when they collaborated with several organizations to ensure that a grandma with mild dementia has adequate care, allowing her to continue stay at home.

Over time, I got to learn more about HUG's vision and youth program. I am amazed at the organisation's passion in engaging with the at-risk youths, providing the guidance and exposure required. When volunteering with the kids, I observed that though they may be inexperienced in many ways, but they are willing to help where they can. It is heartwarming to see their attempts to communicate with the seniors, even with a language barrier.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed lives; I am hopeful that the situation will continue to improve, the seniors can regain their lifestyle and not have to live in fear. As HUG grows, I look forward to more individuals joining us to form a stable volunteer community and reach out to more seniors who need a friend.



I always had a passion for helping youths due to numerous encounters with volunteers in this line of work. I initially joined HUG Community because of a close friend of mine. He introduced me to the HUG Community, and I met P.Jeff, P.Grace, And TEAM Overall, it was an eventful experience filled with heart-warming moments. Through the mentorship guidance provided by them, I learned many valuable insights not only in dealing with youth at risk but also in other generalized aspects as well. Though my close friend is temporary not with us, I still share a portion of the passion and vision of HUG Community hence the continuous aid to the youths

It is certainly filled with eye-opening and heart-warming moments. Initially, I definitely faced more than I expected and chewed more than I could bite. I never knew the amount of patience required to deal with youths, to build a bond and relationship, placing yourself in the position where they would seek advice and guidance from. Even now, I still have many areas of improvement, and I hope that under the guidance of members of HUG Community I will continue to be part of many youths' journey. In addition, through volunteering with HUG community I learnt not everyone is blessed with the right teachers and role models.

Many of us only look at this (ministry? industry?) at surface level. We see the front-facing volunteers and the youth. We overlook how difficult it is to plan for the program and the possible consequence of it being unsuccessful. I feel the ministry ultimately lacks individuals with the right skills sets which can be overcome by partnering with tertiary educational institutes and providing opportunities for students to volunteer. Through my experience, my friends were more than willing to volunteer alongside me when required, and I believe it's the same for the rest of the student body when presented with the opportunity. An increase of exposure can lead to the development of passion within volunteers which may last a lifetime. Hopefully creating a ripple effect to guide the future leaders of tomorrow, the youths.

Jowett Chng

Student of
Singapore Management University

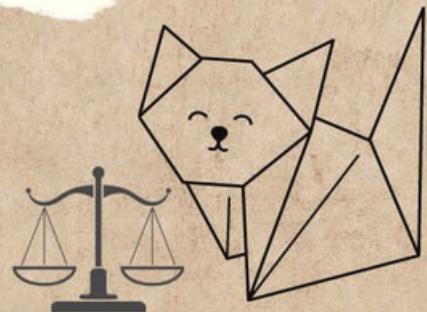


Youth Volunteer



Melissa Kor

Board Member, Legal Adviser



It is an honour to be involved with the HUG Community. Having interacted with the youth participating in the program, I am humbled by their vitality, maturity, and their aspirations for the future. Their presence day after day is testimony to their strength and verve. It is often said that every small step in the right direction counts ; my journey with the youth is one of discovery and hope.

I paraphrase from Jeong Hyeonjong, a Korean poet, whose poem, The Visitor, recognises that a person entering one's life is a very great thing; he brings with him his past, present and future. Significantly, he also brings with him a heart that has been broken before, and can therefore break easily - a heart whose only the winds can trace. Jeong Hyeonjong goes on to write that '[i]f my heart could mimic that wind/it could become a welcome place.'

The youths who entered my life, and whose lives I have been privileged to enter, have changed me. Just like the wind, their stories of losses, pain and rejection have found their way steadily and unerringly into my heart. However, unlike the wind, their dreams and vision for themselves and their loved ones stand them out like bright, unfading lights. Just as what they have become to me, I wish to become both the wind and light to them - to understand and accept each of them as they come, and to journey with them into the future.



青少年辅导需求大，最近一
周七个新个案一起来，拥抱社区
服务正积极到组屋区找新据点。
拥抱社区服务成立五年，专
门辅导涉及各类法庭案件的边缘
青少年，创办人麦锦鸿参与辅导
工作九年，也连续九年每周三带
青少年到租货组屋为独居老人免
费打扫，中心也设篮球队、音乐
小组让青少年疏导精力、发挥才
华。

他透露，几乎每个月都有新
的边缘青少年和法庭案件，上
个月甚至一周内来七个新个案。

区，目前正寻找新据点。
被许多青少年视为“父亲”的麦锦鸿说：“我们要领导下一代，每个人都会犯错，只要帮助青少年机会，他们也将成为帮助别人的人。我们也努力帮助他们与家人和好，让破镜重圆。”
他欣慰说，最近一名20岁
过来人签约海军，他到毕业礼为
对方戴上海军帽，青年也答应戒
烟，为新来的涉案青少年当导
师。有意当义工或... 热线62532004 ()

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Yoong Wen Qing
- Youth Volunteer -
Regular in Republic of Singapore Navy

My name is WenQing, 20 this year. Back in 2017, 3rd January. I committed the dumbest and shameful act that made me think how immature I could be. Chapter 38, Section 7(A) and in conjunction with Chapter 224, Section 37GA(1)(B).

I came to know HUG Community Service through my father. Initially, I did not want anyone to learn and also to some sort of interfere. But I willingly walked through with HUG as I knew this could help lighten my sentence, which I didn't realise how serious the offences I got myself in. My case mentor told me to follow strict rules and regulations that I'm not used to, and my Wednesday night has been taken up for community work at Ang Mo Kio Ave 1. My journey wasn't that easy as I was still immature then. All my mind could think of was to go out and enjoy till late at night, and at times we still have to obey the rules of being back home by 2200HRS. I'm glad that my case mentor was a kind lady. She taught me how important it is to bond the family. During community service, she will talk to me and advise me on how to have conversations going home and what to do to have a "so-called" peace at home, as a very sporty person in the HUG community compared to the other youth. I'm always looking forward to sports events like Frisbee and Amazing Race. I will always be looking forward to meeting new friends!

Since then, I have been with HUG from 3rd January till 23rd September 2019 and still counting. From a secondary school boy taking my N'level to a Regular in a Republic of Singapore Navy. I'm delighted to journey through together with other youth and give them the love and brotherhood they have been missing out on or been hoping to receive. Come to think that I've been journeying with HUG for a very long period, and I could hear people say that there are changes about me, from a very immature kid who always wants to play and fool around to someone more regimental and slightly disciplined. HUG The community have guided me and influenced me to become a better person, and I'm grateful for every one of them.

Yoong Wen Qing
- Youth Volunteer -

