

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **Disability Awareness Campaign Launched to Shift Public Mindset Towards Persons with Disabilities**

- *Campaign encourages members of the public to appreciate abilities of persons with disabilities and see them for who they truly are*
- *Free awareness talks, workshops and new website to facilitate deeper understanding*

**SINGAPORE 2 June 2016** – Seven out of 10 persons with disabilities would like to have greater independence and 62% do not feel that they are socially included, accepted or are given opportunities to contribute and to achieve personal potential.

Persons with disabilities also reflected that the public view their differences as limitations for which they need protection and different treatment from society. This protection and difference in treatment have created a barrier that prevents persons with disabilities from doing the things they can do and want to do at the workplace, in social outings and at societal activities.

These were among the key findings revealed at this morning's inaugural launch for the five-year \$5 million **Disability Awareness Campaign – “See The True Me”** by the **National Council of Social Service (NCSS)** in collaboration with the **Tote Board**.

The Campaign is part of a five-year public education effort to promote inclusion in Singapore, which started with research efforts last year. The **See The True Me** campaign will roll out initiatives that have been shaped by the key insights and findings from the studies conducted by NCSS.

**Mr Sim Gim Guan, Chief Executive Officer, NCSS** said, “When we start looking at a person with disabilities as a person instead of their condition, our entire perception of them changes. We start connecting with them through their likes and dislikes, and appreciate their dreams and aspirations – because these are the very traits that define every person, regardless of ability, hence the campaign call to ‘See The True Me’.

“NCSS is committed to narrowing the social distance between persons with disabilities and the rest of society. Public education initiatives are ongoing, and we ask for open minds and hearts to embrace persons with disabilities as equally important members of the society we live in. We are very thankful and grateful for the unstinting and generous support of the Tote Board which has made this campaign possible.”

**Mr Fong Yong Kian, Chief Executive, Tote Board** said, “Tote Board is committed to *Giving Hope, Improving Lives*, by helping vulnerable groups and improving lives of all in Singapore. We want to contribute towards building an inclusive, resilient and vibrant community through our grants, with the gaming surpluses from our subsidiaries – Singapore Pools and Singapore Turf Club. Tote Board works closely with NCSS and SG Enable on the \$30 Million Tote Board-Enabling Lives Initiative, to help persons with disabilities and their caregivers.

“We need to enhance our awareness, have a good appreciation and show empathy to the challenges faced by persons with disabilities. The **See The True Me** campaign signals our conviction that persons with disabilities are one of us in the community. Indeed they are ordinary people leading extraordinary lives, passionate about their lives and can contribute their fair share to the community. We should do our part as Singaporeans to help and embrace persons with disabilities and integrate them seamlessly, to achieve an inclusive community. The **See The True Me** campaign is therefore an important thrust of the Tote Board-Enabling Lives Initiative. We are very happy to work collaboratively with our partner NCSS in this campaign.”

In focus group discussions and in-depth interviews conducted with 100 persons with disabilities, participants shared their aspirations, dreams, wish list and fears. Persons with disabilities shared that they aspire to do what persons without disabilities do. However, barriers to this include perceptions by the public that persons with disabilities need to be protected and treated differently from society.

A separate Attitude Study, conducted with 1,400 members of the public, showed that, persons with intellectual impairment and autism are viewed less favourably by the public than for those with physical and sensory impairments. This finding is especially prevalent in the employment sector, as compared to the educational setting, public access and social interaction.

*See Appendices A to C for Survey Outcomes.*

Public education initiatives in this year's **See The True Me** campaign include:

- a. Persons with disabilities sharing their dreams, aspirations and abilities through an **integrated advertising campaign** across digital, broadcast, outdoor and print media platforms. *See Appendix D for campaign details*
- b. Launch of the **See The True Me** website – a dedicated website created in collaboration with **Disabled People's Association** which will house stories and resources on how to be more inclusive in our interactions with persons with disabilities
- c. **Disability awareness talks** for the public
- d. An inclusive **Community Chest Heartstrings Walk 2016** that offers opportunities for both persons with and without disabilities to interact

Dickson Tan, 22, an undergraduate, is one of the persons with disabilities featured in the "**See the True Me**" campaign advertisements. Born visually-impaired, Dickson did not let his disability deter him from pursuing his dream of a career in the technology industry. He consistently performed at the top of his cohort in Business Management at Nanyang Polytechnic while studying there three years ago. With

support from the school and his professors, Dickson is now studying Computer Science at the National University of Singapore and is on his way to fulfilling his dream.

“I am grateful to everyone who has seen beyond my disability, recognised my potential and abilities, and encouraged me to pursue my dreams. I hope that more of our society can focus on what we can achieve rather than what we are unable to. This will go a long way in assisting us to lead independent lives and pave the way for us to contribute more to the society,” said Dickson Tan.

Survey outcomes will help NCSS in service planning, and will also be shared with member agencies and partners to develop services and programmes to support the disability community.

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**About National Council of Social Service (NCSS)**

NCSS is the umbrella body for over 450 member voluntary welfare organisations in Singapore. Its mission is to provide leadership and direction in enhancing the capabilities and capacity of our members, advocating for social service needs and strengthening strategic partnerships, for an effective social service ecosystem. For more information, please visit: [www.ncss.gov.sg](http://www.ncss.gov.sg)



In collaboration with:



## **About Tote Board**

Established in 1988, Tote Board (Singapore Totalisator Board) is a Statutory Board of the Ministry of Finance. As a grantmaking organisation, Tote Board works closely with stakeholders and partners, to support broad and diverse worthy projects in the sectors of Arts, Community Development, Education, Health, Social Service and Sports. Through these projects, Tote Board helps to uplift the community by giving hope to vulnerable groups and improving the lives of all in Singapore.

Tote Board channels gaming surpluses of its agents – Singapore Pools (Pools) and Singapore Turf Club (STC) – as well as the collection of casino entry levy – to grantmaking projects that help build an inclusive, resilient and vibrant community. Tote Board also ensures that Pools and STC conduct their businesses in a socially responsible manner, to provide legal and safe gaming, and to counter illegal gambling. For more information, please visit: [www.toteboard.gov.sg](http://www.toteboard.gov.sg).

## **About Tote Board–Enabling Lives Initiative Fund**

The \$30 Million Tote Board-Enabling Lives Initiative aims to improve the quality of lives and well-being of persons with disabilities and their caregivers. The Initiative, over a period of five years, was launched in October 2014. It is a partnership between Tote Board, SG Enable and NCSS.

The Initiative adopts a fresh approach to bringing together the community of Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs), social enterprises and other organisations to work together to co-create and shape solutions that address the challenges faced by persons with disabilities and their caregivers over the course of their lives. The Initiative will provide grants to seeding of new ideas, pilot programmes, scaling up of evidence-based programmes and cross-sectoral collaborations. It also seeks to share good practices and provides a platform for learning across the disability and social sector.

Tote Board has appointed SG Enable to administer the grants on disability-related projects in cross-cutting areas such as Data and Technology, Caregiver and Natural Support as well as Transition Management, through grant calls. Tote Board has appointed NCSS to carry out public education activities to foster greater public awareness and wider acceptance of persons with disabilities.

## **APPENDIX A: ATTITUDE STUDY**

NCSS conducted a cross-sectional survey on Singaporean citizens / Permanent Residents, aged 18 to 69 years old to find out the perception of the general public towards persons with disabilities in 2015. A total of 1,400 respondents were surveyed in May and June 2015.

Specifically, the study aims to establish a perception of the public towards persons with disabilities by:

- Ascertaining the level of public understanding of persons with disabilities;
- Determining the perception of opportunities and discrimination of persons with disabilities in areas of employment, education and public access;
- Determining level of acceptance; and
- Examining relationships between respondents; demographic characteristics and their attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

### **Key Findings:**

1. Respondents' attitudes towards persons with sensory impairment were most favourable, followed by physical impairment. Autism and intellectual impairment scored least favourably. This is especially prevalent in the employment sector, as compared to areas of education, public access and social interaction.
2. Public's attitude towards persons with disabilities is more favourable when there is frequent contact with them.
3. The public displays larger social distances towards persons with autism and intellectual impairment, compared to persons with sensory or physical impairment.
4. More than one third of the public will not employ persons with disabilities if they were an employer.

## **APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

The objective of the focus group discussions (FGDs) was to understand the needs and perspectives of persons with disabilities and based on these findings, to provide a clear strategic focus for the planned disability awareness campaign.

A key focus of the research was to understand what persons with disabilities want and their definition of inclusion.

FGDs among 100 persons with disabilities from all sectors of disability were conducted. The FGDs were conducted in November 2015. A workshop was also conducted with voluntary welfare organisations to share the findings and ideate potential communication solutions to be implemented in the disability awareness campaign.

### **Key Findings:**

1. Persons with disabilities reflected that the public view their differences as limitations for which they need protection and different treatment from society. This protection and difference in treatment has created a barrier that prevents persons with disabilities from doing the things they can do and want to do at the workplace, social outings and societal activities.
2. The barrier also reinforces stereotypes relating to their disabilities. Persons with disabilities want to break down this barrier and progress in their lives. Persons with disabilities aspire to do what persons without disabilities do.
3. Persons with disabilities want to continue learning and upgrading and be a valuable, contributing member of society. They want to be treated with a bit more respect and courtesy while they strive to achieve their goals.

## APPENDIX C: QUANTITATIVE STUDY WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

NCSS conducted a study with close to 1,000 persons with disabilities to find out more about their needs. The study took a whole of person approach. Participants of this study include individuals with physical disability, cognitive disabilities and sensory impairment. The study was conducted between January 2015 and March 2015.

### Key Findings:

1. The study found that 7 out of 10 persons with disabilities desire for greater independence and control over their lives.
2. 57% feel that they have no control of their lives.
3. 57% feel that they do not have autonomy (decision making, control and choice).
4. 63% feel that they are not able to participate in social activities and contribute to society.
5. Factors that were identified to enable the inclusion of persons with disabilities include:
  - The level of understanding ;
  - Level of participation in societal activities;
  - The ability to get along with other members of the community.

## **APPENDIX D: 'SEE THE TRUE ME' CAMPAIGN DETAILS**

Persons with disabilities, such as Dickson Tan, Chen Wan Yi, Ivan Gomez and Ong Peng Kai, will share their interests, aspirations and dreams through an integrated advertising campaign.

The integrated advertising campaign will reach out to members of the public through:

- Online and social media such as Facebook and Youtube;
- Outdoor bus shelters, interactive bus stop ads and Tower Transit bus wraps;
- Advertisements, in English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil, in newspapers and on radio;
- Stickers on SMRT train windows and platform screen doors in Raffles Place MRT station

Other aspects of the 'See The True Me' campaign include:

### **'See The True Me' Website**

A dedicated website, developed in collaboration with the Disabled People's Association (DPA), is also launched today. The website houses stories and resources on how the public can interact with persons with disabilities.

### **Disability Awareness Talks for the Public**

DPA and SPD will be conducting Disability Awareness Talks for the public and targeted groups such as employers. These talks will share more information about the various disabilities, tips on inclusive communication and interaction and address any questions that members of the public may have. Interested parties can sign up for these talks via the 'See The True Me' website.

Another disability-themed initiative by NCSS this year:

### **An Inclusive Community Chest Heartstrings Walk**

The event, to be held on 31 July 2016, will incorporate various elements to provide opportunities for persons with different abilities to interact. These include pairing corporate volunteers with beneficiaries during the charity walk and a family-friendly carnival with booths designed for persons with and without disabilities to enjoy.