



PRESS RELEASE

EX-OFFENDERS CAN NOW LOOK FORWARD TO MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING TO ENHANCE THEIR CAREER PROSPECTS

Singapore, 5 March 2024 – A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Catholic Welfare Services (CWS) and Yellow Ribbon Fund (YRF) to provide more opportunities for low-income ex-offenders to enhance their employment and career prospects. The MOU was signed by CWS' Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr Bart Lim and YRF's Secretary, Mr Sunny Lee.

2. Under the MOU, CWS is committing \$100,000 to *The CWS Emmanuel Second Chance Education – YRF Skills Training Assistance to Restart* (CWS ESCE – YRF STAR) Bursary. This marks the first such collaboration between CWS and YRF for eligible ex-offenders to receive funding support for vocational training. Acquiring vocational skills enhances ex-offenders' employability as it helps them secure jobs in specific sectors with the relevant skill sets. The Bursary will also fund ex-offenders for academic courses like private GCE N-, O- and A-Level, Nitec, Higher Nitec, Diploma, Degree and Graduate Diploma courses. More than 20 ex-offenders are projected to benefit from the CWS ESCE–YRF STAR Bursary for a start, which will be open for applications from April 2024.

3. "Today marks a special milestone as CWS partners with YRF to jointly reach out and support ex-offenders in our community. The CWS ESCE – YRF STAR Bursary supports their educational or vocational pursuits to improve employability, providing them a second chance for a renewed, fresh start in their lives. This collaboration is more than just financial assistance; it's a testament to our belief in the power of second chances. Through this partnership, we hope to unlock their potential to rewrite their stories and rebuild their lives. We stand shoulder to shoulder with the YRF, committed to journeying alongside these individuals as they embrace a brighter tomorrow filled with hope and newfound purpose." said Mr Bart Lim, CEO of CWS.

4. "On behalf of our beneficiaries, I express our deep appreciation and gratitude to CWS for stepping forward and making a real difference in their lives. This collaboration with CWS signifies a shared commitment to empower ex-offenders to change their lives by acquiring the necessary skills for successful reintegration into the workforce, and into society. Such investment in education and skills training provides a clear pathway for these individuals to enhance their long-term employment prospects, and we believe it will go a long way towards reducing recidivism and improve the overall wellbeing of ex-offenders and their families." said Mr Sunny Lee, Secretary of YRF.

5. Mr Mohammad Ridzwan Bin Abdol Latiff, an ex-offender and a recipient of the YRF STAR Bursary, complimented CWS and YRF for the initiative. He said, "Not everyone follows a conventional academic path. I believe that such opportunities for skills and vocational development are instrumental in unlocking the full potential of individuals and contributing to a more inclusive and dynamic workforce."



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About the Yellow Ribbon Fund

Launched in 2004, the Yellow Ribbon Fund (YRF) is the first national charitable fund devoted entirely towards the development and implementation of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for inmates and ex-offenders, as well as family support programmes to strengthen their family ties. Proceeds from the various fund-raising activities will go towards funding a variety of rehabilitation and family programmes, as well as aftercare services.

The YRF is registered under Yellow Ribbon Singapore (YRSG) and is a member of the CARE Network, an alliance of public and non-government agencies that aims to promote supportive aftercare for ex-offenders.

In 2018, 2019 and 2023, YRF was conferred the Transparency Award from the Charity Council, signifying exemplary disclosure and good transparency practices by the Commissioner of Charities (COC).

For more information on YRF, please visit <https://www.yellowribbon.gov.sg/yellow-ribbon-fund>.

About Catholic Welfare Services

Catholic Welfare Services, Singapore (CWS) is a non-profit social service agency and an Institute of Public Character, founded in 1959 with the aim of supporting those in the community. CWS is dedicated to journeying with people in need to live life to the fullest, and provides a wide range of programmes and services in support of a diverse range of beneficiaries. These include three nursing homes, a sheltered home for seniors, an infant and childcare centre, a sheltered workshop for young adults with intellectual challenges, shelters for rough sleepers and the homeless, and various social assistance programmes providing casework and counselling services, financial assistance and food relief, bursaries and scholarships, and outreach programmes.

For more information on CWS, please visit www.catholicwelfare.org.sg.