



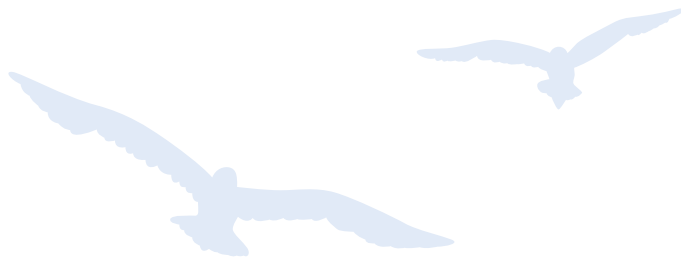
# Fulfilling a Dream...

Ask someone to name a dream and you might get answers like a round-the-world trip or the latest electronic gadget. Indeed, a dream denotes the tune of something wonderful, a wish waiting to be fulfilled. Not many people get their dreams fulfilled in their lifetime at all. I'd like to share with you the story of Susan\* and her dream that came true.

When I first met Susan (33 years old), she had just been released from prison for her eighth account of drug abuse and theft. Her life was in pieces. She was a mother of seven children and was three months pregnant with the 8th. They share five different fathers who had left Susan after she got pregnant.

Two of her children had been fostered out by MCYS as she was deemed unsuitable to be their caregiver due to her imprisonment. Despite her pregnancy, she smoked, drank, and lied so that she could get agencies to put her on their financial assistance schemes. She had no idea what she wanted to do with her life, how to start working to support her children, and how she was going to maintain a life

**Care Community Services Society (CCSS) – The rainbow after the rain. Counsellor Sally Sim relates how CCSS restored a family's broken dreams.**



of sobriety. She knew she wanted to be a good mother, but she was prepared to let it stay a dream.

Two months later, her fiance, whom she was supposed to be married to, was sentenced to 22 months of imprisonment for attempted theft. He attempted to steal a motorbike out of the desperation to feed her seven children while she was doing time in prison. He was the sole breadwinner and had promised Susan that he would do his best to provide for these children who were not even related to him by blood. His imprisonment came as a big blow to Susan and the kids. They had grown attached to this man and he had become a confidante to the older boys in the absence of any attention. To Susan, this meant that she had once again lost a life partner whom she could rely on. She was back in a place where she was all alone – emotionally, physically, and financially.

Her older son decided to drop out of school. The second boy started smoking. The oldest daughter was rude to her and they had practically no relationship to talk about. Susan had two other children living with her ex-partners, and she had no idea how they were doing. There was no food on the table for her children and she didn't even know. They survived on handouts from neighbours and friends. It seemed like this family was doomed to shatter. Life went on.



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In June this year, Susan gave birth to a healthy baby boy Freddy\*. She was not able to breastfeed him as she suffered from Hepatitis C (from her history as a substance abuser). Freddy was born below the average weight, and had gorgeous big eyes like his mother. CCSS managed to secure a sponsorship of six months of infant formula for him.


Four days after Freddy was born, he was admitted into the National University Hospital (NUH) for a brain infection. Due to the lack of adequate attention, his fever had soared and he was in danger of brain damage and loss of hearing

in both ears. Susan was shattered. The birth of Freddy was a sign of new hope for her and the family. They had bonded closer to one another as they rallied around the addition of a precious sibling. Despite the obvious lack of necessities in the family, Susan and her children were determined to look after baby Freddy and not let him be taken away by the officials again. Although the thought that he might become mentally challenged and hearing-impaired was scary, they were determined to let him stay with the family and look after him.

One week later, the pediatrician checked him and found that the hearing capabilities in both his ears were good, and that his brain was going to be fine after all! It was a miracle.

This seemed to be the breakthrough Susan had been waiting for all her life. After this ordeal and with the support from her family, she discovered a new found strength and determination. She was certain that she could not return to the days of old, leading a life of drug-assisted highs. She now understood that there were eight lives, all in her hands. It took her a lot of courage, but she plucked up enough to approach the CDC to sponsor her for an apprenticeship programme as a Healthcare Therapist Assistant. If she performed satisfactorily during the period of apprenticeship, she would then be offered a permanent position in a nursing home. This had been her dream, to work in a nursing home!

Although Susan is still in the midst of her apprenticeship programme, we are witnessing a change in her demeanour we never once saw. She has put on some weight, due to her decision to quit smoking. To that, she said, "It's a small price to pay." She has to rush home every evening to cook dinner for her children.



**A miracle happened!  
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Her children complain that her repertoire of dishes is limited and tease her for not cooking food like those sold in their school canteen. She banter along with them and promises to go learn from her mother. Her oldest son has dropped out from school, but is no longer spending his days sleeping and moping away. He now works as a delivery boy and is able to contribute to the family's expenses. As for miracle baby Freddy, he is still a little on the skinny side, but is nonetheless healthy, cheeky and loved.

Susan took a longer route to get to where she is today. She is on her way to fulfilling her dream as a healthcare therapist assistant, with the help of many others who believed in her and lent a helping hand along the way. Her other dream of being a good mother, on the other hand, is becoming more real each day.

*\* Names have been changed to protect the identity of the persons mentioned in the story.*

To find out more how you can fulfill someone's dream, call us at **6304 7604** or email us at **ccss@carecom.org.sg** Or, simply visit our website at **www.carecom.org.sg**