



Ahuva Good Shepherd - Children's Home

MY JOURNEY TO BE OUTSTANDING

By **Pearlie** (not her real name)

At the end of 2021, I was given the "Outstanding Award". I would like to share my long journey, maybe it will inspire some other kid. Sometimes I still do not believe how I became who I am today, with a glow in my eyes.

In 2017, at the age of 11, I was removed from the care of my parents by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and placed in foster care. I arrived in Ahuva Good Shepherd - Children's Home (CH) at the age of 13, extremely introverted, isolated, and reserved. I was preparing for PSLE then, so I kept to myself, trying hard to study and revise continuously. But then, as the saying goes, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

During that period, I felt like I was in the worst circumstances. It was extremely challenging to live with 13 other girls with strict rules. I had to adapt to many changes and became overwhelmed. I frequently stayed up past 10 pm to complete my assignments and felt very stressed.

Faced with so many challenges and obstacles I was very grateful that I had one friend in CH. Heidi (not her real name) reached out to me and was always there for me when I was in a lurch. One day, she kindly took me to the library corner and encouraged me to share my worries with her and one of the staff. I didn't expect this gesture, but it helped me calm down. I am genuinely grateful for friends like Heidi, staff and social workers who stand by me no matter what.

The one thing that sparked my change in thoughts and behaviour was when I was introduced to Christ. One of my primary school teachers shared her Christian faith with me. Out of my own free will, I became interested to find out more and found the strength I needed to live despite the difficulties I faced constantly. I found meaning in life. I decided to give my best effort in everything I do. I study intensely, trying my best to improve my social skills. I try to be there when someone needs help. Of my own volition I often help in the kitchen, in programmes and activities.

I wrote the following love letter to myself.

Dear me,

Thank you for being so hardworking all the time. I truly appreciate it. Thank you for your own folly, making all kinds of awfully ridiculous mistakes and yet deciding not to obliterate them from your mind. Instead learn lessons from them. I accept your shortcomings and your imperfection because you are part of me. You have shaped me into who I am today.

Thank you for believing that I have a purpose in this life, that I am not here to waste my talents but to serve and contribute to society, the world, to help those who are disadvantaged.

Thank you for having the courage to continue to live in this world, even though it is so cruel, so painful, with so many sad realities. You chose to live through this, and that is what is so great about you.

Thank you for forgiving others, and yourself. Create peace, not chaos, make this world a better place.

I say this from the bottom of my heart: you are priceless, worthy. You deserve happiness. As St Mary Euphrasia said, "One person is of more value than the world." I hope you will always be encouraged by this verse, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."

Psalm 139:14 (NIV).