



贊助人：曾鮑笑薇女士 Patron: Mrs. Selina Tsang

March 2012

My dear friend,

Fu-tsai is 13 years old. The first time the outreaching team saw him he was sitting on a park bench. He was carrying a crumpled plastic bag full of dirty clothing and his shoes were falling apart. His eyes were red and he smelled terrible.

We found out that he was literally “homeless”. His parents had split up when he was small and he was taken in by an aunt. Because he had not been properly taught as a child, he had a wild temper and was frequently involved in trouble at the boarding school where he stayed and often enough the trouble degenerated into fights. Fu-tsai thought that you had to be violent to be strong and so this was how he dealt with people.

When he finished at boarding school and went to a local secondary school he went back to living with his aunt. But his uncle disliked his violent temper and bad manners and eventually forbade him from coming home and arranged for him to stay in a hostel. Fu-tsai found life in the hostel lonely and very strict and the other boys refused to have anything to do with him. He began to skip school and because of this was eventually thrown out of the hostel. And so began his life on the streets.

He didn't have any money. Carrying his plastic bag containing his spare clothes he hung around in the village. In the mornings he waited until his uncle went to work and then went home to see his aunt but he had to spend the cold and windy nights sleeping on a park bench.

The first time we heard of Fu-tsai was when one of the local social workers phoned our hotline and told us that he had been sleeping in the park or in the shopping mall for more than a week and asked us if we could take him into our crisis center. Unfortunately, Fu-tsai himself refused to come. The next night, we went out to look for him. He was very hostile and used his customary violent behavior and bad language to let us know that he didn't trust us and was not interested in a “hostel”. But we didn't give up. We used jokes and games to hold his attention and after a couple of hours he seemed to be getting interested in us. We eventually persuaded him to come with us back to the Hangout to play. While he was there we told him he could take a shower and offered him something to eat – he hadn't showered for a week and wolfed down several helpings of noodles. Even in the car on the way back to the Hangout, he fell asleep.

Later on, Fu-tsai got to know a group of “friends” in the village. They were a lot older than he was and would take him to pubs to drink and enjoy himself. Because of his involvement with them he was eventually arrested for stealing a bicycle and given a warning by the police. But Fu-tsai is very stubborn. He still refused to come into our center – he hated the idea of rules and regulations governing his life and preferred the apparent freedom of the streets, the parks and the shopping malls.

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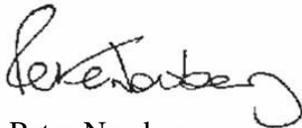
We were afraid that he would be used by the triad members he had got to know in the village and tried every way to get him to come into our residential center but it was no use. Even so we made an effort to go and visit him every night and bring him back to the Hangout to play and then in the morning take him back to see his aunt. He gradually got to know us better and had less opportunity to hang around with the triad members.

It took a while but Fu-tsai gradually came to like the Hangout and to trust our workers and we truly became a place where he felt he could hang out. He felt that the workers – like older brothers and sisters – would take care of him, teach him and love him. Gradually, his violent temper and bad manners have begun to change. He has begun to say “please” and “thank you” rather than snatching whatever he wants and swearing.

A 13 year old should be enjoying life in the warmth of a family but Fu-tsai is still wandering the streets. We are currently investigating possible long term solutions to his problems together with the police and Social Welfare Dept. His most urgent need is for a stable living environment before his other problems can be deal with. This story is by no means finished.

I often wonder how we can have so many billions of dollars in the Hong Kong reserve fund and have a multitude of various kinds of services for young people and yet there are still children like Fu-tsai on the streets. I think that we, the people of Hong Kong, can do better for our children.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Newbery', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peter Newbery
Executive Director