

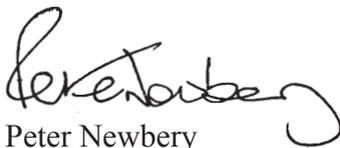
June 2016

My dear friend

This month's letter is actually written by Ted Tam who heads up our outreaching program. As you will see from his letter, not much has changed with the young people on the streets, except that they are getting younger and they are more and more into drugs. The parents and the teachers don't seem to have changed much either. These young people ask for so little – some loving care and attention; some praise and encouragement and yet they can only find this among their friends hanging out on the streets at night. Fortunately, we are there on the streets with them and gradually we can make a difference in their lives, giving them some hope and some dreams for the future.

I appeal to you to make a generous gift to help us stay with these young people and accompany them as they gradually step back onto the road of life.

Sincerely



Peter Newbery
Executive Director

We got to know Little Chun about half a year ago. He just turned 11, and was gambling in the street with a group of youngsters about 16 to 17 years old. What brought him to our attention was that he was much younger, and at that moment, he was babbling rude words in raps. We found that he had lost all the money he had and when he lost the game again, the penalty was to perform very strange acts.

We didn't detect an ounce of bad feeling in him for being wronged. Instead we feel that he was secretly expecting further penalties. After losing another game, he was told to dance. He danced the kind of street dance of unknown origin. All other youngsters became amused, and that made Little Chun very happy.

When we knew that we didn't have to play for money, we joined them. It was in that night that we became acquainted with this group. Later, whenever we came to this cul-de-sac again, we found Little Chun was there every time, as if he need not go to school or home, but was on the street all the time. He told us that this group, besides gambling, eating and drinking, took part in drug trafficking, and even money laundering. Because he was small, and not easily suspected, he was told to handle drugs.

Once, Little Chun told us to give him a lift home. In fact, he told us to drive him to another cul-de-sac, this time in a village, to take part in another group activity. When he arrived, he looked as if he was an adept, and was very familiar with the older kids in this group. From their conversations, one could hardly believe that he was only eleven years old. He was the youngest, but he was not being left behind probably because he was an exhibitionist. Every time we saw him, he was endlessly performing, dancing, riding skateboard, or playing with kendama¹. His every move became the talk of the group. He was very satisfied for being the centre of attraction.

We came across his father once. After finishing some business with Little Chun, he left. Little Chun remained in the street. He told us that his father knew he was always in the street, and his father didn't seem to object. Little Chun seldom talked about his family or his school where, it seemed, did not give him satisfaction. The mid-night street became his paradise where everybody accepts him.

We then invited him to visit our "street rover²", a modified lorry. He liked the set-up we made in the street, where we had games that he enjoyed. Moreover there was a little stage where he could perform to his heart's content. Besides performing, he also taught our colleagues and volunteers how to play all sorts of little games, as if he was a teacher. Recently, every time when our street rover was on the move, he would be there waiting. That means he chose us

¹ Kendama is a traditional Japanese toy. The object is to balance the ball (attached by a string) with one of the three cups or spike in increasingly complicated and difficult combinations.

² Street Rover is a 5.5 ton lorry which carries the services of The Hang Out onto the streets. The lorry is equipped with lighting, computers, skateboards, sound equipment and entertainment equipment. The outside of the vehicle has been painted with graffiti to attract the attention of young people. The Rover is parked during the night hours where young people gather and the social workers and other staff offer counseling, guidance and support while engaging the young people in interesting and entertaining activities. To help the young people to develop their talents.

from all the groups that he had joined before. In our street rover activities, he was more focused than ever before, so engrossed and so arduous in his performances.

Once, he very excitedly related to us that his teacher told him to perform kendama in his school, and immediately he showed us what skills he did in that performance, and told us non-stop how those skills were performed. This is the first time we heard him so merrily talk about his school.

In Hong Kong, in the middle of the night, there are many youngsters like Little Chun. But how many teachers could appreciate them?



Written by Ted Tam



Translated by Stephanie Choi