

MEDIA INVITE
8th February 2023



INVITATION: CELEBRATE VALENTINE'S DAY WITH 120 EX-OFFENDERS

Dear media friends,

We would like to invite you to join us in celebrating Valentine's Day with 120 ex-offenders who have turned over a new leaf and have now settled down with their spouses, leading purposeful lives.

The event, *Trophies of Grace*, is organised by The New Charis Mission (TNCM), an organisation which helps ex-offenders, on 14 February 2023, at Pan Pacific Singapore.

Besides meeting the guest-of-honour, **Mr Eric Chua (Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Culture, Community and Youth & Social and Family Development, and Member of Parliament for Tanjong Pagar GRC)** you can also interview and speak with ex-offenders about the challenges they have overcome, and how their lives have been transformed in order to lead their families today. Some of them were drug traffickers and others charged with capital offences, but they are now contributors to society; including businessmen, social workers and church leaders.

"Finding a partner and settling down is a key milestone in their lives because it also signifies a level of maturity and responsibility they have attained in order to lead their families. We would like to give due honour to these individuals who have overcome the odds and are actively contributing to society," said Pastor Don Wong, TNCM Founder/Executive Director.

"Love is about acceptance, second chances, and looking beyond the past. The intrinsic value of a person does not diminish because of his mistakes," said Hannah Loke, the wife of ex-offender Ezekiel Seah, who had been incarcerated three times.

As part of the programme that evening, there will be various segments where due honour will be given to individuals who have overcome the odds and are actively contributing to society.

The details of the event are as follows:

Name of event	: Trophies of Grace Valentine's Day Celebration 2023
Date	: 14 February 2023, Tuesday
Time	: 7:00pm pm to 9:30pm
Venue	: Pan Pacific Singapore Pacific Ballroom, Level 1 7 Orchard Boulevard Singapore 039595

Please kindly RSVP with us by contacting Mr Raymond Tan by 13 Feb 2023. Thank you and see you!

Name: Mr. Raymond Tan
Email: raymondtan@tncm.org.sg
Contact: 8448 7874

THE NEW CHARIS MISSION

UEN: T06SS0166B • Charities Reg. No.: 2002 • IPC No.: IPC000572 • Member of NCSS

Mailing Address: Thomson Road Post Office, P.O. Box 305, Singapore 915711

Location: 11 Jalan Ubi, Block 1, Kembangan-Chai Chee Community Hub, Singapore 409074

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He found new purpose in life after rehab

Caned thrice and put behind bars for consuming drugs, Mr Ezekiel Seah, 33, was a little indignant at his sentence when he was caught and jailed six years ago.

"I remember thinking: I didn't do anything else, and I didn't hurt anyone else but myself. Why is my sentence more than those who committed robbery or cheating?" recalled Mr Seah.

It was the third time he had been caught for taking drugs, and, like all other third-time repeat drug abusers, he had been sentenced to five years' jail and three strokes of the cane under the long-term imprisonment (LT) regime.

In comparison, the minimum sentence for robbery is at least two years' jail and six strokes of the cane, while those convicted of cheating are sentenced to a maximum of three years' jail and fined.

Under proposed changes to the Misuse of Drugs Act, repeat drug abusers like Mr Seah, who had committed no other crimes, could be redirected to a rehabilitation regime instead of a long jail term and caning, if the Bill passes in Parliament.

Had the revised law been in place back then, he would not have suffered as much, said Mr Seah.

During the time he spent in prison – about 40 months – Mr



Mr Ezekiel Seah, a former repeat drug abuser, is now a programme executive at The New Charis Mission halfway house. ST PHOTO: JEREMY KWAN

Seah said he felt condemned and discouraged. He had difficulties coping after his early release from prison for good behaviour.

"When I came out, I was very disoriented; there were a lot of things that I didn't know... I didn't know how to keep up," he said.

If he had not sought the help of The New Charis Mission halfway house, he might have gone back to his old friends who were bad influences, as it would have been "comfortable and easy".

It was through the many coun-

selling and rehabilitation programmes at the halfway house that he has found new purpose in life, said Mr Seah. The bachelor has steered clear of drugs for three years, and is now a programme executive at the halfway house.

"Prison binds you physically, but it is the counselling and the rehab programmes that help you to have self-realisation and purpose, and that is more important for change," said Mr Seah.

Cara Wong

Ezekiel Seah, incarcerated three times, was addicted to drugs for 15 years.



Today, Ezekiel is happily married, working at a halfway house and helping others like himself.

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