

## **APCCA Newsletter No. 17**

**Dec 2003**

### **Note from Director, Singapore Prison Service**

Seasons Greetings from the staff and inmates of the Singapore Prison Service! It has been 2 years since Singapore and Hong Kong have undertaken the role of Secretariat.

Looking back, the year 2002 has been an eventful one. We have had to face many new situations, such as the spread of the Severe Anti- Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), as well as threats of terrorism, and learn how to deal with them in the Corrections context. These are merely two examples of the challenges that we face in the unpredictable world today. It is important that we engage in life-long learning and innovation, so as to keep up with the accelerating changes, and further improve our respective organisations.

The sharing of unique professional knowledge of Correctional agencies is one way of responding to the challenge of constant change. The annual APCCA Conference, the bi-annual APCCA newsletter and the APCCA website are excellent platforms for the sharing of such knowledge. It is through your continuous contributions that these platforms can thrive. I am confident that we will maintain our exceptional working relationships and openness to learn and share.

Hong Kong will host the 23<sup>rd</sup> APCCA Conference from 6-12 December this year. We look forward to another interactive session of sharing and learning.

### **Voluntary contribution to the APCCA Fund**

The APCCA Fund was established in Dec 1997 as a financial source to provide a small fee and administrative expenses to the co-ordinators and co-rapporteurs who have been supporting APCCA on an honorary basis. The Fund is also used in maintaining the APCCA website, as well as the production of the bi-annual APCCA newsletter.

As at August 2003, the following member nations or territories have generously contributed to the APCCA Fund.

1. Australia (Australian Capital Territory & Northern Territory)
2. China
3. Fiji
4. Kingdom of Cambodia
5. Macau
6. Mongolia
7. Philippines
8. Solomon Islands
9. Thailand

The APCCA gratefully acknowledges a contribution of US\$976.24 to the APCCA Fund from the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Member nations or territories who wish to contribute to the Fund can either pay in bank draft in US\$ payable to "APCCA" or by telegraphic transfer to the Fund's US\$ bank account 002-9-643038 with the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited at 1 Queen's Road Central, Hong Kong.

**A Caring Partnership with Wildlife**

The diamond python wrapped his long, sleek body around Senior Correctional Officer Darren Barlow and squeezed tight.

This was not a time for the faint-hearted or an escape attempt for the reptile – just another ‘media shoot’ at one of the State’s prized jewels.

The Wildlife Care Centre, based at John Morony Correctional Centre at Windsor in Sydney’s West, has received numerous plaudits from around the country and internationally for its work in assisting injured animals.

Staff at the Centre received a certificate of appreciation from the Director of Richmond College of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) Western Sydney Institute, Guy Bentley, for ‘so generously sharing your time, knowledge and excellent facilities with our students and staff.’

Deputy Richmond College Director Kathryn Meyer said the staff and inmates at the Wildlife Care Centre have been assisting students enrolled in the Animal Attending Special Course, over a number of months.

“The course at the Richmond College of TAFE was established to assist a number of students who were identified as having difficulty coping with the theory content of the course due to intellectual disabilities,” Ms Meyer said.

“There are seven students in the group with a technical teacher and a support teacher. The focus is on repetition of the practical skills. The essential theory aspects, Animal Welfare and Legislation, are delivered over an extended period of time.

“After 12 months, the success of this program can be measured by examining the development of the students. Five of the students are now engaged in voluntary work in animal facilities.

“These include Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), local government animal pounds and Riding for the Disabled. The delivery of this course has been made possible because it has been supported by the TAFE Access and Equity Unit, the dedicated professionalism of the teachers and the enthusiasm of Animal Care organisations who provide employment and work experience for our students.

“In particular, we are grateful to Graeme Phipps, part time teacher of Animal Care courses, who established access to the Animal Unit at the John Morony Correctional centre for all our students to acquire practical competencies in the handling, feeding, housing and restraint of native birds and mammals.”

SCO Barlow said the idea for the Wildlife Care Centre was Commissioner Ron Woodham’s. He looked at the therapeutic effects on inmates working with animals and helped set up the native-fauna haven.

The Wildlife Care Centre is not a zoo as it is not licensed to exhibit animals even though it has a huge variety of birds and other creatures.

“The Centre accepts injured wildlife from the public and animal organisations. The staff and inmates then care for the animals and help restore them to health before handing them over to Wildlife Information and Rescue Services (WIRES), the Australian Wildlife Ambulance

Rescue (AWARE) or the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) who return them to their natural habitats,” SCO Barlow said.

“The Centre is real partnership between the community, staff and inmates and the wildlife kingdom,” he said.



Senior Correctional Officer Darren Barlow faces a curly predicament when it comes to assisting injured wildlife.

**Launch of the Driver Education and Training Program at Alice Springs Correctional Centre – Northern Territory Correctional Services, Australia**

On 17 September 2003, the Honourable Peter Toyne MLA, Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, Northern Territory Government, Australia, launched the Driver Education and Training Program at the Alice Springs Correctional Centre.

The new program is aimed at reducing re-offending amongst prisoners convicted of driving offences by providing training and the means to gain a drivers licence prior to their release from prison.

In the Alice Springs Correctional Centre, 65% of prisoners have a current or prior driving offence on their record and a large number of these have never held a driver's licence. For indigenous prisoners from



remote communities in the Northern Territory, the program provides access to training and the ability to gain a licence, which is difficult for them to access in a remote locality.

The program was developed collaboratively between the Alice Springs Correctional Centre management and education and programs staff, the Northern Territory Motor Vehicle Registry, Tangentyere Council, Hanson Training Services, the Road Safety Council of the Northern Territory and Drug and Alcohol Services, Alice Springs. The Superintendent of the Alice Springs Correctional Centre donated a training vehicle which was made roadworthy and converted to dual control by prisoners under the instruction of the Chief Industries Officer, Mechanical.

To date a total of 220 prisoners have expressed an interest in the program however 99 of those will need to complete a drink driving course. Negotiations are currently underway to establish this course within the prison.

### **Sri Lanka Court Officials visit Perth**

Magistrates and court officers from Sri Lanka are in Perth this week to learn more from Western Australia's successful community corrections programs.

The training is being provided by the Department of Justice, in partnership with AusAID, and follows the winning of an AusAID-funded tender back in 1999 for a project to develop a pilot community-based corrections program in Sri Lanka.

Administered through the Illawarra Technology Corporation of the University of Wollongong, the program aims to introduce a community-based corrections system in Sri Lanka to provide alternatives to fines or imprisonment for minor and first time offenders. The new system should help alleviate overcrowding in prisons and reduce the detrimental impact of imprisonment upon the community and individuals.

WA Justice Department Director of Community Justice Services (Regional), Bob Carter, has been the project's director since its inception.

"Having previously assisted in setting up the administration, we are now developing a design and implementation program to enable the Sri Lankan Ministry of Justice to generate its own training capacity," Mr Carter said.

“Two officers from Sri Lanka are now in Perth for training as trainers.

“They will then be able to train their own officers in core operational training for community corrections and in drug and alcohol interventions.

“Also, two magistrates and the Commissioner for Community Corrections from Sri Lanka are in Perth to observe the sentencing and administration of community-based orders,” Mr Carter said.

“We will be adopting training materials used in WA and customising them for use in the Sri Lankan context, so they will have a complete package and materials to take back,” Mr Carter said.

The Commissioner of Community Corrections for Sri Lanka, Mr Dharma Hewamadduma, said the concept of giving preference to work orders instead of prison terms, which he witnessed in Perth, was new to modern Sri Lanka.

He said Sri Lanka had 20 million people, including 20,000 prisoners, each costing \$3 a day.

“Under the WA Department of Justice system, a government need not spend so much money,” he said.

“If we can divert prisoners to community work, we save on prison costs and get the benefit of the offender labour in the community at a rate of about \$5-6 a day.

“In addition, the social benefits are incalculable, as Sri Lanka does not have a social security system and does not provide for families without an income.

“It is the poorest people who commit most of the crimes,” he said.

“If the breadwinner of a family with, for example, six to eight children is imprisoned, the wife is forced to become the breadwinner and go out to work leaving the children unsupervised and without guidance, with the risk that they too will soon turn to crime.

“Offenders on community work orders as opposed to prison still get enough time in the week to hold down a job and remain as breadwinners.

“Where these offenders are parents, they remain a family unit and the wife doesn't have to abandon the children to go to work,” he said.

Mr Hewamadduma said he had also noticed that vocational training was made available in prisons in WA and he would now look at how it could be provided to Sri Lankan offenders in the community.

“Offenders could learn carpentry, masonry or computer science,” he said.

Mr Hewamadduma said that Sri Lanka had a similar justice system about 2000 years ago.

“Ancient inscriptions in stone tablets tell us that our kings employed offenders to build water tanks and temples,” he said.

“We are very happy that our system is being brought back via Western Australia to Sri Lanka.”

### **CSC Nurse Aids Burmese Refugees**

*Each year thousands of tonnes of heroin and millions of methamphetamine tablets from Burma are exported throughout southeast Asia and around the world. This situation is especially devastating to refugees... who reside in camps along the Thai-Burma border. Camp life is an ideal environment for the proliferation of drug dealing and addiction. The*

*lack of employment and educational opportunities, the intense trauma and loss that people have suffered, and the lack of control over their own lives and future create a situation in which drug use is easily cultivated.*

*National Health and Education Committee*

*Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, Thailand*

Bouncing wildly over a twisting, deeply rutted road in a 4x4 vehicle, Jane Laishes, Correctional Service of Canada Senior Manager, Mental Health, held on tightly as the driver headed for the “handicap camp” – a refugee hamlet where most of the inhabitants have had limbs shattered by landmines. In the back seat of the vehicle were cooking supplies and sleeping mats, sorely needed by the refugees who lack all but the most basic amenities.

Laishes was in the lush, mountainous region of northern Thailand, on leave from CSC, ostensibly as a trainer for a CIDA-funded project, teaching addictions assessments and counseling. But since her arrival, she had been called upon to carry out many duties that did not appear in her official job description. For example, negotiating with local officials over security issues, teaching women’s and ethical issues, family violence, and trying to make head or tail of the local political scene – which greatly affected her freedom of movement and ability to get things done.

Based in Mae Hong Son, a town of 7000 on the shores of a tiny lake that once served as an elephant bathing pool, Laishes traveled to the remote camps scattered along the Thai-Burma border. Her goal was to work with selected Burmese refugees, teaching them to

assess, counsel and intervene with those of their own people who suffered from addictions. Ultimately, trainees would teach enough locals in addiction prevention and rehabilitation to permanently anchor the programs in the communities.

“The trainees were gentle and kind, an absolute delight – bright, funny, eager to learn and very helpful with each other,” Laishes commented. “Always smiling despite what they have lived through.”

They came from various hill tribes that had co-existed on the steep mountainsides for thousands of years. They kept the translator busy conveying their multilingual messages, sometimes resorting to comical pantomime to get their ideas across.

Typically, the classrooms were rough bamboo structures cleverly patched together with scavenged materials and roofed with broad leaves to keep out the heavy rains. Laishes had to very quickly adapt to teaching through a translator and sitting cross-legged for hours on a thin mat – the only cushioning between her and the concrete floors.

In this setting of soaring mountain ridges and orchid-scented breezes, Laishes encountered considerable human misery. The thin, ragged children, many of whom had never known any life outside the camps, touched her heart. But she also found hope in the spirit and energy of the people. She returned to Canada after her short stay having made a contribution to the people’s welfare. She remains committed to improving the lives of the Burmese refugees through a volunteer organization, Canadian Friends of Burma, located in Ottawa.



Jane Laishes (seated, centre) with Burmese refugee trainees



Camp dwellings constructed from bamboo and discarded sheet metal. Most of the camps have drinking water wells but no sewage systems. Disease and addiction are a double threat to the well-being of the inhabitants.



A meeting inside the home of the village chief. No roof vents for cooking fires means that dwelling interiors are dark and smoky.

### **Recent Developments in the Fiji Prisons Service**



The Fiji Prisons Service maintains 14 prison institutions, mainly located in the administrative centres around the country. The present structures in the 14 institutions have become archaic since most were constructed in the 1960s. Not only have they lost structural composure, they also lack the facilities that are necessary for modern prisoner management techniques. Put another way, there are virtually no built-in recreational and rehabilitation components in the present structures, for their conformation to the real spirit of rehabilitation per se. Indeed, because of poor infrastructure, our recidivism rates remained constantly high for the last 12 years, between 47 – 53%.

Apart from infrastructure, common problems that contribute to the dilemma of the Service relates to manpower shortage, scarcity of expertise in specialised skills, including psychologists, and technological resources, such as vehicles, lack of training, and defunct operational standards, to actually drive the Service forward.

Given the above background, and to address these predicaments, the Service has embarked on 3 separate reviews to try and put the Service on track and be competitive in the correctional field. The Cabinet has endorsed these reviews, and 2 have already started rolling. Each of the 3 reviews will be discussed in much greater detail below.

Late last year, we submitted a proposal to the Government to consider funding the engagement of a Consultant to review the organisational structure of the Fiji Prisons Service. This particular review started in June 2003, and is currently being undertaken by Professor David Biles on behalf of the Australian Correctional Management (ACM). A draft report is still under consideration and expected to be finalised by the end of September 2003, for tabling in Cabinet.

Parallel to the Organisational Review, the Australian Government, under the umbrella of AusAID, assigned a team of Consultants to strengthen the capacity of the Law and Justice Sector in Fiji. Each agency, including Prisons, Police, Director of Public Prosecution and Justice, has a Consultant, who are tasked to look specifically into issues relevant to these agencies and make available solutions by following the normal machinery in the AusAID system. As far as the Prisons is concerned, an interim activity, which seeks to address short-term needs has been endorsed by AusAID, and funding will be dispatched to facilitate the construction of a computer laboratory for young offenders at Nasimu Prison. As part of this package, furniture for recreational purposes, computers and other accessories will also be provided.

The linkage between the David Biles Review and AusAID Law and Justice Sector Programme is that they complement each other in a very broad framework with a view to enhancing our capacity in the treatment of offenders.

The third Review, which is being funded by the United Nations Development Programme, relates to our law, that made provisions for the better regulations of prisons and persons employed therein which came into force on 1 January 1966. It replaced the previous Prisons Ordinance of 1955. The main Prisons Regulation, which came into force in 1968 and other Special Purpose Regulations are made out under the Prisons Act Chapter 86. The Regulations set out the rules for the admission, classification, custody, discipline and discharge of prisoners committed by the Courts to the Fiji Prisons Service for its care. The Regulations also provide details for the employment and rules of work for Prison Officers of various ranks. These laws are archaic and out-dated, and need to be reviewed.

Mindful of the foregoing reviews, it is envisaged that our stakeholders would be in a better position to appreciate the value of our role in maintaining peace in the context of our beloved country. All three agencies are forceful pillars that could prompt the Government to pour resources to upgrade the level of professionalism, efficiency and effectiveness of the Service, in order to be robust and dynamic in approaching and dealing with offenders.



## **Māori staff work collectively to support Māori aspirations**

One of the Department's main goals for the 2003/2004 year is to improve its responsiveness to Māori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, and an integrated staff network was set up recently to provide collective input on the Department's Māori issues.

The network includes key representatives of about 40 staff from across the Department and taps into existing Maori staff networks. It will provide a forum for Maori staff input on improving the Department's performance for Māori.

The network's pepeha, or guiding statement, is *Whakaiti kia pu mau mo te iwi* – which loosely translated means, "maintain humility to strengthen yourself to serve the people".

Chief Executive Mark Byers addressed the inaugural hui (meeting), endorsing the principle and reasons behind it.

"Many Maori staff have expressed their desire to do more for Maori people. There is plenty of positive energy among them to achieve our guiding statement through the supportive environment of the network," he says.

"It's about recognising the solutions that Māori staff, working in a Māori way, can generate to address Māori issues."



Around 40 Corrections staff, from Public Prisons Service, Community Probation Service, Psychological Service and Head Office attended the Department's first integrated Maori staff network hui.

### ***Tikanga proves effective in sex offender programme***

*Cultural processes known as Tikanga Māori can have significant clinical benefits for Māori inmates' rehabilitation, new Department of Corrections research into its Te Piriti special treatment unit demonstrates.*

Te Piriti, located at Auckland Prison, is one of the Department's two special treatment units for men who sexually offend against children. Its counterpart Kia Mārama operates at Rolleston Prison, near Christchurch. Both are run by the Department's Psychological Service, using a nine-month intensive cognitive behaviour therapy programme based on best practice drawn from national and international research.

The Te Piriti programme has, additionally, incorporated Tikanga Māori cultural elements belonging to the indigenous people of New Zealand. The effectiveness of this programme was the subject of recent evaluation.

Māori men who completed the Te Piriti programme had a significantly lower sexual recidivism rate (4.41 percent) than Māori men who had completed the Kia Mārama programme (13.58 percent). An examination of other possible effects was made and no significant differences were found. Non-Māori men also had a lower rate of recidivism (6.02 percent) than the control group.

"This research provides hard evidence that specialist interventions for Māori offenders can help reduce re-offending, and at the same time have no negative effect – indeed, can even

have a positive effect – on non-Māori offenders,” says David Riley, Psychological Service Director.

The Te Piriti programme enables a Māori paradigm to stand in its own right as an appropriate intervention within a context of delivering Western psychological therapy, he says.

“Te Piriti’s tikanga approach is part of Corrections’ ongoing quest to reduce re-offending and improve its responsiveness to Māori. There will be opportunities to apply these findings in other areas of Corrections’ work.

“The research builds on earlier studies which have shown that Te Piriti and Kia Mārama are already very effective, reducing participants’ recidivism by some 50 percent. These latest findings show that further increases are possible.”

He points out that improved treatment results do not mean that it is possible to rehabilitate all child sex offenders, however.

“The rehabilitative programmes are a very effective means of helping these men to address their offending against children, understand the impact that it has on themselves and others, and learn strategies to keep themselves from re-offending. But it is important to bear in mind that no matter how good an intervention is, some participants will go on to re-offend.”

The research was carried out by Lavinia Nathan (Ngā Puhī), Nick Wilson, and David Hillman (Tūhoe). The research can be viewed at [www.corrections.govt.nz](http://www.corrections.govt.nz)

## **A New but Familiar Face in Thai Corrections**

### **New Familiar Face**

2002 – 2003 was a period of change for Thai Corrections. After having been under the Ministry of Interior for 70 years, the Department of Corrections has been transferred to be under the roof of the Ministry of Justice. We have to adapt ourselves to new environments, to get acquainted to new families, and to introduce ourselves to new neighbors. At the end of the fiscal year 2002, we had the opportunity to welcome a new Director General successor of the former Director General who retired. The name of Nathee Chitsawang, who was promoted from Deputy Director General, brought delight to all corrections staff. At least, this was one big change amongst many that we did not need to introduce ourselves to - a new familiar face.

### **A True Fan**

Nathee Chitsawang, 52 years, is a true fan of Corrections. He received his Bachelor degree in Law from Chulalongkorn University, and two Masters degrees, the first one on Criminology from Florida State University, and the second one on Public Administration from Chulalongkorn University. Nathee started to work at the Department of Corrections as a Penologist. For a 3-year period, he was transferred to the Faculty of Social Administration in Thammasat University, as a lecturer. Upon his return, he performed various functions in the Department such as Director of Corrections Training Institute, Director of Personnel Division, Senior Expert in Penology, and Deputy Director General. With his outstanding expertise, he has always been invited as guest lecturer on criminology, corrections administration, and criminal justice system by many agencies as well as universities.

### **Be Published and Publications**

The name of Nathee Chitsawang is well recognized among academic and mass media agencies. Apart from articles that have been regularly published in various journals, his many research projects have also been mentioned in newspapers, capturing a lot of public interest, since most of his works are about truth in prisons - the stories that people have never heard of. Even when some stories on Correctional activities were presented on television, one would simply hear name and voice of the real Nathee Chitsawang.

Samples of Nathee's renowned publications are books on ***Principle of Penology*** and ***Treatment Programmes for Special Type of Prisoners***. These two books are collections of theories on criminology and the combination of concepts and experiences of the treatment of offenders, particularly in Thailand. The books are frequently used as reference in academic institutes, and more importantly, they serve almost as manuals for correctional staff.

### **Whose Idea Is This? It's so Cool!**

We had never heard or thought of the word '**Innovation**' before Nathee introduced it to us. ***Innovation in Corrections*** has come into our concept and understanding that anybody can innovate, and that innovation can bring about changes and development in prison management.

When there are some special projects that attract the public, we always hear a similar expression, "Whose idea is this? It's so cool!" Well, the answer is often the same one.

Currently, every prison is enthusiastic about what other people are doing and whether or not it should do the same thing, or should it create something new. There have been competitions on innovation to develop our correctional system and the results have been very productive. However, there has never been a competition on the most innovative individual. If there is, it may not be challenging because the audience may already be able to tell the result!

### **Eat Right, Sleep Tight**

***Kin-lim-Non-Oun*** or ***Eat Right, Sleep Tight***, is a simple slogan that Nathee gave when he first assumed the position of Director General. The prison is not a home or a hotel, its residents should not have all comforts they wish for. However, the prison should, at least, be a place where offenders are treated with humanity, are given wholesome food, receive essential welfare, and get a basic living condition. Nathee said that by the end of the fiscal year 2003, at least 20 prisons in Thailand would be standard prisons, comprising appropriate sleeping areas, kitchens, canteens, food, library, and refuse and water treatment systems.

## **Football Lover**

Nathee likes all kinds of sports, particularly football. He is a person that one likes to talk with because of his sense of humor. He is still single.

## **Hong Kong inmates give their creativity a full play**

A group of inmates in Hong Kong's Stanley Prison are using their imagination to the full with no restrictions, literally, in their daily work.

The Graphic Media Design Workshop at the institution was opened last year to provide Computer-aided Design services for clients of Correctional Services Industries (CSI) of the Hong Kong Correctional Services Department. It uses latest computer software to help inmates to turn their creativity into graphics and drawings.



Stanley Prison Chief Industrial Officer Chan Chi-fat said: "This job placement not only allows inmates to acquire design knowledge and increase their capability, it also helps tapping their talents and raise their self-confidence through creative work."

“To work as a team, it also fosters among them a spirit of collaboration to finish an assignment. All these will definitely benefit their reintegration into society upon release.”

At present, the workshop provides services mainly in design and page-making for posters and publications, design of signage, artistic engraving, garment pattern drawings, etc.

“The inmates there, on average, have been in custody for more than 10 years and have little knowledge about design and application of computer software. Training is therefore of prime importance aside from inmates’ perseverance and interest in design,” Mr Chan said.

He visits the workshop regularly to train the inmates in design skills and techniques, “I always remind them that the essence of practical design is to provide a product which not only meets but exceeds the customer’s requirements. They also learn about the importance of careful planning in the early stage of production to the overall quality and production efficiency.

“Inmates are encouraged to discuss, complete and present the assigned design jobs as part of their training. They are given flexibility in creativity and trained to cooperate with others while having critical thinking.

During the process they learned compromise, mutual encouragement and understand a problem from different perspectives. Some have even come forth to make constructive suggestions to improve a product. These positive changes are a very encouraging start.”

Apart from providing greater job satisfaction for both staff and inmates, the Workshop could achieve the objectives of better production planning, quality assurance and cost effectiveness, Mr Chan added.

Taking garment manufacturing as an example, he said that the precise computing of pattern drawings enabled better control over material utilization, product quality and the size of the end product.

“It also speeds up the production process as a 3-dimensional illustration of a finished product can now be shown through the application of computer software, saving the resources of making prototypes as in the past.”

A swift and precise output of product specifications or cut-sectional drawings also helped the inmates understanding the whole manufacture processes, product structures and quality control concepts, he said.



“We will strive for the better and introduce more advanced design techniques and professional equipment to cope with the development in other trades to upgrade the products and services of CSI, as to win customers’ trust and capture more opportunities for inmates to work,” Mr Chan said.

**Singapore and Hong Kong sign Memorandum of Understanding**



*Mr Chua Chin Kiat, Director of Singapore Prisons Department and Mr Kelvin Pang, Commissioner of Hong Kong Correctional Services at the MOU signing ceremony held at Singapore Prisons Department, Headquarters on 23 July 2003.*

The Singapore Prison Service has established a very close working relationship with the Hong Kong Correctional Services Department (CSD) on many fronts. The two Departments have learnt greatly from each other through exchanges of knowledge via reciprocal visits, video conferencing, seminars and forums. An example of the two Departments' collaboration would be the provision of secretariat and support services to the Asian and Pacific Conference of Correctional Administrators (APCCA) from October 2001 to December 2003.

On 23 July 2003, the two Departments reached another significant milestone in their working relationship with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to develop a joint work programme in the pursuit of improved correctional practices. The MOU signifies the common professional interest and desire of the two Departments to assist each other in their journey to be exemplary correction services in the world.

The MOU was signed at the Singapore Prison Service's first ever Research Forum, held as a platform gathering of like-minded persons to present, discuss and share research findings.

With the signing of the MOU, the Singapore Prison Service and the Hong Kong Correctional Services Department will work on joint projects to improve correctional

practices. This will include sharing of best practices, organising bilateral seminars on topics of mutual interest, development of joint research and study projects, regular exchange of staff and information, visits to both institutions for examination and evaluation of each other's rehabilitation programmes.

The Singapore Prison Service and the Hong Kong Correctional Services Department are confident that the enhanced co-operation and joint work between the two Departments will help them achieve their common goal of correctional excellence.

### **WIT-ty Inmates in the Singapore Prison Service**

A Work Improvement Team (WIT) is a group who meets regularly to identify work areas that need improvement and propose recommendations for changes to the management. A WIT's main concern is with making quality improvements in the work place; its long-term focus is to improve work systems and processes by making the best possible use of available resources. Working in WITs also helps in developing leadership, creative thinking, problem-solving and public speaking skills.

The Singapore Prison Service has extended the formation of WITs to the inmates in our custody. By including them in certain decision-making processes, and encouraging them to pick up problem-solving skills, the Prison Service aims to ease their reintegration to society upon release. Written by an inmate, the following excerpt relates the personal experiences of an Inmates' WIT from Moon Crescent Prison.

### **THE STRIVERS**

Our team, the STRIVERS of Housing Unit 'Frontier', Moon Crescent Prison, was formed on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2002. Our objective was to seek improvement opportunities in areas of our work and lives and recommending practical solutions which are effective and yet, not a compromise to security and safety.

Although the team members came from completely different backgrounds and ethnic groups, we were able to assimilate our views to produce fruitful ideas and suggestions. Consequently, we were able to work cohesively towards a common set of objectives and goals. Inadvertently, there were disagreements from time to time, but we were able to circumvent on these differences by focussing on the issues rather than the person. Through cross-functional learning and sharing, our *esprit de corps* grew stronger and we were able to function as one productive team both in spirit and truth and most importantly enjoy every moment learning together and developing ourselves.

Our very first project was to improve the tedious process of administration during admission and the arduous transfer of inmates at Housing Unit 'Frontier'. We won a Gold Award at the Inaugural Moon Crescent Prison/ Reformative Training Centre (MCP/RTC) Inmates WITs Convention held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2002. The Gold Award project also won the praises of Mr. Chua Chin Kiat, Director of Prisons, when the project was presented to him during his visit of MCP/RTC on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2003.

Our achievement has done Housing Unit 'Frontier' proud and undeniably enhanced our enthusiasm and commitment to excel even further in future assignments as a team. We feel grateful to be given the opportunity to contribute our strengths in the respective areas of needs and be successful in delivering them.

The team is presently working on another project and is confident in clinching on to the award should there be a convention this year.

**A Weekend with A Difference**

On Saturday, 13 September 2003, Guest of Honour, Senior Minister of State (Law and Home Affairs), Associate Professor Ho Peng Kee was at NTUC Downtown East to cut the ribbon and declare “Crafting Change” – Handicraft Fair and Exhibition 2003 open.

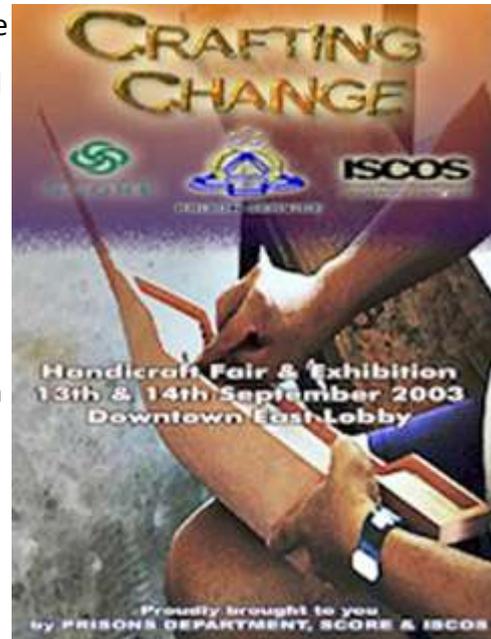
This event was a collaborative effort between the Singapore Prison Service, the Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises (SCORE) and the Industrial & Services Co-operative Society Ltd (ISCOS), to showcase the art and handicraft produced by inmates. Through experiencing their creativity and artistic talents, the public would realise that many inmates have the skills that can be put to good use. As such, it would create greater awareness that inmates deserve to be a chance to contribute to society as responsible citizens. The two-day exhibition was free and open to the public for 2 days.

Inmates’ handicraft such as batik paintings, ornamental plants, knitwear and beaded wear were displayed for sale. Renowned batik-painting artist, Mr Sarkasi, who actively imparted his knowledge to ex-offenders, was at the exhibition to demonstrate the art. Other interesting products included a 10-tracks music album titled “Aspirations”, comprising songs written and performed by inmates from Kaki Bukit Centre (Prison School) and sample websites put up by IT-skilled inmates who provide website design services at competitive rates.

On sale were also videodiscs of movies with rehabilitative themes, such as “The Twilight Kitchen”, a very meaningful movie sponsored and produced by SCORE. Its lead actor was local television actor Mr Moses Lim, who was one of our guests at the opening ceremony, where he promoted the movie and signed autographs for fans.

Accompanied by Director of Prisons, Mr Chua Chin Kiat, Associate Professor Ho was impressed with the creativity of the inmates. He acknowledged the effort and time put in by the inmates in crafting the products. Of particular interest to the Guest of Honour was the Internet Home Tele-visit system on display. Prison staff were on hand to explain the workings and implementation of the innovative system.

Over the two days, visitors were able to gain an insight into our rehabilitative efforts to realise the Prison Service's Vision of being the "Captains of Lives" of inmates by browsing the informative exhibition panels on display.



Volunteers from Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association (SANA) and Singapore After-Care Association (SACA) were at the Fair to share their experience in the rehabilitative process and also to recruit volunteers.

Talents from the Prison Service kept the carnival mood alive with a rich repertoire of programmes to educate and entertain the crowd at NTUC Downtown East. There were magic shows, quizzes, band performances and even classical singing.

The support of the community is crucial in helping the Prison Service and our partners steer inmates and reforming offenders in the right direction. The "Crafting Change" – Handicraft Fair and Exhibition 2003 has indeed met our objectives of raising the public's awareness of the Prison Service and its rehabilitative efforts as well as highlighting the artistic and creative talents of the reforming inmates through the display and sale of their handicraft.