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# SINGAPORE PRISON SERVICE

Community Engagement for  
Rehabilitation & Reintegration:  
The Singapore Experience

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# About Singapore Prison Service (SPS)

## About SPS

- Instituted in 1946
- One of the 11 agencies under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)

## Vision

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

## Mission

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

# SPS's Throughcare Approach

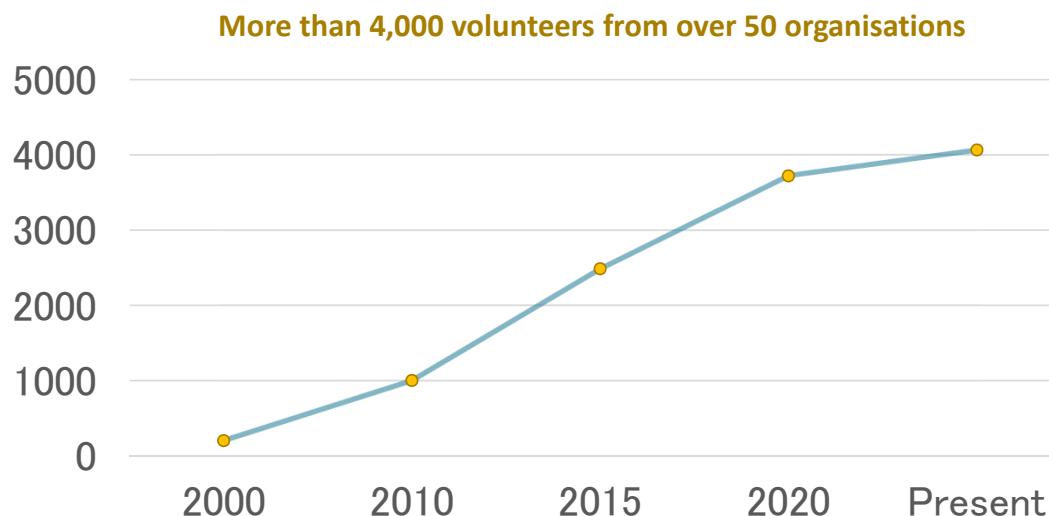


**Continuous and coordinated efforts from incare to aftercare, addressing offenders' needs and building their human, social and community capital**

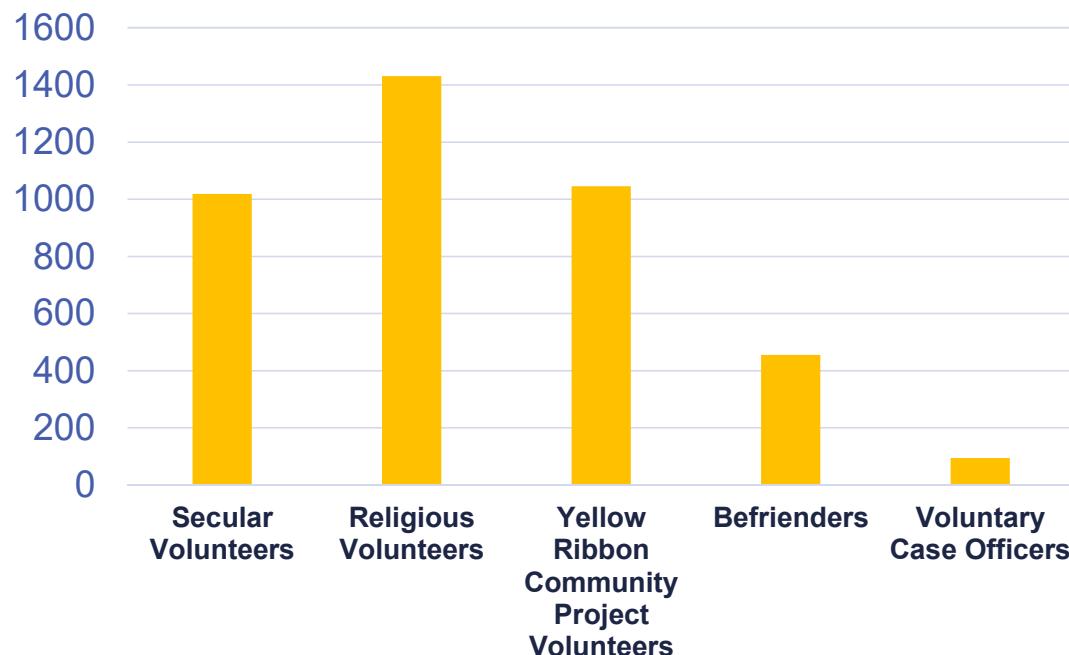
- Community-Based Programmes (CBP)
- Mandatory Aftercare Scheme (MAS)

# SPS Volunteers

**SPS partners closely with community volunteers to support inmates and their families**



## Volunteers Breakdown by Categories



■ As of Jan 2024

## Religious Volunteers

- SPS partners 1,430 volunteers from 12 religious organisations and 5 major faiths to meet spiritual needs of offenders
- **Provides a strong religious foundation and incorporate moral development** to help steer away from a life of crime
- Religious volunteers also **continue to provide pro-social support** to offenders after they are released



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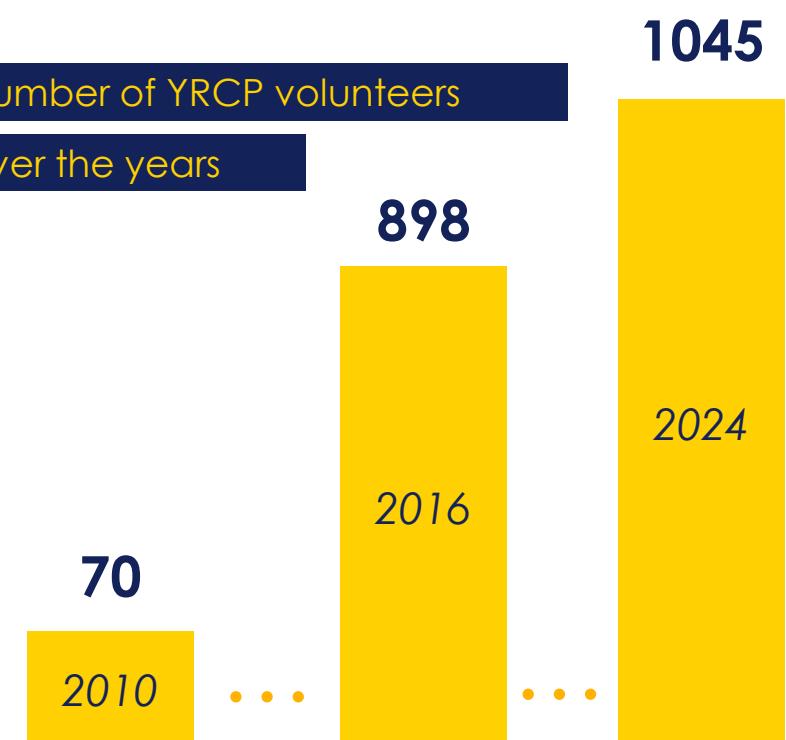
## Yellow Ribbon Community Project (YRCP)

- Upstream **grassroots-led initiative**
- Trained YRCP grassroot volunteers visit families of offenders, with their consent, to **offer social support and assistance**



Number of YRCP volunteers

over the years



## Befrienders

- Befriending services are available to inmates and drug abusers **who may not have strong familial support or positive peers**
- Befrienders **foster meaningful mentoring relationships** with befriendees that begin in-care, and **continue to guide them in their reintegration journey after release**



# Volunteer Case Officer (VCO) Scheme

## Who are the VCOs?

- **Experienced volunteers who support Community Corrections work through case-management and counselling**
  - Experienced in working with inmates (e.g., retired SPS officers)
  - Post-graduate students in Social Work/Psychology/Counselling
- This initiative was developed to appeal to volunteers who desired to make a greater impact

### Learning from Japan's Volunteer Probation Officers (VPOs) system

- SPS went on a study trip to Tokyo, Japan in Feb 2020 to learn about VPOs.

## What is the VCO Scheme?

- VCOs refer supervisees and families to community agencies to address reintegration needs
- VCOs provide basic interventions to supervision through counselling and do house/site visits when necessary
- Through the VCO scheme, **SPS targets to expand the supervisees' network of support** in the community during and beyond their community-based programme
  - Thereby **reduce supervisee's risk of re-offending**



## Strengthening Volunteers' Capabilities



### Supporting volunteers and encouraging volunteer retention

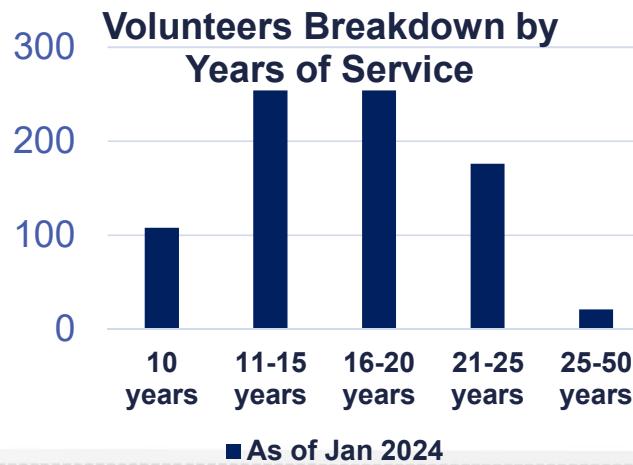
- SPS provides basic training and relevant developmental courses for partners
- Equips volunteers with capabilities required to work with inmates/ex-offenders and their families**
  - Enhances their ability to cope with challenges
- Volunteers will also have access to self-care courses**
  - Enhances their well-being and resilience while serving in challenging roles
- Between 2021 to 2024, **SPS increased the number of training spaces from 163 to 3400**
  - Includes webinars, e-learnings and classroom sessions

# Volunteer Appreciation Events

**SPS organizes various initiatives to connect with volunteers and express appreciation**

## Years of Service

- **813** SPS volunteers have been in service for 10 years and longer



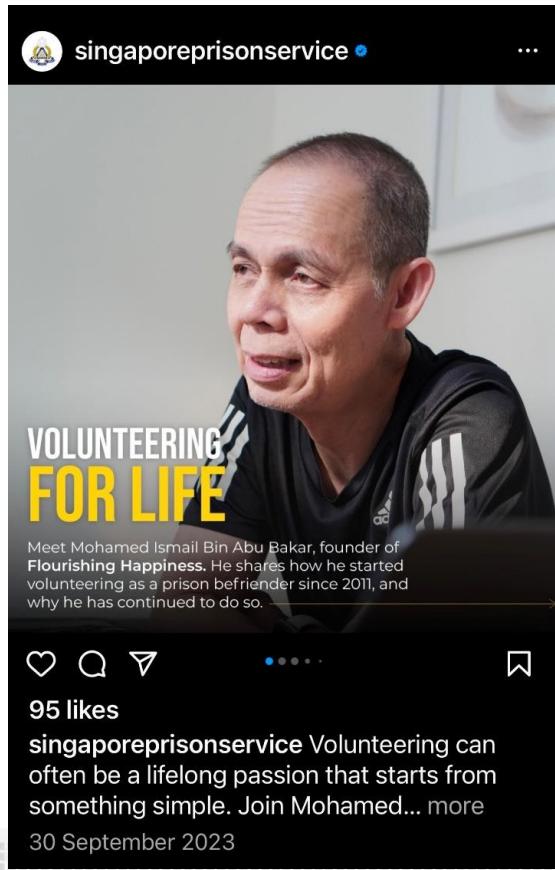
## Throughcare Hero Award

- Acknowledges partners and volunteers who journey with inmates and their families throughout incarceration
- 13 recipients from 13 organisations were awarded in 2023
  - Youngest recipient: 37
  - Oldest recipient: 73



# Promoting Volunteer Works

Volunteer works are also promoted through social media



**Singapore Prison Service Instagram Page**



**Sharing volunteer Human Interest stories via Whatsapp broadcasts**

# Ongoing Community Engagement Efforts



## Increasing Awareness of Volunteer Opportunities

- Leverage on social media platforms to feature SPS and YRSG volunteers to **raise awareness of volunteering opportunities**
- Collaborate with Institutes of Higher Learning to recruit VCOs

## Increasing Engagement of Existing Volunteers

- **Organize dialogues and engagements** for new and existing volunteers
- **Review training framework for volunteers and community partners**
  - Equip volunteers with skillsets relevant to their roles (e.g., befriending skills)
- Encourage volunteer-led initiatives and corporate volunteering
- Explore inter-agency volunteering opportunities for existing volunteers

## Ongoing Community Engagement Efforts

### Engaging interested younger volunteers for the future

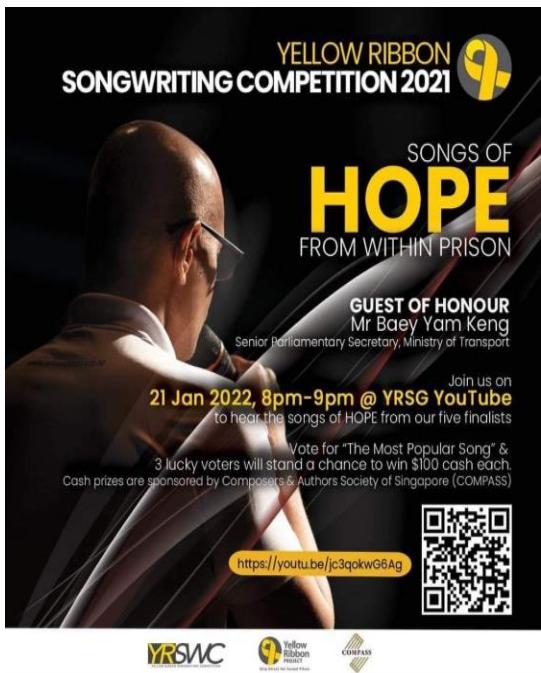
- Direct interested young volunteers to community partners supporting families impacted by incarceration so that some will join SPS as volunteers/staff when they reach the minimum age
- Enhancement of the YRP committee's school engagement efforts to introduce and encourage educational institutions to adopt the YRP to support inmates, ex-offenders and their families

### Engaging desistors as contributing members of the society

- Recruit desistors to consider volunteering opportunities in SPS and in the community
  - Through volunteering, desistors are more connected to the community and build a positive self-identity
- Co-create opportunities in the community for inmates and ex-offenders to contribute back to community
- Support ground-up initiatives led by ex-offenders



# Yellow Ribbon Project (YRP)



**YELLOW RIBBON  
SONGWRITING COMPETITION 2021**

**SONGS OF  
HOPE**  
FROM WITHIN PRISON

**GUEST OF HONOUR**  
Mr Baey Yam Keng  
Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Transport

Join us on  
21 Jan 2022, 8pm-9pm @ YRSG YouTube  
to hear the songs of HOPE from our five finalists

Vote for "The Most Popular Song" &  
3 lucky voters will stand a chance to win \$100 cash each.  
Cash prizes are sponsored by Composers & Authors Society of Singapore (COMPASS)

<https://youtu.be/c3qpkwG6Ag>



**YRSCW**  **COMPASS**

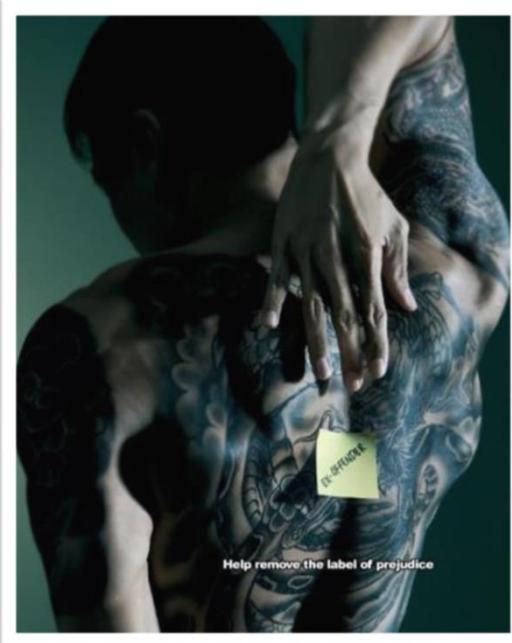


Help Unlock the Second Prison



Launch of the YRP by late  
President of Singapore, Mr.  
S.R. Nathan, in 2004

## Yellow Ribbon Project (YRP)



- To create community **AWARENESS** of importance of giving second chances to ex-offenders
- To generate **ACCEPTANCE** of ex-offenders and their families in the community
- To inspire community **ACTION** to support the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-offenders



**Capturing Minds of the Nation through Creative Advertising, Featuring Volunteers and Inmates' Talents**



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## YRP: Media and Mass Outreach

**Spreading Human Interest Angles on Reintegration Issues and Importance of Strong Community Support**

THE STRAITS TIMES



Artist Barry Yeow has made a life and career out of art since his release from prison in 2015. PHOTO: COURTESY OF BARRY YEOW



**Yamini Chinnuswamy**

PUBLISHED  
10 FEB 2022, 3:35 PM SGT

f  ...

today

**She was in and out of jail. Then her mother died and she had to attend her funeral in handcuffs**

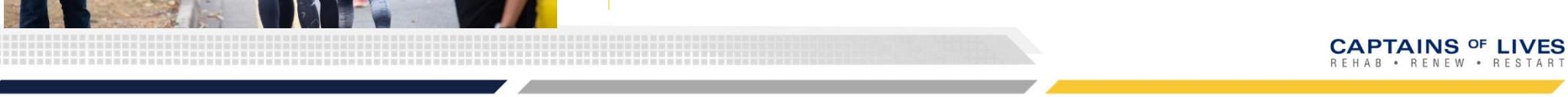
BY KIMBERLY LIM

Published October 19, 2019  
Updated October 21, 2019



Ms Kasmawati Kali Ubi, a Bronze Certificate of Achievement recipient at the Yellow Ribbon Celebrating Second Chances Award Ceremony on Oct 12 – for her commitment to staying crime- and drug-free for six years – poses for a portrait on Oct 15.

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## Effectiveness of YRP



**142** community partners



91% surveyed\* are **aware of YRP** and its **objectives**. Majority **acknowledge that ex-offenders need help to restart** their lives (90%) and that it **benefits the community** to give them a second chance (89%)

\*Based on a survey of members of public conducted in 2022

## YRP Beyond Local Shores

Over the years, the YRP campaign has garnered much support from many well-meaning individuals and corporate partners, as well as traction beyond the shores of Singapore.

**2008:** Launch of YRP in Fiji



**2011:** Second Chance Day in Australia

**2012:** BuCor LOVE Foundation, Philippines launched their first Prison Run



**2019:** Ireland and Northern Ireland jointly held their pilot Yellow Ribbon Run



## YRP 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Film (2 min)

[Video link: https://youtu.be/\\_fTCOTlv0Sk?si=W-leyPHie9Losoiq](https://youtu.be/_fTCOTlv0Sk?si=W-leyPHie9Losoiq)



## Don't Just Wear a Yellow Ribbon. Be One.

To reduce long-term re-offending rates, a strong support system within the community is essential



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