

EMBARGOED TILL AFTER DELIVERY

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**WELCOME ADDRESS BY MR TAN PUAY KERN
CHAIRMAN OF CHARITREES@MARINA BAY 2017
ORGANISING COMMITTEE AND VICE CHAIRMAN OF
COMMUNITY CHEST
17 NOVEMBER 2017, FRIDAY, 7:25PM
MARINA BAY WATERFRONT PROMENADE**

Mr Melvin Yong
Member of Parliament
Tanjong Pagar GRC

Ms Jennie Chua
Advisor, Community Chest

Our Many Generous Donors

My Fellow Community Chest Committee Members and
Volunteers

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. A very good evening, and welcome to the ChariTrees @ Marina Bay 2017 Light-Up Ceremony. We are honoured to have with us today, Mr Melvin Yong, MP for Tanjong Pagar GRC. Thank you, Mr Yong, for adjusting your busy schedule so that you can be with us to grace this event and support Community Chest.

2. For the 7th year running, Community Chest has dotted the Marina Bay Waterfront Promenade with what we fondly call “ChariTrees”. This year, members of the public will be able to see 30 such Christmas trees – meaningful symbols of the warmth and joy we hope to share with the community during the festive season. Some of the trees have been decorated by our donors, together with the social service users supported by Community Chest, making this festive season event even more special and meaningful.

3. Joining us this evening to share the love and joy, and to celebrate the spirit of giving are our partners and donors. I would like to say a big thank you to all of you. Your generous support has certainly brought warmth and hope to our beneficiaries, and it will go a long way in empowering their lives.

4. With the generous contributions from our partners and donors, we have raised \$346,000 through ChariTrees 2017. In fact, since the first edition of ChariTrees seven years ago, we have raised a total of \$2 million via this platform. Thank you very much, Everyone! Every dollar we have raised will go towards helping children with special needs and youth-at-risk, adults with disabilities, families in

difficulty, persons with mental issues and seniors in the community. Here, I would like to specially mention the Kent Ridge Hall of the National University of Singapore. They have raised and donated \$100,000 to this event! Thank you, Dr Kah Loon, the Hall Master, and the many students and staff of Kent Ridge Hall for your efforts and generosity. The students from NUS Kent Ridge Hall also decorated 6 trees with the children from AWWA School. The students themselves have shared that it is extra meaningful for them to be able to decorate the ChariTrees with the children from AWWA School, spreading the Christmas spirit of giving, together with the friends that they care for.

5. We also have, amongst our donors, many who have been supporting Chari-Trees repeatedly, such as DBS Bank Limited, POSB, OUE Limited, Arrowcrest Technologies, Century Evergreen, Certis CISCO Security, NTUC Fairprice Foundation and Rudi's Fine Food. Thank you so much for your continuous generosity. You are certainly a motivation for the other donors to emulate. We certainly hope to see you in future ChariTrees!

6. This evening, I would also like to express our heartfelt appreciation to the Urban Redevelopment Authority, or URA, for the long standing support of ChariTrees over the past 7 years. URA has been our venue sponsor and

partner, without whom we would not have been able to secure this wonderful location for ChariTrees. Another partner I wish to acknowledge is the Singapore Red Cross who have helped us to raise funds for ChariTrees for the second year running. And we must thank the Singapore Police Force Band, who have supported us through the years with their world class musical performances. It is most remarkable that the Police Band have performed for us every year since the inception of ChariTrees in 2011.

7. We are also heartened by the support of new partners from the Ministry of Education and the National University of Singapore for gracing this ceremony with your singing talents. Please join me to give all our partners and performers another round of applause.

8. The 30 Christmas trees will remain around the Bay from today till 27 December. Each tree carries a story, of our social service users – to show how their lives have been touched by the generous contributions from our partners and donors. The trees will not only spread festive cheer in this area but serve as a daily reminder to visitors to the Marina Bay, that there are those in our community who need our care and support.

9. Ladies and Gentlemen. Before we proceed with the rest of the programme, let me acknowledge a small group of my friends and colleagues who have volunteered their time and efforts to help organise the ChariTrees 2017. First is Mr Chang Yew Kong, my long-time friend who have reached out to several corporate bodies and motivated them to donate generously to this project. Then we have my two colleagues and friends, Mr Koh Teck Hin and Mr Koh Thiam Hock, who have worked tirelessly with our other volunteers, the Community Chest staff and our event organiser to make ChariTrees 2017 happen. I must also put on record, my heartfelt appreciation and recognition to our Community Chest staff, ably led by Priscilla Gan, Eric Ong and Eric Tan, for their dedication and for rising up to the many challenges along the way. And a big thank you to our event organiser led by Teressa Lee, for being so ever ready to go the extra mile with us for ChariTrees.

10. Finally, leaving the best to the last, Ms Jennie Chua, our past Chairman and current Advisor of the Community Chest. Many of you may not know this - Jennie is the founder of the Chari-Trees @ Marina Bay. It was her brilliant idea in 2011 to use Christmas trees and leverage on this beautiful location and the year-end festive celebration, to create a long lasting charity platform every

year for everyone to care, to share and to enjoy. It has been seven years since we started this wonderful experience. Thank you, Jennie, for your leadership, support and motivation to build a caring and inclusive society.

11. Ladies and Gentlemen, Enjoy your evening ahead.
Merry Christmas in advance.