

SPEECH BY MR DESMOND LEE, MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT, AT THE COMMUNITY CHEST AWARDS CEREMONY ON 13 OCTOBER 2017, 2.40PM, ISTANA

Mr Tan Chuan-Jin

Speaker of Parliament

Advisor to the National Council of Social Service

Mr Phillip Tan

Chairman of Community Chest

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. Good afternoon and a very warm welcome to this year's Community Chest Awards ceremony.
2. As another year draws to a close, it is an opportune time to look back at and celebrate the generous contributions made by our partners and friends of Community Chest in the last year.
 - In 2016, donations to Community Chest totaled \$52.4 million, making up nearly one-fifth of overall donations to the social service sector in that year.
 - I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to our donors and partners of Community Chest. Your contributions have supported about 80 Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs) supported by Community Chest, enabling them to provide a wide range of programmes to better serve the disadvantaged in our community.

- Your contributions, partnership and support have made all the difference in our efforts to build a strong community of support in Singapore.

Deepening Volunteerism Efforts to Build a Community of Support

3. Through enabling fund-raising and volunteerism efforts, Community Chest is an important avenue through which individuals and organisations can give their time, talent and resources towards bettering the lives of those around them.

- It is encouraging to know that more people are stepping up to volunteer. According to a survey by the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre released earlier this year, the volunteerism rate in Singapore has almost doubled, from 18% in 2014 to 35% in 2016.

4. But we want to go beyond creating more platforms for people to give. To truly build a caring society, what we need is to bring people together in a community that inspires one another to give.

5. It is with this in mind that we launched *SG Cares*, a nationwide volunteering movement to inspire more Singaporeans to step forward, partner us, and support others in need.

- Through *SG Cares*, Community Chest has successfully matched volunteers from corporates and institutes of higher learning with our social service organisations. This has encouraged more sustained volunteerism where volunteers give their time on a regular basis, and VWOs are able to better understand the support that volunteers need.
- Co-led by NCSS and MCCY, *SG Cares* will continue to grow partnerships across companies, public agencies and the non-profit organisations. I hope all of us can come on board to care and give support to those around us.

Exemplary Giving that Benefits the Community

6. In this regard, I would like to highlight a few exemplary individuals and organisations who have gone the extra mile, using the skills and resources at their disposal to give holistically. They are all positive role models of volunteerism.

- **Ms Susan Ng**, our emcee for today, is a great example of an **individual** who has made a difference with her time and expertise.
 - A presenter with Mediacorp, she has been offering pro-bono emcee services to Community Chest for the past three decades.
- At the organisations level, **Samsui Supplies & Services Pte Ltd** reached out to its network of suppliers to donate a portion of its sales proceeds to Community Chest.
 - Besides monetary contributions, Samsui is also an **inclusive employer**. They just set up a second central kitchen in Changi Prison that will hire inmates to help with the preparation of meals, as well as service users with special needs to pack and prepare orders. They currently provide 500,000 meals to VWOs annually at subsidised rates.
- One of this year's SHARE Corporate Platinum Award recipients is **Royal Plaza on Scotts**, a strong supporter of SHARE since 2002.
 - Over the past few years, over 90% of the employees who work at Royal Plaza on Scotts contribute monthly via SHARE, the Community Chest's regular giving programme. Their efforts have helped sustain the support for Community Chest-supported VWOs.

- Another outstanding organisation is the **Great Eastern Life Assurance Company Limited**, which mobilised its network of financial planners to raise funds for Community Chest-supported VWOs.
 - Through their employee's tireless efforts going door-to-door to solicit donations, they managed to garner more than \$150,000 which went towards supporting children with special needs and vulnerable seniors.

7. I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the top donors to Community Chest last year – **Jurong Health Services Pte. Ltd., NTUC Income Insurance Co-operative Ltd, POSBank, and SMRT Trains Ltd.** Thank you all very much, for your support.

8. The examples I have cited illustrate how, by coming together, the People, Private and Public sectors can collectively create greater impact on the social service sector. But more crucially, they show us that there is more than one dimension to giving, that giving can come in various guises and forms.

Transformation of the Awards from 2018

9. It is therefore critical and timely for the Community Chest Awards to be recognising partners who go beyond giving monetary donations to contributing their time and skills, as well as partners who embrace inclusive employment practices.

10. I am happy to announce that the **Community Chest Awards will be transformed from 2018** to recognise exemplary and holistic caring efforts by our partners.

- These partners will be recognised through awards like the Volunteer Partner Award, the Enabler Award and the Pinnacle Awards.

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11. With this transformation, we hope that you will continue to partner us to strengthen our social service ecosystem, and join us in our endeavour to foster a more caring and inclusive society.

12. Thank you once again for your commitment and support for Community Chest and our supported VWOs. I look forward to building stronger partnerships with you in the years to come, and working with you to transform our community.