

Make A Difference

Small changes go a long way.

Will you be the spark of hope in someone else's life?

Here's how you can extend a helping hand today!

Donate* towards second chances

Through our online portal, Giving.sg:
<https://www.giving.sg/singapore-after-care-association>

Donate by cheque. Write in to:
Singapore After-Care Association
81 Dunlop Street, Singapore 209408

*All donations are tax-deductible.

“THERE ARE MANY
WONDERFUL THINGS
THAT WILL NEVER
BE DONE IF YOU
DON'T DO THEM...”
CHARLES D. GILL



Volunteer with SACA

Volunteer as a Befriender! Ready to make a positive impact on an ex-offender's life and show them that society cares? Write in to us at volunteer@saca.org.sg without further ado! Volunteers must be at least 23 years of age.

Do you have a flair for words? Join us as an ad-hoc writer or/and photographer for our events and publications! Email huisan@saca.org.sg for further details.



**Singapore
After-Care
Association**

81 Dunlop Street
Singapore 209408



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Come November, join us in celebrating yet another milestone: the joint celebrations of the Volunteer Appreciation Programme (VAP) 20th Anniversary and 10th Anniversary of Education Support Programme (ESP)!

We will wow you with a night of entertainment with collaborative performances from our talented ESP student-clients, volunteers, and staff!

SPARKS

MCI (P) 163/04/2017
JUN2017

IGNITING
CHANGE

A PUBLICATION OF SINGAPORE AFTER-CARE ASSOCIATION



SACA

HELPING EX-OFFENDERS
AND THEIR FAMILIES
GET BACK ON THEIR FEET

Charity Film Preview 2017

DESPICABLE ME 3

Gru and his minions return to the big screen!

Inspired by Gru's story of transformation and goodness, the Singapore After-Care Association brings to you, dear supporters of SACA, Despicable Me 3, an Illumination Entertainment and Universal Pictures International production!

Hailing from a long lineage of villains, Gru's ambition, until recently, was to be a supervillain, plotting to steal the moon with the help of his crew of minions, Dr Nefario, and recently adopted daughters.

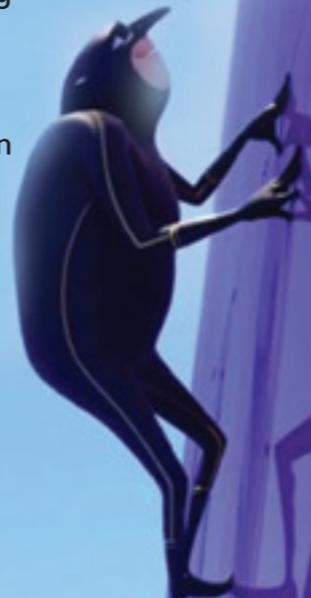
With his gruff demeanour, Gru initially strikes the audience as a cold-hearted man, often freezing people into icicles without a second's hesitation. If you look a little closer, however, you'll find that behind the evil plotting and coldness lies the heart of a kind and loyal friend. He is appreciative of Dr Nefario and his minion's hard work and gets along fantastically well with them.

Gru delights us by breaking free of the villain stereotype: turning over a new leaf after experiencing Fatherhood, he comes to reject the villainous ways of life, and puts his expertise to good use at the Anti-Villain League.

While Gru has the support of his minions, mother, Dr Nefario, and his daughters, not all of our clients are fortunate to experience a smooth transition into mainstream society. More often than not, the stigma of incarceration follows ex-offenders, blocking off many educational and employment opportunities for them. In time, they may internalise this label, growing dejected and feeling despondent. Acceptance by their family and society is therefore crucial in ensuring that they do not return to their old ways of life upon their release from prison – back to a life of negative influences, from abusive family situations to friends who may lead them astray.

Offenders and ex-offenders require our patience and empathy to move past personal and societal barriers, which include being alienated and ostracised by their communities. To stop the cycle of repeat offending, let us give these men and women a second chance: let us believe in their determination to turn over a new leaf and become productive members of society.

They may find themselves in a 'second prison' and face the invisible walls formed by social stigma, fear and distrust. This is the crux of the problem. Society plays a significant role in the reintegration of former offenders. No matter what mistakes they made, they are still a part of us. – The Straits Times, 16 July 2016, in "Society must free ex-offenders from 'second prison' "



Celebrating 60 years of reintegrating lives!

2016 was a momentous year as the Association celebrated its 60th anniversary. The year saw a variety of outreach efforts and events, from auctioning a painted piano for charity, to our Movie Night at The Fort, eventually culminating in our Diamond Jubilee Fundraising Dinner.

The dinner paid tribute to Associate Professor Ho Peng Kee, who served as Patron from 2002-2015, while welcoming our new Patron, The Honourable Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon. We also paid tribute to sponsors who steadfastly believe in SACA and the cause that we represent;



Some of our passionate volunteers and ex-staff.



Internationally renowned sand artist, Mr Lawrence Koh, with his interpretation of the obstacles little Annie faces as the child of an incarcerated parent.

our dedicated staff and volunteers who spread our work into the community and enable us to assist as many beneficiaries as possible; and of course, our clients, who have persevered against the odds.

We hope to continue inspiring others to find their voices and join us in serving the aftercare sector for many years to come!



Michelle Lee, SACA's talented Case Manager.

Thank you for journeying with SACA!



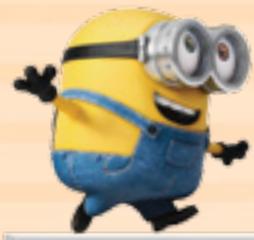
This little angel on the flute stole the show!



From left to right: Chairman of SCORE, Mr Chng Hwee Hong; Former Patron, Associate Professor Ho Peng Kee; Patron, Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon; SACA's Chairman Mr Jeffrey Beh, and Commissioner of Prisons, Mr Desmond Chin at the cake-cutting ceremony.



SACA staff pleased with the amount raised!



Making Waves



We are proud to announce that SACA's piano has found a new home! In March 2016, local artist Kate Pocklington, together with staff and ten student-clients from our Education Support Programme, painted a preloved piano to be auctioned off. With piano strings painted on the surface, the "inside out" theme encouraged society to not judge ex-offenders for their past.



“... I chose to support SACA by buying the piano in the auction. I believe in SACA and the work that it does – helping people overcome hurdles in their lives now in order for them to be self-sustaining for the future. This is very important work that not everyone can take on.”

Cindy,
owner of
SACA's
piano



IIMAC Reaches Out To 1,600 Affected Children



Source: The Straits Times
SACA is thrilled to have been featured in the media in 2016!

November 27, 2016
The Straits Times

The Straits Times reported on SACA's Initiative of Incarcerated Mothers and Affected Children (IIMAC) programme, which has reached out to 1,600 children of newly incarcerated women since its inception in 2012.

IIMAC exists to alleviate some issues this often overlooked group in society faces, and ensures that their needs are met in the absence of their mothers. Studies have shown that

parental incarceration affects many aspects of a child's life, including emotional and behavioural well-being, family stability, and financial circumstances.

Ms Evina Subani, SACA's social worker, was quoted sharing about the harsh realities faced by these children and their caregivers, who experience a great sense of loss and trauma when separated from their mothers.

Faces of SACA

Day in the Life of Anita, Case Manager

Anita is the newest staff of the SACA family! Did you know, she had been volunteering with us for 10 years through the Volunteer After-Care Programme (VAP) before transitioning to being a full-time staff?

She first chanced upon SACA while looking for voluntary experiences in Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs) before graduating from university. Feeling that the work done by SACA was awesome, Anita decided to sign up as a volunteer.

Having volunteered for so many years, she has seen inspirational stories from youths who have gone on to further their studies upon release, clients who have found jobs and sustained them for several years, and those who have integrated well into society with the support of their families.



Welcome Anita!



Here's what she has to say...

Strongest beliefs about second chances and acceptance/reintegration: "Every human is fighting their own battle within. Everyone wants to be accepted and be happy. Everyone should be given a second chance, without being judged."

Perspectives on life: "I believe that everyone acts based on their circumstances, that everyone is just as human as you are and it's their behaviour which defines them. You're not in their shoes so don't judge."

Personal philosophies: "Be Happy Cause Worry & Regret gets you nowhere, just understand and continue your learning journey."

If you weren't volunteering or working here, what would you be doing instead? "I would have won the US elections and taken over Trump. (keeeeeding). I would have been counselling at the Singapore Association for the Deaf."

Some people you've met while volunteering/working in Prisons: "Human beings like you and me, mothers who miss their children and can't wait to go back to their homes, people who want to be given a second chance to prove that they have changed and want to lead a life henceforth. Youths who want to be with their families eating dinner with their parents."

One thing you would like people to know about SACA? SACA Rocks! They believe in people even when others don't.

Planting Seeds of Kindness

On 30 March 2017, SACA hosted 33 students and 2 teachers from Anglo-Chinese School (Independent)'s gifted programme. The group of Secondary 2 students was here as part of their learning journey aimed at shaping empathy towards the less fortunate in society, and to appreciate the outreach work designed to help these groups of people in Singapore.

Our Training & Research manager, Dawn, led the presentation to the teachers and students. With more than 10 years of experience in the After-Care sector under her belt, Dawn kept the students engaged through sharing personal anecdotes.

The students were keen to discover what motivated her to join the after-care sector, and what pushed her through despite the stressful work conditions our case managers often face. ***"I want them to know that, they may not have a choice in the family they were born into or their life circumstances, but they have a choice in how they want their lives to turn out."***

To SACA:
"... Your dedication to helping others and the heart of service of your volunteers has encouraged me to do my best to help others who are discriminated against. Where others would shun them, you have instead accepted them..."
- David Teo

Here's what some of them had to say about their time at SACA:



"... Thank you for making society a more loving, welcoming and warm by accepting these ex-offenders, and allowing them to make a difference as well."

"... We are really motivated and inspired by the things that you do, even if it is really small and learnt a lot from all of you. It is comforting to see that people still care about these ex-offenders..."
- Ignatius



It was heart-warming to see the level of empathy expressed by the students towards offenders, ex-offenders, and their families, as SACA strives to reach out to youths who can make a difference in this world. We hope that these students will join us in spreading their understanding of and compassion towards the after-care sector to their communities!

Special Feature:

Excerpts from ESP Writing Competition 2016

In June 2016, SACA hosted its 6th annual Creative Writing Competition within prison. The goal of this initiative is to promote inner reflection while serving as a platform to showcase the talents of the student-inmates who are pursuing their studies in prison whilst serving out their sentences.

123 male and female student-inmates from several institutions participated in the competition. Through this competition, we hope that the inmates will be able to begin their healing through writing.

The following selected essays reflect the inner struggles that (ex-) offenders face when attempting to reintegrate into society – despite their regrets, loneliness, and despair, it is their hope, determination, and pillars of support that see them through tough times.



Open Cat 2nd Prize

Moving On/Letting Go

"When you expect the best of people, they will rise to the occasion." The fact that I still have the unconditional support from my parents, who, rain or shine would pay me their monthly visits, bringing me books and magazines as well as the transportation that eat up on their daily expenses - has struck a chord in me to render my appreciation and unspoken promise (lest being sceptical upon. It's my third time in prison) through my positive actions like pursuing academic success or even joining a writing competition! As sweet as it is emotionally moving, it is their moral imperative of parental care and unconditional love that makes a story more meaningful, a sacrifice worth mentioning and an inspiration for a dire change.

It's been four years of my incarceration. I haven't had a drink or any of those destructive substances and I have started to see clearly now. I am able to speak with coherence and without slurring. The fine line between right and wrong and the consequences that entail seems more palpable; an honest and sincere perspective viewed literally from a sober mind, a remorseful heart and a reasonably higher state of consciousness - conscious about the future and the responsibility involves. I used to have this uncharitable thought about getting out, terrified of change, terrified of facing a new life outside barbed wires and guard towers. But being the crafter of my path in rehabilitation and actively participating in my own recovery have given me the strength and courage to face the world again.

There's something to be said for people who keep their dignity, when all is breaking out around them and they're enduring horrible things. And remember they are all human beings. Instead of questioning the mishaps and misadventures of my life, I choose to redeem my dignity by transforming into a responsible person who is also at the helm of a successful rehabilitation. I choose to move on with my head held high and let go of the meaningless trivia of my past."



Moving On/Letting Go

"What?! Are you sure? Think about your reputation, man. You don't need to do this if you really want to change." Those are the words which played like a broken tape recorder everytime I asked my fellow inmates, especially my would-be-now ex-gang members, for their opinion of my participation in the gang renunciation programme.

I have been a member of a secret society group since my school days. Many of my gang members are also my childhood friends. The bond we have built among ourselves was a formidable one, forged by the sacrifices we made for one another over many defining years of our lives. We would never hesitated to take a hit for another in fights and we never fail to turn up when trouble comes knocking.

The camaraderie that I felt within my gang was indeed the toughest obstacle that was refraining me from letting go of my gang affiliations. My gang is the only organisation I know where I belong and where I would never be prejudiced for my long criminal and incarceration history. Moreover, my gang was the one who provided financial support and supplement my income for as long as my career life goes, albeit unlawful activities. Indeed, it was through them that I managed to cultivate a "healthy" network of drug traffickers which had allowed me to earn tens of thousands of dollars by hardly breaking a sweat. Yes, the money actually provided me a good life, but it was also a life full of debauchery. The phrase "easy come easy go" had never held truer for me as I splurge my not so hard-earned money on drugs, alcohol, women, clubbing, gambling, and all other vices that crossed my mind.

So how could I move on with my life without severing ties with the people who were almost like family to me and destroying the only source of income I had ever known? And with the negative feedback I am getting on my plans to renounce my gang affiliation, all this business of letting go and moving on has become an absolutely daunting task for me. And if I add the stigma I may face from my "own people" and the random veiled threats that I received, letting go and moving on has become anything but possible.

And so it became the most tumultuous period of emotional struggles that I ever had in my life. On one hand I wanted to break away from my former life and start clean. However, on the other I was so afraid that I would fail again, and this time I would not only lose my freedom but my closest friends and the life that I only knew. I had to dig deep inside the recesses of my heart for the strength to overcome this dilemma, but I guess my supplications were answered when somehow I felt God pointed the direction for me.

When the day for my renunciation came I was filled with apprehension. It was not the least that I have to stand in front off all the teachers, officers and inmates to announce my renunciation, but I was more afraid of what would come after it. Fortunately, the response I got was much better than expected, especially when the same people who discouraged me in the first place came up to congratulate me. Maybe they were afraid like I was too, but I found out that sometimes you have to face up to your fears before you could let go and move on.

