



# A Life Less Lonely

By **C Aishwarya**

I joined Ahuva Good Shepherd - Small Group Care (SGC) with an open mind, ready to expect the unexpected, excited to delve into a new sector. I was looking forward to being part of the staff team, proffering my talents and gifts.

One year on as I reflect on my journey, I have a plethora of memories to cherish, and bonds formed with residents that are tied to my heartstrings. However, there were some obstacles, the most challenging of which was gaining the trust of some residents.

Glen (not her real name) made it clear that she did not like me from the get-go. She would make snide remarks about me, criticized my cooking and was determined to make me miserable. Initially I found it difficult to build a relationship with her. She was upset about a staff who had left the service. She let me know clearly that I could never replace the ex-staff who was her mentor. Despite my assurances that I was not intending to do so, she pushed me out and regarded me as an intruder in SGC.

Then, Glen received some unpleasant news about her home leave. She broke down in tears, repeatedly hitting herself. I sat down beside her uneasily expecting to be driven away. But she did not stop me. Encouraged, I asked if she would like some privacy. She agreed and followed me to a safe room where she could freely express her emotions.

She accepted a cup of lemon tea from me. I simply sat and listened while she vented her frustrations and expressed her worries. I did not comment or make any suggestions. I understood that all she needed was a non-judgmental listening ear from me.

After that day our relationship changed for the better. She realized that she could always count on me, to be honest and non-judgmental, and I realized all she needed was a safe place to unload her emotions. **Although she became more receptive to my corrections and discipline, as well as more respectful, there were hiccups we had to get over together. She was more ready to share about her day at school and even empathized with me when my dog passed away.**

One day she surprised me with a gift, a book. It transpired that she had paid a fine for not returning the book to the library. Now she wanted me to have it because the title of the book, "A Life Less Lonely" represented our relationship. I was touched by what she wrote on the first page. She inspired me to continue leading with kindness.

I can be sure that no matter which path life takes us on, these memories are ours to cherish forever, and I feel blessed to have been part of Glen's, and the other residents' journeys.

## A LIFE LESS LONELY

What we can all do to lead more connected, kinder lives

I am Glen  
and I am 14. V will never leave my  
heart. I will always remember u as  
the indian lady who cook good chicken  
soup. Thank u for always teaching me  
to see the good and bad in everything.  
I hope I can be ur friend after  
my discharge and get to know u  
more than Ms Aish who lives  
in Serangoon with a husband who  
is a traffic police officer. I will  
always look at back SCRC days  
and ponder about what I have done  
but I know for sure that giving u  
this book is the best  
thing I could have done. 12/2/22