

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN OFFENDERS' REHABILITATION: THE SINGAPORE PRISON SERVICE'S EXPERIENCE

PART I: An Overview of the Singapore Prisons System

Mission & Operations Philosophy

In Singapore, tough laws and strict regimes in prisons have served us well in deterring potential criminals from offending, and keeping criminals out of circulation. While incarceration and punishment for offenders remains a priority, it is also imperative that they do not recidivate. The Prison Service Mission was first promulgated in July 1988¹ to encapsulate the essence of our beliefs. The mission, which was subsequently re-crafted in 1999, states:

*“As a key partner in criminal justice,
we protect society through the safe custody and rehabilitation of offenders,
cooperating in prevention and aftercare.”*

2. Together with the Prison Service Mission, a common Operations Philosophy was established as well. The 3 elements of *security*, *humanity* and *rehabilitation* were emphasised as key concepts to guide every officer's actions. The Operations Philosophy provides the guidelines reflecting our management and motivation, and enables our prison officers to effectively carry out their institutional objectives.

¹ The mission in 1988 states: “To strive for excellence and professionalism in support of the Singapore Criminal Justice System in the safe custody, humane treatment and successful rehabilitation of offenders in preparing them for return to society as law-abiding citizens”.

Key Inmate Demographics

3. As at 30 Nov 2010, there were about 12,515 incarcerated persons in prisons, of which about 9.5% or 1,185 were female inmates. A majority of about 29.3% or 3,672 of the inmate population are between 31 and 40 years of age. About 51.1% of all inmates were incarcerated for drug-related offences.

4. Based on the release cohort of 2007, Singapore's recidivism rate² stands at approximately 26.5%, a slight increase from the 25.1% of the 2006 cohort.

Organisation Structure

5. The Singapore Prison Service (SPS) administers 4 maximum, 5 medium and 4 low-medium security institutions. They make up SPS' line units, and are grouped under 3 clusters, namely Cluster A and B (housed within the main Changi Prison Complex) and Cluster C (comprising of decentralised institutions, i.e. Changi Women's Prison, Kaki Bukit Centre, Admiralty West Prison and the Selarang Park Community Supervision Centre) to synergise services and enhance operational efficiency.

6. At staff level, SPS has 6 main divisions, viz. Operations, Staff Development, Corporate Services, Rehabilitation & Reintegration, Strategic Planning & Research, and Intelligence Divisions, comprising 29 units together with 3 standalone units, i.e. Public Affairs, Provost and Prison Staff Inspectorate.

² Recidivism Rate is defined as the percentage of local inmates detained, convicted and imprisoned again for a new offence within two years from their release.

The Business Framework

7. The SPS Business Framework is underpinned by the 4 purposes of imprisonment, i.e. Punishment, Incapacitation, Deterrence and Reform. These serve to guide SPS in carrying out its 3 core businesses of *Executing Justice*, *Reducing Re-offending* and *Preventing Offending*.

- a. *Executing Justice*: This is the fundamental purpose of our prisons system, i.e. to execute sentences and corporal punishment meted out by Singapore's Courts. Under the arm of "executing justice", SPS also provides effective and efficient remand services to fellow law enforcement agencies, for e.g. the immigration authorities and police force.
- b. *Reducing Re-offending*: Our second business area is that of "Reducing Re-Offending". Our prison system is focused on ensuring the inmate is adequately rehabilitated so that he does not offend again, and adequately resourced to help reintegrate him back to the community.
- c. *Preventing Offending*: SPS aims to "prevent offending" by moving further upstream of the socio eco-system and stemming the flow of potential and at-risk persons from entering the cycle of crime. By leveraging on the considerable criminal knowledge we have within our prisons, SPS helps the police and other law enforcement agencies fight and prevent crime.

The Rehabilitation Framework

8. The goal of rehabilitation is the successful reintegration of the offender back to the community as a contributing member of society. The establishment and maintenance of positive community and family relationships will assist offenders in their reintegration as law-abiding citizens. Strong families can provide security and meaning to life. Similarly, support and acceptance from the community is just as important in helping an ex-offender as he journeys through this path of recovery.

9. What ultimately determines successful rehabilitation is the offender's own desire to change for the better. Not every criminal or drug abuser may be willing to reform but the right kind of rehabilitative strategy can motivate offenders to rebuild their lives. In year 2000, the Singapore Prison Service's Rehabilitation Framework was developed to guide us in our offender's reformation efforts.

10. Under the new rehabilitation framework for penal offenders, inmates undergo the following phases:

- a. Admission: Inmates are objectively assessed and classified into 4 broad classes: Class A, B, C or D. The classification process enables SPS to channel its resources to those with the best chances of benefiting from rehabilitation and to manage the others in an effective manner. A Personal Route Map (PRM) for each penal offender is drawn up, based on the assessment of his risk and needs that is determined during admission;

- b. Deterrence: From admission, the inmate moves through to the deterrence phase which includes periods of self-reflection and drill. Progressive assessments are conducted by the inmate's personal supervisors during this period.

- c. Treatment: In the treatment phase, inmates are employed in either prison industries or domestic work, depending on their respective PRMs. For instance, Class 'B' inmates are given compulsory education to raise their basic literacy level and vocational training in skilled prison industries to address their educational and employment needs. SPS also administers a suite of Specialised Treatment Programmes (STPs), developed and delivered by prison counsellors and psychologists, which target criminogenic risks, such as substance abuse, violent behaviour, sexual offending and criminal thinking. Delivered either individually or in group sessions, these programmes aim to increase offenders' propensity and motivation to change, help them understand the roots of their offending behaviours and to equip them with the necessary skills to avoid a relapse.

- d. Aftercare: For those inmates who need assistance upon their release, the Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises' (SCORE) Employment Assistance Unit (EAU) assist them in securing employment for them. Aftercare case management and other welfare assistance are also available through the Singapore Aftercare Association (SACA), Community Development Councils (CDCs) and other voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs).

PART II:
Community Involvement in Offenders' Rehabilitation

11. A multi-faceted approach is adopted to achieve our core business of “Reducing Re-offending” and recidivism in Singapore. This involves not just SPS and the offenders themselves, but also other Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs), governmental agencies, the community at large, as well as families of the inmates. Active community involvement is present for both in-care as well as the aftercare phase of an inmate’s journey through incarceration.

Community Involvement during In-Care

12. Currently, community partners are involved extensively in the rehabilitation programmes of SPS in the following specific areas:

- a. Work: With rehabilitation as an important objective, it is imperative that inmates are taught marketable skills that will secure them steady employment when they return to society. Hence, SCORE was established as a Statutory Board in Nov 1975, and it is entrusted with establishing and managing prison industries, as well as providing vocational training in prisons. It also provides rehabilitative and aftercare services to inmates before and after their discharge from custody. For instance, SCORE’s EAU looks after the employment needs of inmates and ex-inmates while they are on the Work Release Scheme (WRS) and immediately after their discharge. The EAU has a databank of suitable jobs by actively collaborating with more than

- b. Education: Another priority is the provision of education (academic or vocational) for the purpose of leveling up the inmates' educational status and skills. Academic education is provided through teachers seconded from the Ministry of Education, while SCORE provides vocational and skills training.

- c. Religion: Religion is a source of moral support and guidance to many in prison. Faith-based programmes can be powerful tools in the rehabilitation process as it gives inmates a strong sense of purpose, direction and meaning in life. Inmates are therefore encouraged to develop their spiritual well-being by turning to their respective faiths. Those who wish to embrace any of the main religions, such as Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism or Christianity, are encouraged to do so. Volunteers from respective faiths conduct religious services and counseling sessions for them.

- d. Family-Focused Services & Programmes: The impact of incarceration on families and children of inmates, the unintended victims of crime, is often significant and negative. Inmates' families are often in disarray when their family member is imprisoned. Hence, seeing families through this difficult phase can help foster stronger family bonds and networks upon the inmates' release. Since 2006, Family Resource Centres (FRCs) have been set up in SPS to provide social assistance and support to inmates' families to help them cope during inmates' incarceration (for e.g. in the areas of financial difficulties, accommodation issues and emotional

- e. Halfway-House Scheme: The Prisons Halfway House (HWH) Scheme, started in Apr 1995, allows amenable offenders of drug rehabilitation centres and prisons without strong family support to spend the last stage of detention at the halfway houses. Currently, there are 10 halfway houses participating in the HWH Scheme and their programme comprises counseling, work therapy and moral/religious education. More recently in October this year, a new HWH Service Model was developed to enable HWHs to operate a more consistent and dedicated programme to better meet offenders' reintegration needs.

13. SPS also works closely with the Industrial and Services Cooperative Society Limited (ISCOS), a multi-purpose cooperative that seeks to enhance the employment and entrepreneurial opportunities of discharged inmates. Established in 1989, ISCOS offers ex-offenders job opportunities to help them regain their self-worth and esteem with meaningful employment. This objective is met through providing inmates with on-the-job training and job exposure through enterprises or cooperation with other private companies on a joint venture or consultancy basis.

14. Engagement of inmates by ISCOS starts right from the in-care phase, where ISCOS representatives brief all inmates on the various resources and schemes of work available. Through

Community Volunteers – A Critical Partnership

15. The work of rehabilitation cannot be done by SPS alone. It requires partnering the community to further its mission. Our volunteers have been at the forefront in meeting the potential reintegration needs of our inmates. SPS' volunteer base has grown from 124 in 1999 to more than 1,200 volunteers over the last 10 years.

Volunteer Training Programmes

16. To level up our volunteers' capabilities to support SPS' core business of rehabilitating offenders, a structured pilot training package for volunteers was conducted from Jan to Mar 2010. As the trial proved to be successful with positive feedback from the participants, SPS then decided to launch the volunteer training programme on a full-scale with an expanded scope of training. The volunteer training programmes are targeted at all prison volunteers. Its twin objectives are:

- a. To orientate and equip the volunteers with the necessary knowledge and skills to engage the prisoners purposefully, while appreciating the rules and regulations of SPS; and

- b. To upgrade and develop the volunteers professionally through certified courses issued by recognised and accredited training institutes.

17. Such training enables SPS to work closely with its volunteers who are aligned and trained to deliver effective offenders' rehabilitation programmes.

Engaging Strategic Community Partners in the Aftercare Sector

18. For many, the transition back to society remains a struggle. Maintaining the motivation not to re-offend requires strong community support, understanding, as well as encouragement from their families. SPS has pursued several initiatives to pave the way for a more successful offenders' reintegration. These are elaborated in the following sections.

CARE Network

19. Formed in May 2000, CARE (Community Action for the Rehabilitation of Ex-Offenders) Network brings together key strategic partners³, both in government and in the community, who are responsible for offenders' reintegration in Singapore. The Network engages the community in rehabilitation, co-ordinates member agencies' activities and develops innovative rehabilitation initiatives for reforming offenders with the following objectives:

³Members of the CARE Network include the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS), the Singapore Aftercare Association (SACA), Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA), the National Council for Social Services (NCSS), SCORE and ISCOS.

- a. To improve the quality of rehabilitative services through knowledge-sharing;
- b. To build awareness and understanding of the rehabilitative process amongst the general public;
- c. To increase efficiency by reducing duplication of work and services between member agencies;
- d. To create a seamless transfer for offenders from in-care to aftercare; and
- e. To mobilise and facilitate the community to take action toward rendering appropriate support services to help ex-offenders and their families reintegrate into the society.

Case Management Framework

20. One of the first initiatives of the CARE Network was the Case Management Framework (CMF) for reforming offenders in the aftercare phase. This service is delivered by full-time Aftercare Case Managers (ACMs) from the Singapore Aftercare Association⁴ (SACA) and the Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association⁵ (SANA), who aim to facilitate the reintegration of ex-offenders and ex-drug addicts into families and the society. Under the CMF, the ACM and client identify the aftercare needs of the client in reintegrating well. An Individualised Service Plan (ISP) is then drawn up which charts out the resources required in meeting those needs. The ACM will source for resources from other agencies for services that they do not provide and also ensures any follow-up required is attended to.

⁴ The Singapore After-Care Association (SACA) is a voluntary welfare organisation acting as the key agency providing welfare and rehabilitation services for discharged offenders and their families. SACA's aim is to assist clients and their families to cope with problems arising from the offending behaviour and the consequent incarceration. This is done with the belief that such assistance would give clients the chance to reintegrate into society successfully thereby reducing the chances of recidivism.

⁵ The Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA) is a voluntary welfare organisation and was first established in 1972 to assist in the rehabilitation of drug addicts in Singapore. SANA runs various programmes in drug abuse prevention and drug rehabilitation. SANA was also tasked by the National Council Against Drug Abuse (NACADA) to be the coordinating agency for preventive action against drug abuse in high-risk youth.

21. In Oct 2010, the CARE Network's website⁶ was also been set up to provide the public with access to information on the Network and its initiatives. Through this website, a comprehensive directory of community partners involved in the work of offenders' rehabilitation is listed to facilitate ease of communication and knowledge sharing within the aftercare industry.

The Yellow Ribbon Project: Advocating Community Acceptance
& Enhancing Community Involvement

22. Ex-offenders often live with the stigma of having served time behind bars upon their release from prison. This can often be more difficult than the prison sentence itself. Many ex-offenders, once released, find themselves stepping into a second prison of suspicion by society at large because of their past misdeeds. In the absence of community intervention and support, there is a higher chance of re-offending. Therefore, the importance of community involvement and the integral role it plays in the reintegration journey of our ex-offenders who are motivated and desirous to change cannot be over-emphasised.

23. The CARE Network launched of the Yellow Ribbon Project (YRP) in 2004, which is an annual campaign aimed at changing society's mindset towards ex-offenders by giving them a second chance to succeed in life. The inspiration behind YRP was taken from a 1970s song entitled, "Tie a yellow ribbon round the Ole Oak Tree." The lyrics of this song aptly describe an ex-offender's desire for acceptance and forgiveness from his loved ones and await the community to set him free:

⁶ With a new website in place, not only can agencies exchange aftercare best practices, resources as well as current and relevant news, the public can also be more informed of CARE Network's activities and events. In this way, CARE Network can better engage the community in effecting positive changes in the lives of ex-offenders and their families. Source: www.carenetwork.org.sg.

*“I’m really still in prison and my love she holds the key,
a simple yellow ribbon’s what I need,
to set me free...”*

24. The key drivers of the YRP campaign are SPS and SCORE, supported by the CARE Network agencies.

Objectives of the YRP

25. The objectives of YRP are categorised into the 3 ‘A’s, which are:
- a. To create ‘Awareness’ of giving second chances to ex-offenders.
 - b. To generate ‘Acceptance’ of ex-offenders and their families into the community.
 - c. To inspire ‘Community Action’ to support the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-offenders.

Thematic Development

26. Each year, a different theme will be developed for the YRP campaign to intensify the level of community engagement, while building upon the successes of campaigns from the preceding year. While the first few YRP campaigns focused on generating awareness, subsequent campaigns aimed to deepen the YR message by actively engaging the community through reformed ex-offenders (see Annex A).

Publicity & Media Engagement

27. Brand positioning has also been instrumental to the effectiveness of the YRP campaign. The iconic yellow ribbon, together with its associated meaning, is easily identifiable and recognizable by Singaporeans from all walks of life. The success of the brand also lies with the consistency and discipline of the Yellow Ribbon message year after year.

28. YRP also leverages extensively on the media as a strategic tool for our campaign messaging. The public campaign is launched through a series of televised and printed advertisements, news and radio broadcasts, online mediums such as the Internet and websites. New social media, such as YouTube, Facebook, mobile phone messages and local internet forums, were also tapped to effectively publicise our events. In addition, YRP also enjoys wide media coverage from the Singapore media. It provides the media with a fertile spread of interesting story angles, such as highlighting anecdotal stories with a human touch, the arduous journey of rehabilitation undertaken by ex-offenders, as well as the impact it has on their loved ones.

Community Engagement Activities

29. In order to ensure recall and familiarity among the general public, community partners and stakeholders, media campaigns and key community engagement activities for YR are always concentrated in the month of September, which is designated as the official Yellow Ribbon month each year.

30. A sample of the main YRP events held thus far are as follows:

- a. Yellow Ribbon Concert (2004, 2006 & 2008);
- b. Yellow Ribbon Walk (2005 & 2007);
- c. Yellow Ribbon Conference (2004 to 2008);
- d. Movie Screening “One More Chance” by local celebrities (2005);
- e. Yellow Ribbon Fairs (2004 to 2007);
- f. Yellow Ribbon Creative Festival (2004 to 2010);
- g. Yellow Ribbon Community Art Exhibition (2007, 2008, 2009 & 2010);
- h. Yellow Ribbon Job Fairs; and
- i. Yellow Ribbon Prison Run (2009 & 2010).

Active Involvement of Inmates & Ex-offenders

31. Inmates and ex-offenders form an integral part of our campaign initiatives. Our fundamental belief is that inmates and ex-offenders should not be just receiving, but they should also be giving back as much as they can to others. Therefore, opportunities are given as much as possible to involve inmates and ex-offenders in our outreach activities. Since the commencement of YRP, inmates have handmade up to 2,000,000 pieces of Yellow Ribbons for distribution. They have also participated in community service projects⁷ where the proceeds were donated to charitable causes to help the less fortunate in society (see Annex B). Ex-offenders have also pitched in by providing transportation and logistics assistance during events, distributing Yellow Ribbons and even putting up performances to showcase their talents and reformed ways.

⁷ In 2006, inmates from SCORE bakery baked 7,000 croissants and raised S\$11,000 to help needy children of ST Pocket Money Fund. In 2007, inmates baked cookies and sold them at the Yellow Ribbon Fair and raised \$12,997 for the Handicap Welfare Association. In 2008, Inmates baked mooncakes and raised \$5,000 for Yellow Ribbon Fund. In 2009 and 2010, inmates and ex-offenders cooked and served 500 less privileged in the Tribute of Love Luncheon co-organised with Lions Clubs of Singapore.

Celebrity Engagement & Rehabilitation Ambassadors

32. Celebrities and Rehabilitation Ambassadors form an important part of the engagement strategy. With their wide popularity and influence, they are well positioned to help spread the YRP message, serve as crowd-pullers, and more importantly, serve as ambassadors in support of the YR campaign. Local and regional artistes had been featured consistently in many of our YRP events over the past few years.

Community Partnerships

33. As the YRP was centered on community acceptance, a majority of our YR campaigns were initiated with the intention of running a campaign for the community, by the community. With strong branding of the YRP, many community and corporate organisations have taken the initiative to collaborate with SPS (see [Annex C](#)). Many community and grassroots leaders, politicians, corporate partners and celebrities had made time and effort to grace such events, often bringing with them a passion to spread the message of community acceptance for offenders' rehabilitation. Community involvement and partnerships also came in the form of donations and sponsorships, or showing cause for support by donning the Yellow Ribbons, fund-raising or simply by participating in the YRP events.

34. SPS has gained some pertinent lessons from its engagement strategy with community partners. These include:

- a. Central Body for Coordination: A central coordinating body for community involvement in the aftercare sector is most effective. In SPS' case, it has the CARE Network initiative to leverage on, where it can then take the lead to forge strategic community partnerships for the delivery of both in-care and aftercare programmes and services.

- b. Preparing the Community to Receive Ex-offenders: As governmental agencies seek to collaborate under the umbrella of CARE Network, the community at large can be brought on board through national campaigns such as the YRP, where strong community messages are reinforced and events targeting at the various strata of the society are conducted;

- c. Selecting a Core Team for Effective Planning & Implementation: In the preliminary planning phase, it is essential to have a committed team of core personnel who will work with the identified stakeholders on the 'Branding', 'Engagement' and 'Execution' of community projects. In Singapore's context, the CARE Network Secretariat holds this responsibility; and

- d. Maximising the Strengths of Volunteers: The strength and capabilities of community volunteers cannot be underestimated. Besides tapping into this valuable community resource, there is a conscious need to build on the capabilities of volunteers from the VWOs and religious organisations for a more effective outreach of rehabilitation programs within prison.

The Impact

35. Into its 7th year of campaigning, the YRP has achieved the following:
- a. Registration of Criminals (Amendment) Act was amended in May 2005 to help ex-offenders reintegrate back into society more easily by making it possible for one's criminal records to be wiped slate clean if he is able to stay "crime-free" for no less than 5 consecutive years;
 - b. In 2006, the Land Transport Authority reviewed the guidelines for issuance and renewal of vocational licenses for drivers of public service vehicles to make it more flexible for ex-offenders to be issued with the license;
 - c. Public perception survey conducted in 2007 found that 94% of Singaporeans were aware of the YRP core message;
 - d. For its contributions to the YRP, SPS was given an Honourable Mention in 2007 for outstanding achievement in public relations campaigns which best exemplify the ideals and goals of the United Nations;
 - e. YRP also received the Public Relations in the Service of Mankind (PRISM) Excellence Award under the Public Service Campaigns category in 2008;

- f. In 2009, the Yellow Ribbon Tattoo Removal Programme received the Ministry of Home Affairs' Operational Excellence Award;
- g. A total of 1.985 million Yellow Ribbons were distributed;
- h. 313,000 Singaporeans participated in the YR events;
- i. 807 new employers registered with SCORE's Job Bank;
- j. 908 volunteers signed up to volunteer for YRP; and
- k. S\$7.8 mil raised for the Yellow Ribbon Fund (YRF).

36. Another key milestone for Care Network was the establishment of the Yellow Ribbon Fund (YRF). The YRF is the first national charitable fund devoted entirely towards the development and implementation of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes and services for ex-offenders and their families. Registered under NCSS, YRF was granted Institute of Public Character (IPC) status since 1 August 2004.

The Success Factors

37. Over the years, the YRP had been successful in its outreach and had built a high level of awareness and goodwill. This can be attributed to the following key factors:

- a. *Passionate Core Team:* Led by SPS and SCORE, the core team planned, conceptualised and executed the YR projects to ensure consistency in messaging. In addition, as key stakeholders of ex-offenders reintegration issues, the core team drove each YR project to a higher level as inherent ground knowledge and experiences were translated into workable community engagement campaigns.

- b. *Branding:* A consistent branding strategy helped to send out a clear message to the community where even a layman could easily relate the YRP back to the cause of helping ex-offenders and their families reintegrate into society.

- c. *Effective Use of Levers:* The YRPs identified key governmental bodies, community leaders and celebrities as effective levers whose direct support and engagement lent weight to the project as a cause worthy of support.

- d. *Touching the Heart of the Community:* Through the sharing of ex-offenders' testimonies (both successes as well as failures) and stories on the plight families faced, especially on the impact of incarceration on children, the community can better appreciate the reality of incarceration. This in turn goes a long way towards helping them to understand reintegration issues faced by our inmates.

PART III: Upcoming Initiatives

38. To enhance coordination of rehabilitation efforts, an Inter-Ministry Committee was set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in April 2009 to study and propose recommendations to address the problem of re-offending in Singapore. A two-pronged approach of moving further upstream to prevent inter-generational offending and downstream by preventing offenders' re-offending were the key thrusts of this Committee.

39. One of the recommendations made include the need to strengthen community-based networks that would serve to provide the protective factors for inmates, as well as to strengthen SPS' volunteer engagement system by building both capacity and capability in the community.

40. Another key focus is to leverage on the grassroots and community in taking ownership for offenders' rehabilitation. This can be seen from the increasingly active participation and initiatives mooted by community groups to reach out to inmates and their families residing within their jurisdictions.

41. While currently still a work-in-progress, it is expected that when these recommendations are fully implemented, it will further strengthen the rehabilitation and aftercare efforts in Singapore.

Conclusion

42. SPS should never function in a silo. It needs to tap on the expertise of its strategic partners and the community at large. The success of its various initiatives is attributed to a very supportive pool of community partners, who are passionate in working toward a common cause of successful reintegration of ex-offenders.

43. The work on rehabilitation is also an ongoing effort. What it takes to make it work is passion and effort, and developing one initiative at a time. This is best summed up in the words of the former U.S. President, John.F Kennedy, who once said:

*“All this will not be finished in the first one hundred days.
Nor will it be finished in the first thousand days,
Nor in the life of this administration,
Nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet.
But let us begin...”*

44. And this is something SPS has begun.

Prepared by: Singapore Prison Service, 2011

ANNEX A

THEMES FOR YELLOW RIBBON PROJECT CAMPAIGN (2004 - 2010)

Campaign Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Themes	Creating Awareness	Engaging the Community	Engaging the Ex-Offenders	Giving Back	Beyond Just Words	Giving Back	This is My Yellow Ribbon. This is My Journey.
Intent	Selling the Message – Help Unlock the Second Prison	Give them a Second Lease of Life	Widening the reach, deepening the message	Extending our reach, inspiring action in inmates and ex-offenders	Going beyond awareness to action by actively engaging the community	Inmates and ex-offenders playing a role to give back to society	Engaging the Community for action to help ex-offenders reintegrate

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE ON YELLOW RIBBON PROJECT

home 11

June 21, 2009 thesundaytimes

Inmates serve up Father's Day family treat

Debbie Yong

They had thought it was going to be a monthly routine visit to their father in prison.

But when Anne, 16, and Amy, 12, (not their real names) arrived at Changi Prison yesterday afternoon, they were in for a surprise Father's Day treat.

Their father Ken, 42, and his team had clinched the top prize in the finals of the Yellow Ribbon Cooking Competition held on May 26. A total of 12 teams of inmates from different prison institutions took part.

As a reward, the two girls got to tuck into a three-course Western meal with their father, made by him according to his team's winning recipes.

As part of the Yellow Ribbon Project's Tribute of Love Father's Day Celebrations, all 11 other finalists, including four women, were also able to invite their families to celebrate Father's Day over lunch in prison.

The inmates had been preparing for the competition since April under the guidance of chefs from the

Shatec Institutes.

Winners will get to undergo a 35-week culinary training course conducted by Shatec.

"We hope to let the inmates gain new skills to enhance their employability, which is a critical part of rehabilitation," said Ms Karen Tan, vice-chairman of the cooking competition organising committee.

"With secured employment and support from their loved ones, the chances of ex-offenders reintegrating back into society are much higher."

This was the second time that the cooking competition was held. The first was in 2007. That year's winners got to invite their families over for a meal for Mother's Day. Ms Tan said her group plans to make the competition an annual event.

She added that a Tribute of Love 2 would be held in September, when more inmates would be roped in to cook a buffet lunch together with volunteers from Lions Club of Singapore Tanah Merah.

Former offenders will help to deliver the food from the prison's kitchens to several old



ST PHOTOS: DESMOND FOO

Twelve inmates celebrated Father's Day with their families yesterday as part of the Yellow Ribbon Project's Tribute of Love Father's Day Celebrations.

folks' homes.

Ken, a former chef in a Chinese restaurant, said it was his first time cooking a Western-style meal.

He and his three teammates hope to set up their own restaurant one day.

For now, though, he is proud and contented to be given a chance to display his new skills to his

daughters.

Said Ken, who has been in prison for 11 months for criminal breach of trust and will be released next March: "As a father, I wish we did not have to meet under such circumstances. I hope that from next year on, we will get to celebrate every Father's Day outside, maybe at a nice restaurant."



Inmates preparing dishes that secured for them a Father's Day lunch treat with their families during the Yellow Ribbon Cooking Competition held on May 26.

ANNEX C

KEY COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS OF YELLOW RIBBON PROJECT

Year	Key Community Collaborations	Outcome
2006	Joint collaboration with North East Community Development Council to hold Yellow Ribbon Job Fair in prisons.	Helped inmates to secure employment before their release. Led to the development of placement exercises taking place in prisons since then.
2007	Joint collaboration with Raffles Hotel to hold first Yellow Ribbon Cooking Competition in prisons.	Discover inmate's talents. Led to the development of the Yellow Ribbon Culinary Programme where inmates get to undergo a certified culinary course.
2008	Joint collaboration with AVIVA to raise awareness and funds for YRF through AVIVA Ironman Triathlon Competition.	Over \$20,000 was raised for the Yellow Ribbon Fund.
2009	Yellow Ribbon Tattoo Removal Programme for inmates who want to remove their gang related tattoos. The 2 year programme that cost S\$1 million programme is fully sponsored by a community partner.	Over 100 inmates benefited from the programme. Continuation of the programme in discussion.
2010	YR NECDC Rekindle Programme with North East Community Development Council for Reformative Training Centre inmates. The programme aims to reconcile family and prepare them before the release of the inmates.	Over 30 inmates and 60 family members benefited from the programme. The programme will continue for another 2 years.