



special bulletin

June 2009

Chronicles of a PAGAD Member:

The True Picture... No Mistake!

A few days ago, I received an email from a friend updating me about the very bad drug situation back home. I learnt of how people are, once again, **asking for the assistance of PAGAD**. As a dedicated member thousands of miles away from home, I felt helpless and sad. I was overcome by emotion.

I joined PAGAD way back in 1996. Through many trials and tribulations, we stood up against the scourge. Thousands of people flocked the streets to demonstrate their protest against gangsterism and drugs. Sadly, when PAGAD members were arrested, people became afraid and stayed away while others just decided that they don't want to belong. Due to my involvement with PAGAD, I have developed and grown tremendously in all aspects of life. I became directly involved with families who are suffering due to a son or daughter who is caught up with drug addiction. I remember one of the very first PAGAD public meetings that I attended, Brother Abdus-Salaam reminded us that: "If this community don't stand up against the scourge, ten years down the line things will be ten times worse..." Now believe me, over the past few years of working in drug rehabilitation things are twenty (or even thirty) times worst.

I have witnessed a life support machine being shut down from a 16 year-old (due to drugs); I have heard how a young man sexually abused his mother for drug money; and I have counseled a case where a father was constantly beaten with an metal pole for not having any more money to support his son's addiction. Many times I felt totally helpless in the company of traumatised and devastated parents.

We read in the newspapers, of children being raped due to drugs and alcohol; and of parents that just cannot take it anymore - even leading to killing their own child. More and more of these horror stories are heard from various rehabs on radio programs. I've asked the question: How many more rehabs are going to open? I don't deny the fact that people need help; but are we going to allow the drug merchants and gangsters to continue with their peddling? A few weeks ago, I heard that Imam Gasan Moos delivered a Khutbah on substance abuse and about the RAUF (Refocus and Upliftment Foundation) at York Road Masjied in Lansdowne. The very next week, the support group was full to the brim. When someone shared this with me, I said that this was rather sad. Don't get me wrong; I am happy that at least they came for help; but sad that more rehabs are being filled. My dear brothers and sisters, when are we going to realise that we need to put a stop to this scourge and stand together as one, and as a united force to rid the society of gangsterism and drugs.



It has also been brought to my attention that **a picture of my husband was recently published in The Voice** – along with an article of PAGAD. When we first heard about the article from my son, we actually had a good laugh – a notorious newspaper like The Voice, we thought! Consequently, I received numerous emails and sms's from people who were upset. They felt that they should solicit people to call the local Community Radio Stations in order to '**announce and rectify the mistake**'. After all, I am the member of PAGAD - and not my husband.

Striving Towards a Gangster-free & Drug-free Society

Now give me a break! I cannot understand why an issue is being made about this. Instead of passing judgement, perhaps they should have asked how we felt about the picture and PAGAD first!

From the content of the article, it is assumed that the picture was meant to depict the PAGAD leadership (perhaps Abdus-Salaam Ebrahim?). The truth of the matter is that the picture was taken while my husband was sharing a PAGAD platform. Moreover, it was not the first time that he had been on a PAGAD platform, and I don't think it will be the last!

The fact that he allows me to be part of this Movement surely proves that, in some way, he is part of this Movement. It is high time that we all realise that if you are a person against drugs and gangsters, you are, in actual fact, PAGAD! Please don't wait till one of your children or perhaps your grandchild fall prey to this evil scourge. A father once brought his daughter to me for counseling. While talking he mentioned that PAGAD was okay before but later went off track. I could not help but to respond to him. I explained that if he had continued in the fight, against this evil scourge, his daughter might not have been caught up in this situation.

My dear friends, some of our Brothers (and a Sister) lost their lives in this struggle! Many have spent years in prison, and there are still 17 Brothers languishing in various prisons. The Question is: For what? And for who? Who else, but for our children!

Think about this: We need to stop making assumptions and passing judgments. Instead, we need to find out about the facts before we do something or pass comments. Life is much too short to be bickering about unnecessary issues. PAGAD is the only organisation who is prepared to stand up against gangsters (criminal or political). Like you and I, PAGAD members have families too, and is as ordinary as you and I. The only difference is that they are prepared leave their homes at any given hour of the day - come rain or shine; while many others remain at home in their comfort zones. It is high time we all get involved. Help us to solve this problem, rather than shun it. This problem is closer to home than you think. I cannot think of any family that hasn't been directly (or indirectly) affected by this scourge.

Remember: **"United We Stand; Divided We Fall..."**

Sister Zoghrah Kriel

**How are we going to save our children?
Each one of us can do something to make a difference.**

**PAGAD offer assistance to those who want to
contribute towards building a strong and permanent movement
against gangsterism & drugs.**

If you want to assist in PAGAD's effort, you can contact us at:

☎ 076-128-6549 ☎

CALL NOW & MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!!

Striving Towards a Gangster-free & Drug-free Society