

# I Want to Speak Out for the Disadvantaged

Jennifer Van

In the past few months, the news that war correspondents were executed one by one by ISIS has caused a sensation all over the world. Apart from the cruelty and cold-bloodedness of ISIS, what else can you see behind the scene? I can see courage, the courage of these war correspondents that motivates them to cover stories in war-stricken regions at the cost of their lives. That is the reason why I would like to be a journalist and I believe I have the courage to speak out for the disadvantaged.

Let me, first of all, share about one of my enlightening visits while doing community service. It was Chinese New Year's Eve when we visited some families living in social housing in Coloane a few years ago. A single mother's story moved me to tears. During our visit, she poured out her heart. In tears she said, 'My ruthless husband has divorced me, leaving me and my son, who is diagnosed with autism, helpless and hopeless. Despite our financial difficulty, I didn't want to seek help from the government. So I did several jobs. But you see, it never rains but pours. I had my legs hurt seriously in an accident. Due to my incapability, I had no other alternative but apply for government assistance. Do you know it is heartbreaking that none of my relatives and friends has lent me a hand?'

I have come to realize that our society generally has negative opinions and unjustifiable

indifference towards people who are desperate for help. Instead of giving a hand to the unfortunate and embracing them with open arms, we choose to turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to their needs. I believe a journalist can help voice their concerns, reporting their real-life experiences and difficulties. A reporter has a mission to raise people's awareness of the need to help the destitute. If I were a journalist, I could tell the whole world that they are not lazy and that it is not their choice to be a burden to society. I must change people's mindset towards the weak and needy.

Joni Eareckson Tada, the winner of the Golden Plate Award of the American Academy of Achievement, once said, 'If you truly believe in the value of life, you care about all of the weakest and most vulnerable members of society.' There is no doubt that the media plays a significant role in how we see the world. However, the media nowadays very often focuses on the glamorous celebrities rather than the vulnerable, who are out of the spotlight. There is no wonder why some people may only remember their idol's birthday, or even their dog's name, but not the poor old man huddling in the street corner. In my opinion, the pen is the most powerful weapon to influence and inspire. I will be a journalist one day. It is my dream to speak out for the disadvantaged.