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Issue 011
2016 January

People

In search of real happiness out of an unknown future

So good, aged 16 and Ah Lok, aged 17, both quitted school before completing secondary school. They have always been unsure of the future, wanting to earn a living but without any direction or life goals. They just focus on the present but lacking any hope for their future.

They quitted school at the age of 12 or 13, they loitered throughout the night with friends in parks, or in the video games centres. Sometimes, their families needed to call the police to find them. At first they enjoyed this kind of lifestyle, however, they got tired of this and started to feel that they needed directions for life until they met social workers who encouraged them to participate in the project "In search of real happiness out of an unknown future" organised by our Yuen Long Youth Outreaching Team (YLYOT) through which they changed their style of living and tried new experiences.

Through the project, So good and Ah Lok participated their first time various activities such as bubble football games, indoor archery, skate boarding, abseiling and wild camping, adventurous rock climbing. Despite the hardship and difficulties in these activities, they had a lot of support and encouragement which revealed to them that they were not facing the difficulties alone. They were presented a new perspective to face challenges of life. In other activities, they made snacks, chatted and played with children of our small group homes. These experiences made good impression on both children and themselves. They realised that happiness is as simple as reaching out with their hearts.

Apart from So good and Ah Lok, there were other service users participated in different activities. One of the participants who had quitted school for three years since secondary three, he described himself as "trash" when our social worker first contacted him and always said "I can't do that, I just can't." Nevertheless, after participating in the project, he eventually gathered his experiences and built up self-confidence. He was the master of ceremony at the closing ceremony of the project, and his dream was to become a social worker. Recently he has been re-admitted to school and had a score of 100 in Mathematics examination. This further boosted his motivation for further studies to realise his dreams.

There were other participants who had been involved in drug trafficking, theft, and fighting. Through detail interview by social workers, they reflected on what they were after, the meaning of real happiness and what was important to them. When they started to think deeply and chose all over again, they began to realise that family members are more important than money. Some of them even tried to look for jobs even though they lacked experience. Different participants ventured into their new page to look for real happiness.

Just like the responsible social workers said, these participants face defeating experiences in life, people have biased opinions on them judging by their outlook: coloured hair, unfavourable habits such as smoking and foul languages. Their deeper needs like a sense of recognition and acceptance were always neglected, they then lost their motivation ended up being rejected and they in turn quitted school or work. However, when they felt being accepted and had friends with positive attitude, they could simply let go of themselves and change their unfavourable lifestyle and habits, and take a step forward to satisfy their needs.

In order to continue and strengthen these positive experiences, and away from unfavourable influences, our YLYOT will continue their mutual support, and through volunteer work, to strengthen their bond with the community in order they could get the positive energy from community and break away from the vicious circle of being off-track and poverty.



Wild camp: Canoeing and scuba diving



Volunteering in small group homes