



贊助人：曾絕笑薇女士 Patron: Mrs. Selina Tsang

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My dear friend,

I think it is true to say that Ka Ming is one of our stars!

He said that the first big change in his life was in 2004, when he was studying in Form 4. He began to go out with a girl in his class and his school results began to get worse. Then because his results were poor he began to skip school altogether and hang around in the nearby shopping mall. Of course, he very quickly came to be labeled by the teachers as “bad”. In the end, the outcome was obvious. He would have to repeat Form 4.

Ka Ming is intelligent but he is also stubborn. He didn't want to lose face by having to stay behind while all his friends went into a higher class. He refused to repeat Form 4 and since he was already 16 years old he decided to leave school and get a job.

Actually, his first job was at Youth Outreach as part of the Govt.'s “Youth Ambassador” scheme. He said that at that time he thought the work was not challenging but it helped to pass the time. Soon after that he began to hang out on the streets at night and gradually his interest in work waned. But although he thought he was intelligent, he was in fact young and quite inexperienced. He was soon hanging out with a “cool” crowd and eventually spent almost every evening at a Disco enjoying the music, dancing, drinking and taking drugs. He later told us that some restaurants put a dish of peanuts on the table when you order a drink but the places he went to put a dish of pills!

Living like this meant that he had no energy during the day. His work performance got increasingly worse and he left us. You could ask “Was he pushed or did he jump?” In fact he resigned but if he had not resigned we would have had to ask him to leave. He had a lot of self confidence and thought that leaving would enable him to live in new surroundings, doing whatever he liked.

It was at this point that he got to know the leaders of a Triad society and eventually became a member. He thought he was smart. It never occurred to him to ask himself if he was being used. He believed he would build up a big criminal career for himself and would never be caught by the police. But he didn't have to wait too long to find out. He was indeed picked up by the police for involvement in the crimes of his “big brother.”

He spent time in Pik Uk Prison – the first time he had been in prison – but even so he did not regret what he had done. He just thought that he had been unlucky. He was eventually released for lack of evidence but he just went back to his Triad friends and continued his life of gang fights, trafficking, distributing and importing drugs from the mainland. Hardly surprisingly, it was not long before he finished up back in Pik Uk Prison.

This time one of our social workers went to visit him regularly and spoke up on his behalf. He was sentenced to 18 months probation. Part of the deal was that we offered him a job interview at Youth Outreach. We knew from before that he was intelligent and could be hard working. We felt that he had been led astray by his own pride and naïveté.

He came for the interview but was obviously not too happy with the outcome. We offered him a job in the courier service we were running at that time but it was only a part-time post. He could see that if he was going to go anywhere he would have to prove that he could work and

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that he was dependable. After two months he was promoted to a full time post and the smile, on his face brightened. After another couple of months of hard work we offered him the opportunity to join the Adventure Based Counseling Team as a technician but he would have to join a training course to become qualified for the post. This meant that during the day he worked as a courier and in the evening he had to attend the training program. He did it and his pride in his achievement was clear. He left the courier service and joined the Adventure Based Counseling Team. Now, he really was developing his career. He really did have a bright future.

He told us that he thought this was biggest change in his life. He learned to see life from the point of view of others. He no longer bothered about what people thought of him but paid attention to whether they were learning what he was trying to teach. He helped to teach many different groups varying from Correctional Services Officers to university students and he did it well. Then he dropped a bombshell on us! He wanted to go back to school!

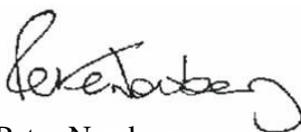
It wasn't easy but he worked his way through the Yi Jing Program which is the equivalent of finishing Form Five. Then he finished a Pre-Associate Degree course and signed up for the Associate Degree. He did all this while he was still working at Youth Outreach. He has finished the first year of his Associate Degree, but had to take a year off to earn some more money to pay his school fees.

By pure co-incidence just when he began looking for a job a new Adventure Based Counseling Centre was opened in Hong Kong and the advertisement in the newspaper said the Agency in charge was looking for a Training Officer. He applied – and so did about a hundred other qualified social workers! He was short listed. The interviewing officer was intrigued by his background and wanted to know why he had so many qualifications and so much experience in Adventure Training and why his formal education was so irregular. When Ka Ming told him about his life experiences and his training at Youth Outreach he was offered the post even though other applicants had better social work qualifications.

He is now responsible for Adventure Education programs, including program design and implementation as well as making proposal for funding sponsorship. In addition he supervises two subordinates and is responsible for the management of the facilities and the equipment. Let us wish him well as he moves bravely into a bright future.

As we approach Christmas, I would appeal to you to make a generous gift to our young people. This year particularly, the Govt. has already begun distributing HK\$6,000.⁰⁰ to HK residents. For each of us, this is indeed an unexpected windfall. I would appeal to you to donate this unexpected windfall of HK\$6,000.⁰⁰ to the young people at Youth Outreach so that we can continue to offer them the services which they so desperately need. Please extend this invitation to your family members, friends and colleagues.

Wishing you a peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year.



Peter Newbery
Executive Director