

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019

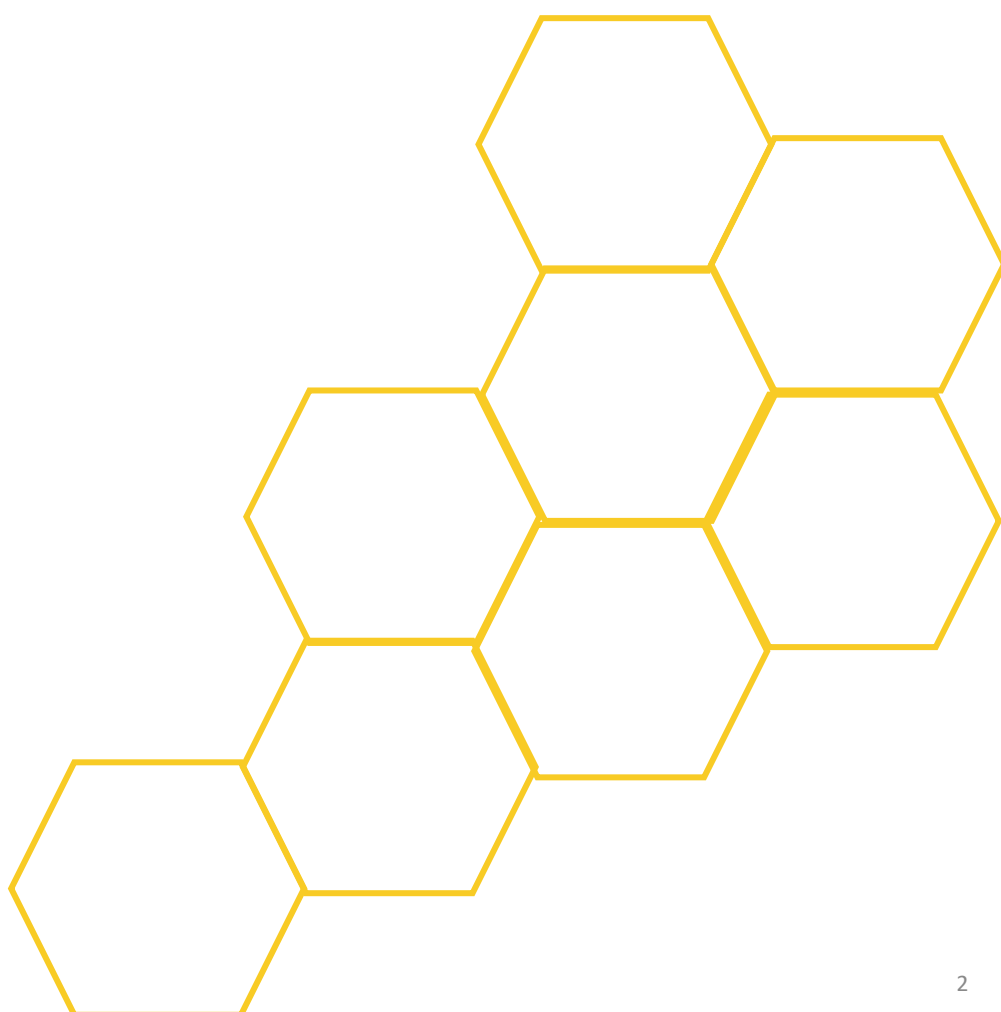


**NEW LIFE STORIES**

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# MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2019 has been an exciting year for all of us here at New Life Stories! We have

- conducted **5,560** one-on-one reading sessions,
- reached out to **136** beneficiaries via our Early Reader programme,
- Held 40 in-care programmes for the incarcerated,
- published **27** books written by the mothers to their children,
- conducted **7** open visits and
- worked with over **10** organisations.

We have achieved new milestones and are expanding even further in 2020 to reach out to more beneficiaries to further inculcate good reading habits to these children so they can finally break the cycle of incarceration and have a fair start in school.

Here at New Life Stories, we strongly believe that familial relationships are essential to the rehabilitation of inmates. We encourage the building and rebuilding of connections between the incarcerated and their families to ensure that the bond between them is not lost in spite of their situation.

*Co-founder and Executive Director  
Saleemah Ismail*

We are very thankful to have a dedicated team of volunteers who conduct weekly reading and mentoring sessions to our beneficiaries. They are the heart and soul of New Life Stories. They reach out to the children and caregivers through reading and by spending their previous weekends with them graciously.

Through it all, we keep the families constantly in our mind, and strive to provide as much support during and after the incarceration of their loved ones.

To end of, I believe that love heals all wounds and through New Life Stores, I hope that we can continue to spread love and joy to all our clients no matter their circumstance.

Thank you for your continuous support, and we hope that you will stick with us to see what we have in store in 2020!



# PROGRAMMES

New Life Stories supports the incarcerated and their families via a two-prong approach; conducting in-care programmes for parents still in incarceration and providing support for both the caregivers and the children.

Our programmes have been carefully designed to reach out to all family members tied to the incarcerated to ensure that they get enough support and guidance to aid their release from prison.

Through this approach, we hope to instil in the family the importance of

education and proper rehabilitation to eventually break the cycle of incarceration.

In 2020, we would be providing added assistance to the incarcerated and their families by introducing an after-care programme for the recently released and a monthly sharing session to provide emotional support to all caregivers.

Aside from this, we would also be extending our programme to the men's prison, increasing our reach of the incarcerated from 10 a year to 150.

## In-care programme



Weekly programmes in prison

## Out-care programme



Support for caregivers and children



After-care programme for the released parents



Monthly sharing session with the caregivers



Early Reader Programme and field trips for children

# IN-CARE PROGRAMME



Every week, trained counsellors visit Changi Prison to conduct programmes for the incarcerated to impart them with social skills, methods to combat emotional stress among many others. The 6-month programme aims to teach the incarcerated crucial life and social skills to discourage them from re-offending and to eventually break the cycle of incarceration.

During these sessions, all the participants are encouraged to write a story for their children to share messages of love and hope which they can give to them during the open visit held at the end of the session.



In 2019, we have held 40 sessions in Changi Women's Prison for 10 mothers over the course of the year. The mothers have shared some of their heartwarming feedback from the sessions and have thanked us profusely for providing them with this service.

## Feedback from the mothers after the programme with New Life Stories

*"I am more comfortable in showing my emotions and it no longer makes me feel weak."*

*"New Life Stories has given me the opportunity to learn more about myself."*

*"I have more confidence in myself and now view obstacles and challenges positively."*



# PRISON OPEN VISITS



In 2019, **10** mothers and **54** of their loved ones participated in the open visits held in June and December.

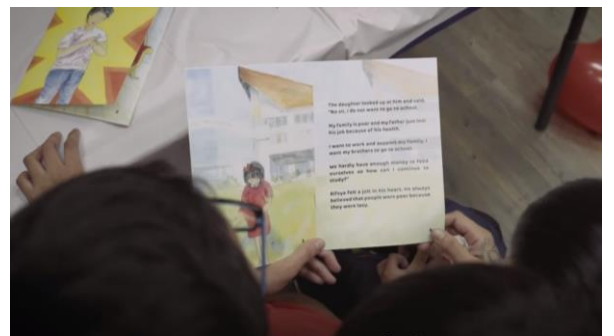
The visits aim to foster close relations between the incarcerated and their families and to assure both parties that they are not alone during the 3-hour programme.



During the visit on 14 December 2019, the incarcerated had lunch with their family where they enjoyed bento sets provided by the Singapore Prison Service.

The accompanying caregivers were then brought to a separate room to learn self-care tips from our trainer while the mothers got to enjoy some much-needed one-on-one time with their children.

The mothers and their children then worked together to complete a handmade jigsaw puzzle which displayed messages of love from mother to child.



Thereafter, the mothers read the books that they had written to their children and gifted it to them so that they could read it when they returned home.

Before they said their goodbyes, the mothers gave a heartfelt performance where they sang Celine Dion's, *Because You Loved Me* and took turns to express their gratitude to all their loved ones present in the room.

# WEEKLY READING SESSIONS



7 year-old \*Aaron was introduced to the Early Reader programme in April 2019 by his stepbrother who was incarcerated at that time.

At his first Early Reader session, Aaron was very shy and could not express his emotions clearly. Instead of sharing his frustrations when he could not understand what was being read to him, Aaron kicked the furniture and walls around him. He screamed and walked away whenever he felt uncomfortable during the reading sessions.

After 6 months, Aaron showed tremendous improvement, both in school and at home. His teachers commended on his improved behaviour and shared that he has made great progress in his studies. He is more enthusiastic during the reading sessions and has developed close relationships with the volunteers. Through these sessions, Aaron can now read and write confidently!



**136**

Children benefited from our in-home programme



**5560**

One-on-one reading and befriending sessions held

Our Early Reader programme hopes to prevent intergenerational offending by helping these children develop healthy reading habits and social skills.

After every reading session, our volunteers assess the children on their ability to read, expressiveness and attitude. In addition, our counsellors conduct deeper qualitative social and emotional assessment of each child every six months. In 2019, we have observed an improvement across all three measurements.

# WEEKLY READING SESSIONS

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**68%**

*were more positive and enthusiastic during the reading sessions*



**74%**

*were more confident and could express themselves clearly*



**78%**

*were able to read on their own without any assistance*



# EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FIELD TRIPS



As part of our Early Reader programme, all our beneficiaries are invited to take part in our experiential learning field trips where they get to learn and explore outside of their homes.

We believe that field trips are essential to promote information retention and kinaesthetic learning where they children learn by being physically engaged. These field trips are designed to instil a sense of wonder in the children as well as encourage the development of social and emotional structure which serves as a foundation for their lives.

We have partnered with Google, Apple and UOB among many others to bring the children out to various

places of interest including River Safari, Science Centre and Sungei Buloh which many of them have not had the chance to visit before.

Many of the children have shared that the experience has taught them a lot about the world outside of the classroom and that they enjoyed the opportunity very much.

## Feedback from the children after the field trips

*"I really enjoy visiting Sungei Buloh and learning about how to care for the Earth!"*

*"I love the River Safari! There are so many animals there, my favourite is the panda!"*

*"I would recommend all my friends to visit the Science Centre. I has so much fun!"*



**160**

Children participated in the experiential learning field trips

# EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FIELD TRIPS

## 28 APR



### Mendaki Playfest

20 children accompanied by their families and our volunteers attended the event where they engaged in educational games.

## 13 JUN



### Google@Science Centre

Google brought 15 beneficiaries to KidsSTOP at Science Centre where they were encouraged to learn through interactive play.

## 11 SEP



### Hwa Chong Day Camp

5 of our Hwa Chong volunteers planned and executed a day camp for 14 beneficiaries where they engaged in a storytelling session and took part in team-building games.

## 12 SEP



### UOB x Prudential Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve

Accompanied by UOB and Prudential volunteers, 18 beneficiaries visited the reserve to learn more about environmental sustainability.

# EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FIELD TRIPS

## 5 OCT



### Esplanade "Octoburst! 2019 – A Ladder to the Stars" Play

For Children's Day, Esplanade sponsored 13 of our beneficiaries to enjoy the play, "*Octoburst! 2019 - A Ladder to the Stars*".

## 14 NOV



### Raffles Institution (RI) – Games Day

In collaboration with RI and SCORE under the Yellow Ribbon project, 13 beneficiaries headed over to RI to enjoy a fun-filled day of games and activities.

## 11 DEC



### SPH SCORE Year-end Party

SCORE invited 17 of our beneficiaries to their year-end party held at SPH, where they had lunch, played games, and took part in a gift-giving session.

## 19 DEC



### UOB Gift for Good

In the spirit of Christmas, 15 beneficiaries were invited to tour UOB's banking hall led by UOB staff. The children then gathered to enjoy a light snack and were personally gifted books and toys donated by UOB staff.



# VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT



Our programmes would not achieve the same amount of success if not for our dedicated volunteers. Currently, we have over 69 active volunteers reading to our beneficiaries under the Early Reader programme.

Our volunteers go through intensive training to ensure that they are equipped with the necessary tools and resources to provide a comprehensive reading programme for the children. Most of these children have abandonment issues and feel neglected from their parents, and need the extra attention from these volunteers to improve their reading abilities and pro-social skills.

Children suffering from neglect have been found to have slightly smaller brain mass compared to that of a normal child and develop emotional and cognitive problems when they mature. They are at risk of falling behind their peers in school and repeat the cycle of incarceration if they are not supported healthily.

Our volunteers conduct weekly reading sessions at the homes of the children to read to them. Aside from just reading, the volunteers also act as a mentor and provide emotional support to the children.



After every session, the volunteers complete a mandatory report documenting the progress of the child so that we can all assess their reading ability. This also helps both the volunteers and our team to personalise the reading programme based on their reading and learning abilities to ensure that there is continuous growth and improvement for every child.



# MEDIA PUBLICITY

Never write off parents behind bars: They can still bond best with family



A rare precious date with dad behind bars. (Photo: YF screenshot)

**The Independent SG**  
4 Feb

Never write off parents behind bars: They can still bond best with family

Meet the woman who's helping mums in prison



PHOTO: Her World Online

by **CARA VAN MIRIAH** ■  
HER WORLD ONLINE | Sep 24, 2019

The road to rehabilitation for incarcerated mothers is long and difficult. However, women who have been there can train to become mentors to mums behind bars, and help them through the process.

**Her World Online**  
24 Sep

Female inmates write love stories to their kids

Female inmates write love stories to their kids

Goh Yan Han

A seedling needs sun and rain to grow into a tall tree and, to Hamizah (not her real name), her two sons are exactly what she needs for strength.

She is serving her third drug-related sentence since 2012, and is focusing on her sons to complete rehabilitation and break the circle.

Her current six year sentence will end in September next year.

The 26-year-old has channelled her feelings into a 14-page English book called *Together We Grow*.



**The Straits Times**  
22 Dec

Female inmates write love stories to their kids

Getting a rare hug and kiss from their mums in jail

Goh Yan Han

She hugged her two sons aged five and nine tightly, holding on to them as if anything would make her let them go.

It was a moment Hamizah (not her real name), 26, had been looking forward to for months. She is serving a six year jail sentence for drug-related offences, which will end next September.

She was one of 20 inmates who met their children and family members without barriers for three hours during an open visit to Inmatecamps A1, Singapore's only all-women's prison, on Dec 14.

An open visit is rare, taking place about once every six months.

Inmates are usually allowed two family visits a month. It is a visit where they can see each other on video call, and a face-to-face one, where the inmates and their families see each other but are separated by a physical barrier.

The recent visit was organised by New Life Stories, a charity that helps incarcerated mothers and their children. The inmates brought a small gift that they had read original stories that they had written and compiled into a book called *Together We Grow*.

Sharon (not her real name), 35, said of her 14-year-old son: "There are the only times I can get close to him and listen to him."

getyanhan@sg.com.sg

SCAN TO WATCH  
A special hug from mummy  
https://str.sg/mumsinjail



GET CLOSE TO YOUR  
I miss my family a lot, especially my son, since I have not spent much time with him. These are the only times I can get close to him and listen to him.

SHARON, a 35-year-old inmate who is serving a six-year sentence for drug-related offences, shares a hug during the visit.

The inmates worked on personalised paper puzzles, which they had designed and written special messages on, with their children.

Far left, An inmate giving her daughter a kiss during the visit.  
Left, An inmate hugging with her daughter's hair during a rare visit without barriers.

**The Straits Times**  
24 Dec

Getting a rare hug and kiss from their mums in jail



# CORPORATE PARTNERS AND SPONSORS



*Building Bridges, Changing Lives*



**SINGAPORE  
PRISON SERVICE**

**Google**



**kids21**

**UOB**

**CapitaLand**



**Temasek**  
POLYTECHNIC



# BOARD MEMBERS AND MANAGEMENT

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**Graham Kelly**  
Board Director

**K. Veerapandiyan**  
Board Director

**Su Chzeng Ong**  
Board Director

**Abdul Majid Maideen**  
Board Director

**Saleemah Ismail**  
Executive Director

**The Board of Director held 6 meetings in 2019. The meeting attendance are as follows:**

Graham Kelly – 6 meetings  
K. Veerapandiyan – 6 meetings  
Su Chzeng Ong – 6 meetings  
Abdul Majid Maideen – 5 meetings

# FINANCIAL REPORT

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>\$478,366</b>	<b>\$ 473,013</b>	<b>\$262,080</b>
Expenses on Governance	\$ 7,126	\$ 22,996	\$ 12,513
Expenses on Charitable Activities	\$ 336,702	\$ 222,999	\$ 252,255
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 343,828</b>	<b>\$ 245,995</b>	<b>\$ 264,768</b>
<b>NET PROFIT/(LOSS)</b>	<b>\$ 134,538</b>	<b>\$ 227,018</b>	<b>- (\$2,688)</b>
<b>CASH RESERVES AT YEAR END</b>	<b>\$ 384,827</b>	<b>\$ 250,289</b>	<b>\$ 23,271</b>

# STATUTORY INFORMATION

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ACRA UEN: 201411304Z

Registered Address: 1 Lorong 2 Toa Payoh #07-01 Braddell House, Singapore 319637

Certified with Institution of Public Character (IPC) since 2016 and Charity Status since 2014



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