

Source: The Sunday Times © Singapore Press Holdings Limited. Permission required for reproduction.

Publication: The Sunday Times

Date: Sunday, 19 December 2021

Page: A17

Headline: Organisations and volunteers honoured for helping ex-offenders

Link: <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/organisations-and-volunteers-honoured-for-helping-ex-offenders>

Organisations and volunteers honoured for helping ex-offenders

Siti Sarah Abdul Rahman

Three years of volunteering as a befriender to prison inmates has given Mr Idan Moskovitch, 42, a good number of memorable moments.

Particularly moving for him was accompanying a former offender to meet his family upon his release.

Mr Moskovitch, a South African native who is now a Singapore citizen and works as a client solutions director in an alternative legal services firm, had spent the weeks leading up to the meetup building up the inmate's confidence during their sessions together.

"It was nice to see him hug and embrace his family members," Mr Moskovitch told The Sunday Times.

Yesterday, Mr Moskovitch was among 266 Singapore Prison Service (SPS) volunteers who were presented with long-service awards. These awards are given to individuals who have volunteered with SPS for three, five or 10 years and beyond, in five-year intervals, in recognition of their contributions to bettering the lives of inmates, former offenders and their families.

In a pre-recorded speech at the virtual SPS Volunteer Award Ceremony, Minister of State for Home Affairs and Sustainability and the Environment Desmond Tan noted that the SPS volunteer network has come a long way.

It has grown from fewer than 200 volunteers in 2000 to more than 2,400 today.

Mr Tan also underscored the importance of community support in the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates and former offenders.

He said: "Volunteers play an important role in the community by continuing the relationships they have built with ex-offenders, so that they can render further support to them after their release."

Tokens of appreciation were also presented to 27 social service agencies (SSAs) and various other organisations for their support of inmates and former offenders in their rehabilitation and reintegration process, while another 23 SSAs received a 10-year Journey Plaque.

Among the organisations that received the 10-year award was The Salvation Army, which Mr Tan noted had partnered with the prisons to provide family-centric programmes since 2000.

The Salvation Army also runs the Prison Support Services - Kids In Play initiative that provides counselling and social support to children with incarcerated parents, as well as to their caregivers.

Mr Tan also highlighted 10-year Journey Plaque recipient Industrial and Services Co-Operative Society (Isocos), which has been lending support to former offenders and their families since 1989.

It offers programmes and services such as job training and support groups for former offenders, and helps them to reintegrate into society and with their families.

Mr Tan said in his speech: "Prisons is fortunate to have strong rehabilitation partners in its volunteers and partner organisations, and we will continue to mobilise the strengths of the community to support offenders."

In a separate event yesterday, Isocos presented 420 students from low-income families of inmates and former offenders with bursary awards.

Speaking at the virtual event, Minister of State for Home Affairs and National Development Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim reiterated the importance of support provided by Isocos and many other partners.

"These efforts help children bring out the best in themselves, regardless of their circumstances," he said.

ssbar@sph.com.sg



Mr Idan Moskovitch, a client solutions director, has been a volunteer for three years with the Singapore Prison Service as a befriender to inmates. Pictured with him are his wife Nam Haeng Yoo, 43, and daughter Leia Eun Moskovitch, 11. PHOTO: COURTESY OF IDAN MOSKOVITCH

Text:

Organisations and volunteers honoured for helping ex-offenders

Siti Sarah Abdul Rahman

Three years of volunteering as a befriender to prison inmates has given Mr Idan Moskovitch, 42, a good number of memorable moments.

Particularly moving for him was accompanying a former offender to meet his family upon his release.

Mr Moskovitch, a South African native who is now a Singapore citizen and works as a client solutions director in an alternative legal services firm, had spent the weeks leading up to the meetup building up the inmate's confidence during their sessions together.

"It was nice to see him hug and embrace his family members," Mr Moskovitch told The Sunday Times.

Yesterday, Mr Moskovitch was among 266 Singapore Prison Service (SPS) volunteers who were presented with long-service awards. These awards are given to individuals who have volunteered with SPS for three, five or 10 years and beyond, in five-year intervals, in recognition of their contributions to bettering the lives of inmates, former offenders and their families.

In a pre-recorded speech at the virtual SPS Volunteer Award Ceremony, Minister of State for Home Affairs and Sustainability and the Environment Desmond Tan noted that the SPS volunteer network has come a long way.

It has grown from fewer than 200 volunteers in 2000 to more than 2,400 today.

Mr Tan also underscored the importance of community support in the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates and former offenders.

He said: "Volunteers play an important role in the community by continuing the relationships they have built with ex-offenders, so that they can render further support to them after their release."

Tokens of appreciation were also presented to 27 social service agencies (SSAs) and various other organisations for their support of inmates and former offenders in their rehabilitation and reintegration process, while another 23 SSAs received a 10-year Journey Plaque.

Among the organisations that received the 10-year award was The Salvation Army, which Mr Tan noted had partnered with the prisons to provide family-centric programmes since 2000.

The Salvation Army also runs the Prison Support Services - Kids In Play initiative that provides counselling and social support to children with incarcerated parents, as well as to their caregivers.

Mr Tan also highlighted 10-year Journey Plaque recipient Industrial and Services Co-Operative Society (Iscos), which has been lending support to former offenders and their families since 1989.

It offers programmes and services such as job training and support groups for former offenders, and helps them to reintegrate into society and with their families.

Mr Tan said in his speech: "Prisons is fortunate to have strong rehabilitation partners in its volunteers and partner organisations, and we will continue to mobilise the strengths of the community to support offenders."

In a separate event yesterday, Iscos presented 420 students from low-income families of inmates and former offenders with bursary awards.

Speaking at the virtual event, Minister of State for Home Affairs and National Development Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim reiterated the importance of support provided by Iscos and many other partners.

"These efforts help children bring out the best in themselves, regardless of their circumstances," he said.