

Members' Sharing

Holake Hong Kong Lifts Limited ---Clerical Assistant---Grace

Hi! I'm Grace. In 2005 my lower back got injured and as a result I lost my job. I lost my health, job, social life, and faith in people; I stayed home all the time and did not contact anyone. I was diagnosed with depression, and was referred by my doctor to Phoenix Clubhouse for rehabilitation.

After working in the clerical unit for a period of time, I got a transitional employment placement. At first I doubted my ability to work, but since I got the opportunity I wanted to give it a try. Fortunately, they arranged for me to work at Holake Hong Kong Lifts Limited, and the position was that of a Clerical Assistant. I had to fold letters, mail monthly bills, calculate the total amount of cheques received daily, and do photocopying and filing etc. When I first started, I was alarmed to find that my ability to work was worse than before, my memory was poor, and my body got tired easily. I was faced with piles of documents and lots of numbers; my mind was full of numbers and I found it a bit hard to deal with them. I was afraid to let people know that I was mentally ill for fear that they would stigmatize me and fear me; so, at first, I did not even dare to look up, let alone talk to colleagues. As a result, my neck hurt after work. (For three and a half hours I held my head low; no wonder my neck hurt!)

Fortunately the people there were understanding and nice.. The manager Miss Kitty Lee often asked me out of concern, 'Are you doing all right? Is the work hard? Are you tired? Take it easy!' The Human Resources Manager Mr. Danny Luk and other colleagues such as Esther were friendly to me. After some days of trying hard I started getting used to the job.

Unfortunately, in the middle of the contract, my mood fluctuated because of some family problems. I was unable to go to work for some days. It happened to be the busiest days in a month when we needed to send out statements to customers. I felt the dilemma between loyalty at work and my own health inside.. Thanks to the clubhouse for arranging staff and members who helped to cover for me for three days. That enabled me to pass through the most difficult time. When my mood improved, I got back to work immediately. Now I was able to do my job and to cheerfully chat with colleagues. I opened up more, and my self-confidence increased quite a bit. I am thankful to the company for employing us and understanding those who are mentally ill. I will prove to people that though we are ill, we have the same kind of ability to work as normal people do. I am hoping that in the future I will get an appropriate long-term job.

Paul Hastings---Office Assistant
Baker & Mckenzie---Professional Development Administration Coordinator
Paul Hastings---Administrative Clerk
Ivy

Before I came to Phoenix Clubhouse, my life was meaningless. There were days when I could work and there were days when I was sick! I lived from day to day. I had no hopes for the future and I had no happy moments in my life. The side effect of my medication made me drowsy. I just wanted to sleep; I moved sluggishly, could not think and had a bad memory.

The first job I got from the transitional employment program was an office assistant position at Paul Hastings in October 2002. My job started with refilling photocopy paper into faxes, printers and photocopying machines followed by delivering internal mail. This job made me realize that my ability to work and confidence were very low. I was always worried about my performance and was afraid that I would bring trouble to my colleagues. However, after 9 months of work, I gained various working experience and learned inter-personal skills with my colleagues. My confidence increased and my performance improved. I received recognition from my colleagues. After this 9-month contract, I was surprised and happy that Paul Hastings re-employed me as a full time staff. My confidence was further enhanced and started to hope for the future. After working for 9 months, I enrolled in evening school. Unfortunately, the pressure of managing a daytime job and nighttime school proved too much for me to handle and I found myself breaking down again after about one year of this routine. However, I was very grateful that Paul Hastings still employed me, giving me sufficient time off for rest. But finally, I resigned from the job in order to fully recover from the breakdown.

In August 2006, I was recovered & joined the transitional employment program again. This time, it was a part-time job as an Admin Coordinator with Baker & Mckenzie. Working in the Professional Development Department, my main duty was data entry & data processing. As I am not proficient at computer skills, I was not confident that I could do well in this job. However, Clubhouse staff Eva and Gabriel gave me guidance and encouragement & recommended me to join a computer course. Even though I really wanted to better myself, I decided not to take any study courses due to the previous experience. My colleagues were very understanding; they were willing to help me with the computer. Their help and consideration made me feel that I was not alone. I regained my long lost confidence.

In March 2007, Paul Hastings gave me another chance to work for them as a part time worker. The duties were similar to those of the previous job. However, side effects from the medication returned. I could not perform as before, and I was so disappointed. But the encouragement and support from colleagues made me feel as though I was in a loving family, and strengthened my determination in returning to society. With a new drug, most of the side effects like hand trembling, insomnia disappeared. I gradually regained my ability to work and felt better in general. I am just a bit sleepy at times.

I would like to thank my employers Paul Hastings and Baker & McKenzie, who have given me chances to work in their company. Without their support and understanding, I would not have stood back up on my feet and regained my confidence. I will try my best and continue to work hard, not

disappointing anyone. I hope to stretch my limit to taking up a full time job, to serve the company again.

Morgan Stanley---General Assistant
The University of Hong Kong, Dept. of Psychiatry---Clerk
Wyeth---Data Entry
Morgan Stanley---Independently Find this job on His Own
Kenneth

I had worked in a bank for more than 8 years before coming to Phoenix Clubhouse. Because of excessive pressure and other reasons, I became a psychiatric patient. Since then, I was constantly in and out of hospitals. I lost my confidence and self-esteem; I had to quit my job and I could not face my relatives and friends.

In 2002 I joined Phoenix Clubhouse where everyone helped in its daily operations. I started to gain a little confidence in my ability to work. A year later, I got my first transitional employment position as a general assistance at Morgan Stanley. The nine-month contract for this half-day job required a lot of out-of-office duties after folding letters, hence I learned to communicate with my boss and colleagues in team work. Most importantly, no one in the company discriminated against me because I was a psychiatric patient. The job brought laughter even though it could be strenuous at times. Unfortunately I had to leave before the contract was over as I had bronchial problems.

The clubhouse did not withhold a second chance of work from me because of my health. A year later, in 2004, I was temporarily employed at the University of Hong Kong as office assistant. I found the job quite easy to handle, which led me to think about returning to school afterwards. I did register for 3 accounting courses but I had to sacrifice working at any half- or full-time jobs because of exams. The Clubhouse understood my needs of having to pay school fees as well as a boost in my self-confidence, so they referred me to another transitional employment at Wyeth (H.K.) Limited as data entry clerk. . The job hours was very flexible, therefore, I was able to study and later passed the examinations for 3 accounting courses. My boss Maggie was nice enough to rearrange my schedule so I could sit for the exams. Now I plan to sit for examinations for another 3 courses and if I pass again, coupled with a year's job experience, I will be officially qualified as an accountant. The 3 temporary jobs through Phoenix Clubhouse helped me regain self-confidence and learn job skills. I also learned how to communicate with others, which is very important in surviving in this world.

Unfortunately, life is unpredictable. My mother passed away right after I passed my exams and was ready to re-enter the work force. It took me more than a month to gather myself and go out to look for jobs. After sending over 200 e-mails, I finally found a full-time position at CBRE, a branch of the very same Morgan Stanley that offered me my first transitional employment.

Now that I am fully recovered, I can work for this company as a "normal" employee, to prove to the world that my ability to work is back! When given a chance, we will always give you our best in our jobs. Thank you!

Premier Medical Centre---Mass Mailing Group
Jardine Schindler Lifts (Hong Kong) Ltd---Training & Admin. Assistant
Baker & McKenzie---Marketing Assistant
Sky Trend C.P.A. Co---Account Assistant
Neil

My name is Neil. I want to welcome you all and I am very happy for this opportunity to share my story with you. I was working at a legal firm as an accounts clerk for two years. However, I was very stressed at work, so I left. Soon, I was also admitted to hospital because of my condition.

After I was discharged from hospital, I felt very tired all the time so I did not work for four years. I had wanted to be an accountant but I also took up other jobs, none of which were satisfactory to me. Meanwhile, I tried hard to find a job but failed. I felt disappointed and frustrated as it was really difficult for me to find employment.

When I did not have a job, I practiced my computer skills and my tolerance for work at Phoenix Clubhouse. Fortunately, in 2005, Phoenix Clubhouse recommended me to work at the Premier Medical Centre where I was responsible for packing and mailing. I worked at Jardine Schindler Lifts (Hong Kong) Ltd in 2006. My duties included photocopying, binding, internal mail delivering, and assisting in conference room setting. It was not an easy job but I am glad I managed to finish the 9-month contract. In 2007, I worked at Baker & McKenzie, and my duties included internal mail delivering, handling bills and publication arrangements. I am so grateful that I was given these chances of employment.

I was nervous before I started work. I worried that I would be late for work, or make careless mistakes so that my boss would chastise me. That was a cause for stress already. Fortunately, my colleagues were nice to me, especially Chu and Stephanie. They patiently taught me my duties. I could learn to use the computer and speak English while I am on the job. I learn many practical things and I obtain a lot of satisfaction after completing a task, so I feel that my life has purpose. Eva jokingly praised me for being always half an hour early for work and never missed a day! My dad said that I became smarter and thought less about useless things. I can now share the family expenses and I feel really happy about that.

Now, I am working at Sky Trend C.P.A. Co., Limited and my duties include photocopying, delivering documents, and data entry etc. I am glad to have a job in an accounting company because I can learn a lot there. Working as an accountant is my dream. Therefore, I wish to obtain a bachelor degree in accounting one day. Now, I am trying my best to save money to study accounting in the future.

Thanks for coming!