

EMBARGOED TILL AFTER DELIVERY

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY MR CHRIS CHONG
CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMUNITY CHEST CHRISTMAS ON
A GREAT STREET LIGHT-UP CEREMONY 2019 ORGANISING COMMITTEE
16 NOVEMBER 2019, SATURDAY, 7.05PM
NGEE ANN CITY CIVIC PLAZA**

Mdm Halimah Yacob, President of the Republic of Singapore and the Patron-in-Chief of the National Council of Social Service

His Excellency Kakhramon Shakirov, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Singapore

His Excellency Jun Yamazaki, Ambassador of Japan to Singapore

A/P Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Social and Family Development

Mr Kojin Nakakita, Chairman, Hitachi Asia Ltd.

Distinguished guests, and friends of Community Chest,

1. Good evening! It is wonderful to have everyone join us to usher in this festive season of joy and giving. This year marks the 36th Community Chest Christmas On *A Great Street* Light-Up Ceremony. In a short while, our Guest-of-Honour, President Halimah Yacob, will do us the honour of transforming Orchard Road into a magical wonderland. Thank you, Mdm President and SPS Faishal, for being here with us.
2. Tonight, we celebrate one of the greatest gifts – the gift to empower lives so that every person can have the opportunity to nurture their talent and fulfil their potential, and to lead more independent and meaningful lives.

3. All donations raised will go towards funding various programmes supported by Community Chest including those that promote inclusive hiring. Through these programmes, persons with disabilities and persons living with mental health conditions will be equipped and empowered in their employment pursuits towards contributing independently to our community.
4. It is encouraging that many organisations are already inclusive employers. I would like to make special mention of three such organisations – Edible Garden City, Han's and Maybank Singapore, which have embraced inclusive practices and enabled our social service users to contribute at the workplace and realise their full potential.
5. Many of the service users employed in these organisations graduated from special education schools supported by Community Chest. One of them is Ms Ong Chai Ling, a service crew with Han's. Chai Ling, a former student of APSN Chaoyang School, has been with Han's for nine years. Upon noticing that Chai Ling had difficulty expressing herself when she first joined Han's, her supervisors took time to understand her challenges and come up with ways to help her adjust. Through constant encouragement and feedback from her supervisors at the workplace, Chai Ling is now more confident and has stepped up from stewarding to cashiering duties.
6. Chai Ling is now able to lead an independent life as a result of the holistic and concerted support she has received from the community in coming together to build an inclusive society. Going forward, we – as individuals or corporates – can empower many more like Chai Ling to contribute actively to society.
7. In line with tonight's theme of "The Greatest Gift", we are delighted to give our service users a platform to showcase their abilities through music and movement. You saw the very upbeat Cajon performance by SAMH YouthReach earlier. Students from APSN Chaoyang School and Presbyterian High School will also be presenting a collaborative dance performance later.

8. On behalf of our service users, I would like to thank our co-organiser, Orchard Road Business Association, our main sponsor, Hitachi Group of Companies in Singapore, and Singapore Tourism Board. It is only with your continued support that Community Chest is able to empower and transform lives through this annual Light-up Ceremony.

9. I would also like to express my appreciation to CapitaLand Hope Foundation, PropNex Realty Pte Ltd, Maybank Singapore, NTUC FairPrice Foundation Ltd, Singapore Press Holdings Limited, ION Orchard, The late Irene-Tan Liang Kheng, Accor Hotels & Resorts, Daikin Airconditioning (Singapore) Pte Ltd, Fu Lu Shou Si Mian Fo Pte Ltd, State Street Bank and Trust Company, Xilinx Asia Pacific Pte Ltd, Singapore Post Limited, Ngee Ann City, Coca-Cola Singapore and Mastercard Asia Pacific, and all who have contributed in one way or another, to make this event possible. Thank you.

10. Lastly, I would like to thank my fellow organising committee members, Mr Peter Wee, Mr Steven Goh, Mr Mark Shaw, Mr Michael Tay, Mr Allen Law, Mr Frankie Quek, Mr Richard Tan and Mr Steven Ong, for your invaluable contributions.

11. Thank you and enjoy the evening.

(675 words)