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Ms. TANG Suk-chun Winnie
Ms. WONG Miu-yan Cecilia

July 2025

My dear friend,

Here is the life of **Willy**! In his short lifetime he has experienced things that we would not wish on our worst enemy! On the other hand he is intelligent, confident and loyal to his friends. After fighting his way through so many troubles, the change in his life style is almost a miracle. But basically he is just an average teenager looking for somewhere to belong. His interest in basketball was an opportunity and he grabbed the chance with both hands. His good qualities were hidden but they were still there. All that was needed was the opportunity for Willy to develop in the right direction. So far, he has continued to play basketball and we think that in time he can develop as a trainer. There are many other young people out there in the darkness of the night. They too are hoping for a chance to develop their talents. Let us not let them down but offer them our helping hand.

Sincerely,



Founder and Member of
the Executive Committee of Youth Outreach
Peter Newbery

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My name is Willy the Kid. I am here to tell you my life story as a young man. I had experience with domestic violence, awful school life, drug taking, gang fights, imprisonment and heart-breaking boy-girl relationships. It was a long and hard journey. Fortunately, there was light at the end of the tunnel. The Hang Out Basketball Training Program (HOB) run by the Youth Outreach (YO) has changed my life.

As a secondary school student, I felt bored with my studies. My mother once woke me up for my school class. She suddenly got mad and started screaming, scolding and yelling at me. She grabbed my neck very hard and I felt deeply hurt. We then had a good fight, arguing and swearing at each other. Too bad, my father was seldom home. All I could hear was my mother's complaining, disputing and even throwing objects at me sometimes.

When we moved to the Housing Estate in Sau Mau Ping, I played basketball at the playground and met a group of boys there. They understood well about my boring life at home and at school. We had some common ground and I felt comfortable with them, hanging out together and sharing food and drinks together in the food shops there.

They took me to the Hang Out (24-hour Drop-in Centre) of YO in Sai Wai Ho, playing video games and basketball games there. We had arguments occasionally and started fighting with other boys. The Centre Social Workers came up and calmed us down. They tried to get to know us but we did not want to get close to them. We all did not trust adults at all due to our previous experience with them. They did not care about us and thought we were good for nothing.

A month later, these boys introduced drugs to me, and I felt good with high spirits. Once I got drunk and woke up with a girl beside me. I did not know her at all. But then we started our intimate relationship and became lovers.

These boys had issues with some other groups of young boys and big boys from time to time. They met at night and told me to join their gang fights. They found that I was rather good at fighting and following their commands. Then I was accepted as a team-leader in their triad groups. To me, it was an honor that I was qualified to be a gang member. I had a sense of belonging with them since then.

Consequently, I was chosen to be the leader for organizing gang fights. In one occasion, I seriously hurt 20 gangsters and was arrested by the police. I was kept in prison for several months. At the beginning, I thought it was all right to stay there. But later on, I found that it was a total waste of time. There could be so much for me to do at my age. At the same time, I was told that a gang member in my group seduced my girl-friend and took advantage of her. The guy then left Hong Kong and disappeared. I was very angry and even cried. I thought we were brothers, supporting each other. I was betrayed. How evil it was! I did not believe in their brotherhood since then. I decided not to join gang fights anymore.



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When I was in prison, I was told that my mother and my girlfriend went to the Hang Out and asked for a mitigation letter in order to get me out of prison. I was eventually released under some circumstances, going to court as requested, staying home after 8:30 in the evening, quitting drugs and waiting for the report on my behaviors written by the Probation Officer.

I had never imagined that my mother, my girlfriend and the Social Workers of the Youth Outreach would assist me to get released from prison on probation. I was amazed and grateful for their care and concern about me.

I went to the Hang Out and played basketball games again. The social workers talked to me and asked me if I wanted to go back to school. I said 'No!'. I told them that I wanted to be a professional basketball player. My idols were the players of the American Basketball Team, the NBA.

The Social Workers of the YO then took me to join their Basketball Program instructed by the professional and experienced coaches who taught me new skills, tactics and attitudes of co-operation towards the game and the teammates. There was a Basketball Match in October 2024 for Charity run by the YO. I was chosen to participate in the competition. I was so excited that I spent all my time and energy on the training. You know what? We won the Championship!

This successful experience has changed my life. Drugs, gang fights, triads ..., leave me alone! I am now thinking of being a professional basketball player with the support from my mother, my girl-friend and the Youth Outreach Basketball Team. I intend to learn more skills and strategies in playing basketball. And I am ready to pursue this goal in my future life.

Virginia Li

N.B.

The Hang Out provides youth with a safe place to gather and hang out with their friends, and at the same time organizes activities which encourage positive values. Social workers are there to provide support 24/7. Riding on sports and cultural activities that youth like, we adopt an outreaching and crisis intervention approach to seek out at-risk youth who are unwilling or unable to return home at night.

The Hang Out has become a "Youth Culture Base, a Unique and Innovative Cultural Platform". Over the years it tracks the evolving youth interests and organizes cultural activities like basketball, skateboarding, rock music, Thai boxing, Hip Hop dancing etc. for at-risk youth. The Hang Out recognizes alternative youth achievements. Through these activities, young people can rebuild their self-esteem and self-confidence and replace their negative behaviors with positive culture. The Hang Out encourages youth to develop their unique talents and turn their interests into career.