

Project Hope

7-34

Multi-Year

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Section 1: Project Overview

A. Area of Concern

Children with incarcerated parents are 10.5 times more likely to commit crimes. Family members who are busy working to support the family may be unable to pay enough attention to these children (Seow, 2017). Another study also found that 70% of these children have emotional or psychological disorders (Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008).

We have worked with two children with incarcerated parents, Prasanth (10-year-old) and Rayyan (5-year-old). According to Mr Shad, a staff member of our beneficiary, New Life Stories, Prasanth has low self esteem because of a lack of awareness of his strengths and positive attributes. He also has difficulty in reading. Rayyan struggles to read and should understand the importance of trying his best, to prevent him from developing a perfectionist attitude which could lead to erosion of self-worth.

B. Challenges Identified

Parental incarceration leads to the absence of a positive influence in their childhood, possibly resulting in physical and/or mental health problems. Furthermore, this may also result in the children being pessimistic and having low self-esteem in life.

C. Underlying Problem

Given that children whose parents are incarcerated suffer from a lack of parental guidance and attention which might result in them having low self-esteem and being pessimistic, how might we provide guidance through our programs and act as a role model to the children to develop the emotional and academic aspects of their lives, so that they can face their future with greater confidence in the year 2021 and beyond?

D. Plan of Action

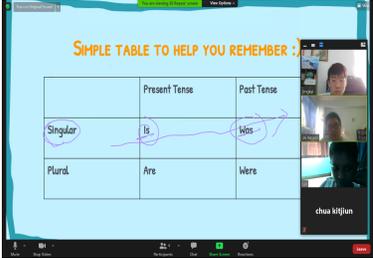
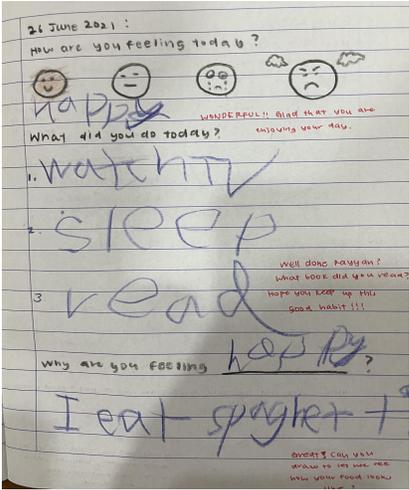
As Singapore moved into Phase 3 with low community transmissions, , we formulated a suitable plan of action to include more physical interactions and activities with the children we worked with. However, in light of the worsening COVID-19 situation and

implementation of Phase 2 (Heightened Alert), we shifted our interaction sessions and other initiatives online.

Section 2: Implementation of Plans

A. Actions and Outcomes to Date

Activity	Action	Objective(s)	Timeline
Weekly Interaction Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A programme by our beneficiary. ● 1.5-hour reading sessions conducted at the children’s home. ● Other activities aiding in the improvement of relationships between the children and group members were conducted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To strengthen the children’s academic prowess ● To nurture them to become more confident, curious and school-ready 	January - May, July
Telecommuting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shifted online during COVID-19 heightened measures, preventing us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bring happiness to the children and help them cope 	May onwards

	<p>from visiting the children physically.</p> 	<p>with the trying COVID-19 situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allow the children to remain physically and mentally stimulated 	
<p>Weekly journaling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keeps track of the activities and emotions experienced by the children weekly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To allow the children to better understand their own emotions ● To allow the children to build emotional capacity and self-confidence 	<p>Weekly</p>
<p>Online Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Self-made resources that we went through with the children during the weekly interaction programme ● Focused on English with Prasanth due to his weakness in it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To improve their academics, cognitive abilities, and communication skills. 	<p>January onwards</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focused on general knowledge and basic arithmetic with Rayyan 		
<p>Book Donation Drive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collection of donated story books from HCI students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The books were donated to our beneficiary to increase the range of reading materials for the children. ● Raises awareness amongst students in HCI about problems faced by children of incarcerated parents. 	<p>March - April</p>
<p>Family Day</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assisted in the making of Mother's Day cards with the children ● Presented cards to their mothers during our weekly visiting sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To encourage the children to show their appreciation and love for their parents/guardians ● To build emotional capacity in the children 	<p>7/5/2021</p>

			
<p>Spreading Awareness through Social Media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Made use of Instagram to spread awareness of the children and our beneficiary. ● Uploaded interactive social media posts featuring some of our experiences working with the children and about our beneficiary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To raise awareness of the difficulties faced by children with incarcerated parents 	<p>Throughout the year</p>

			
<p>Team Bonding Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Group events where we engage in fun activities that enable the children to form a greater bond with us. ● Activities include craft-making and field trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To improve motor skills and build confidence in their work and crafts 	<p>May and August</p>

<p>Learning Journey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half-day trip with the children to the Science Centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To discover new interests and learn values such as creativity. • To spark an interest within them in the field of science 	<p>17/7/2021</p>
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Section 3: Project Outcomes

A. Accomplishments

Our beneficiary commended us for our exemplary work and additional initiatives created, while remaining communicative with their parents throughout. The children’s reading ability has also improved since we started working with them. They also look forward to our weekly interaction programme. Their parents/guardians complimented us for being dedicated and for constantly helping them. They were also satisfied with our support and the progress we have made with their children. Moreover, we have made several social media posts on our Instagram page which has over 570 followers to spread awareness about children with incarcerated parents. and our beneficiary to the public.

B. Reflections

We are grateful for the opportunity to better understand the challenges faced by children with incarcerated parents. Despite their seemingly discouraging circumstances, their relentless determination and precious childlike sense of wonder truly shone through as we read and played together. This was an eye-opening experience for us all. Going into this project, we thought that we would be the ones imparting values and knowledge to the children, however, our shared experiences with the children have certainly enabled us to walk out of this experience more mature. It has reminded us to be more grateful and

appreciative of our parents for their years of love and care and to truly embody the spirit of servant leadership.

Due to the heightened alert measures, we had to improvise, adapt, and overcome. It served as a reminder for us that serving the community may not always be about hosting the most extravagant activities or helping the largest number of people, but having meaningful, genuine and long-lasting impacts on our benefactors. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to serve the community and champion such a meaningful cause and be able to pass our project down to future batches.

C. Scope of Impact

Community impact: We hope that through our Instagram page, we can shine a light on the difficulties faced by children of incarcerated parents while fostering support for our beneficiary, New Life Stories.

Community involvement: Through the interaction sessions, we encouraged the children we work with to remain optimistic as we face these trying times; sharing memories and stories brought joy into the lives of us and the children. We managed to boost their self-esteem and touch their hearts.

Resolution of UP: Given that we have identified that children of incarcerated parents are generally pessimistic and have low self-esteem, our online resources have allowed us to assist the children academically whilst our weekly interaction sessions have helped the children come out of their shell and grow increasingly self-assured. Despite the COVID-19 restrictions, we are fortunate to have contributed significantly in the increasing of their emotional capacity and improvement in their academics.

References

Seow, B.Y. (2017). Iscos' executive director Lisa Lim: She helps ex ex-inmate get back on their feet. The Straits Times.

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Nesmith, A. & Ruhland, E. (2008). Children of incarcerated parents: Challenges and resiliency, in their own words. MyIdeas.

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