

# Walking Tall Parade

In December 2021, the residents of Ahuva Good Shepherd - Children's Home (CH) presented a fashion show, Walking Tall Parade that tugged at the hearts of their loved ones who connected on Zoom and a small group of invited guests, as permitted by the safe management measures then.

As part of a week-long programme on resilience each teenaged girl was given a budget to shop for fabrics and other materials to design and sew an outfit for herself. Little India was their choice to hunt for bargains with the help of staff. With

creativity unleashed, the demand for a slot on the sewing machine soared. A few discovered that they could do more than guide the machine to sew a straight line. Loud applause, oohs and ahhs echoed in the hall as each young lady stepped out on the improvised catwalk. Balancing on heels was a first for some, but no one took a fall. At the end of the short runway, each resident looked confidently into the camera to acknowledge a loved one, and read her love letter to her future self.

Following are excerpts from some of them.

My inspiration for this parade is love and culture. Culture is a part of me. When I love and respect my culture I am loving and respecting myself too. From my stay in CH I have learnt to love. Loving people around me can be difficult, but loving myself is even harder. It is a process that takes time and effort.

I am proud to wear this dress I sewed. It feels like I am embracing my culture. I had absolutely no knowledge of sewing, but staff patiently taught me. The unpicking was part of the learning journey. Today I have something greater than experience or awards.

Love and gratitude. I came up with this tagline, "Show your attitude through gratitude". I began writing down every small thing I was grateful for at the end of each day. Slowly gratitude grew into self-love as I was able to appreciate everything around me and love my life to the fullest. It's simple. All you need is a notebook and a pen!

REC

|| || PERLA (not her real name)



00:05:22



Hey, I hope you are doing okay. Don't be too hard on yourself. When times are tough, just know that there will always be someone there to help you or talk to you. You are the most precious thing in the world. Always tell yourself that because you are the one and only you. I love you so much and so do all your loved ones. I hope you are always happy.

REC

I ||| SELMA (not her real name) ■ ◀ ▶ 00:02:56

I know sometimes you wonder why you faced so many obstacles in your life. Everyone goes through tough times in their life too. But at the end of the day, it is up to you whether you want to take it to heart or keep on moving. It's okay to not be okay but it's not okay to tell yourself it's okay even if it's not. All my life I learnt to be independent without my parents. I hope I will continue to be that same strong self.

REC

II ||| DANA (not her real name) ■ ◀ ▶ 00:03:12

Thank you for treating yourself so good. You have come really far from chapter 8 of life to chapter 12. All this time you took really paid off. You made a promise and said that you will not even shed a drop of tear even when you face the hardest point in life and I'm glad that you did it. Thank yourself for the past for who you are today. Maybe you may or may not have realised how much you're loving yourself but thank you.

REC

I ||| FAERIE (not her real name) ■ ◀ ▶ 00:03:37



You are good, just the way you are. You are very smart. I know you do not have a significant talent but you still can do very well academically. You can do anything if you believe in yourself. And you should also love yourself and others. There is a Bible verse I would like to share with everyone, "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love" – 1 Corinthians 13:13 (NIV)

I know that you don't have a lot of friends but you still have a few truthful friends. And even though in situations they might not be there for you, you still have people like the staff. I love you.



|| | || HALLE (not her real name)



00:02:56

"How are you? Things may or may not be rosy around you. It might not always be what you'd want or like. That's normal. Life is like a roller coaster. We have our euphoric moments and our darkest moments. In the darkest moments, we drown ourselves in sorrow, unable to find our way out of the never-ending darkness. Again, that's normal, we are only human. Some challenges in life are so tough that we just want to give up or try to escape them. But giving up is the birth of regret. When we fall, don't be afraid to stand back up, just like an infant learning how to walk. We can choose to be resilient, find the light at the end of the tunnel. NEVER GIVE UP! Love you to the moon and back and may God bless you."



|| ||| NADIA (not her real name)



00:04:39