THE DELANCY STREET FOUNDATION – one of the most successful halfway house programmes in the world

Delancy Street Foundation is considered the US’s leading self-help education centre for former substance abusers and ex-convicts. Today it houses more than a thousand residents in five states and is headquartered in San Francisco where it originated.

Its residents range in age from 18 to 68 and a quarter are women. The average resident has been a hardcore drug addict for ten years and has been in prison four times. Despite such a violent and criminal background, there has never been a single arrest in the 25 years that the Foundation has been in existence, and even gang members who have sworn to kill one another now live in integrated dormitories and work together cooperatively.

Although the average resident is functionally illiterate and unskilled when entering Delancy Street, all residents receive a high school equivalency and are trained in three different marketable skills before graduating. The minimum stay is two years and the average is four years, and residents learn not only academic and vocational skills but interpersonal, social survival skills, along with the attitudes, values, sense of responsibility and self-reliance necessary to live in the mainstream of society drug-free, successfully and legitimately. Over 10,000 men and women have graduated into society as tax-paying citizens leading successful lives as lawyers, truck drivers, sales people, mechanics, medical professionals and even a deputy coroner and sheriff.

All this has been accomplished at no cost to either the taxpayer or client. Delancy Street has never accepted government money earned. Training schools include a Moving & Trucking School, Restaurant & Catering Services, Print & Copy Shop, Retail & Wholesale Sales, Paratransit Services, Advertising Specialties Sales, Christmas Tree Sales and a Decorating and Automotive Service Centre.

Community friends help with donated products and financial gifts, by utilising the training schools and most importantly, by showing faith and trust in the residents against all odds.

Delancy Street recently completed construction of an expanded and centralised home in San Francisco. The complex was built and supervised by Delancy residents. Dr Silbert was the developer and Delancy was its own general contractor. Covering an entire city block, the four story complex contains storey level retail stores, a public restaurant and outdoor espresso cafe as well as 177 dwelling units and educational & recreational facilities for Delancy residents. The project also served as a vocational training programme providing 300 formerly unemployed drug addicts, homeless people and ex-criminals every skill in the building trades with the support of the unions. In addition, residents received training in purchasing, contracting, computer and accounting services.

There is nothing else in the world like this self-built, self-managed, self-help complex. Small wonder that it has received awards from distinguished bodies such as the American Architects Association.

But most important of all, Delancy Street shows that ordinary people can transform extraordinary – even impossible – dreams into reality by pooling their resources, supporting one another and living lives of purpose and integrity.

Dr Mimi Silbert – mixing hard PRACTICALITY and IDEALISM

Dr Mimi Silbert is the President, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of the Delancy Street Foundation which Dr Karl

expert in criminal justice and has worked as a prison psychologist, police trainer and college lecturer. She has conducted hundreds of seminars throughout the US on subjects such as substance abuse, community corrections and criminal justice and published several monographs and book chapters as well as numerous articles in professional journals.

Dr Silbert and Delancy Street have received numerous commendations, certificates and awards from Presidents Bush and Reagan, congressional leaders, State legislatures and governors, including 4 Mayoral Proclamations of “Mimi Silbert Days” in San Francisco.

Her visit to Singapore is in every sense a very special one. Dr Silbert accepts only two speaking engagements per year and this is her first in the Asia-Pacific area.

SCORE ORGANISED CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT RAISES A HEFTY $180,000

More than a hundred leading businessmen and prominent civil servants turned up at the Laguna National Golf & Country Club’s Classic Course on 28 July to help raise funds for NACADA. Minister for Home Affairs Mr Wong Kan Seng launched the charity drive which netted more than $180,000. The funds will go a long way towards supporting NACADA’s many activities such as anti-drug abuse seminars, preventive education programmes and Halfway Houses.

The tournament as well as lucky draw prizes were formidable, ranging from a Mercedes-Benz C200 and a Mitsubishi Spacegear to quality furniture suites, airline tickets, branded golf accessories, premium liquors and electronic equipment, to name just a few.