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**WELCOME ADDRESS BY MR MARKHAM SHAW
CHAIRMAN OF THE CHRISTMAS ON A *GREAT STREET*
COMMUNITY CHEST LIGHT-UP CEREMONY 2023 COMMITTEE**

Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, President of the Republic of Singapore

Ms Jane Ittogi

Mr Eric Chua, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Social and Family Development, and Culture, Community and Youth

His Excellency Hiroshi Ishikawa, Japanese Ambassador to Singapore

Mr Chew Sutat, Chairman, Community Chest

Mr Kojin Nakakita, Vice President and Executive Officer, in charge of Regional Strategies [APAC], Chairman of Hitachi Asia Ltd.

Distinguished guests, and friends of Community Chest,

1. Good evening! Thank you for joining us at the Christmas on *A Great Street* Community Chest Light-Up Ceremony 2023.
2. It is a wonderful occasion today, to be here with friends and families to witness the lighting up of Orchard Road. It is a special once-a-year event where Orchard Road lights up brilliantly, heralding the coming holiday season.

3. Shortly, our Guest-of-Honour, President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, will do us the honour of transforming Orchard Road into a dazzling wonderland. Thank you for being here with us today, and your strong support for Community Chest.
4. This annual light-up ceremony that we co-organise with the Orchard Road Business Association is a long-cherished tradition that is more than a symbolic welcome to the festive season. It is also a time to celebrate our community spirit. This year, Community Chest celebrates its 40th anniversary and it becomes ever more important to recognise the donors and partners who have enabled us to help those in need. These include children with special needs, at-risk youths, adults with disabilities, persons with mental health conditions, seniors, as well as families in need of assistance.
5. For example, in 2002, over 7,000 children with special needs received education and training in independent living skills at special education schools like the Association for Persons with Special Needs. Likewise, over 8,000 families received holistic and comprehensive support at family service centres like the Fei Yue Family Service Centre.
6. To ensure the social service sector is adequately resourced to meet current and future challenges, it is critical that we rally corporates and the community to contribute on a regular basis. To help with this, Community Chest rolled out the Change for Charity initiative earlier this year to enable companies to incorporate a giving mechanism in their business models. That way, their customers can donate

conveniently as they go about their daily activities, be it dining out, playing, shopping or even paying bills.

7. I am happy to share that Community Chest has about 200 businesses on board. To help the public recognise these businesses more easily, we have just launched our Change for Charity partner decals. Keep a lookout for them in store fronts and on digital platforms to show your support to these businesses who are committed to social good and help us empower those in need to achieve their fullest potential, despite the challenges they face in life.
8. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank our main sponsor Hitachi Group of Companies in Singapore, the Singapore Tourism Board and Mastercard, without whom this annual light-up ceremony would not have been possible.
9. I would also like to express my appreciation to:
 - a. Our donors A Group of Philanthropists, Daikin Airconditioning (Singapore) Pte Ltd, DBS Bank, novita, 9 Koi Marketing Pte Ltd, OUE Limited, Starbucks Singapore, Singapore Airlines, Toppers Education Centre Pte. Ltd.;
 - b. Our venue sponsor Shaw Organisation; and
 - c. Our partners The Boys' Brigade in Singapore, McDonald's Singapore, Neo Group, Wisma Atria and all who have contributed in one way or another to make this event possible.
 - d. Your partnerships enable us to bring about sustained impact to those we care for.

10. Lastly, I would like to thank my fellow co-chairperson, Mr Chew Kwee San, and my committee members for your invaluable contributions.

11. Let us continue to work together, so that we can uplift those who may face challenges and build a caring and inclusive home for all. Thank you and enjoy the evening ahead.