



DRUGFREE SG ADVOCACY NEWSLETTER

OCT 2024

Dear Partners and fellow Advocates

This month, we are pleased to bring you highlights from two outreach events that raised awareness on drug prevention – the Family-Fun Cycling event by Hasanah Mosque and Project Give by SINDA.

Read an article published by The Straits Times reporting a concerning rise in drug abuse among youth under 16 in Singapore.

Check out a winning essay from the DrugFreeSG Essay Writing Competition, which discusses the impact of drugs on families through a personal account.

Happy reading!

We value your feedback and inquiries on our programmes and activities. Please feel free to reach out to us at cnb_community_partnership@cnb.gov.sg.

Thank you for your unwavering support in our shared mission for a drug-free society.



ADVOCACY

On 6 October, over 100 participants joined the Harapan Hasanah Family-Fun Cycling event organised by Hasanah Mosque and graced by Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Minister of State, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of National Development. The event raised awareness on drug prevention through educational talks and showcased the community spirit in combating drug abuse through collaborations with Dadah Itu Haram, the Reforming Support Group (RSG) and Family and Inmates Throughcare Assistance Haven (Fitrah).



Photo source: MOS Faishal social media account



ADVOCACY

As part of our ongoing efforts to raise awareness on drug prevention, Bothaiporulai Ethirthu Nirpom (BEN) collaborated with SINDA for 'Project Give' via two sessions held at the Indian Heritage Centre (IHC) on 19 and 26 October 2024. The booth, situated in the bustling heart of Little India, attracted numerous visitors of all ages. Attendees learned about the harmful effects of drugs & the importance of abstaining from drugs, and children were also engaged through the colouring activities.



Our advocate, Hui Fann, sharing anti-drug messages at the booth



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Learn more about the harms of drugs and drug prevention at the upcoming community roadshows/events.

Event Name	Date/Time	Venue
Kaki Bukit Awareness Day 2024	9 Nov 2024, 8.30am - 2pm	Kaki Bukit CC, 670 Bedok North Street 3, Singapore 469627
Nee Soon GRC Community Resilience Day	9 Nov 2024, 3 - 6pm	MPC @ Khatib (Next to Block 846 Yishun, Singapore 760846)
Engaging Youths to Shine	10 Nov 2024, 10.30am - 6pm	e2i (Devan Nair Institute)



The following article by The Straits Times discusses the rise in drug abuse among youth in Singapore, with more cases involving those aged under 16 years old. It also highlights the factors contributing to this issue, including social media influence, peer pressure, and misconceptions about drug use.

Youth, 15, felt like a zombie when fortnightly drug fix became a daily one

In the first four months of 2024, 16 drug offenders below 16 years old were arrested, compared with 24 such arrests in the whole of 2023. Samuel Devaraj and Gladys Wee find out why this is happening.



There have been more cases of youth engaging in drug trafficking and abuse, and they are getting younger. PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: CHONG JUN LIANG

Council Member from National Council Against Drug Abuse, Mr Firdaus Daud, also emphasised that popular culture, social media, and global trends have led to a growing misconception that drug use is normal and acceptable. He notes that this has resulted in more young people trying drugs out of curiosity or peer influence, often underestimating the dangers of addiction. The article also discusses various initiatives to combat this issue, including education programs. Scan the QR code below to access the full article.



This month's winning essay from the DrugFreeSG Essay Competition 2024 shares the impact of drug abuse on a family through the author's personal experience with their granduncle, Jiddi.

ESSAY BY HANA BINTE OTHMAN, ST ANDREW'S JUNIOR COLLEGE

Jangan nangis depan Jiddi. Jangan kasi Jiddi lihat you nangis" – *Don't cry in front of Jiddi. Don't let him see you cry.*

My sister had to be reminded as she stood at the foot of Jiddi's hospital bed. Tubes were being fed into my granduncle's nostrils. The beeping of his heart rate monitor sliced through the room in short intervals. The cold and too clean of an environment in the miniscule room encompassed of white walls never felt inviting. Just desolate, as if taunting and reminding us all of what actions had led him there.

I was home then, asleep and unsuspecting that that night would be the last time I saw Jiddi Ali or when he would take his final breath. The double digits of my age, a contradiction to how naive and oblivious I had been.

I was nine when the police parked their car at the parking lot of my HDB. Red and blue sirens and all. I was told to stay in the room while they took Jiddi away. My grandmother's frown bunched together along with her wrinkles. She was crying. Lips tugged downwards and the brown in her eyes glossed from her hot tears. "He needs to go to the bathroom. Just let him go to the bathroom before you take him. Please," she was saying in Malay. I remember her being angry. "Go to sleep," I tried fighting the anxious knot tightening in my chest and pushing away the waves of apprehension causing the turmoil inside of me. No one told me much.

Jiddi stayed in jail for 2 years and went in and out of rehabilitation for drug abuse during and after serving his time in jail. When I first saw him for the first time in years, it was like seeing the shell of him. His body changed dramatically. Gangly and exacerbated by the extra large AC/DC shirts he always wore. His glasses gargantuan sitting on the sharpness that was his skinny face. You could have cut the tension in the room with a knife. I could not talk to him naturally after years apart. It was disconcerting how I used to know everything about him and then nothing much. But, this was my Jiddi. The same person who asked me to stand on his back when it was aching, who put a picture of my painting as his phone wallpaper, who never failed to send me "Relax! It's the weekend!" pictures on WhatsApp weekly.

I rarely speak to my family about Jiddi. Whenever we do talk about him, it is to remind one another to pray for him as he lays, waiting in the grave for afterlife. But as much as time can break your heart, it gives and mends too. Ummi sat down with me and told me the things I ached to know years ago. Jiddi started taking drugs a long time ago. Since the 80s. He never showed signs because he made sure to take them without any of us around. No one saw him slur his words, lash out or act high out of his mind. Just his caring personality, banter with his older sister and lopsided smile while he smoked his cigarette, his familiar smell easy to detect. They tried talking him out of doing drugs. But the sinkhole always pulled him in again. Friends found him again. The temporary euphoria from a high stealing him away from us again. Again and again.

I did not cry when I first heard that he passed away. It did not register. But when I saw my family members carrying him, wrapped in white cloth, I felt the weight of the number of "I love you-s," or "How was your day, Jiddi-s?" I did not manage to say. I felt the decades of years he missed living dawning on me and then being snatched away as he got carried away to be buried. I cried in front of everyone then, not even aware of the multitude of pats or hugs I had that morning.

Whenever my grandmother prays now, she prays for Jiddi too. I wonder how she actually feels, wonder if we had just tried a little harder, pushed him a little more, maybe the outcome could have been different. I wonder if I could have been more to make him want to stop. To make him change for us.

But Jiddi had his struggles too. Fighting in his own battlefield.

It's true. He shouldn't have dealt with things that way. Now I try to remember what I can of him. Because beyond being a drug addict, he was my granduncle, the youngest of four siblings, a lover forced into a winless fight. "Jangan lupa untuk berdoa untuk Jiddi," they said – *Don't forget to pray for Jiddi.*

*Coming
Soon*

Our newsletter is getting a makeover! Look out for the complete transformation in the November issue of our newsletter!

Also, mark your calendars for the official announcement on the revamped Anti-Drug Abuse Advocacy Network (A3 Network) in the November issue! The announcement will contain more information on the enhanced volunteer experience for our advocates, so be sure not to miss them.

HELP US SPREAD THE ANTI-DRUG MESSAGE



The **Anti-Drug Abuse Advocacy Network (A3 Network)** is a volunteer scheme jointly administered by the NCADA and CNB. The A3 Network, which is under the umbrella of the Home Team Volunteer Network comprises various groups of people who identify with, support and promote the anti-drug cause*.

**Volunteers under the Network do not represent CNB and NCADA, nor are they spokespersons of CNB and NCADA during or outside the term of deployment.*

Help us grow the A3 Network by telling your friends about us and the volunteering opportunities with CNB. Scan the QR code for more information or drop us an email at cnb_community_partnership@cnb.gov.sg.



Drop us an email at CNB_Community_Partnership@cnb.gov.sg if you would like to add your colleagues and friends into our mailing list or if you wish to unsubscribe.

If you come across drugs, or what you suspect to be drugs, you should call CNB hotline at **1800-325-6666**. Kindly note that airtime charges apply for mobile calls to 1800 service lines and calls are free of charge only if made from regular land lines.

For more information, please visit the CNB website at www.cnb.gov.sg

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