



MEDIA RELEASE

## **“Interacting with Seniors” handbook and workshops launched in celebration of International Day of Older Persons 2015**

***Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong officiated event to kick-off month-long celebrations which encourage seniors and the community to communicate, connect and celebrate***

**Singapore, 03 October 2015** – In celebration of the International Day of Older Persons (IDOP) – a designated day observed worldwide on 1 October to recognise the contributions of older persons to society - the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) has launched a handbook to dispel some of the common myths people have about seniors and ageing.

Titled “**Removing Barriers Series – Interacting with Seniors**”, the handbook provides tips on how to better communicate with seniors and lists down contacts and useful resource information. 15,000 copies of this handbook will be distributed to voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs), community partners like grassroots organisations, social enterprises, volunteer youth groups and organisations, libraries and hospitals. A softcopy of the handbook will also be made available on the NCSS website at [www.ncss.org.sg](http://www.ncss.org.sg).

The handbook was officially introduced at the IDOP launch event today, which was graced by Emeritus Senior Minister (ESM) Goh Chok Tong.

Organised for the second consecutive year by NCSS, with strong support from corporate, community and VWO partners, the focus of IDOP this year is to empower seniors to communicate, connect and celebrate, encouraging them to show their appreciation to those who have brought joy into their lives, to step out of isolation and

connect with the community (especially for those with little or no family support), and to strengthen existing relationships that they enjoy with neighbours, friends and family members.

### **Senior Says Thanks**

One of the main target groups for this year's IDOP is those with little or no family support and those who are at risk of social isolation. Community organisations and seniors activity centres (SACs) have been working hard to identify and constantly engage them with activities and home visits. The IDOP hopes to leverage on existing programmes, activities and platforms to bring these groups of seniors to be more strongly connected to the community.

More than 450 volunteers from 15 community, corporate and social service organisations will also be mobilised throughout the month of October to encourage and facilitate seniors to pen down their appreciation on "Thank You Cards" specially designed for IDOP 2015. Seniors can express their gratitude to their neighbours, co-workers, friends or family members in words or through drawings on the cards. Volunteers will leverage on existing engagement activities of these organisations, to assist them on the use of the cards.

Over 10,000 "Thank You Cards" will be distributed to the partnering organisations and volunteers will post photos of seniors and their thank you messages on Instagram with the hashtag #seniorsaysthanks to generate greater awareness. The cards are available, upon email request to [ncss\\_eldercare@ncss.gov.sg](mailto:ncss_eldercare@ncss.gov.sg), for members of the public who would like to share them with a senior at home or at work. Please refer to **Annex A** for list of partnering organisations and highlights of their activities.

### **Workshops on Interacting with Seniors**

Besides the handbook, 15 workshops will be held at VWOs, community centres and NCSS from October 2015 to January 2016. The workshops, to be conducted by three eldercare experts, aim to better equip befrienders and volunteers from community organisations and VWOs with useful communications skills when interacting with seniors. Tips on effective communication and myths of ageing, which are listed in the "**Removing Barriers Series – Interacting with Seniors**" handbook, will be shared

during these workshops. The workshops are expected to reach out to over 400 volunteers.

Ms Tina Hung, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Group Director, Service Planning & Development and Advocacy & Membership, NCSS, said, “We are very happy that our community and corporate partners have responded enthusiastically to IDOP 2015. Through celebrating IDOP, NCSS galvanises community resources to bring about greater recognition to seniors’ contribution to our society. NCSS hopes that such meaningful and impactful partnerships will make Singapore a more caring and inclusive society.”

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### **National Council of Social Service**

NCSS is the umbrella body for over 450 member voluntary welfare organisations in Singapore. Its mission is to provide leadership and direction in social services, to enhance the capabilities of social service organisations, and to promote strategic partnerships for social services.

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## Annex A

### List of partnering organisations and their activities highlights throughout October 2015 (not exhaustive)

S/N	Organisations	Activity Highlights
1	Kembangan-Chai Chee Grassroots Organisation	<p><u>Activity 1</u> Jointly organised a birthday celebration event for seniors with student volunteers from Nanyang Technological University's Caretalyst club and Kembangan-Chai Chee SAC.</p>
2	Kembangan-Chai Chee Seniors Activity Centre (SAC)	<p>Volunteers facilitated seniors staying in rental blocks to express their gratitude via the "Thank You Cards".</p> <p><u>Activity 2</u> "Thank You Cards" and discount coupons will be distributed via Residents' Committees (RCs) to seniors.</p> <p>Two coffee shops owners (Food Hub@ ChaiChee and Chai Chee 29 Food House Pte Ltd) have agreed to provide 3,000 discounted coffee and toast sets to seniors in the constituency. Seniors are encouraged show their appreciation to their special someone over a meal of <i>kopi</i> and <i>roti</i>.</p>
3	WeCare@MarineParade	WeCare@MarineParade's volunteers, also known as social enablers, will be actively sharing with residents on the messages of International Day of Older Persons and encouraging them to proactively grow relationships with seniors in the community.
4	Kampong Glam Citizens' Consultative Committee	Seniors will be encouraged to write or draw on the "Thank You Cards", through a monthly activity - Breakfast with Love – that encourages interaction among seniors. Volunteers from grassroots organisations and PEACE-Connect SAC will assist seniors to pen down their appreciation on the cards. Seniors can to take a photo with the card they wrote/drew on and keep the photo as a memento.
5	PEACE-Connect SAC	

6	Tsao Foundation	<p>The Tsao Foundation is holding a series of activities for the elders in Whampoa, together with their families, friends and supporters, to celebrate IDOP 2015 throughout the month of October.</p> <p>In line with the NCSS-led marking of IDOP, the elders will be encouraged to fill the “Thank You Cards” provided by NCSS and pose their photos on the dedicated NCSS Facebook page.</p> <p>The month-long celebrations will be with the support and participation of the City for All Ages Whampoa and other partners in the foundation's latest project, the Community for Successful Ageing (ComSA), aimed at creating a ground-up, community-wide approach to optimising opportunities in longevity.</p>
7	Ulu Pandan Citizens’ Consultative Committee	<p>Ulu Pandan Citizens’ Consultative Committee will be reaching out to seniors through their wellness centre and ongoing activities. The seniors would be encouraged to express their gratitude to someone special via the “Thank You Cards”. Free coffee/ tea and snacks would be provided at their wellness centre during designated timings, to encourage seniors to bring their friends along and strengthen their friendships.</p>
8	Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation (Singapore)	<p>Volunteers from Tzu Chi and students from SIM University, Master of Gerontology class will facilitate seniors to express their appreciation through the “Thank You Cards” during Tzu Chi’s community engagement and home visits.</p> <p>The students will observe seniors’ behaviours and reactions through the activities and will make recommendations on how to empower seniors through communication. The findings from this partnership will provide insights to next year’s IDOP celebrations.</p>
9	SIM University (UniSIM), Master of Gerontology students (5th Intake)	

10	DBS Bank	DBS Bank, Thye Hua Kwan Bedok Radiance SAC and Bedok Orchid RC will be organising a Cook-Out activity. This initiative will bring seniors from Thye Hua Kwan Bedok Radiance SAC, volunteers from the bank and the Bedok Orchid RC together. Through DBS' volunteer movement 'People of Purpose', the bank hopes that the partnerships forged between staff and seniors when cooking together and sharing recipes will lead to many more such collaborative initiatives in the future, thereby creating a more sustainable and long-term impact on the community. Seniors will also participate in a fun-filled experience of baking and decorating cupcakes with the volunteers. The seniors, neighbours and volunteers will gather to enjoy the food and the seniors would be encouraged to express their gratitude to someone special in their lives via the "Thank You Cards" provided.
11	Thye Hua Kwan Bedok Radiance SAC	
12	Bedok Orchid RC	
13	Just Parenting Association	Volunteers from Just Parenting Association's Grandparents Support Group will encourage and facilitate seniors to pen down their appreciation on the "Thank You Cards".
14	Lions Befrienders Service Association (Singapore)	Lions Befrienders Service Association will reach out to seniors to encourage and facilitate in their penning on the "Thank You Cards" through their outreach programmes. They will also set up a booth at the IDOP launch event to share on their services.
15	YAH! (Young-At-Heart)	Senior learners from YAH! (Young-At-Heart!), a flagship and community outreach programme by Montfort Care, will reach out to their classmates at Agape Village during the month-long celebration. YAH!'s Happy Club senior volunteers will also bring the campaign to seniors in Taman Jurong, Bedok South, Telok Blangah and Jalan Bukit Merah to encourage them to pen their gratitude and appreciation to their loved ones.