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**WELCOME ADDRESS BY MR CHEW SUTAT
CHAIRMAN, COMMUNITY CHEST AT
COMMUNITY CHEST HEARTSTRINGS WALK ON 5 AUGUST 2023**

Ms Sim Ann, Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and National Development,

Mr Paul Town, Chief Operating Officer of Marina Bay Sands Pte Ltd,

Friends from corporates, sponsors and social service agencies (SSAs),

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls,

1. Good evening and welcome to our Community Chest Heartstrings Walk 2023.
2. On behalf of Community Chest and our co-organiser Marina Bay Sands (MBS), I would like to thank our Guest of Honour, Senior Minister of State Sim Ann for joining us today. We are also grateful to Mr Eric Chua, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Social and Family Development and Culture, Community and Youth, for joining us this morning for the Vertical Marathon.
3. Recently, we have seen greater collective efforts and focus on promoting mental well-being. In response, Community Chest has allocated \$10.4 million to support mental health programmes like counselling, employment support and therapy in Financial Year (FY) 2023. This is an increase of 18% from \$8.8 million in FY2022, which went towards helping more than 14,000 individuals.
4. Beyond SSAs providing these programmes and supporting those who require them, it is important for us to play a part. We can look out for our loved ones and encourage them to seek help early, if they require. We can also donate to and volunteer with mental health SSAs, as well as rally friends and families to join us.

5. Besides persons with mental health conditions, Community Chest also raises funds to support adults with disabilities, children with special needs and youth-at-risk, and seniors and families in need of assistance. This year is a special one for us as we celebrate our 40th anniversary! This milestone would not have been possible without the sustained support of our corporate partners, volunteers, and the wider community. Like today's event, it's heart-warming to see so many of you coming together to support our communities in need. I know you are looking forward to the Walk, but allow me to mention a few important partners.
6. First, I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our co-organiser, MBS. In addition to sponsoring the venue for more than a decade, its employees have volunteered in various capacities today. Its signature Sands for Singapore Charity Festival also provides a platform to showcase the abilities and talents of special needs trainees with APSN, a SSA that provides special education, vocational training and employment support services for individuals with mild intellectual disability. These illustrate MBS' commitment to give to the community holistically.
7. We are also grateful to our other partners like City Developments Limited, PCS Pte Ltd, Singapore Exchange and Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada Singapore Branch, for their support to empower individuals, families and communities in need to achieve their fullest potential, despite the challenges they face in life.
8. To the event co-chairpersons Mr Kwek Eik Sheng and Mr Nicholas Ionides, and members of the organising committee, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your dedication.
9. Most importantly, today's event would not have been possible without your generous support. Your contributions through donations, volunteering and rallying your friends and families are key to sustainable philanthropy, an approach that Community Chest is advocating for this year, so the sector is adequately resourced to meet current and future challenges.
10. Thank you and have a lovely evening ahead!