

Embrace Who You Are and Maintain a Positive Outlook



I am now 15-year-old, and my brother and I arrived in Singapore from Vietnam with our mother in 2016. Unfortunately, our new life was marked by daily violence from my stepfather. He verbally and physically abused us, as well as mistreated our mother. Despite the frequent police interventions and being chased out of our house, we had nowhere else to turn to. We would not eat if my stepfather cooked because the food was not prepared or cooked properly. He was always angry, seemingly without reason.

In March 2022, we returned to Good Shepherd Centre because my stepfather's violent behaviour persisted despite my mother's efforts to give him another chance. This time, we were provided with a flat to stay in – my mother, my brother, my younger sister and me. The transition to this flat was a significant change for me; it offered a completely new environment for all of us. The safety and comfort of our flat made it feel like home. We could finally sleep peacefully, I could focus on my homework without any disruptions, and we had the freedom to explore Singapore.

At GSC, we participated in enjoyable programmes, such as basketball games at Suntec City and other outings organized by the GSC staff. However, the most touching event for me was when my brother fell ill and required a substantial amount of money for his surgery, I witnessed the generosity of people around us, including the GSC staff who rallied to raise the needed funds. Their compassion made us feel valued and supported. Even though they were strangers, their warmth and genuine care touched us deeply.

We have spent nearly two years at GSC. Reflecting on this journey, I envision a serene sky, filled with shades of blue and white, illuminated by the daylight. This imagery fills me with peace, hope, and gratitude. These feelings and experiences have shaped my values and will guide me to become a better person. In the past, it was difficult to believe that I could overcome all the challenges in my life. However, after my time at GSC, my new motto is "Embrace who you are and maintain a positive outlook".

by Joelle (not her real name)
Resident
Good Shepherd Centre*