



Good Shepherd Centre

A Blessing in Disguise

By **Jacinta**



I believe that when one door closes, God will open another door for you. One may initially feel disappointed, even angry at the injustice. While it is difficult to accept when a door closes, it may turn out to be a blessing in disguise.

About 5 years ago, I had a familiar door banged hard in my face. It was painful and traumatizing. But God led me through the door of Good Shepherd Centre (GSC). The shelter is small and simple, but the warmth and compassion radiate beyond those plain walls. I am healed.

I found a new mission to support women and children who have been abused, victims of violence. If the first door did not shut, I would not have walked into this direct service which requires me to work in shifts. Before that traumatic experience, I was cruising through life even though I always wanted to work in a meaningful organisation. Although the nature and extent of trauma experienced by the residents may be different from what I went through, I could identify with them, helping me to understand them with compassion.

But I must say that journeying with the residents who come from different backgrounds and who had gone through different forms of trauma can be truly challenging. Sometimes it requires a lot of patience, love and acceptance from me, especially when I am faced with "my values versus their values", "my time versus their

time", trust and understanding. There were times when I got triggered by my own assumptions, prejudices, memories of my own pain, or simply language barriers. By the grace of God, and with the support of my colleagues, I learnt to disentangle my entanglement.

Of course, interacting with the residents has its positive and heart-warming side too! Sometimes, I am touched by their resilience and being forgiving towards people who had hurt them. Other times, it is the joy of seeing them change and grow. In the last 2 years I had the opportunity to teach basic English and Mandarin to a few migrant residents from other parts of Asia. They were willing to learn and diligent in their pursuit. It is heart-warming to see the boost in their self-confidence as they become better in communications. And I learnt some of their languages too.

Many times, it is the residents' willingness to help and their words of concern that moved me. I might think I am the one loving and supporting them, but they humbled and surprised me instead. I was nearly moved to tears by a 5-year child who approached me recently during one of my busy days. I thought she wanted something, but she just asked: "Miss, have you eaten?"

A simple loving concern from the generous heart of this little one; a blessing. Indeed, another lesson for me.