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囚犯和释囚子女获赞助追梦

■ 黄小芳 xfhuang@sph.com.sg

年仅9岁就亲眼目睹父亲因涉毒被逮捕，丹尼靠足球一步步走出伤痛，重拾自信。

专为释囚和囚犯子女而设的工业与服务合作社协会（Industrial and Services Co-operative Society，简称ISCOS）明年起将推出课后活动赞助计划。目前已有三人在试验阶段率先获赞助，12岁的丹尼（化名）和他11岁的弟弟，是其中两名受益者。他们7月起获得全额资助，每周一次到足球学院受训。

丹尼的父亲14年前染毒，多年来进出监狱，仅靠母亲萨拉（化名，42岁，服饰店经理）一手带大四名年龄介于5岁至14岁的儿子。

萨拉透露，儿子向来和父亲关系密切，他们目睹父亲被捕后，心里的伤痛多年来难以愈合。和父亲关系最亲密的二儿子丹尼，常常以泪洗面，自信心也受打击，变得沉默寡言，唯有足球能让他重拾自信。

家中四兄弟从小就展露足球方面的天赋，幼稚园便开始踢足球，大儿子凭着优异的表现获选入新加坡体育学校。但丹尼和弟弟没那么幸运，两人只能使用大哥传下来的旧球具，而从前免费指导大哥的亲戚也在几年前移民到国外。

萨拉说：“我最大的心愿是让孩子走出父亲的阴影、快乐成长，也让他们在竞争激烈的社会里，有一技之长。我多年来都想让他们接受专业足球训练，但每一学期的学费要近500元，我实

在负担不起。还好有ISCOS的资助，才能让孩子圆梦。”

羞涩的丹尼受访时紧缩着双肩，唯有谈到足球时，脸上才露出笑容。他自豪地说：

“我在学院里有机会和不同队友练习，可以去参加比赛。我在比赛中表现不错，我希望长大后能成为像罗纳尔多这样杰出的足球员。”

明年资助10学生 参加体育或艺术课程

课后活动赞助计划明年正式推出后，将资助10名学生。协会会按学生的兴趣为他们安排增益课程，除了足球和体育，受益者也可选择参与艺术类课程。ISCOS未来有意进一步扩展这项计划，让更多家庭受益。

ISCOS是在昨天举办的助学金颁奖典礼上宣布这项消息。共有约320名学生获赠助学金，其中有九名学生凭着优异表现获赠卓越表现奖和良好进度奖。

ISCOS自2011年起，每年颁发助学金奖励学业优异的释囚和囚犯子女，至今有近2000名学生受惠。单在今年，ISCOS发放的奖励金就达近10万元。李氏基金和昇菘集团是ISCOS奖项的主要赞助商。

内政部兼国家发展部高级政务次长孙雪玲出席了于大巴窑建屋局中心举办的颁奖典礼。她致词时说：“助学金不只是认可得奖者的学业表现，也肯定他们克服挑战、在学业上取得良好表现的坚韧精神。”

她也呼吁更多社区伙伴伸出援手，通过赞助奖项协助释囚和囚犯子女实现梦想。

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黄小芳报道

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Translation:

Children of current and former offenders received sponsorships to pursue their dreams

By Wong Siew Fong

Having witnessed his father being arrested for drug offences when he was just nine years old, Dani used soccer to cope with the pain he felt, and to regain his confidence.

Dedicated to help children of current and former offenders, the Industrial and Services Co-operative Society (ISCOS) will roll out the After-School Activity sponsorship starting next year. 12-year-old Dani (not his real name) and his 11-year-old brother are two of the three beneficiaries currently enrolled in the pilot programme. Since July 2019, they have been attending weekly soccer training sessions.

For the past 14 years, Dani's father went in and out of prison due to his drug addiction. His mother Sara (not her real name), a 42 year-old boutique manager had to single-handedly bring up four sons aged between 5 and 14.

According to Sara, her sons are very close to their father hence when they had to witness the father's arrest, it was a very painful experience for them even after so many years. This is especially so for Dani who is the second child and shared the closest bond with his father. The boy often cried and became withdrawn after the father's arrest. It was only through football that he regained his confidence.

Her four sons have displayed much talent in football since young, as early as when they were in kindergarten. While the eldest son earned a place in Singapore Sports School with his stellar performance in football, Dani and his younger brothers are not so lucky. Both siblings could only rely on their brother's hand-me-down football equipment. In addition, the relative who used to coach their eldest brother for free had migrated overseas several years ago.

Sara said, "My biggest wish is to have my children leave their father's past behind, grow up happily, and develop a skill or talent in today's competitive society. I have always wanted to send them for professional training sessions but the course fees can go up to \$500 every semester, which is beyond what I could afford. Thankfully, with ISCOS' assistance, my children's dreams are now fulfilled."

During the interview, Dani was shy and hunched his shoulder, perking up only when we started talking about football. He enthusiastically said, "At the academy, I have the chance to practice and participate in competitions with many of my teammates. My performance during competitions are not bad, and I hope to be a footballer like Ronaldo when I grow up."

Sponsoring 10 students in sports or arts enrichment courses from next year

The After-School Activity sponsorship will officially commence from next year, with 10 students benefiting from the initiative. ISCOS will match the students' interests with the relevant enrichment classes. Aside from football and sports, beneficiaries can choose to pursue their interest in arts as well. ISCOS has intention to expand and fine-tune this programme to benefit more families in the future.

This was announced at the ISCOS Bursary Award Ceremony yesterday, with 320 students receiving bursary awards, including nine students who earned Outstanding Achievement Awards and Good Progress Awards.

Since 2011, ISCOS has offered bursary awards to the children of current and ex-offenders, with close to 2000 students benefiting from this initiative. In this year alone, close to \$100,000 has been disbursed, primarily sponsored by Lee Foundation and Sheng Siong Group.

Ms Sun Xueling, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of National Development was the Guest-of-Honour at the ceremony held at the Toa Payoh HDB Hub auditorium. In her speech, she said "The Bursary Award recognises more than academic performance – it also recognises the resilience of students who have overcome the challenges they faced and done well in their studies."

She also urged more community partners to extend a helping hand, and help the children of current and former offenders realise their dreams through the sponsorship of the bursary awards.