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Headline: 父频进出监狱 母一人带大孩子 三兄妹发奋获助学金

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梁嘉仪报道
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父亲自小女儿出生不久就频频进出监狱，母亲一人带大三兄妹，三人勤奋求学获得ISCOS助学金，20岁二女儿更以GPA3.77获得卓越表现奖。

苏菲（20岁，化名）和22岁的哥哥以及15岁的妹妹都是工业与服务合作社协会（ISCOS）助学金的受益者，这项助学金专为协助低收入家庭的释囚子女。

但是苏菲并不清楚父亲是犯了什么罪行而入狱，因为他从她小学二年级时就开始进进出出监狱，自她懂事以来，都和父亲好好相处过。

她受访时说，母亲靠着教舞蹈赚钱，养大三个孩子，非常辛苦，幸好她和哥哥已经长大，不需要向母亲拿零用钱，可以帮她减轻经济压力。

二女儿成绩优异 获卓越表现奖

苏菲坦言，从小父亲就不在身边，她起初觉得不公平、伤心，但过后化悲愤为力量，好好读书。她的母亲是在三年前从议员那里得知孩子可以申请这项助学金，而她也凭着GPA3.77的优异成绩获得卓越表现奖。

“750元的助学金加上300元的卓越表现奖能够帮助我每天的生活开销。我现在就读理工学院3年级，做毕业作业（Final Year Project）也必须花钱，所以这笔钱对我非常有用。

神亲计划（Fairy Godparent Programme）和ISCOS再生基金旗下的ISCOS助学金由昇菘集团和李氏基金赞助，自2011年起已经有超过2000名释囚子女获益，今年将会有320名受益者，还有6份卓越表现奖和3份良好进度奖。

苏菲今年不仅获得ISCOS助学金，还获颁卓越表现奖。

中三开始 半工半读养自己

二女儿中三开始就半工半读养自己，不跟母亲拿零用钱。

苏菲说，她当时看着母亲那么辛苦，所以中学时期就会在周末打工，上了理工学院后因课堂表比较轻松，一星期可以打工约4次赚取更多生活费。

“助学金帮助我减轻每日消费，让我不需要那么辛苦打工，可以比较专注于学业。”

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Translation:

Three siblings work hard to receive the bursaries

Father went in and out of prisons, mother had to single-handedly raised the children

By Liang Jiayi

With the father shuttling in and out of prison since the birth of their youngest daughter, a mother had to raise her three children on her own. All the siblings studied hard and were recipients of the ISCOS bursary award, with the second daughter, 20, obtaining the Outstanding Achievement Award with a GPA of 3.77.

Sophie (not her real name, 20), her 22-year-old elder brother and 15-year-old younger sister are all beneficiaries of the Industrial & Services Co-operative Society (ISCOS) Bursary Awards. The initiative supports the education of children of current and former offenders from low-income families.

However, Sophie is not clear of his father's offences which led to the imprisonment, as he had been going in and out of prison since she was in Primary 2. In her growing up years as far as she can remember, she had not had the opportunity to spend time with her father.

When interviewed, she said that her mother made a living as a dance instructor to bring up the three of them, which was very difficult. Fortunately, her elder brother and herself are now older and do not need to rely on their mother for pocket money. This lessens her financial burden.

Sophie was also frank in sharing that when she was younger, she was upset about not having her father by her side and felt that it was unfair. She later channeled the sadness and anger into becoming a positive motivation for her studies. Her mother learnt about the ISCOS Bursary Awards from a Member-of-Parliament and subsequently applied for them – through this, she also obtained the Outstanding Achievement Award with a stellar GPA of 3.77.

"The \$750 bursary and the additional \$300 from the Outstanding Achievement Award helps me greatly with my daily expenses. I'm currently working on my Final Year Project in the third year of polytechnic studies, which requires some expenses so this sum of money came very handy for me."

The ISCOS Bursary Awards are under the the Fairy Godparent Programme managed by ISCOS ReGen Fund, with Sheng Siong Group and Lee Foundation being two of the key sponsors for this initiative that had benefited over 2,000 students since 2011. This year, there are 320 recipients including six awardees for the Outstanding Achievement Award and three beneficiaries obtaining the Good Progress Award.

Juggling study and work to support herself since Secondary 3

Since she was in Secondary Three, the second daughter of three children began to work and study at the same time so that she would not need to ask for pocket money from her mother.

Sophie said that she observed how difficult it was for her mother to make ends meet then. That prompted her to work on the weekends during secondary school. With a more flexible schedule in polytechnic, she worked up to four days per week to earn more money for her daily expenses.

“The bursary award helps me to defray my daily expenses so that I do not need to take on more work to support myself, and am able to better focus on my studies.”