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news

6,500 people take part in Yellow Ribbon Prison Run

Ex-offender gives back after escaping death penalty

by MICHELLE NG

Mr Jabez Koh calls his narrow escape from the gallows 21 years ago "a miracle".

In 1997, he was caught trafficking 2.5kg of heroin, but it turned out the purity of the drug was 1.85g short of the 15g that would have seen him hanged.

He was sentenced to 24 years' jail and given 20 strokes of the cane instead.

"It was a miracle and I was given a second life to live. When I came out, I was determined to change my life and make the most of every moment," said the 43-year-old, who was released on remission in February 2013.



Mr Jabez Koh now runs his own company. TNP PHOTOS: SYAMIL SAPARI

He was speaking to the media at the Yellow Ribbon Prison Run yesterday. He took part in the run for the sixth year straight.

About 6,500 people took part

in the event that supports the reintegration of former offenders back into society.

Mr Koh runs his own transport and logistics company, Infinite Transports, fulfilling his dream of being a businessman.

He said most of his employees are former offenders, adding that giving them a job is his way of giving back and helping others find their footing in life.

Now in its 10th year, the run has attracted more than 79,200 runners in both its 10km competitive run and 5.6km fun walk categories. This year, there was a special four-member 5.6km team Run for Second Chances that is open to the public.



About 6,500 people took part in this year's Yellow Ribbon Prison Run, held yesterday.

The annual event has raised about \$1,056,975 since 2009. The money goes to programmes run by the Yellow Ribbon Project to help former offenders reintegrate into society.

Minister for Trade and Industry Chan Chun Sing, who flagged off the 10km run and

joined the 5.6km fun walk, said: "The strength and character of a country are defined by how we are able to take care of the little, those with the least, those who may be lame and those who might be lost."

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