

Acronis and HCSA Community Services Congratulates First Graduates of Acronis-HCSA Computer Classroom

19 ex-offenders have been awarded the recognised WSQ ICDL Microsoft Office certificates and are more confident and employment-ready.

Singapore, 30 September 2023— Acronis, a global leader in cyber protection, and HCSA Community Services (HCSA), a charitable organisation dedicated to empowering vulnerable groups, including ex-offenders, abused teenage girls, and single parents, are thrilled to jointly celebrate the inaugural group of graduates of the Acronis-HCSA Computer Classroom. The graduation ceremony, held at the premises of HCSA, was graced by Member of Parliament for Pioneer SMC and Assistant Secretary-General of the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC), Mr. Patrick Tay.

Nineteen graduates, including residents of HCSA Highpoint Halfway House (HCSA Highpoint), one of the four programmes under HCSA Community Services, completed the IT skills training conducted between March and August 2023 at its newly inaugurated computer classroom, which was officially opened in April 2023. This initiative is part of the Yellow Ribbon Fund-Acronis IT Skills Programme, which equips former offenders with essential digital skills, particularly focusing on Microsoft Office training in Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, and Microsoft Excel. These skills enhancements significantly improve their employability prospects upon release and rehabilitation, ultimately facilitating their successful reintegration into society.

Acronis celebrates its fifth year in the decade-long partnership with Yellow Ribbon Fund (YRF), in both cash and services to provide such education and training, helping ex-offenders acquire essential computer skills to increase their employability. Through YRF, Acronis has generously contributed \$50,000 for the renovation and equipment upgrade of the Acronis-HCSA Computer Classroom, with an additional \$50,000 earmarked for IT training courses in 2023.

Since its establishment, the YRF-Acronis IT Skills Programme has provided an average of 62 hours of IT skills training to 120 ex-offenders. Out of the current batch of 19 graduates, at least three of them were previously unemployed but have since found jobs. Additionally, there is a marked increase in the salary range (of at least 9 graduates) from \$1,000 - \$1,440, to currently between \$1,500 - \$2,000.

One success story is of Mr. Ramesh S/O Ramachandran, a former resident of HCSA Highpoint Halfway House who was previously unemployed prior to completing the IT course in April 2023. Mr. Ramesh shared: *"I took up the challenge to upgrade myself when the opportunity came about. I know it will benefit me when I start working."* Now more comfortable with technology and confident in his ability to work, he has since started to work as a Grab driver in May 2023, and hopes to secure a full-time job by the end of the year.

Another graduate, Mr. Hameed Maricar Bin Ahamed Maricar, who also completed the IT course in April 2023, is a self-employed Batik artist, who holds Batik painting workshops. He shared how the course was crucial for him to improve in his career: *"I signed up for this course to learn how to utilise Microsoft PowerPoint for the workshops I run outside. This is essential for me."*

Mr. Shawn Lim, Head of Programme, HCSA Highpoint, remarked that *"gainful employment remains a critical aspect of an ex-offender's successful reintegration. With partners like Acronis and Yellow Ribbon Fund, HCSA can provide digital upskilling opportunities at the Acronis-HCSA Computer Classroom to empower our ex-offender community to take charge of their transformation and boost their confidence in the workplace."*

Mr. Vladimir Zatsepin, Head of Singapore R&D Centre, Acronis, who presented the certificates, said *"our government has continuously encouraged citizens to upskill with digital skills, to ensure we remain relevant and employable. In line with that, and Acronis' core belief that knowledge should be available to all, the YRF-Acronis IT Skills Programme doesn't just equip ex-offenders with the necessary IT skills but improves their employability and builds up their confidence to better contribute and reintegrate back into society. We applaud all the graduates for their determination and courage to step out of their comfort zone and congratulate them on gaining new IT skills. At the same time, we encourage them to continue learning and improve on those skills."*

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About HCSA Community Services (HCSA)

HCSA Community Services is a charitable organisation with the Institution of Public Character (IPC) status and a member of the National Council of Social Service. The organisation was launched in 1996 as a halfway house for recovering drug addicts and ex-offenders. Today, their work has expanded to include teenage girls who have suffered complex trauma from abuse, and single parents with limited support. HCSA operates with a team of dedicated staff, volunteer teams, and corporate and community partners, as they continue to serve the vulnerable in society, to give them a future and a hope. HCSA's mission is to empower these vulnerable populations through their signature programmes. Find out more at www.hcsa.org.sg.

About Acronis

Acronis unifies data protection and [cybersecurity](#) to deliver integrated, automated cyber protection that solves the safety, accessibility, privacy, authenticity, and security (SAPAS) challenges of the modern digital world. With flexible deployment models that fit the demands of service providers and IT professionals, Acronis provides superior cyber protection for data, applications, and systems with innovative next-generation antivirus, [backup](#), disaster recovery, and endpoint protection management solutions powered by AI. With advanced anti-malware powered by cutting-edge machine intelligence and blockchain based data authentication technologies, Acronis protects any environment - from cloud to hybrid to on premises - at a low and predictable cost.

Acronis is a Swiss company, founded in Singapore. Celebrating two decades of innovation, Acronis has more than 2,000 employees in 45 locations. Acronis Cyber Protect solution is available in 26 languages in over 150 countries and is used by 18,000 service providers to protect over 750,000 businesses.