

# prisonnews

DECISSUE 2020  
**CAPTAINS OF LIVES**  
REHAB • RENEW • RESTART

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Photo taken before COVID-19

## INNOVATIVE MINDS MAKE WONDERS IN PRISONS

MAIN FEATURE



SINGAPORE  
PRISON SERVICE

# CONGRATULATIONS

to our Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)  
Star Service Awards (SSA) 2020 recipients!

The annual MHA SSA recognises exemplary service of Home Team officers, and is the highest accolade for service excellence in the Home Team.

## AWARD RECIPIENTS

SCW 1 Elammaran S/O Marimuthu

SCW 1 Mustafa Bin Omar

CW 2 Mohammad Farhan Bin Mahmood

CW 2 Sathiaselan S/O Thurasingam

CW 1 Lew Wen Guang

CW 1 Radzia Bte Masuni

MX 12 Tan Heng Chian

SGT 2 Lee Jia Min

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

## Dear Readers

In October 2020, the Ministry of Home Affairs held its **inaugural Innovation Month (InnoMonth)**. We deep dive into innovation at work in the Singapore Prison Service (SPS), both during InnoMonth and throughout 2020. Have a read also on what drives our **Innovation Award Winners** to innovate and improve their work and workplace.

During Circuit Breaker, our Prison Visit Management (PVM) unit adapted quickly and adopted the phone visit system to allow family members to keep in touch with their loved ones. We take a look at a **Day in the Shoes of a PVM Officer**, and also learn how they coped with the changes in visit operations during the Circuit Breaker. Join us as we take a walk down memory lane to see how far we have come in terms of our visit facilities **since the first Prison Link Centre was set up**.

It's been a few months since Mr Daniel Tan joined SPS as **Deputy Commissioner of Prisons (Policy and Transformation)**. We had a chat with him to see how he was settling in, and his thoughts on innovation as well.

Last but not least, we wish to congratulate our **Ministry of Home Affairs Star Service Award Recipients** for their exemplary service!

With that, the Prison News Team wishes all our readers a safe, happy and healthy 2021 ahead!

ASP Crystal Seet  
Editor, Prison News

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# INNOVATIVE MINDS

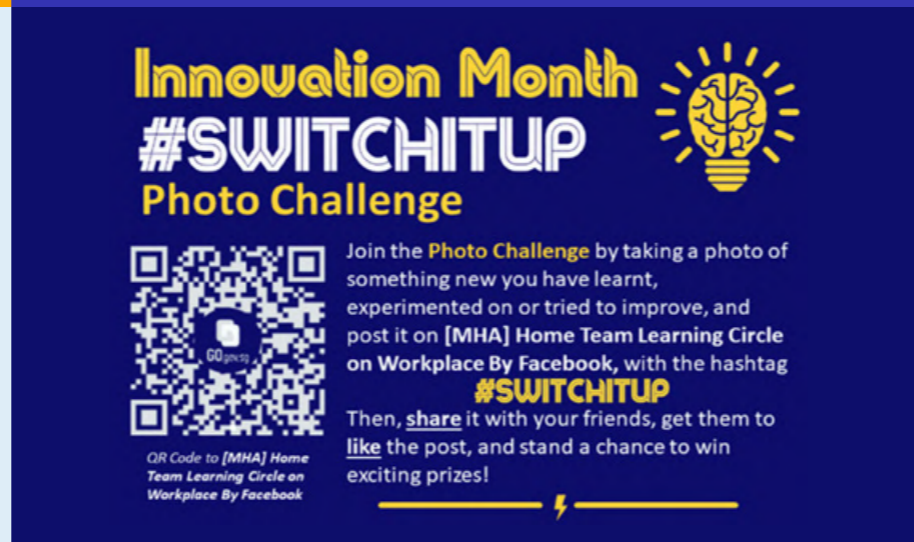
## MAKE WONDERS IN PRISONS

Reported by  
Prison News Reporters Sim Lin Yi,  
Tan Hui Min and Huzaifah Bin Mustaffa

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### AT MHA LEVEL, THE FOLLOWING EVENTS WERE HELD:

#### PHOTO CHALLENGE ON WORKPLACE

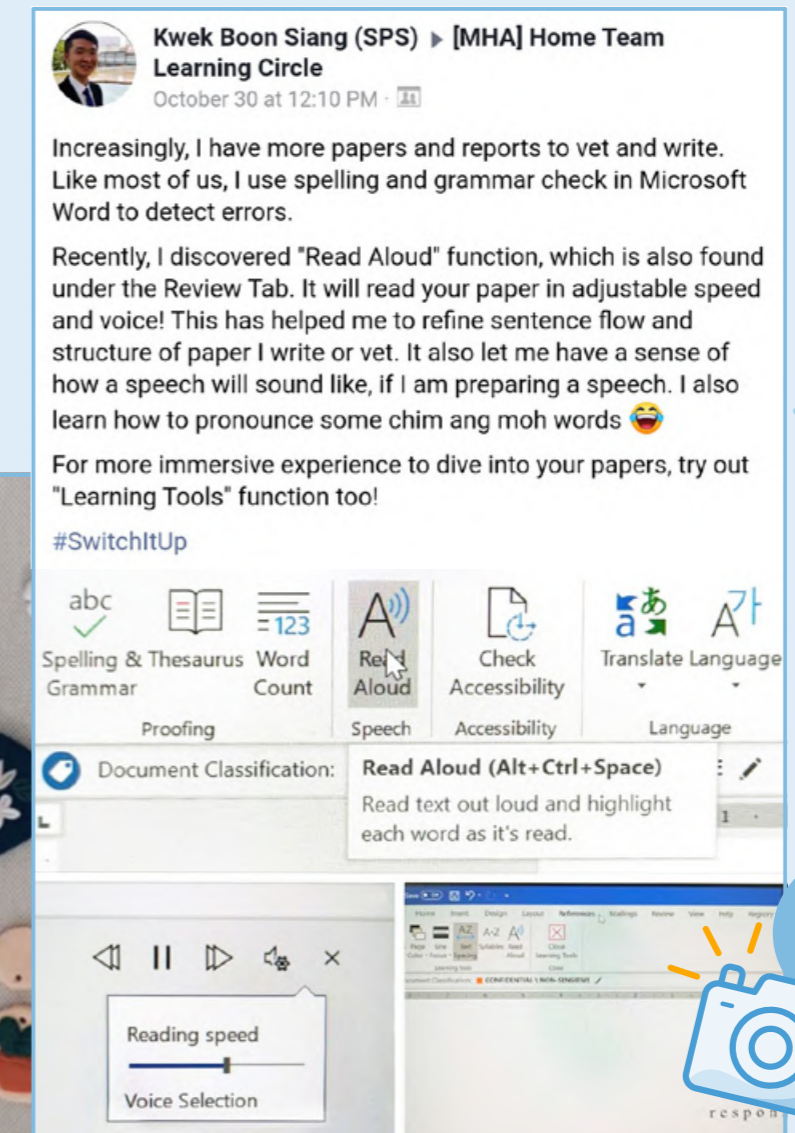


**Innovation Month**  
**#SWITCHITUP**  
**Photo Challenge**

Join the **Photo Challenge** by taking a photo of something new you have learnt, experimented on or tried to improve, and post it on [MHA] Home Team Learning Circle on Workplace By Facebook, with the hashtag **#SWITCHITUP**. Then, **share** it with your friends, get them to **like** the post, and stand a chance to win exciting prizes!

QR Code to [MHA] Home Team Learning Circle on Workplace By Facebook

The photo challenge encouraged staff to post on Workplace By Facebook, detailing how they have done things differently during InnoMonth (only Civil Servants would be able to log in via the QR code).



**Kwek Boon Siang (SPS) ▸ [MHA] Home Team Learning Circle**  
October 30 at 12:10 PM · 🌐

Increasingly, I have more papers and reports to vet and write. Like most of us, I use spelling and grammar check in Microsoft Word to detect errors.

Recently, I discovered "Read Aloud" function, which is also found under the Review Tab. It will read your paper in adjustable speed and voice! This has helped me to refine sentence flow and structure of paper I write or vet. It also let me have a sense of how a speech will sound like, if I am preparing a speech. I also learn how to pronounce some chim ang moh words 🗣️

For more immersive experience to dive into your papers, try out "Learning Tools" function too!

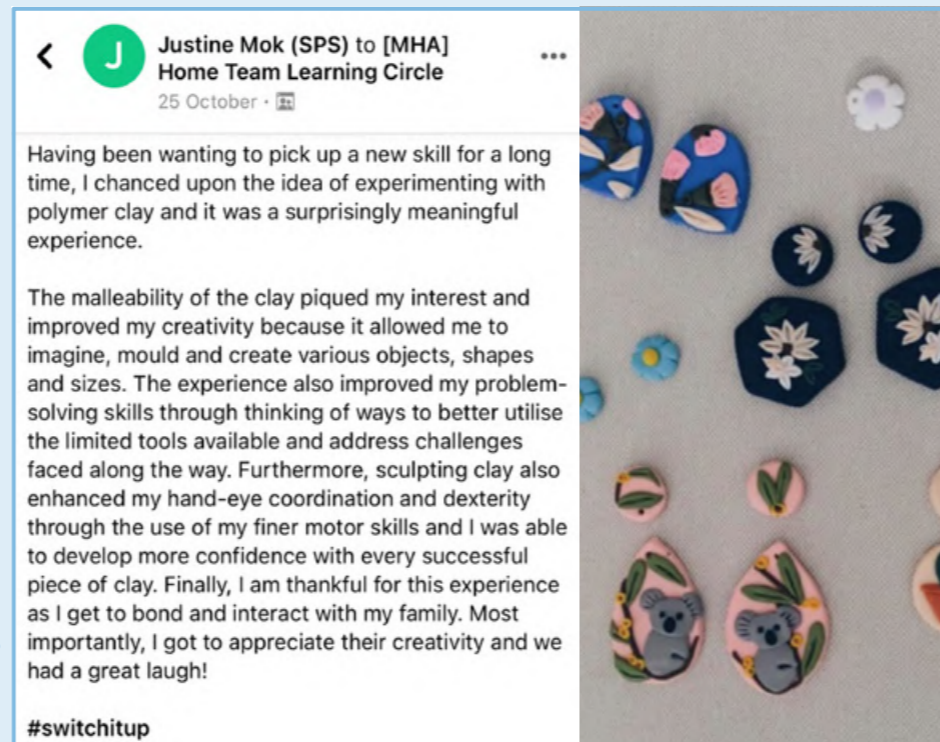
#SwitchItUp

abc ✓ Spelling & Thesaurus Grammar Word Count 123 Proofing A Read Aloud Speech Check Accessibility Accessibility Translate Language Language

Document Classification: **Read Aloud (Alt+Ctrl+Space)**  
Read text out loud and highlight each word as it's read.

Reading speed  
Voice Selection

Staff participation in photo challenge



**Justine Mok (SPS) ▸ [MHA] Home Team Learning Circle**  
25 October · 🌐

Having been wanting to pick up a new skill for a long time, I chanced upon the idea of experimenting with polymer clay and it was a surprisingly meaningful experience.

The malleability of the clay piqued my interest and improved my creativity because it allowed me to imagine, mould and create various objects, shapes and sizes. The experience also improved my problem-solving skills through thinking of ways to better utilise the limited tools available and address challenges faced along the way. Furthermore, sculpting clay also enhanced my hand-eye coordination and dexterity through the use of my finer motor skills and I was able to develop more confidence with every successful piece of clay. Finally, I am thankful for this experience as I get to bond and interact with my family. Most importantly, I got to appreciate their creativity and we had a great laugh!

#switchitup

The inaugural Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Innovation Month (InnoMonth) was held in October 2020. The objectives were to:

- Showcase the ways in which innovation supports transformation, and makes work better through improving efficiency, streamlining processes and cutting work;
- Nudge staff to develop their own skills and expertise in fields that will contribute towards Transformation (e.g. data analytics, Robotic Process Automation — RPA, etc.); and
- Encourage staff to innovate in their daily work, and learn a new skill during Innovation Month.

COMPARTMENTALISED INMATE TRANSPORTER (CIT) PRESENTED AT INNOMONTH LAUNCH

Our staff, RO1 Zulkifli Bin Zakaria, was invited to present on the Compartmentalised Inmate Transporter (CIT) project during the virtual InnoMonth launch.



Click here or scan the QR code to check out our CIT!



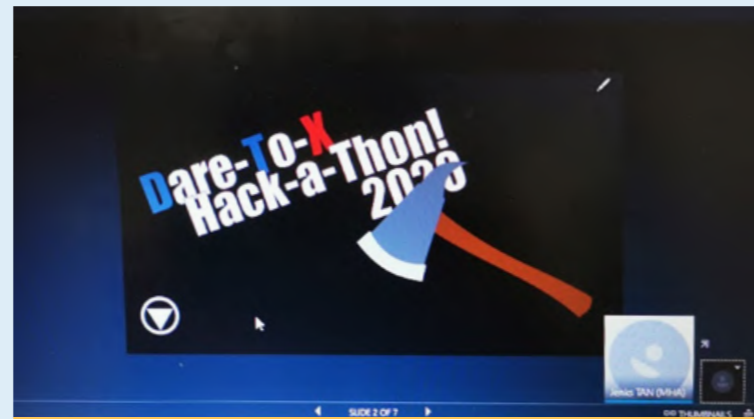
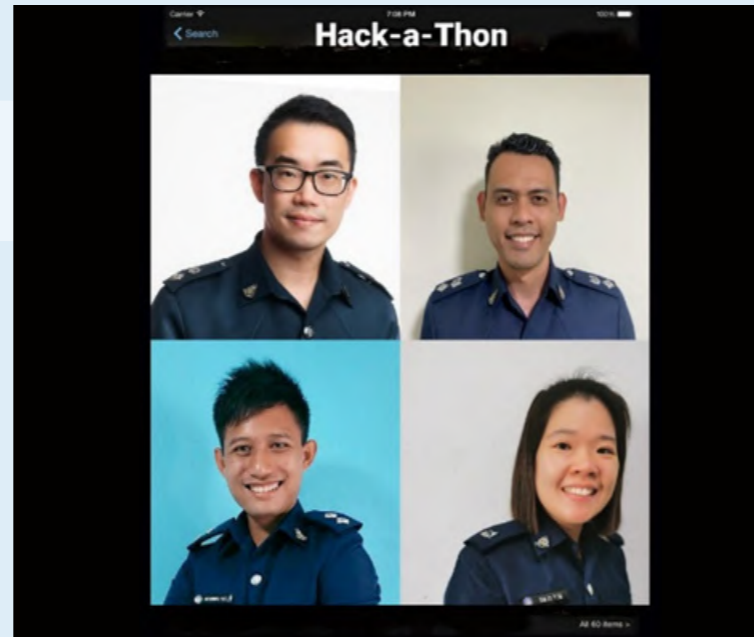
RO1 Zulkifli Bin Zakaria

What is one lesson you have learnt in this project?

RO1 Zulkifli Bin Zakaria (Officer-in-Charge of Fleet & Fixed Assets Management): It was the importance of continuously refining the original design and willingness to make changes. We had to factor in time for trials and gathering of feedback from operational staff and also cater provisions for modification works and further testing.

DARE-TO-X HACKATHON

"Talk-to-Me!" (SPS) project team represented by (clockwise from top left) DSP2 Yong Ka Jun Desmond, DSP1 Muhammad Hafidz Bin Johari, ASP2 Tan Ee Ping and RO2 Muhammad Hafiz Bin Samad won the MHA Dare-To-X Hackathon, where teams formulated solutions to their identified problems.

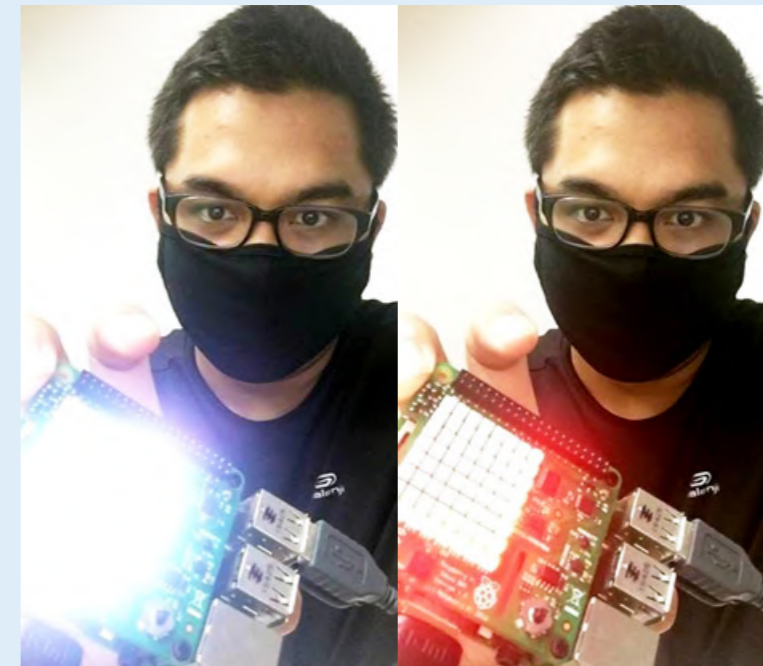


MHA Dare-to-X Hackathon competition held virtually on 26 and 30 October 2020

"Talk-to-Me!" is an application that records and transcripts voices to allow Prison Officers to easily record their data into the management system. It can translate different languages such as Malay, Mandarin and Tamil into English text without a network connection.

WORKSHOPS TO EQUIP STAFF WITH SKILLS TO INNOVATE

As part of continuous learning and picking up new skills to innovate, workshops such as Introduction to Microcontrollers and Python were conducted during InnoMonth to equip our staff with the relevant skills.



RO2 Mohammed Farish bin Azman, Staff Officer (Data Policy), Data & Analytics Branch, showcasing the Raspberry Pi he coded such that the LEDs would change colour according to sensory inputs

What was taught at the workshop?

RO2 Farish: An introduction to Python programming with Raspberry Pi and SENSE Hat. By combining good software with good hardware, we can make magic happen!

How can it be applied to your work?

RO2 Farish: This workshop allowed me to have a better appreciation of the practical applications of computer programming, which is fairly useful as I work with quite a bit of data. It opened my mind and made me reflect on the possibilities of a fully automated, data-driven prison system, especially as we progress in our transformational journey towards a Prison Without Guards!

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**SPS HELD ITS OWN INNOVATION EVENTS  
IN LINE WITH INNO MONTH:**

**CLUSTER B'S INNOFEST**

Cluster B has been proactive in driving innovation and has a group of innovation enthusiasts called Team B-DARING who promotes innovation to Cluster B staff in various ways. In 2019, Team B-DARING organised its own Innovation Festival (InnoFest). InnoFest aimed to showcase, celebrate, recognise and share excellent innovative initiatives, as well as to provide a platform for officers to discuss innovation-related issues.

InnoFest had successfully organised the following activities in 2019 for the Cluster B staff:

- **InnoTalk:** External speakers from Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and Public Service Division (PSD) were invited to share about innovation.
- **InnoExpo:** Different units showcased their ideas in a mini exhibition.
- **Learning Journeys:** Visits to 3M and other agencies were organised to learn the best practices on innovation from others.
- **Design Thinking workshops:** The target is to train all staff in Design Thinking.

Without physical events held this year, Cluster B encouraged submissions of ideas via email, in their Mission Impossible Challenge held from October to December 2020.



Poster for Cluster B's InnoFest 2020



Officers participating in innovation activities in Cluster B's InnoFest 2019 (photos taken before COVID-19)

**BEYOND INNO MONTH, THE SPS 3i (IDEAS, IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPROVEMENT) INNOVATION FRAMEWORK AIMS TO SUPPORT INNOVATION WITHIN SPS ALL YEAR ROUND:**

**SPS 3i INNOVATION FRAMEWORK**

The SPS 3i Innovation Framework provides an overarching structure by describing the factors of innovation and detailing the three elements — Leadership, System and People, which support our innovation drive.



To drive and promote innovation in SPS, 3i drivers (selected senior leadership group), 3i chief advocates (selected leadership group) and 3i advocates (selected staff from every division/cluster/command) are appointed to foster a culture of innovation in their respective spheres of influence. SPS held its inaugural 3i Community of Practice (CoP) on 23 Sep 2020 virtually, for the 3i community to provide feedback on enhancing SPS' innovation initiatives and to share best practices on creating a more innovative culture in SPS.

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**DSP2 LIM WEI JIAT**

3i Advocate for Cluster A



**What are the essential mindsets, qualities or talents one should have to innovate?**

It is essential that we are curious about the things happening around us and have the desire to solve problems and close gaps. All innovation starts from a question, be it Who, What, When, Where, Why, or How.

To create new and better ways of doing things, it is important to be empathetic and put ourselves in the shoes of the stakeholders. One has to think out of the box and explore new ways of doing things with the resilience to persevere without the fear of failure. Giving up as soon as an idea fails will never lead to innovation. Innovation should not stop at the implementation of a new idea and it is vital for one to be reflective to think of how things could be done differently and how the new idea could be further improved.

**MX12 CHAN YIN LING**

3i Advocate for Intelligence Division



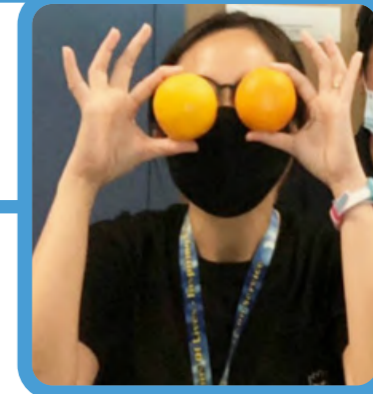
**What are the essential mindsets, qualities or talents one should have to innovate?**

To be innovative, an individual must possess two 'dares':

1. Dare to dream the impossible: To think out of the box and venture into the world of impossible, then we can find fresh new ideas.
2. Dare to voice out: If we stay silent and do not share the ideas with others, the bulb of innovation will never light up.

**SUPT 1A TEH PHUAY HIAN CAMMY**

Chief 3i Advocate for Community Corrections Command (COMC)



**What makes innovation sustainable in your workplace?**

COMC, being at the forefront of community corrections, creates a conducive environment for us to sandbox, test bed and experiment new ideas. Other than being at the right time and place, our staff at COMC embrace innovation in the course of their work. These are key ingredients in creating a flourishing and sustainable innovation culture!



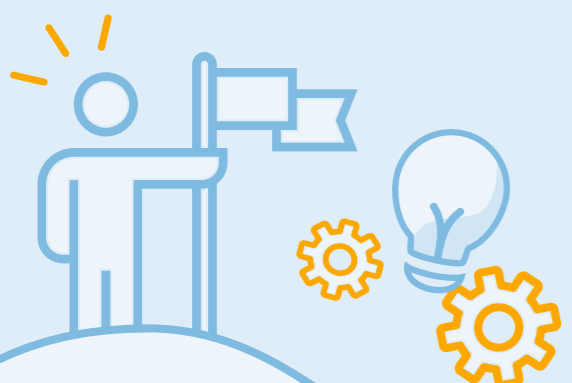
**STRONG SUPPORT FROM LEADERSHIP**

In conjunction with InnoMonth, we incorporated innovation-related topics into our Leadership Circle (LC), to enhance our leaders' knowledge of emerging trends in technology and innovations in the public service, and inspire the leadership group to kickstart discussions on how these could be applied in SPS.



SPS Leadership Circle (LC) conducted online in 2020.

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OUR CAPTAINS OF LIVES

# INNOVATION AWARD WINNERS

Reported by  
Prison News Reporters  
Sim Lin Yi, Tan Hui Min  
and Huzaifah Mustaffa

Singapore Prison Service (SPS) has a comprehensive recognition structure to encourage and reward innovative efforts. In line with Innovation Month (InnoMonth), Prison News interviewed our innovative Captains of Lives (COLs).

## MOST INNOVATIVE SUGGESTION AWARDS

The Most Innovative Suggestion Award is given to individuals and teams who contributed outstanding suggestions, which help to improve work processes in SPS.



**Most Innovative Suggestion Award: Individual Category**  
*Reflective Thinking Journal for Inmates Who Requested for Time-out*

### SSGT Ang Meng Kim Ann

SSGT Ann: Occasionally, inmates request for time-out, where they are given time and space to sort out their thoughts as they face difficulties adjusting to prison routine. Guided by Restorative Practices (RP), I developed a questionnaire to help facilitate reflection. This allows the Personal Supervisors and Correctional Rehabilitation Specialists to plan effective interventions.

I am happy to receive recognition and also positive feedback on the questionnaire from my fellow colleagues. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my Superintendent, Officer-in-Charge of my Housing Unit (OC HU) and Mr Thomas Cheng Yeow Tong for their guidance and support.



SSGT Ang Meng Kim Ann discussing the Reflective Thinking Journal (RTJ) with an inmate



**Most Innovative Suggestion Award: Group Category**  
*B2 Inmates' Orientation Video*

CW2 Mohammad Nuzaihan Bin Jaapar, SGT3 Muhammad Isa Bin Kemut, and SGT3 Mohamad Khairul Azhar Bin Ismail, SSGT Senthil Kumar S/O Rajakumar



Left to Right: SSGT Senthil Kumar S/O Rajakumar, CW2 Mohammad Nuzaihan Bin Jaapar, SGT3 Muhammad Isa Bin Kemut and SGT3 Mohamad Khairul Azhar Ismail

Our team streamlined our admission process by producing an orientation video for newly admitted inmates. This allows the standardisation and consistency of contents for our admission briefing and also saves time for briefing to be conducted for the newly admitted inmates. While the video taking and editing processes were tedious and often required us to work beyond our working hours and on off days, we are glad that our video was approved and used in admission briefing for newly admitted inmates. Winning the award gave us tremendous motivation to continue to improve our work processes.

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INNOVATIVE PROJECT

This award is given to innovative projects that have demonstrated substantial value creation like cost or time savings and have contributed to improved work processes.



**Innovative Project: Gold**  
*iBrief@FormSG*

ASP2 Muhammad Rashidi Bin Saidi,  
ASP2 Mohamed Taufiq Bin Razali,  
ASP1 Muhammad Miqhayil Khan,  
SSGT Mohamed Yasin Bin Omar,

CW2 Liu Zhiqiang,  
CW2 Lu Liangwei, Dave,  
SSGT Nur Aini Bte Kassim, and  
SSGT Muhammad Rizal Bin Abdul Rasip

Before emplacing inmates on Home Detention (HD), Community Based Programme (CBP) officers had to call and physically meet family members of inmates to brief them about the emplacement conditions and obtain their signatures on the acknowledgement form.

iBrief@FormSG streamlined the family briefing process by allowing an SMS to be sent to the family members via an Outlook mailbox. Family members can access the link via SMS to read the conditions and fill up the required form. Hence, the briefing and acknowledgement could be conducted without having to call and physically meet up. The inmates' family members no longer need to travel all the way to Changi to sign the acknowledgement form. This suggestion results in immense time-savings for the inmates' family members as well as for the CBP team.



Cluster B Programme Team (Photo taken before COVID-19)

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### Innovative Project: Silver

Community Corrections Command: Mobile Workforce Workgroup

MX12 Lam Yong Liang Bill,  
DSP1 Chia Kah Mun,  
MX12 Tan Shu Yi, Dorothy,  
MX12 Wang Mingyuan,  
MX12 Premnath S/O Vesudevan,

MX14 Qurayishah Binte Basari,  
SSGT Ramakrishna S/O Appa Rao,  
CW1 Mariana Binte Karim, and  
RO1 Yeo Kee Siang

The Workgroup was formed to enhance mobility, work efficiency and effectiveness for our COMC (Community Corrections Command) staff.

#### We are enabling COMC staff to be a mobile workforce.



Devices

Sourcing of appropriate software and hardware that meets our operating environment.  
Eg. New WOG laptop trials



Network connection



Assessment of work

Helping staff understand how work performance is being measured.



Work life balance

Developing remote working policies.



Sense of belonging

Building a collaborative and supportive culture in COMC.



Securing of physical space

Identifying suitable room/desk booking systems and designated team meeting days.

Aims of the Mobile Workforce Workgroup

The team is honoured to receive this award and would like to attribute our success to three key factors:

1. Having a Shared and Compelling Vision of wanting to make a positive difference in our work experience.
2. Firm belief in the importance of Co-Creation i.e. creating spaces for COMC staff at all levels, to offer ideas and feedback to promote a sense of shared ownership and collaboration. Co-creation is also about regular connections with end-users and celebrating every achievement in the project lifecycle.
3. Learning from success stories through learning journeys to other organisations such as Lego and GovTech.



Mobile Workforce Workgroup onsite orientation (Photo taken before COVID-19)



### Innovative Project: Bronze

Virtual Classroom

SEO1 Paruk S/O Kothari,  
DSP2 Wong Jin Wen,  
SCW1 Thai Chee Yong Ewen,  
CW1 Peng Zhibiao,  
SSGT Mohammed Sharil Bin Jumahat,  
SGT3 Nur Faiz Fadlin Bin Wagimin,

SGT3 Pierson Andrew Khoo Wan Fu,  
SGT2 Muhammad Firdaus Bin Md Zaini,  
SGT2 Anbaarashan S/O Uthayakumar,  
ASP2 Tan Ee Ping, and  
CW1 Mohamed Alfian Bin Ahmad



The Virtual Classroom Team

Virtual Classroom leveraged on technology and allowed Prison School students to continue with lessons during Circuit Breaker. To mimic Home-Based Learning (HBL) by allowing teachers to conduct lessons from the safety of their homes and minimise entry of personnel into prisons, the team designed a box to secure the laptops in class. The team also worked closely with the teachers on the timing to log on and lock the boxes prior to the students arriving for classes. The project required extensive planning as connection was required daily for 13 different classes with different teachers.

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## DARE TO TRY AWARD

This award recognises individuals or teams who, despite their innovations being unsuccessful, have displayed core innovator traits such as challenging the status quo, risk-taking, ability to apply learnings for future innovations and daring to experiment.



*Innovative Risk-Taking Management  
of Highly Disruptive Inmates*

DSP2 Mohamed Azhar Bin Zailan,  
RO2 Nor Hafiz Noraziz,  
RO1 Rodericks Ng,  
RO1 Eng Yii Hang,  
CW2 Amran Bin Osman,

CW2 Gunaseelan S/O Churian,  
CW1 Abdul Rauff Bin Mohamed,  
CW1 Muhammad Faizal Bin Mohd Nor, and  
CW1 Mohamed Shahril Bin Mohamed Ramli



RO1 Rodericks Ng encouraging positive change through discussing future goals

With the hopes of inculcating the right values and attitudes for inmates to be reflective individuals, Institution TM2 adopted the Risk-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) approach and explored creative strategies to manage a group of inmates who were being disruptive.

Initially, it was not all smooth-sailing as the inmates were not comfortable sharing their thoughts. With continuous guidance, rapport and bond between officers and inmates were built. The team's conscientious ways in managing and engaging the inmates contributed to the operational effectiveness of the housing unit, and potential disruptive incidents were prevented.

## SPS 3i FIREBRAND AWARD

This award is given to individuals who contributed significantly by helping to sustain an innovation culture and actively promoting innovation as a way of life. They must be instrumental in inspiring other officers to become innovative.

*ASP1 Mohamad Shafiq Bin Mohamad Rashid*

**What is one myth about innovation that you would like to bust?**

I must be an expert to innovate — not true! All you need is to be aware of your environment to see what the issues are, what you can do to make your work easier and have the determination to find a solution. If the solution is hard to realise, try and simplify it. Otherwise, find someone who might have the knowledge and work something out together. You can achieve more through collaboration.



## OUTSTANDING 3i ADVOCATES

This award is given to individuals to recognise their efforts for coordinating and encouraging innovation activities in their respective work units.

*CW2 Poo Foo Choon Woon*

**What is your favorite quote about innovation, and why?**

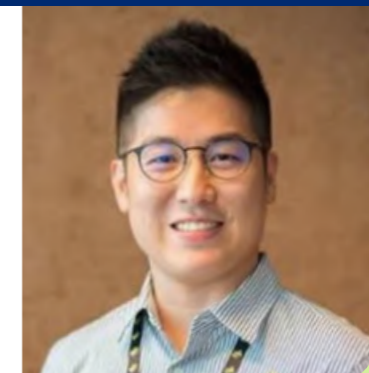
My favorite quote about innovation is from Thomas Edison "There's a way to do it better. Find it!" I believe that there is always a better way of doing things.



*DSP2 Lawrence Lee Boon Kiat*

**Who are your influences to innovate?**

I'm surrounded by creative colleagues with lots of innovative ideas, big and small. So, I think the vibe, coupled with the strong innovation culture in Cluster B, naturally inspired me to support initiatives that improve the way things are done.



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Captains of Lives  
October 26, 2020

**Happy (Virtual) Graduation!**

The Singapore Prison Training Institute held its first virtual graduation ceremony amidst the COVID-19 outbreak. Congratulations to our 35 graduates of the Prison Officer Course, and we look forward to their service and contributions to the nation, starting from their foundational roles as Housing Unit Officers and Personal Supervisors in the Singapore Prison Service.



[Click here to see video](#)

Captains of Lives  
October 8, 2020

**Happy Children's Day!**

Our #CaptainsOfLives wish all children a very Happy Children's Day!



[Click here to see IG post](#)

Captains of Lives  
November 1, 2020

**The Guardians Among Us: CW2 Kenny Seah**

On top of his daily duties, Chief Warden (CW) 2 Kenny Seah is also involved in the Gang Alternative Programme which supports inmates who wish to renounce from their gangs while imprisoned.

Congratulations CW2 Kenny for receiving the Minister for Home Affairs National Day Awards (Individual)!



[Click here to see FB post](#)

By: Prison News Editor Crystal Seet  
GET UP TO DATE WITH OUR  
CAPTAINS OF LIVES!  
CLICK ON THE POSTS  
TO FIND OUT MORE!

Each issue, we select trending posts from our @CaptainsOfLives social media accounts to provide a peek at what our COLs are up to. #ICYMI

Follow us! @CaptainsOfLives



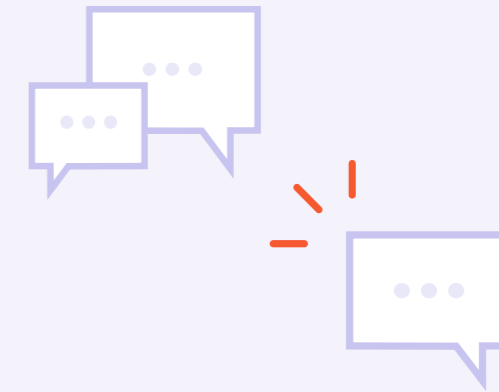
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CONVERSATION WITH...

Deputy Commissioner of Prisons  
(Policy and Transformation)

# MR DANIEL TAN

Reported by  
Prison News Sub-Editor  
Muhammad Sadiq Bin Saad  
and Reporter Lin Rouxiu



**A**C Gr 9 Daniel Tan, previously Director of Planning and Organisation in the Singapore Police Force (SPF), joined Singapore Prison Service (SPS) as the Deputy Commissioner of Prisons (Policy and Transformation) in July 2020. Prison News got the opportunity to check in with Mr Daniel Tan on how he was settling in after his first few months in SPS.



But apart from these normal challenges of taking on a new job, I would say that my experience thus far has been almost perfect.

**Q2** WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS THAT YOU SEE IN OUR CAPTAIN OF LIVES (COLs)?

In the Synergy Meeting Room, a painting caught my eye the first week I came in. Firstly, it was the visual beauty of the painting — it was almost like a photograph. It is not easy to capture light in a painting, but this one almost seemed to have light in it. Then, I went closer and realised that it was the starfish story. Every starfish you throw back into the water, is one starfish you have saved. You have made a difference to that one life.

I would say that the strength I see in our COLs is each of our officer's alignment to the SPS mission and vision, and what it means being a COL. I think every COL joined with that intention to make a difference, to make a change in the offenders' lives, and I think this really shows.

**Q1** HOW ARE YOU ADJUSTING TO PRISON LIFE SO FAR?

Thankfully, I am not behind bars! I have moved into a very welcoming culture, so it has been very easy to fit in. I realised that I already have about half of the Directorate in my contact list when I was added into the Directorate group chat. I am also thankful that our officers have been very welcoming to me. The only downside is that the whole COVID-19 situation restricts the opportunity to meet face-to-face over things like coffee, discussion groups, and lunch.

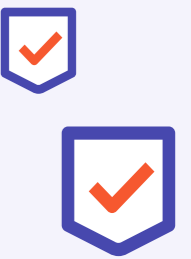
The greatest challenge for me in my first three months here was learning the work and picking up the domain knowledge. Before I came, Commissioner of Prisons and Deputy Commissioner of Prisons (Operations and Rehabilitation) handed me some reading materials, including items like desistance theory and the Risk-Needs-Responsivity model. These were all very new to me.

I am still trying to understand the prison lingo, terminologies, and abbreviations. Every time I go to a meeting, I will be scribbling down all these prison terms to find out later.

**VISION:**  
As Captains of Lives, we inspire everyone, at every chance, towards a society without re-offending.

**MISSION:**  
As a correctional agency, we enforce secure custody of offenders and rehabilitate them, for a safe Singapore.

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**THE STARFISH STORY #7**

by BARRY

Acrylic on canvas,  
102 cm x 76 cm

There was a man who was walking along a sandy beach where thousands of starfish had been washed up on the shore. He noticed a boy picking up the starfish one by one and throwing them back into the ocean. The man observed the boy for a few minutes and then asked what he was doing. The boy replied that he was returning the starfish to the sea, otherwise they would die.

The man then asked how saving a few, when so many are doomed, would make any difference whatsoever. The boy picked up a starfish and threw it back into the ocean and said, "Made a difference to that one..."

The man left the boy and went home, deep in thought on what the boy had said. He soon returned to the beach and spent the rest of the day helping the boy throw starfish into the sea.

The Starfish Story painting

Coming from SPF, the care that SPS officers have for those in our custody made a strong impression on me. One incident stood out as an example. Recently we had an inmate who was granted conditional release as he was terminally ill. Not long after, the inmate passed away. One of the Directorate Members commented that at least the inmate had spent the last few days of his life with his family. As a fellow human being, I could definitely relate to that sentiment. But in SPF, such sentiments rarely surface in work conversations. In this sense, I think our COLs have a big heart for our inmates.

As COLs, you actually see the good in inmates and the efforts that they put in to change for the better. Not all of our inmates succeed. I think it must be quite disheartening for our officers to see former inmates coming back into prison. For those working on the ground, in the Housing Units, they probably see more of those who come back than those who are doing well outside and never return. So, I am quite amazed at how our COLs stay motivated in the course of work. When Commissioner and I visited the halfway houses, she told the management that if they do have any success stories, to please send them to us so that we can share them with our officers, to let them know that they had a

part to play in the rehabilitation and reintegration of that ex-offender.

Another thing I admire about our COLs is the tenacity and endurance to work with offenders, day in and day out. I think it is very challenging to balance the role of a disciplinarian in keeping law and order in prison, and also to be that listening ear and helping hand when the time comes for it.

**Q3 WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON INNOVATION AND CHANGE IN THE WAY WE DO OUR WORK?**

Firstly, advances in technology will inevitably happen and our officers must be prepared for technological pushes in the future that will change how we work. From a project management perspective, we have to make sure that what we want to implement will eventually work. Hence, we need to have a good change management plan whenever we roll something out, and I think the best way is to get officers and users involved in the development phase earlier.

However, I want to assure officers that we will not implement technology or digitalise processes, just for the sake of it. It is important for us to look at the processes and review them first, before we digitalise them.

Secondly, I encourage our officers to look out for innovative solutions at work. My advice is that you don't have to think of big ideas. Start small and start from your area of work. Think about what bugs you and what your pain points at work are. Why are you doing work in ten steps when you think it can be done in five? Find out from your seniors and supervisors on why the ten steps are needed, or why processes are in place, and understand the rationale first. If we do not understand the rationale, then we might be dangerously taking short cuts.

In a similar vein, I also encourage every officer in their free time to read widely, watch documentaries, and always keep a look out for things that might work for us. We should also keep up to date with current affairs and what is happening in our society. This will help us broaden our minds and help us ask the right questions. Why are we doing the things we are doing now? Are they still relevant and appropriate today? What do we stand to lose when we implement something new or change something? Do we stand to gain more when we make changes? We need to look inwards, and also try to understand things from the perspective of the ordinary man in the street today. We should not stop thinking about change or get tired of it once we hit a hurdle.

Personally, I like the framing of Prisons Without Guards, Prisons Without Walls, and Learning Prisons, as these encapsulate the whole push towards Corrections 2025. These strategies are still relevant beyond 2025, but we have to also look at what else we can do. It is about seeing things from a fresh pair of eyes and see what else we can do better, and what are the red flags that we need to pay attention to and address.

**Q4 DO YOU HAVE ANY WORDS OR MESSAGE FOR OUR FELLOW COLS?**

I think it takes a very special someone to be a COL. When you are feeling down, always go back to the time when you decided to sign on as a COL and try to recharge your passion. Think about what makes you wake up in the morning and decide to go to work. You might have had a bad day but remember the occasions where the inmates or their family members said thank you to you for helping them change. Think of all the inmates that you have never seen again since they left. They are the starfishes which you have helped throw back into the sea.

To every COL, continue the good work and keep up the passion!

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# A PRISON VISIT MANAGEMENT (PVM) OFFICER

Reported by  
Prison News Reporters  
Lim Choon Leong and  
Liew Wan Rong

## WHAT DOES THE PVM UNIT DO?

PVM ensures the smooth operations of the visit sessions between inmates and their family members. PVM also oversees the operations of the call centre services, visit shop and five Prison Link Centres (PLCs) around Singapore, namely in Changi, Geylang Bahru, Jurong, Tanah Merah and Selarang Park.

## HEARING IT FROM THE PVM OFFICER

**RO1 HARIRAM S/O THANASEGARA RAJAH**  
PVM Officer

### Q1 What is the job scope of a PVM officer?

A PVM officer's main job scope is to ensure that the daily visit operations run smoothly. Within visit operations, there are many facets such as registration of visitors, booking and scheduling of visits, processing of documents etc. We must be quick to address any issues to prevent any disruptions to the visit processes.

### Q2 What were the challenges faced by PVM during the COVID-19 pandemic and how did you overcome it? How did the staff cope with the changes made during the COVID-19 pandemic?

During circuit breaker, all tele-visits and face-to-face visits were ceased. This measure was in line with the national measure of everyone having to stay at home except those who were working in essential services. However, keeping in touch with your loved ones and knowing that they were well became more important during the pandemic as both inmates and their families were worried about each other. Hence, we arranged for a 'phone-visit' system to ensure that the visitors can continue to communicate with their loved ones in the prisons. Both inmates and their families were appreciative of such arrangement. One visitor was thankful

for the phone-visit because it gave her bedridden father the opportunity to speak to his son in the prison.

Read more about the COVID-19 precautions taken in Prisons as well as for inmate visits here!

Because of COVID-19 and the circuit breaker, we had to be agile and change our processes to comply with the safe management measures (SMM). An example of a process change made was the registration of all new visitors for newly admitted inmates during the circuit breaker — the letter of notification to visitors included a QR code and URL link to register as visitors online. After receiving their online registration, we would quickly arrange for the phone-visits.

All the PVM officers also had to take over the roles of visit officers (which are outsourced roles) during the circuit breaker period such as screening the remaining visit items and books from the previous visit days and coordinating the phone-visit for the inmates.

When PLCs resumed visit operations after the circuit breaker, we had to ensure that SMMs are being adhered to. The visit rooms were cleaned regularly, hand sanitisers were made available, markings were placed on the floor and chairs and posters were put up to remind visitors to adhere to the SMMs.

We also have to be tactful when reminding visitors to comply with the SMMs. In addition, we had to regularly update relevant information in our websites for the visitors on our visit operations and schedules.

### Q3 What are some of the joys you find in your work?

I find joy working with my bosses and colleagues to overcome any disruptions or issues in our visit operations. Such situations not only provide us with new insights but

also strengthen our bonds when we resolve them together as a team.

I also find joy when I can assist visitors with the issues that they are facing. For example, sometimes after the visits, family members inform us that the inmates had asked them to follow up on their issues with different agencies (e.g. bail/financial/housing issues). PVM would check with the relevant agencies if there is an easier process. Sometimes we find out that instead of having family members visit the agencies on behalf of the inmates, the inmates can simply write a letter to the relevant agencies, saving a lot of trouble and time for the family members.

### Q4 What was the most memorable event during your stint as a PVM Officer?

Nothing can be more memorable than having to be nimble and flexible to change our processes because of COVID-19.



PVM Officer  
RO1 Hariram  
(background)

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#THROWBACK

# SETTING UP OF PRISON LINK CENTRES

Reported by  
Prison News Reporters  
Zhang Yun and Faizal Bin Roslan

**P**rison visits provide a platform for family members to encourage inmates to turn over a new leaf, as well as provide a source of comfort for both the inmates and their family members.

## BEFORE 1999

To visit inmates, family members had to travel to the prisons and drug rehabilitation centres where the inmates were incarcerated. Such arrangement was inconvenient to inmates' family members if their residences were far from the prisons and drug rehabilitation centres.

## 1999

On 1 May 1999, the first televisit facility was launched in Queenstown Remand Prison. Televisit enabled visitors to see inmates and talk to them from a remote location via video technology. This project allowed the physically disabled, the elderly and expectant mothers to visit inmates without the hassle of walking to the visit cubicles. In addition, waiting time for visits was reduced.

## 2001

In 2001, Singapore Prison Service extended televisits to all institutions.

## 2004

Prison Link Centres (PLCs) were set up around Singapore to facilitate convenient visits. The first PLC in Changi was set up in 2004.



Prison Link Centre (Changi)

PLC (Changi), under the command of Cluster A Management then, started off with a small team of 16 staff serving five institutions in Cluster A.

## 2008

With increased visitation volume, a second PLC was set up at Jurong in 2008. PLC (Jurong) enabled families of inmates staying in the West to have televisit sessions without the need to travel to Changi.

Despite being the smallest of the three Prison Link Centres, it serves an average of 200 visitors daily.



Prison Link Centre (Jurong)

## 2009

PLC (Changi) took over the visit operations of Cluster B institutions in 2009 and came under the purview of Rehabilitation and Reintegration Division.

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## 2010

A third PLC at Geylang Bahru started operations in December 2010. PLC (Geylang Bahru) is centrally located within the heartlands of Kallang. PLC (Geylang Bahru) is the largest televisit centre and serves an average of 300 visitors per day. Being co-located with a Day Reporting Centre, the officers also work with the Day Reporting Order (DRO) Officers who provide counselling programmes for those who are sentenced to DRO by the Courts.



Prison Link Centre (Geylang Bahru)

## 2012

PLC came under the ambit of Operations & Security Command (OSC) and was renamed Prison Visit Management (PVM) in April 2012.

## 2016

The operating model of visit management was transformed in July 2016 when it was outsourced to an external service provider.

PVM currently oversees five PLCs, namely: PLC (Changi), PLC (Tanah Merah), PLC (Selarang Park), PLC (Geylang Bahru), and PLC (Jurong). PLC (Tanah Merah) and PLC (Selarang Park) generally serve inmates housed in Tanah Merah Prison and Selarang Park Complex respectively.

Other than visits, the PLCs also facilitate the sending in of reading materials to inmates from their visitors. Inmates who are remanded can also receive food items purchased for them by their family members. PLC (Changi) has a Visit Shop for family members to purchase reading materials as well. Fei Yue and Lakeside Family Resource Centres are also co-located in PLC (Changi), to render the necessary support to families who need assistance.

Other than the PLCs, there are four additional community televisit centres operated by Social Service Agencies (SSAs). They are situated at Lakeside Family Centre, Singapore Children's Society, Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA) Step-Up Centre, and Kampong Ubi Community Centre.



Televisit facility at Lakeside Family Centre

Besides facilitating televisits, these SSAs also provide case management services and other referral assistance to inmates' family members. With the help of these SSAs as our community partners, the inmates and their family members can maintain their familial bonds which will positively contribute to the inmate's successful rehabilitation and reintegration.

## 2019

The latest community televisit centre is the iCosy Hub located at the Industrial and Services Co-operative Society (ISCOS) in Alexandra Road. It was operationalised in January 2019.



Former Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of Home Affairs Mr Amrin Amin (centre) with ISCOS' Chairman Mr Daniel Teo (right) and former Commissioner of Prisons Mr Desmond Chin at a demonstration of the televisit facilities in the iCosy Hub during its official opening ceremony on 25 January 2019

**As a frontline unit, PVM strives to ensure quality service and positive user experience for inmates' family members. Thus, PVM is actively working towards digitalisation and automation of their services.**





# TURNING SENTENCES INTO NEW CHAPTERS



Be a Captain of Lives  
[www.sps.gov.sg/career](http://www.sps.gov.sg/career)



**CAPTAINS OF LIVES**  
 REHAB • RENEW • RESTART

Follow us @CaptainsOfLives    

## WISHING ALL OUR READERS A HAPPY 2021 FROM OUR CAPTAINS OF LIVES!



RO2 Zhang Yun

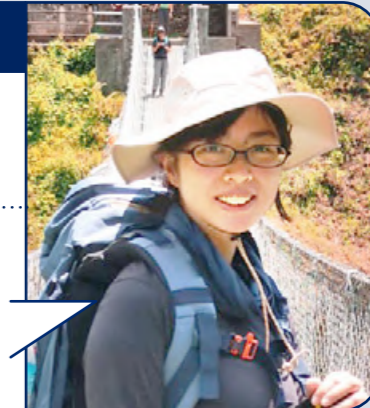
Housing Unit Officer,  
 Institution A4

Dear readers, 2020 was filled with many challenges which we had to overcome, but I'm glad we pulled through together as one Singapore. Here's wishing you a Happy New Year, and may our 2021 be filled with even more enriching experiences!

RO2 Lin Rouxiu

Staff Officer (Human Resources Planning),  
 Human Resources Planning & Recruitment Branch,  
 Staff Development Division

Wishing all a Happy New Year with new adventures and greater heights!



ASP2 Muhammad Sadiq Bin Sa'ad

Staff Officer (Community Policy),  
 Community and Family Engagement Branch,  
 Rehabilitation and Reintegration Division

May the coming year be filled with hope, happiness and fulfilment. Happy New Year to all!

MX12 Liew Wan Rong

Executive,  
 Cluster B Programme

2020 has been a challenging year. Let us greet 2021 with a warm smile and everything will be better. New year, new adventures together...



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