



A Steady Guiding Hand

“I’m happy to see that she has improved. Without the mentors, I don’t know where my child would be.”

— Mr Low, father of Mei Zhen

Married late in life, Mr Low was in his fifties when he had Mei Zhen. Mr Low’s wife was virtually absent from the family, so Mr Low single-handedly raised his daughter while juggling household matters and health issues. Taking care of Mei Zhen full-time meant that he was unable to work and relied heavily on social service assistance.

Having never gone to school even as a child, Mr Low is illiterate in English and only able to understand Chinese. When Mei Zhen began to struggle with schoolwork in primary school, he felt helpless because he couldn’t understand her worksheets. “Every time she came back from school, I had to check her homework. It was all red marks. It was a headache for me, I didn’t know how to help her,” he shared. His social service officer referred Mei Zhen to New Life’s Steady Readers (SR), which had just started in Fengshan.

In SR, Mei Zhen found a steady guiding hand in the volunteer mentors and staff. Esther and Joanna, Mei Zhen’s SR mentors, went to great lengths to build rapport with Mei Zhen and strengthen her English skills. Brian, a New Life staff, spent extra time outside of SR to help Mei Zhen with her homework. The staff from New Life Children Programmes would also be on hand to help Mr Low by explaining any government notices, school circulars or medical letters that he received, which he could not read. Together, all these helping hands assisted Mr Low to do what he was unable to do by himself. Esther observed, “New Life really brings hope to not just a child, but also to the family.”

Slowly, Mei Zhen’s standard of English improved, even as her love of learning grew. “She’s very studious, she will insist on doing her homework now instead of next week, and will only sleep once she’s done,” Mr Low shared. As her English improved, Mei Zhen’s other subjects also improved – since she could now read and understand math questions, she was better able to solve math problems.

Mei Zhen’s progress has given Mr Low assurance that she will be able to get through school. “I’m happy to see that she has improved. Without the mentors, I don’t know where my child would be.”

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— Esther, Mei Zhen’s SR mentors



In 2024, New Life has expanded its services islandwide, offering preschool services and Steady Readers classes all over Singapore. In order to continue meeting the increasing needs of disadvantaged children, youths and seniors, we urgently need your support as we are currently \$2.3M short of our donation target for 2024.

Donate to us on Giving.sg by **31 December 2024** and receive **250% tax deduction** on your donation amount. Any amount you give will go towards New Life’s mission to support and empower the disadvantaged in the community.

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Our mailing address:
Woods Square Tower 2, 6 Woodlands Square, #03-01, Singapore 737737