

prisonnews

JULISSUE 2020

CAPTAINS OF LIVES
REHAB • RENEW • RESTART

CONTENTS

- 02 EDITOR'S NOTE
- 03 MAIN FEATURE
Fighting COVID-19
in Prisons
- 06 OUR COLS
- 08 WHAT'S THE BUZZ?
- 10 CONVERSATION
WITH...
Different Units of SPS
Fighting COVID-19
- 13 A DAY IN THE
SHOES OF...
Laundry Work
Programme Officers
- 15 #THROWBACK
Laundry Operations
in SPS
- 17 WALL OF
APPRECIATION

Safe Distancing in SPS

During fall-in, check in on each other, especially if our colleagues have just returned from sick leave.

Reporting sick is MY RESPONSIBILITY
It's the right thing to do if I am unwell!

See a doctor Rest at home
Visit only one clinic for medical consultation if unwell.

Are you feeling better?
Yes, I am well!

Maintain a safe distance of at least **1 metre** even while wearing a mask.

Avoid loitering in changing rooms

Lunch?
No, let's eat alone as much as possible.

Stagger your lunch hours

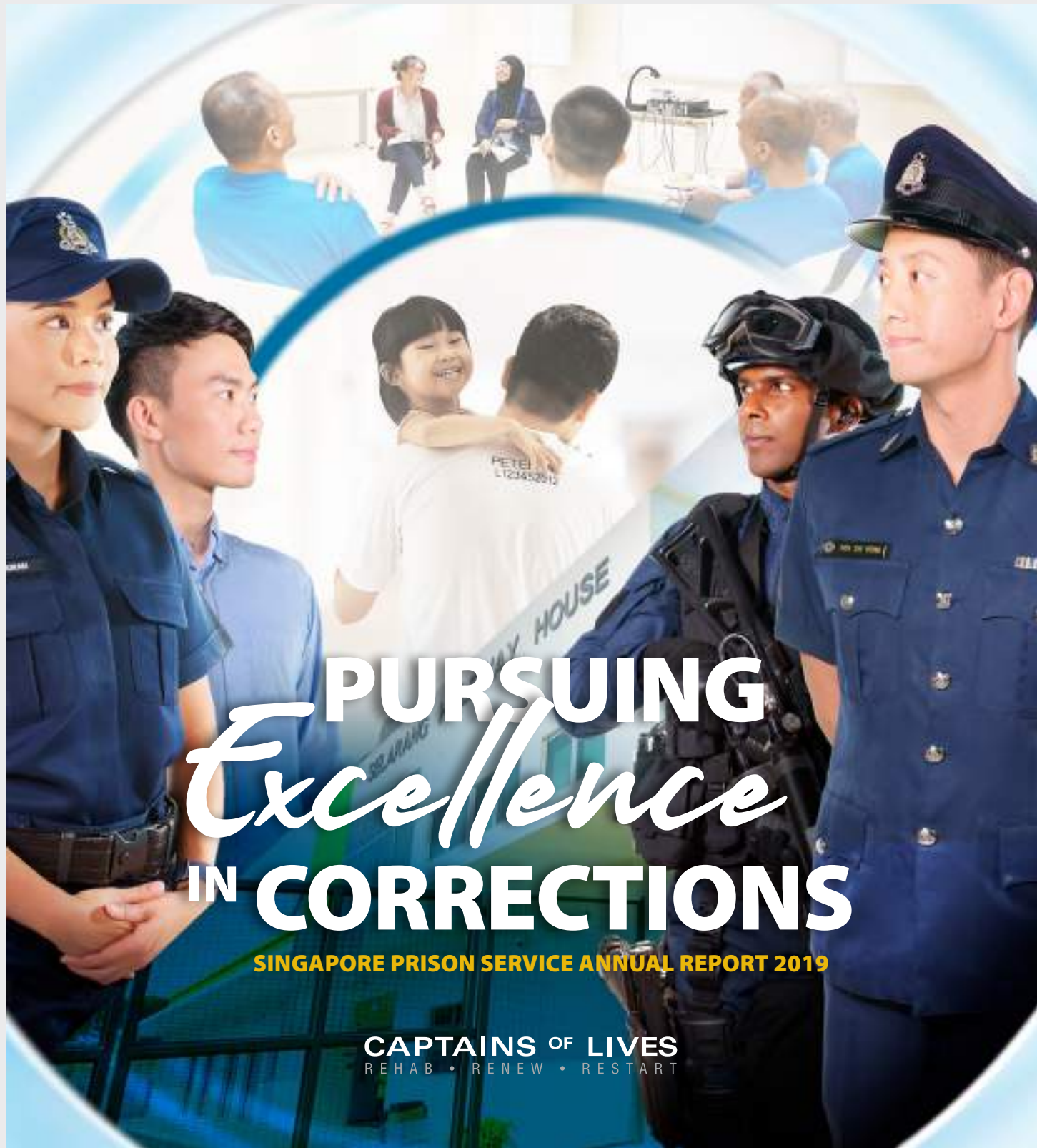
Press on - Together, we will emerge stronger!
#SPSUnited #SGUnited

FIGHTING COVID-19 IN PRISONS

MAIN FEATURE



SINGAPORE
PRISON SERVICE



PURSUING *Excellence* IN CORRECTIONS

SINGAPORE PRISON SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2019

CAPTAINS OF LIVES
REHAB • RENEW • RESTART



<https://go.gov.sg/sps-annualreport-2019-mobile>

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers

I hope you are keeping yourself well and staying safe during this unprecedented time. COVID-19 has drastically changed the way we work and live. In this issue, we take a look at the measures adopted by the Singapore Prison Service to **fight COVID-19**, and how the **different units** have adapted quickly to support our overall operations.

Some of our inmates are also contributing by working in the essential service in prisons, supplying hospitals with clean linens in the YR Industries Laundry. We remotely interviewed Laundry Work Programme Officers in our **"A Day in the Shoes"** segment to understand what their work entailed, as well as how soiled linens are managed. We also peeked into the history of **YR Industries Laundry**, where they had similarly supported hospitals during the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003.

Lastly, read on to discover our **Outstanding Captains of Lives** and what keeps them going!

ASP Crystal Seet
Editor, Prison News

02 Editor's Note

03 Main Feature
Fighting COVID-19
in Prisons

06 Our COLs

08 What's the Buzz?

10 Conversation
with...
Different Units
of SPS Fighting
COVID-19

13 A Day in the
Shoes of...
Laundry Work
Programme
Officers

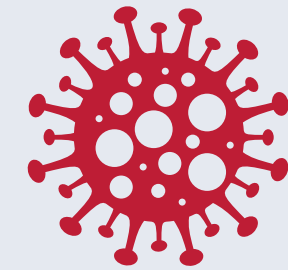
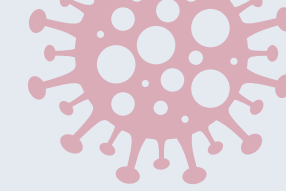
15 #Throwback
Laundry
Operations in SPS

17 Wall of
Appreciation



FIGHTING COVID-19 IN PRISONS

Reported by
Prison News Reporters Faizal Bin Roslan,
Liew Wan Rong and Tan Hui Min



- 02 Editor's Note
- 03 **Main Feature**
Fighting COVID-19
in Prisons
- 06 Our COLs
- 08 What's the Buzz?
- 10 **Conversation
with...**
Different Units
of SPS Fighting
COVID-19
- 13 **A Day in the
Shoes of...**
Laundry Work
Programme
Officers
- 15 **#Throwback**
Laundry
Operations in SPS
- 17 **Wall of
Appreciation**

C COVID-19 has disrupted normal operations in prisons since the first confirmed case in Singapore on 23 January 2020. Alongside community measures, Singapore Prison Service (SPS) also adopted measures to safeguard the health and safety of our inmates, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders such as inmates' family members who visit the inmates and personnel who enter prisons for official duties. The closed nature of the prison environment increases the risk of COVID-19 transmission in prison if not detected early. Therefore, SPS has introduced stringent measures to detect and prevent the transmission of the virus in our prisons. Even as more community activities resume during Phase 2, SPS is adopting a gradual and cautious approach to the resumption of activities in prison.



The COVID-19 situation was so dynamic and fast-evolving that my team and I had to quickly adapt and implement measures to ensure the safety of inmates, community partners and staff. We constantly reminded one another to don Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and practise safe distancing when interacting with one another."

ASP1 Muhd Nazir
Housing Unit Officer of an admission
housing unit in Institution B2

THE BEGINNING OF PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES IN PRISON

One of the first measures implemented was the 14-day cohort segregation for newly admitted inmates. Temperatures were also taken twice daily for inmates and staff, and social distancing measures were enforced in common areas. Should any inmate display symptoms, isolation measures were carried out promptly and swab tests were conducted depending on the assessment by the medical staff. All these measures were implemented to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmissions in prisons to protect the safety of all inmates and staff.



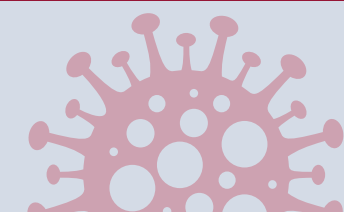
Temperature taking carried out twice daily on inmates

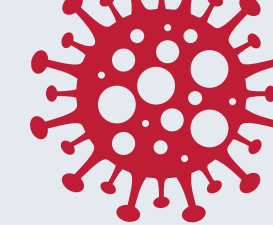


Social distancing markers guiding inmates to observe safe distancing



CW1 Ramesh donning PPE before interacting with inmates undergoing cohort segregation and isolation





Hand sanitisers were placed at the common areas for use by inmates and staff and the frequency of cleaning these common areas was also increased. Split-shift deployment system and suspension of staff events were also enforced, in line with the measures at national level.



Ensuring cleanliness by sanitising common areas



Sanitisers provided at common areas



Thermal imaging at all entry points

Other measures enforced for volunteers and visitors who needed to enter prisons for official duties include the declaration of travel history and temperature checks at the entry points of prison premises. Volunteers who declared that they had visited countries listed by the Ministry of Health (MOH) then were required to observe a 14-day leave of absence upon their return to Singapore, before they could conduct their programmes and services for our inmates.

THE START OF CIRCUIT BREAKER MEASURES

7 April 2020 marked the start of the Circuit Breaker measures in Singapore. Consequently, SPS also heightened our measures to protect our inmates and staff from COVID-19.

All inmates were issued reusable face masks to be worn at all times when out of their cells. Staff have to put on face masks while on duty.

Physical religious services by volunteers were suspended. The volunteers had to develop pre-recorded sermons and religious materials within a short period of time to allow virtual services to take place.

To ensure continuity in rehabilitation, programmes were delivered to inmates in the form of video screening and worksheets were also given for self-learning. Various stakeholders managing the reintegration and aftercare needs (e.g. Community Corrections Command, Yellow Ribbon Singapore) of the inmates had to conduct their interviews and placement exercises through phone calls.

In addition, the usual face-to-face visits and televisits for inmates were suspended as all Singaporeans had to stay at home, complying with the measures during the Circuit Breaker period. Understanding the anxiety of both inmates and their loved ones about each other's safety, SPS facilitated phone calls for the inmates to speak to their family members so that they could keep each other updated of their well-being.



Video screening of inmates' in-care programmes while observing safe distancing

02 Editor's Note

03 Main Feature
Fighting COVID-19 in Prisons

06 Our COLs

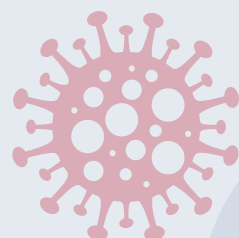
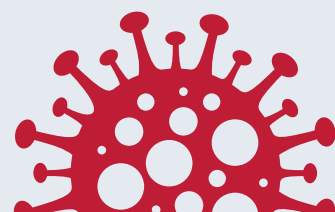
08 What's the Buzz?

10 Conversation with...
Different Units of SPS Fighting COVID-19

13 A Day in the Shoes of...
Laundry Work Programme Officers

15 #Throwback
Laundry Operations in SPS

17 Wall of Appreciation



02 Editor's Note

03 Main Feature
Fighting COVID-19
in Prisons

06 Our COLs

08 What's the Buzz?

10 Conversation
with...
Different Units
of SPS Fighting
COVID-19

13 A Day in the
Shoes of...
Laundry Work
Programme
Officers

15 #Throwback
Laundry
Operations in SPS

17 Wall of
Appreciation

“

Measures had to be implemented within a short timeframe. With collaboration across the Divisions like the Rehabilitation and Reintegration Division and Operations Division, we were able to quickly draft and get approval for our measures and contingency plans. Teamwork was reinforced by strengthening communication and trust with each other.”

CW2 Vivian Ng
B4 Programme Officer



Phone calls facilitated to replace physical interviews



Released inmates issued with reusable face masks and hand sanitiser

For staff, heightened measures throughout SPS included telecommuting for non-operational staff, suspension of in-person staff training and using SafeEntry at the entry points of prison premises.



SafeEntry for all individuals entering and exiting the compound

As Singapore adapts to the new normal, SPS is also adjusting our operations and routines in prisons. We will continue to engage inmates to keep them updated on the measures that impact them and their loved ones, and also allay any concerns the inmates might have.

Even though Singapore has progressed into the post-Circuit Breaker period, our fight against COVID-19 is far from over. SPS will continue some of the existing stringent safety protocols and take a gradual and cautious approach to ease and lift measures in the prisons — our utmost priority is to ensure the safety of our inmates and staff.

Keep well and stay safe everyone!



Correctional Rehabilitation Specialists (CRS) providing words of encouragement for the operational staff

INTRODUCING OUR OUTSTANDING CAPTAINS OF LIVES 2020!

Reported by
Crystal Seet
(Prison News Editor)

The Outstanding Captains of Lives (OCOL) Award is a prestigious departmental award for Captains of Lives who display professionalism in their work and are exemplary role models.

Read on to find out what keeps our seven OCOLs going!



CW2 Ho Yeow Nam, Dennis
Admin & Personnel
Officer, Operations
& Security
Command (OSC)

How do you feel being an OCOL Award recipient?

I share the credit with my team at OSC Staff Development & Corporate Services. I am thankful to work with a great team. When I was posted to OSC, I had little experience with staff work and my colleagues patiently guided and mentored me. Being an OCOL Award recipient is an honour and receiving the award will definitely motivate me to push on and continue to give my best at work.

What has been your greatest challenge as a COL and how did you overcome it?

Our job involves helping inmates to change for the better, but change has to come from the inmates. The challenge is understanding what would motivate them to make a change.

Inmates come from various backgrounds and they face different struggles. There is no "one-size-fits-all" solution. To overcome this, I am currently taking several Psychology-related courses to learn more about human behaviour.

What's your most memorable encounter with an inmate or ex-offender?

Once, in a housing unit, I heard a soft moaning sound. I presumed an inmate was snoring, but I checked anyway. I saw an inmate having difficulties breathing and clutching his chest. The ambulance was activated, and we had to carry the inmate down three storeys with a stretcher. Fortunately, the inmate recovered. He thanked me profusely and said the doctors told him he would not be alive if there was a delay in medical attention.



CW2 Abdul Hafiz Bin Abdul Wahab
Senior Personal
Supervisor,
Cluster A

How would you describe your daily work in one sentence?

Other than ensuring safe and secure custody of inmates under my care, I ensure they take ownership of their own rehabilitation through positive interactions with them.

What has been your greatest challenge as a COL and how did you overcome it?

It can be quite disappointing to know that an inmate under your charge had relapsed and is re-incarcerated. You will start questioning if you could have done something better. I remind myself that as long as I have given my best, there isn't a need to feel bad. You will never know when the little things that you do might be the stepping stone for an inmate to change. So keep trying.

What's your most memorable encounter with an inmate or ex-offender?

I had an inmate who had a poor relationship with his child. His child hated him and did not wish to visit nor write to him. After the Family Interventions and Reintegration Support Team (FIRST) engaged the child and inmate several times, their relationship improved. The inmate continued to work towards strengthening their relationship. Our job affects not just the inmates, but their family members as well.



CW2 Hing Su Wan
Reintegration Officer,
Community
Corrections
Command (COMC)

How would you describe your daily work in one sentence?

My daily work involves engaging with my supervisees on their well-being and their reintegration efforts, at a time and location that works for both of us.

How do you motivate yourself or your peers when the going gets tough?

I always adopt a positive mindset, and the spirit of not giving up helps me to overcome difficult moments. The synergy within the team also enables everyone to help one another in times of need.

What's your most memorable encounter with an inmate or ex-offender?

One of my ex-supervisees who completed his programme in 2015 called me up in 2019 to update me on his well-being. There was no need for him to do so, but the phone call was especially heart-warming when he expressed his gratitude for our efforts in guiding him through his challenges back then.

- 02 Editor's Note
- 03 Main Feature
Fighting COVID-19
in Prisons
- 06 Our COLs
- 08 What's the Buzz?
- 10 Conversation
with...
Different Units
of SPS Fighting
COVID-19
- 13 A Day in the
Shoes of...
Laundry Work
Programme
Officers
- 15 #Throwback
Laundry
Operations in SPS
- 17 Wall of
Appreciation



**CW2 Charles
S/O Pangkeas**
Cluster Control
Centre Team IC,
Cluster B

How do you motivate yourself or your peers when the going gets tough?

“Push yourself because no one else is going to do it for you”. I would remind myself that every problem has a solution — it depends on how you handle it. I also shared this with my peers: “Solve the problem or leave the problem, do not live with the problem”.

Why did you choose to join SPS, and what keeps you going?

I was curious about what goes on inside prisons. I am motivated to do my best in changing the mindsets of inmates to get them back onto the right path, for them to be responsible people.

What’s your most memorable encounter with an inmate or ex-offender?

I met an ex-offender while I was attending a church service with my family. He came over to introduce me to his family as a “Prison Guardian Angel”. I was at a loss for words, as I did not realise that I had made such a big impact in his transformation into a sincere and responsible family man. That was a memorable day for me as my children told me they admired me and my job as a Prison Officer.



CW2 Ang Kian Heng
Trainer [Singapore
Prisons Emergency
Action Response
(SPEAR) Force],
Operations Division

How do you feel being an OCOL and award recipient?

I am surprised and honoured to be an OCOL award recipient. To me, it is a recognition from the men in SPEAR, my peers and my bosses, and SPS as a whole.

What has been your greatest challenge as a COL and how did you overcome it?

My greatest challenge was completing the 4-month SPEAR Basic and Advanced Tactical Course back in 1999. Although that was many years back, I still remember it very well. The course was very demanding both physically and mentally, but none of us took the option of ringing the bell to give up. The tough challenges trained our persistence and mental resilience, and that is how I am still with SPEAR today.

Why did you choose to join SPS, and what keeps you going?

On a practical note, I needed a stable income. I joined the service in 1998 during the financial crisis and I was grateful to be able to get a job then. However, I developed a passion for the job over the years, especially after I joined SPEAR. I feel proud to be able to contribute as a trainer to both SPEAR and institutional officers. This is what keeps me going and I’m happy working where I am today.



**MX12 Norain’ni
Binte Abd Aziz**
Correctional
Rehabilitation
Specialist, Cluster C

Why did you choose to join SPS, and what keeps you going?

I chose to join SPS because of my interest and passion in helping ex-offenders after an internship at a Halfway House. Now, my interaction with the inmates and seeing those who go on to become better sons, brothers or fathers to their families keeps me going. Building relationships with colleagues in SPS has also been a factor that keeps me going as we exchange valuable knowledge and experiences in our work journey.

What has been your greatest challenge as a COL and how did you overcome it?

My greatest challenge would be working with resistant and difficult inmates with very low motivation to change. I’d tell myself that change takes time, and this is not the time for us to give up hope but to push on. Working closely with and sharing the struggles with the inmate’s Personal Supervisor helps in our intervention.

What’s your most memorable encounter with an inmate or ex-offender?

My most memorable encounters come from the ex-offenders acknowledging me in the community and sharing with me how life has changed for them upon release. It made me feel that we have made an impact on them and/or their families, even if it is from that small effort or short interaction we had with them.



ASP2 Tan Yew Chuan
Housing Unit Officer
(HUO), Cluster C

How do you feel being an OCOL Award recipient?

This award goes to the Cluster C leadership team and awesome colleagues who helped me get to where I am today. The only thing I can offer you in return is working harder and to be a better colleague than what you have been for me.

How do you overcome challenges you encountered as a COL?

It is all about getting past your comfort zone because the longer you stay there, the tougher it is to get out. I always tell myself that challenges and problems are opportunities to help us become better, not bitter. As Captain Jack Sparrow would say: “The problem is not the problem. The problem is your attitude about the problem.”

Why did you choose to join SPS, and what keeps you going?

I was curious about what really goes on behind the prison walls and decided to join Prisons. I was given the privilege to be deployed in one of the Maximum Security Prisons — the old Changi Prison. As a SPEAR officer, I had the opportunity to train with local elite Military and Law Enforcement Units, as well as attend study trips to Correctional Departments in Hong Kong, U.S.A and Australia. Looking back from where I started as a Sergeant to where I am today as a HUO and SPEAR detachment officer in Cluster C, my journey has truly been eye-opening.

02 Editor’s Note

03 Main Feature
Fighting COVID-19
in Prisons

06 Our COLs

08 What’s the Buzz?

10 Conversation
with...
Different Units
of SPS Fighting
COVID-19

13 A Day in the
Shoes of...
Laundry Work
Programme
Officers

15 #Throwback
Laundry
Operations in SPS

17 Wall of
Appreciation



- 02 Editor's Note
- 03 Main Feature
Fighting COVID-19 in Prisons
- 06 Our COLs
- 08 **What's the Buzz?**
- 10 Conversation with...
Different Units of SPS Fighting COVID-19
- 13 A Day in the Shoes of...
Laundry Work Programme Officers
- 15 #Throwback
Laundry Operations in SPS
- 17 Wall of Appreciation

Captains of Lives
June 21, 2020 at 11:00am

Happy Father's Day!

For Father's Day, #CaptainsOfLives SSGT Muhammad Syafie shared about his first year of fatherhood during a pandemic. Syafie takes various precautionary measures while working as a frontline officer in prison to ensure not only the health and safety of inmates and his colleagues, but also his eight-month old son and wife at home. Becoming a father has also spurred him to be a better role model, not just to his son but also to the inmates. By listening to their life stories and giving them encouragement, Syafie hopes that it will motivate them to kick-start their rehabilitation journey.



[Click here to see IG post](#)

Captains of Lives
May 9, 2020 at 4:00pm

Happy Mother's Day!

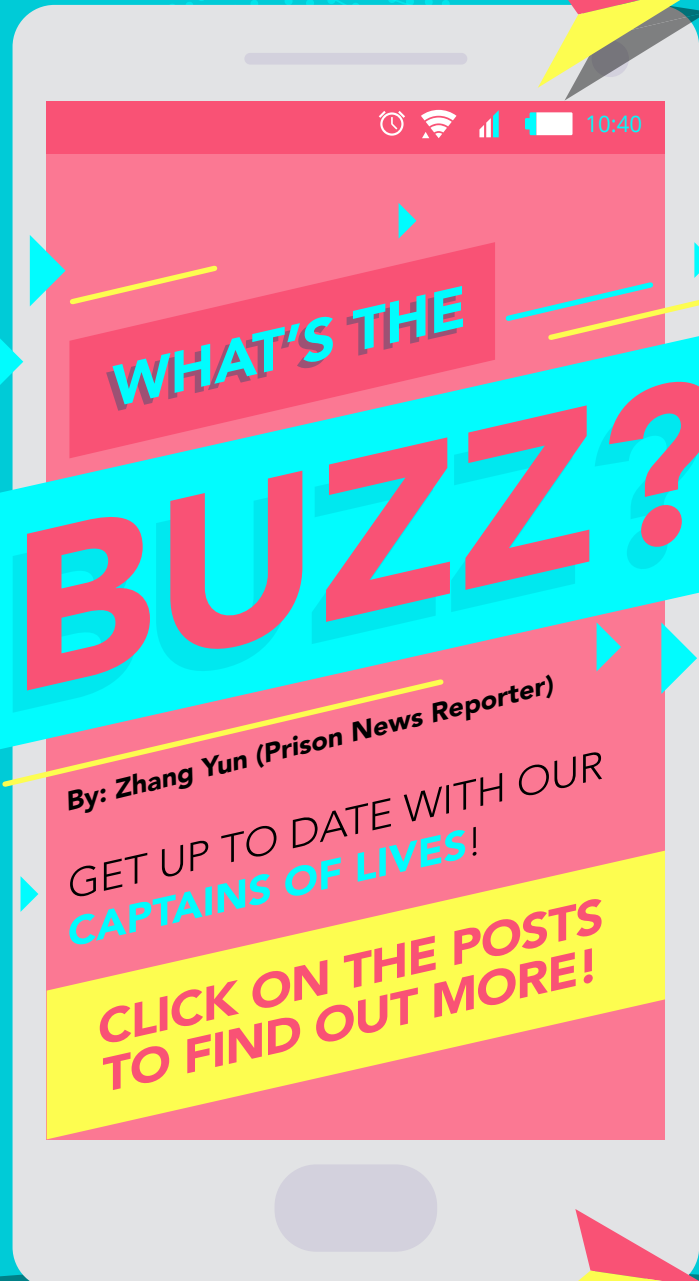
For Mother's Day, #CaptainsOfLives Syarifah, a dedicated mum of four and also a Personal Supervisor at Institution A4, shared about the 3Ps — Passion, Patience & Positivity, values which she holds to maintain work-life harmony amid the COVID-19 situation. Syarifah confided that it is challenging juggling long work hours and having to care for her kids at home, but they are also the ones who give her the motivation to keep going.



"Supporting inmates at every step of their rehabilitation journey is so important because it gives hope for a better future."

– Syarifah Nurul Hakimah Personal Supervisor, Institution A4

[Click here to see IG post](#)



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



Ministry of Home Affairs, Singapore
June 11, 2020

FAST and mFAST

Since the emergence of COVID-19, the Home Team has moved swiftly to support the national response to this public health threat. Here's a snapshot of how our Home Team Guardians, including some of our #CaptainsOfLives, are playing their part in Home Team's Forward Assurance and Support Team (FAST) and mobile FAST (mFAST).



- 02 Editor's Note
- 03 Main Feature
Fighting COVID-19 in Prisons
- 06 Our COLs
- 08 What's the Buzz?
- 10 Conversation with...
Different Units of SPS Fighting COVID-19
- 13 A Day in the Shoes of...
Laundry Work Programme Officers
- 15 #Throwback
Laundry Operations in SPS
- 17 Wall of Appreciation

Captains of Lives
May 15, 2020 at 11:00pm

DSP Andy Kwa Officer-in-Charge of a Housing Unit

#CaptainsOfLives DSP Andy Kwa is the Officer-in-Charge of a Housing Unit comprising about 400 inmates who are awaiting trials. He shared about his job challenges, especially during the COVID-19 period, but he also finds the job meaningful and rewarding when the inmates heed his advice to display positive behaviours while awaiting the outcomes of their trials.

He also shared the importance of family support and teamwork at his workplace, which have kept him motivated to do his best despite the challenges and long hours at work.



Ministry of Home Affairs, Singapore
April 1, 2020 at 12:00pm

Giving Back

Linus Kok, 55 years old, used to hang out with gang members who exposed him to vices such as smoking, gambling, and drugs. He started abusing drugs at the age of 16, and fought a 20-year long battle with drug addiction. It took him in and out of prison seven times. The discovery of his faith and his ageing parents made him realise he had to change.

After his release in 2015, Linus went to The Helping Hand halfway house to undergo treatment and rehabilitation, where he now continues to be involved as a volunteer, doing occasional graphic design projects. He is now an active Prison volunteer who plays a vital role in offering support and spiritual guidance to offenders and ex-offenders.



Ministry of Home Affairs, Singapore
May 22, 2020

Adapting as a Reintegration Officer during Circuit Breaker



CW Premilla d/o Gunasekaran
Reintegration Officer,
Community Corrections
Singapore Prison Service

“As a Reintegration Officer, I manage my supervisees virtually through calls and messages during this Circuit Breaker period. Counselling is conducted through video calls, in place of face-to-face sessions. As I'm able to work from home, I also strive to balance work with my role as a mother to my two kids.”

Captains of Lives
June 22, 2020

Singapore Prison Service Corporate Video 2020

This year's joint Corporate Advance with Yellow Ribbon Singapore (YRSG) was themed "2Gather, Co-creating Community Corrections, Preventing Re-offending". Although the Corporate Advance was cancelled due to COVID-19, this video sheds light on how the community plays an important part in transforming the lives of ex-offenders and re-integrating them back to society. Singapore Prison Service and YRSG works with community partners, volunteers and employers to guide the offenders through their rehabilitation journey.



DIFFERENT UNITS OF SPS FIGHTING COVID-19

Reported by
Prison News Editor Crystal Seet and Sub-editor
Muhammad Sadiq Bin Saad

COVID-19 brought about many challenges in maintaining smooth operations of the prisons and effective rehabilitation for our inmates. During this period, collaboration and teamwork within the Singapore Prison Service (SPS) and with our key partners are crucial in overcoming the crisis together. Prison News spoke to officers from various units, which have allowed SPS to continue keeping our inmates and staff safe with their agility, nimbleness and synergy.

When COVID-19 first hit Singapore, there was a need to ensure that SPS was well-prepared logistically to fight this virus.

SUPT1A Cheam Tiong Pheng
Senior Assistant Director, Logistics Branch (LB)



SUPT1A Cheam Tiong Pheng (right) with Mr Bilson from SSW Logistics Pte Ltd., a subsidiary of Temasek Foundation, which donated reusable masks and hand sanitisers for use by inmates and staff

Q1 WHAT WERE LB'S PRIORITIES IN DEALING WITH THE COVID-19 SITUATION?

LB's role is to support operations through the sourcing, procurement and distribution of logistical items such as the Personal Protection Equipment (PPE). In view of the very fluid and fast-paced situation in which new measures were rolled out, one of LB's priorities was to be able to react quickly and co-ordinate closely with Operations Division to ensure our ground units were equipped with the essential items to perform their duties safely.

Q2 WHAT WERE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES THAT LB FACED DURING THE COVID-19 SITUATION?

The highly uncertain situation generated new and changing requirements often. While handling the additional workload arising from the fight against COVID-19, LB needed to concurrently ensure that the regular logistics processes continued seamlessly. All these were managed while LB staff were also subjected to the social distancing measures which required us to work from home.

I would like to thank all units for their understanding and patience in this period as we experienced some disruptions to our supplies and logistics processes.

Logistically prepared, we had to restrict movements into prisons to reduce the risk of potentially exposing our inmate population to the virus.



SUPT1A
Valerie Chiang
Senior Assistant
Director, Community
and Family Policy
Branch (CFP)

Q1 WHAT WERE CFP'S PRIORITIES IN DEALING WITH THE COVID-19 SITUATION?

I represented the Rehabilitation and Reintegration Division, Psychological and Correctional Rehabilitation Division and Cluster Programme Units to develop programme-related plans in response to the COVID-19 situation. One of our priorities was to engage in open and timely communications with our partners.

We had to reduce the number of external personnel entering prisons for programmes without compromising on the level of programmes required to address inmates' criminogenic and faith-based needs. When we first implemented the safe management measures, we had to handle communications with more than 60 social service agencies tactfully and respectfully, as we had to tell them to suspend their activities. Thankfully, they were understanding and agreed with our cautious approach, a testament to the good relations built over the years and the trust they had in SPS.

Q2 WE MAY EMERGE FROM THE COVID-19 SITUATION INTO A 'NEW NORMAL'. GOING FORWARD, DO YOU FORESEE ANY IMPACT ON INMATES' REHABILITATION AND THE WAY WE WORK?

COVID-19 forced us to adopt new operating processes quickly and consider new possibilities to facilitate our labour-intensive work. While there are many technologies in the community to enable 'business as usual' in a 'COVID-19 world', the same technologies may require adaptations before prisons can benefit from them. Fortunately, the willingness to try has already been seeded in us and gathered speed in some areas.

- 02 Editor's Note
- 03 Main Feature
Fighting COVID-19 in Prisons
- 06 Our COLs
- 08 What's the Buzz?
- 10 Conversation with...
Different Units of SPS Fighting COVID-19
- 13 A Day in the Shoes of...
Laundry Work Programme Officers
- 15 #Throwback
Laundry Operations in SPS
- 17 Wall of Appreciation

However, we continue to receive newly-admitted inmates, who may have COVID-19 as they had been in the community. B2 and A4 managed new admission inmates vigilantly.



SUPT1A
Tan Bin Kiat
Superintendent,
Institution B2

Q1 WHAT WERE B2'S PRIORITIES IN DEALING WITH THE COVID-19 SITUATION?

B2's effort alone is insufficient to overcome the challenges faced during this period. Institutions B1 and TM2, and Cluster B Medical Centre came on board to collectively help B2 to manage the new admission inmates.

Our priority is the inmates' and staff's safety. Hence, much effort was put into planning the appropriate use of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for staff and inmates, the safe accommodation of newly admitted inmates, and the process flow in managing these inmates.

Q2 DO YOU HAVE ANY WORDS OF MOTIVATION YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH THE GROUND STAFF WHO HAVE BEEN WORKING HARD DURING THIS DIFFICULT PERIOD?

All staff in SPS play important but different roles in combating COVID-19. Your cooperation and dedication as '#SPSUnited' is much appreciated. We are all in this together to overcome this crisis.

In any adversity, there will be opportunities. Let's all learn from the opportunities and emerge stronger and better prepared for the future, come what may.

SUPT1A Ng Kailin
Superintendent, Institution A4



SUPT1A Ng Kailin (third from right) with her "pillars at work" at a team-bonding session (picture taken before COVID-19)

Q1 WHAT WERE A4'S PRIORITIES IN DEALING WITH THE COVID-19 SITUATION?

A4's priorities are the same as the Department's in keeping COVID-19 out of prisons. At the same time, we also ensure that inmates were not unduly alarmed about the situation.

Personally, my priority during this time has been to check in more with my staff to see if they were coping well at work and at home. This helped me keep a tab on the pulse of the institution, inmates or officers, to see how we could improve our fight against COVID-19, or help our officers be more effective at work.

Q2 DO YOU HAVE ANY WORDS OF MOTIVATION YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH THE GROUND STAFF WHO HAVE BEEN WORKING HARD DURING THIS DIFFICULT PERIOD?

I have faith that if we maintain what we are doing now and not let our guard down, we will see the light at the end of the tunnel.

We started strong when COVID-19 started, and we shall finish as strong, if not stronger. "Victory belongs to the most persevering" — Napoleon Bonaparte.

We implemented Safe Management Measures (see our Main Feature) and made sure these measures were adhered to.

DSP2 Ravichandran S/O Ambalavanar
OC Inspectorate, Inspectorate & Review Division (IRD)



DSP2 Ravichandran (standing, first from right) with his colleagues from the Inspectorate and Review Division at a team bonding event (picture taken before COVID-19)

Q1 DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS PLAY DIFFERENT ROLES IN OUR COORDINATED EFFORT AGAINST COVID-19 IN PRISONS. WHAT WERE IRD'S PRIORITIES IN DEALING WITH THE COVID-19 SITUATION?

As the department navigates the impact of COVID-19, IRD's role as a catalyst for evaluating and improving the effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes has never been more important. These exceptional times require IRD to focus on its advisory and assurance roles to the department on the implementation and compliance of Safe Management Measures (SMM). IRD coordinates the compliance checks of SMM in Divisions and Clusters by their respective Safe Management Officers. IRD also ensures that non-compliances are resolved in a timely manner. Apart from these checks, IRD conducts independent checks of the various locations using CCTV cameras. IRD then reports the findings for discussion and direction at the weekly COVID-19 Coordination Meeting.

Q2 WHILE CONDUCTING YOUR AUDITS, HAVE YOU SEEN ANYTHING THAT HAS HEARTENED YOU?

It was heartening to see how IRD has stepped up to show the value-added role it provides in helping to support the department's continuity efforts and objective of providing a safe and healthy environment for our inmates and staff. It was also heartening to see how this pandemic has helped to bind our officers together towards this same objective.

- 02 Editor's Note
- 03 Main Feature
Fighting COVID-19 in Prisons
- 06 Our COLs
- 08 What's the Buzz?
- 10 Conversation with...
Different Units of SPS Fighting COVID-19
- 13 A Day in the Shoes of...
Laundry Work Programme Officers
- 15 #Throwback
Laundry Operations in SPS
- 17 Wall of Appreciation

Having put measures in place to safeguard our inmates and staff, we ensured our staff training and operational readiness were not compromised.



SUPT1A
Justin Paul Vikneswaran
Commandant, Singapore Prison Training Institute (SPTI)

Staff from some units were required to work from home. Technological support was needed to facilitate such work arrangements.



SUPT1 Cem Sim (left) with her colleague from T&TD

SUPT1 Sim
Jing Xin Cem
Senior Assistant Director, Trans-Tech Development & Sustainment Branch, Transformation & Technology Division (T&TD)

We were able to continue smooth operations with staff working on the ground and some working from home. We had to ensure the well-being of our staff and that they remain mentally resilient during this difficult period too.

HTS11A
Wayne Ferroa
Senior Assistant Director, Operational Psychology Branch



Mr Wayne Ferroa with Operational Psychology Branch at a yoga team-bonding session (picture taken before COVID-19)

Q1 WHAT WERE SPTI'S PRIORITIES IN DEALING WITH THE COVID-19 SITUATION?

SPTI's key role is to ensure the critical training needs and operational readiness of SPS continue to be met without compromising staff's safety. These include new entrant officer training, tactical and first-aid skills refreshers, and conducting Physical Fitness Tests.

Safe management measures have to be adhered to while conducting training, with no intermingling of staff from the different working locations. Our challenge is balancing training and learning needs without being the weak link that allows the infection to spread to our vulnerable inmate population.

Q2 DO YOU HAVE ANY WORDS OF MOTIVATION YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH SPTI STAFF AND TRAINEES, WHO HAD TO ADAPT QUICKLY TO CHANGES IN TRAINING AND LEARNING DURING THIS PERIOD?

We are experiencing an unprecedented VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous) situation. We had to adapt and respond quickly to prevent the virus from entering prisons. Nevertheless, we must stay on course to fulfil our mission. To this, I am happy and proud that the SPTI team and the recently graduated Panthera and Zenith cohorts have hunkered down and met the challenges head on. In the midst of this adversity, there arose opportunities for changes in forming the new norm. We leveraged on technology in our training and learning efforts. This was only possible because everyone was open and resolute in trying new things and forming workaround solutions.

To my team and to the trainees, we will for sure see better days down the road. Stay strong, stay safe, and stay focused on your purpose as a Prison Officer — Captain of Lives.

Q1 WHAT WERE TRANSFORMATION & TECHNOLOGY DIVISION (T&TD)'S PRIORITIES IN DEALING WITH THE COVID-19 SITUATION?

Our priorities were to leverage technology to minimise disruption to SPS' key operations to ensure business continuity. We ensured staff who had to work from home were equipped with the necessary equipment and given the required technical support to do so. For inmates, we provided alternative arrangements so that they could continue to be engaged purposefully in their rehabilitation.

▶ [Learn how teachers conducted classes remotely at Prison School here.](#)

Most importantly, inmates could continue to keep in touch with their families via phone calls and e-letters when visits had to be suspended.

Q2 WHAT WERE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES THAT T&TD FACED DURING THE COVID-19 SITUATION?

One of the key challenges we faced during COVID-19 was the short timeline for T&TD to implement tech solutions, especially when it required us to source for ready tech equipment in the market. During the initial phase when many countries' borders were closed, the stock of these tech equipment were very low, likely because other companies were sourcing for them as well. T&TD is very lucky to have a team of dedicated staff who were willing to go all out, including working overtime and on weekends to meet operational needs.

Q1 WHAT WERE THE OPERATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY BRANCH (OPSYB)'S PRIORITIES IN DEALING WITH THE COVID-19 SITUATION?

Our focus is enhancing staff's mental well-being, to help them maintain high level of performance at work. We foresaw that staff would likely face greater demands and stress from work which could impact their own personal lives. To win the fight against COVID-19, we had to band together and stay united. Hence, we came up with various broadcasts and guides and worked with the Corporate Communications & Relations Division, Well-being and Personnel Branch, and other Psychological and Correctional Rehabilitation Division (PCRD) branches to provide additional support to help the staff navigate these difficult times. We also identified some high-risk scenarios pertaining to COVID-19. We then formulated support and interventions, and executed some of these plans when the need arose.

Q2 WHAT IS ONE METHOD YOU PERSONALLY USE TO DE-STRESS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH OUR READERS?

Working from home has its own stressors and if we don't manage them well, we will feel it. I wind down by going for regular walks or jogs and by reading before calling it a night.

- 02 Editor's Note
- 03 Main Feature
Fighting COVID-19 in Prisons
- 06 Our COLs
- 08 What's the Buzz?
- 10 Conversation with...
Different Units of SPS Fighting COVID-19
- 13 A Day in the Shoes of...
Laundry Work Programme Officers
- 15 #Throwback
Laundry Operations in SPS
- 17 Wall of Appreciation

A DAY IN THE SHOES OF...

LAUNDRY WORK PROGRAMME OFFICERS

Reported by
Prison News Reporters Lin Rouxiu and Huzaifah Bin Mustafa

The YR Industries Laundry Workshop at Institution A5 is one of the largest health care laundries in Southeast Asia, and the biggest workshop in Changi Prison Complex (CPC).

Prison News chatted with a couple of Laundry Work Programme Officers (WPOs) to learn more about the Laundry Workshop and what a day in their shoes is like.

A LAUNDRY WORK PROGRAMME OFFICER (WPO)'S DAY IN THE LAUNDRY WORKSHOP

Laundry WPOs manage the security aspects of the work environment. They begin and end their day by verifying that all tools and keys are accounted for. Surrounding checks are also conducted before inmates report for work and after the inmates report off work.

During the day, the WPOs ensure that the operations run smoothly and efficiently. It is vital that all linens are sent out on time and any technical issues are rectified immediately to prevent any hiccups or delays. They also ensure the safety of the workers while engaging them during the pockets of time that they have.

PROCESSING OF LINENS

Soiled linens that come in from hospitals are processed in the soil bay section. The first step involves scanning the linens using an X-Ray machine to detect items which were accidentally sent together with the soiled linens.



All linens from the hospitals goes through an X-ray machine at the Soil Bay

All recovered items are returned to the hospitals. The soiled linens are then sorted and transported via the Futurail Bag System for washing.

After the linens are washed, they are dried, ironed, and packed. At the Packing and Quality Control Section, the clean linens are screened for tears, missing strings, buttons and stains, before being packed for delivery to the hospitals.



Nothing escapes the watchful eyes of the Quality Control workers as they ensure the quality of the clean linens

Rejected linens are sent for rewashing and mending, while the packed linens are loaded into trolleys, heading for the hospitals.



Clean linen awaiting delivery to hospitals

The YR Industries Duty Supervisor ensures the fulfilment of linen quantities to hospitals using the provided daily checklists.

- 02 Editor's Note
- 03 Main Feature
Fighting COVID-19 in Prisons
- 06 Our COLs
- 08 What's the Buzz?
- 10 Conversation with...
Different Units of SPS Fighting COVID-19
- 13 A Day in the Shoes of...
Laundry Work Programme Officers
- 15 #Throwback
Laundry Operations in SPS
- 17 Wall of Appreciation



SCW1 JAMES LEW CHEE WENG

Team Leader

Deployed in YR Industries Laundry Workshop for 10 months

Given that these inmates are working and also attending other rehabilitation programmes, how do you find time to engage them?



I maximise the small pockets of time during the inmates' tea break and tap into the intermittent lull period during production time to engage inmates in spontaneous conversations. These small blocks of interactions helps me cultivate relationships with them over time. To me, this is a subtle but effective way of engagement with inmates.

SSGT JAMASRI BIN YATIM

Work Programme Officer

Deployed in YR Industries Laundry Workshop for 2 years

What are some of the unique challenges that Laundry WPOs face?

While we have the usual challenges of managing inmates that any workshop faces, what is unique to the Laundry Workshop is that we cannot afford to have any electrical short circuits and mechanical breakdowns as that will delay our production for the day, and Laundry runs on a very tight schedule.



DID YOU KNOW ?



The Laundry Workshop processes around **27 TONNES** of linens daily.

The linens are processed according to the Ministry of Health infection control standards.



The Laundry Workshop operates on a shift system, **7 DAYS** a week.



- 02 Editor's Note
- 03 Main Feature Fighting COVID-19 in Prisons
- 06 Our COLs
- 08 What's the Buzz?
- 10 Conversation with... Different Units of SPS Fighting COVID-19
- 13 A Day in the Shoes of... Laundry Work Programme Officers
- 15 #Throwback Laundry Operations in SPS
- 17 Wall of Appreciation

#THROWBACK

LAUNDRY OPERATIONS IN SPS

Reported by
Prison News Reporters Sim Lin Yi
and Lim Choon Leong



Laundry operations at the now defunct Moon Crescent Prison (MCP)

SET-UP OF YRSG

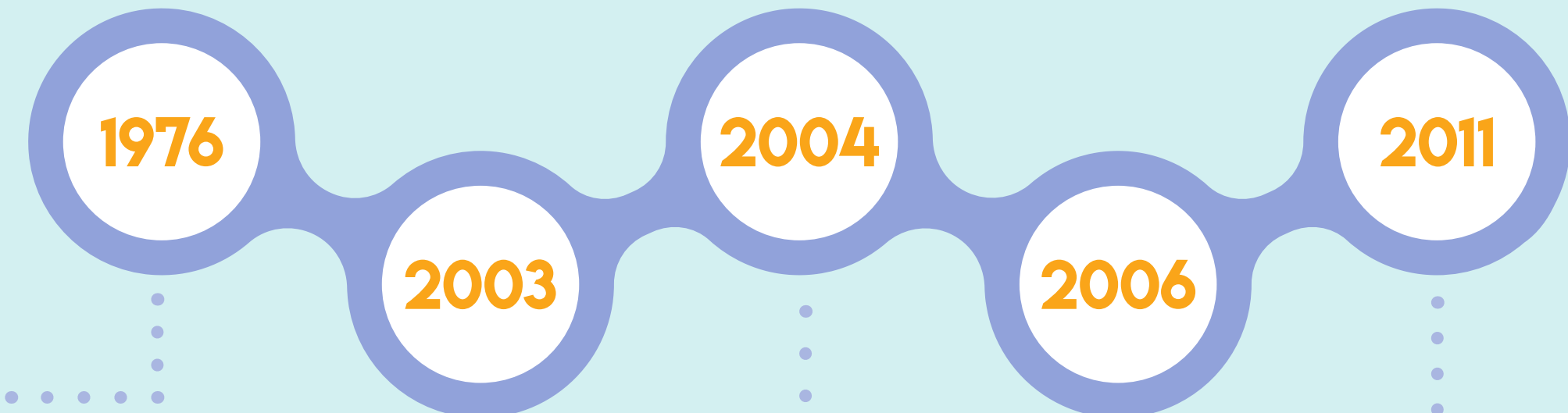
The Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises (SCORE) was established in 1976 and renamed to Yellow Ribbon Singapore (YRSG) on 1 May 2020. YRSG officially took over the operations of the Prison Industries in 1976, including the laundry operations in prisons.



Mr Jason Wong, then CEO YRSG, presenting the Courage Medal to Mr Harith, Supervisor (Production) in 2003

LAUNDRY OPERATIONS DURING SARS

YRSG played an important role in the battle against SARS in 2003. Staff and inmates working in the laundry rose up to the challenge of providing clean linens to the hospitals which were treating SARS patients as well. YRSG was awarded the President's Certificate of Commendation. Courage Medals were also presented to the staff working in laundry for their tireless effort, immense courage and self-sacrifice during the battle against SARS.



A news article (Lianhe Zaobao, 9 August 2003) featuring YRSG's contribution during SARS

2003



Inmates working at the Laundry Workshop in Changi Prison Complex

2004

MOVE FROM MCP TO CHANGI PRISON COMPLEX

YRSG moved the Laundry Workshop from Moon Crescent Prison (MCP) to Institution A5 in Changi Prison Complex (CPC). The A5 laundry occupied a total of seven workshop spaces on three different levels. Inmate workers were also given the opportunity to hold positions such as trainee supervisors and foremen of the workshop. Such positions expanded the job scope of the inmates as they took greater responsibilities.

2006

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

YRSG continued to operate one of Singapore's largest laundries that made up the bulk of laundry services serving hospitals. YRSG conducted pilot projects to continuously expand the product range and provide quality linen services to the healthcare sector.

2011

CERTIFIED TRAINING PROGRAMME

YRSG partnered with the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) to develop the first certified training programme in Singapore for laundry workers. Inmates will gain relevant technical knowledge to become a Laundry Operator and receive an ITE Skills Certificate (ISC) in Laundry Operations. healthcare sector.

TIMELINE FOR YR INDUSTRIES LAUNDRY OPERATIONS

The YR Industries Laundry Workshop located within the Singapore Prison Service supported hospitals through this COVID-19 period by ensuring the supply of clean linens. The Laundry Workshop has been in operation for a long time. The Laundry Workshop had similarly supported hospitals during Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003.

- 02 Editor's Note
- 03 Main Feature
Fighting COVID-19 in Prisons
- 06 Our COLs
- 08 What's the Buzz?
- 10 Conversation with...
Different Units of SPS Fighting COVID-19
- 13 A Day in the Shoes of...
Laundry Work Programme Officers
- 15 #Throwback
Laundry Operations in SPS
- 17 Wall of Appreciation



The external laundry plant at Loyang Way

2016



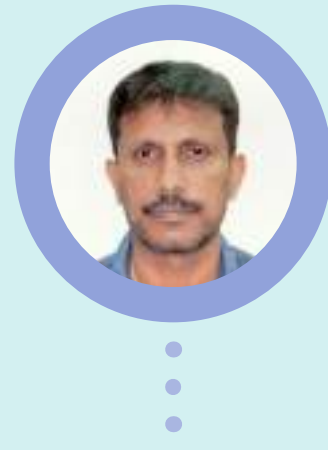
Employees folding hospital garments at the Loyang Way laundry plant

In 2016, YRSG went through an organisational restructuring and the laundry business unit was consolidated under YR Industries Pte Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of YRSG. In the same year, YR Industries' external laundry plant at Loyang Way was operationalised. It aimed to provide transitional employment for ex-offenders. The laundry plant mirrors and complements the laundry operations within prisons, providing ex-offenders a sense of familiarity as they transit from prison into the community. At least 30% of the staff working at YR Industries are ex-offenders.

DID YOU KNOW?

YRSG offers training programmes in generic and vocational skills.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS	VOCATIONAL SKILLS
Workplace Literacy & Numeracy	NITEC in Electronics
ES-WSQ Personal Effectiveness	WSQ Basic Food Hygiene
ES-WSQ Communication & Relationship Management	WSQ Prepare Basic Bread
ES-WSQ Workplace Health & Safety	WSQ Prepare Café Style Bread
ES-WSQ Problem Solving & Decision Making	WSQ Landscaping Operations
ES-WSQ Initiative & Enterprise	ISC in Food Preparation
WSQ in Teamwork in Workplace	ISC in Logistics Operations
WSQ in Quality Systems	ISC in Electrical Wiring
Certified Service Professional (CSP)	ISC in Laundry
Supervisory Skills	Multimedia Skills Training
IT Skills	



Interview with YR Industries Laundry Workshop manager, MR VIJAYAN R

How long have you been with YR Industries and what role(s) did you play during the battle against SARS in 2003?

I have been with YR Industries for about 29 years. I played a key role as part of the operational team to manage the concerns and sentiments of the laundry workers. I ensured that clean linen continued to be delivered to hospitals in a timely manner to avoid any disruptions to their operations.

What was the experience like during SARS for you?

SARS arrived on Singapore shores like a silent killer. It was unclear at first what the virus was, how bad and how long the crisis would go on. Face masks and common cold medication were swept off the shelves. People stayed away from public spaces such as hawker centres, malls, mass events and shunned healthcare workers. However, the courage of the medical staff inspired us and made us feel like we needed to do our part to help them.

How did your family feel about it and how has your colleagues supported you?

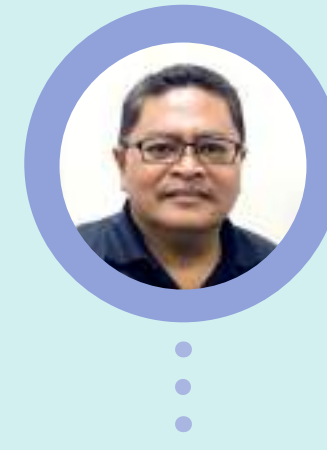
At first my family was very concerned about my safety since we were dealing with hospitals. But with all the safety measures in place, it was easy for me to convince my family. My colleagues were very supportive. When I needed to spend some time with my family, my colleagues covered my duties so that I could have quality time with them.

You were presented with the Courage Medal for immense courage and self-sacrifice. Tell us what this award means to you.

This medal recognised our courage, dedication and sacrifice towards our jobs and to Singapore. We are honoured as it represents excellence and it is something we would never forget in our lives.

Based on your experience, how has the Laundry Workshop operated differently in this COVID-19 pandemic?

We are more prepared this time with enhanced personal protective equipment (PPE), safety protocols that are clearly illustrated, and timely updates from the Ministry of Health. We are more confident and better prepared compared to SARS in 2003.



Interview with SGT RAMLAN BIN KAMIN, a Laundry Work Programme Officer during the battle against SARS

How long have you been with SPS and what was your role in the Laundry Workshop?

I joined SPS in 1991 and was posted to MCP. At MCP, I was deployed as a Laundry Workshop Officer from 2002 to 2008. I was also involved in the move from MCP to A5 Laundry in 2004.

What role(s) did you play during the battle against SARS in 2003?

Donning of masks, aprons and gloves were a must and a norm for our daily operations. I had to ensure that the team and even the inmates themselves played their part in battling against SARS by taking the necessary precautions.

What kept you going?

Strong support from my family members kept me going. I was also able to spend quality time with my family when I was not working. My colleagues displayed good leadership qualities and there was strong cooperation among each other.

You were presented with the Courage Medal for immense courage and self-sacrifice. Tell us what this award means to you.

It was a group award and it was significant to us. We were identified as front-line heroes as we played a part in ensuring that our environment was kept safe in the battle against SARS.

02 Editor's Note

03 Main Feature
Fighting COVID-19 in Prisons

06 Our COLs

08 What's the Buzz?

10 Conversation with...
Different Units of SPS Fighting COVID-19

13 A Day in the Shoes of...
Laundry Work Programme Officers

15 #Throwback
Laundry Operations in SPS

17 Wall of Appreciation

Dear All CAPTAINS OF LIVES

“We will overcome this together with patience and resilience!”

“Stay strong as ONE in this trying time!!! #SGUnited”

“Stay calm and take good care of yourself and your loved ones.”

“This is a difficult time and thank you to all the staff on the ground for the tough work and keeping SPS safe and running. We appreciate you! To everyone else, we will get through this! #SGUnited”



Wall of Appreciation



Illustration by
SUPT1A Cammy Teh
Senior Assistant Director (Staff Development),
Community Corrections Command

♥ Sincerely,
COLS

Credits to
Operational Psychology Branch

“I am appreciative of all my colleagues in SPS who have been so willing to support each other during difficult times. **Let's stay strong!**”

“Thank you for working tirelessly and adapting to the changes on the ground. We are proud of your dedication! **Keep going!**”

“Ships were not built to be docked at the harbour... Thank you for being great Captains of Lives during this tempest.”

“Thank you so much for your hard work despite this challenging season!”

- 02 Editor's Note
- 03 Main Feature
Fighting COVID-19
in Prisons
- 06 Our COLs
- 08 What's the Buzz?
- 10 Conversation
with...
Different Units
of SPS Fighting
COVID-19
- 13 A Day in the
Shoes of...
Laundry Work
Programme
Officers
- 15 #Throwback
Laundry
Operations in SPS
- 17 Wall of
Appreciation