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Ms. TANG Suk-chun Winnie
Ms. WONG Miu-yan Cecilia

June 2020

My dear friend

I would like to introduce you to some of our “superstars.” All of these young men who tell their stories in this letter, began life at Youth Outreach with a history of being labelled as useless dropouts and deadbeats. You can see from their own accounts that given time and encouragement, they have experienced fantastic changes in their lives and are now proud of their achievements and enjoying life.

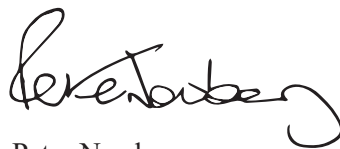
I myself am most moved by that dynamism and spark of life that is energising them as they go forward along the road of life. Before, they were regarded as hopeless cases who had already given up – no goals, no ideals, no dreams. Now you can see for yourself the optimism and joy that empowers them as they talk about their day-to-day life and how they see their futures.

Not all of our young people become social workers but I am so glad to see that they all stride out of Youth Outreach into the world with that same enthusiasm, full of hope and dreams regardless of what they choose to do.

This spark is still very much alive and burning bright in the hearts of all our young people. But it needs support, encouragement and care if it is to continue to burn brightly and in turn rekindle this same fire in the hearts of other young people they meet.

In this period of turmoil and trouble they will need our support even more than before. Keep all of our young people in your heart as they go bravely out into their new world.

Sincerely



Peter Newbery

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June 2020

My dear friend

Youth Outreach (YO) truly understands young people will need a suitable environment with adequate space in order to grow up strong. In this school year, a number of colleagues and young people of YO are inspired to embark on the career path of social work with the same ambition. Their positive changes made during the time accompanying young people offer an encouragement for the colleagues. Among them are three young people from different backgrounds who would like to share their stories to encourage each other.

Ah Wai

Thank you everyone for giving me a second chance!

Hi everyone! I am Ah Wai from City Challenge at YO and I am very grateful I will be completing the 2-year Higher Diploma in Social Work Programme this year and will become a registered social worker upon graduation.

Looking back on my academic career, it had been a bumpy road. I used to hate studying and it made me give up on myself and feel hopeless and weariness in life. I dropped out of school in secondary 3 and even tried to give up on life. Luckily I came across with YO and my crisis were therefore solved, and I even became a programme assistant there. Five years later, I could not believe I would pick up my school bag again. The reason why there was such a big change on me was because of my student leading experience at school during my tenure at YO. I once met a youngster who had a similar experience like mine. He has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and could not integrate into school life, therefore feeling hopeless all the time. However, an outdoor activity led by me gave him an opportunity to show his talent and strengths in caring others and being attentive and he started to get along with other classmates since then. From this experience, I understood I have the power to influence people around me and encourage others with my life experiences. Therefore, I decided to go back to school again hoping to gain more knowledge in order to help more young people.

Ah Chun

Success! Winning at the starting line? Persistence and hard work are very important!

I am Ah Chun. I had an average secondary school grades and felt a bit lost about my future at the beginning. My acquaintance with YO started from a youth study programme jointly organized by YO and The Community College of Lingnan University, followed by volunteering at YO that have inspired me. After graduated with my bachelor degree, I worked at YO and just completed a master degree programme in Social Work.

Looking back over the past two years of studying social work, youth work had been indispensable motivational force for me. The colleagues at YO taught me

to accompany each youngster with all your heart, and this mentality serves as an important reminder for my social work studies. Although studying social work and working at the same time was very difficult, seeing young people growing up and improving bit by bit gave me motivation to face challenges and an opportunities to see myself growing. Every time I encouraged with various challenges and setbacks, I would always remember the time spent with young people, thinking of their hard working faces of making changes for their lives. From being a student to YO volunteer to YO staff and soon becoming a social worker, my every step at YO gave me different and unforgettable experience.

Dai Chu
The Road to Social Worker

During my study of Associate Degree Programme in Social Work at The Hong Kong Institute of Education, I started my first social work internship at All-night Outreaching Team of YO . I had been in love with YO since that two-months summer time. Coincidentally, I took an elective course taught by YO and that not only allowed me to learn more about the vision of YO but also its working style.

I joined the YO family in 2012 and was able to work in different positions in the past 8 years with the trust everyone had shown in me. I was grateful I could now lead new colleagues from being just a fresh social worker at the beginning. Due to the less-than-ideal environment and high employee turnover rate at YO, it was rare for someone to work here over 5 years. People always asked me why I continued in serving YO? When I was studying at Aberdeen Technical School, the “Don Bosco” spirit taught me to accept, believe in youth and devote myself. YO was also filled with the “Don Boso” sprit, although we did not have much resources, we still felt satisfied, abundant and grateful. This year I finally completed the four-year Bachelor of Social Work Programme and I was thankful for the support YO has given me to complete the study. I hope to keep devoting myself to serving others so to accompany more young people to walk the rugged road to adulthood.

YO has always accompanied young people who feel lost, likewise, YO has continued to grow with the support from young people and different parties in the society.

We would like to express our gratitude and respect to Ms. Lau Siu Lai, a great supporter of YO, for her legacy donation, which her care and encouragement have been extended to the youth and lead to more life changes quietly. In the face of the current complexed social environment, youth work has become extremely challenging. YO will require more support to accompany young people to tide over this exceptionally difficult period.

Sincerely



Lawrence Tse



Translated by Jonathan Ho