



MEDIA RELEASE

Five same-day events to launch Seniors Give Thanks! campaign on 1 October - in conjunction with International Day of Older Persons 2016

Minister for Social and Family Development Tan Chuan-Jin officiated main celebration at Kembangan Chai Chee to encourage seniors to strengthen social relationships and build strong support networks

Singapore, 01 October 2016 – Five events involving 25 organisations were held today in celebration of the International Day of Older Persons (IDOP) Singapore this year. Held across Singapore from Whampoa to Bedok and Kampong Glam, the events were initiated by the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) and led by social service organisations, community and corporate partners and grassroots. This marked the largest IDOP same-day celebration in Singapore since IDOP was officially celebrated here in 2014. Close to 2,200 persons were expected to be involved in the five same-day celebration events.

Minister for Social and Family Development Tan Chuan-Jin was the guest-of-honour at the IDOP celebration at Sunlove Chai Chee Senior Activity Centre, where he officiated the **Seniors Give Thanks! campaign – the main IDOP celebration in Singapore initiated by NCSS this year** - in conjunction with Kembangan Chai Chee Active Ageing Committee's "A Beautiful Saturday" event. Minister Tan is also the Grassroots Adviser of Kembangan Chai Chee.

The other four celebration events that took place on 1 October included a family carnival, a walk and *wheelathon* and an engagement session over breakfast where intergenerational bonding and IDOP messages were weaved in. IDOP celebrations by other partnering organisations would also be held throughout the month of October to reach out to more seniors.

Organised for the third consecutive year by NCSS, the IDOP celebrations have gained steady momentum with strong support from social service organisations, community and corporate partners, Community Development Councils and grassroots. The focus of IDOP this year is to highlight seniors as active participants who are keen to show appreciation for people who matter to them, provide a platform for seniors to express thanks, forge closer bonds with their loved ones and build strong support networks, and to enhance the experience of the general public when they interact with seniors.

In a survey conducted with 1,000 seniors last year, NCSS found that having activities to look forward to and being provided ample opportunities for social participation will contribute greatest to the wellbeing of seniors. It was also reported that seniors who have weak familial bonds and networks are generally less satisfied with their lives^[1].

In addition, a study has shown that acts of gratitude such as writing a thank you note, words of praise and hugs are simple ways for seniors to participate and appreciate their loved ones, effectively contributing to strengthened social relationships^[2]. A study conducted in the United States also showed that seniors who expressed gratitude reported much lower depressive symptoms and significantly greater positive effect^[3].

Seniors Give Thanks! – Simple Gesture, Sincere Gratitude

With these in mind and aligned with NCSS' efforts to create platforms for seniors to build strong social support networks, the **Seniors Give Thanks! campaign** was rolled out to enable the community to engage seniors purposefully and for seniors to strengthen their relationships with their loved ones and/or reconnect with people who matter to them through simple acts of gratitude.

i) Seniors Shared Gratitude Stories on Videos

To encourage more in the community to show appreciation to their loved ones, three videos were specially produced for IDOP this year to share heart-warming gratitude stories of three seniors – Madam Mok Chow Mui, 72; Madam Betty Lim, 59 and Mr Mohamed Hussin s/o Y Miabhai, 72.

Find out more about the surprise party that Madam Mok planned for her husband of 46 years, the special dish that Madam Lim learnt and cooked for her domestic helper and the heartfelt words that Mr Mohamed Hussin penned down on the 'Thank You Card' despite having 'stiff man syndrome' at www.ncss.gov.sg/idop.

Please refer to **Annex A** for more information about the three IDOP videos.

ii) Hand-Folded Flowers & 'Thank You Cards'

About 27,000 'Thank You Cards' will be distributed by community, corporate and social service organisations, and schools this year, with 500 trained befrienders from these organisations mobilised to encourage seniors to pen down their appreciation. Seniors can express their gratitude to their neighbours, co-workers, friends or family members in words.

Seniors will also be encouraged to fold paper hydrangeas – a floral symbol of heartfelt gratitude – and present it together with the 'Thank You Card' to the special someone they want to thank.

The number of 'Thank You Cards' to be distributed and the number of befrienders who attended training workshop this year doubled that of last year. Twelve workshops were also conducted by NCSS between July to September 2016 to prepare the befrienders for their engagement with seniors.

Please refer to **Annex B** for list of partnering organisations and highlights of their activities.

[1] Source: Council for Third Age Report on Public Perception on Ageing and Seniors (2008)

[2] Source: Harvard Health Publication (2011) *In Praise of Gratitude*. Retrieved September 21, 2016, from: http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter_article/in-praise-of-gratitude

[3] Source: Kahana, E., Bhatta, T., Lovegreen, L. D., Kahana, B., & Midlarsky, E. (2013). Altruism, Helping, and Volunteering: Pathways to Well-Being in Late Life. *Journal of Aging Health, 25*(1), 159-187.

iii) Interaction Tips and More Information

Members of the public can also pick up tips on how to interact with seniors and find out more about social service programmes available for seniors via NCSS' official website at www.ncss.gov.sg/idop or through NCSS' Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ncss.sg

Ms Tina Hung, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, NCSS, said, "With the strong support from community, corporate and social service organisations, International Day of Older Persons has grown from strength to strength for the past three years. Through celebrating IDOP, NCSS hopes to raise greater awareness about social support available for seniors and the importance of closer relationships with their loved ones. By coordinating efforts across various stakeholders, NCSS aims to be the catalyst that sparks meaningful collaborations to foster a more caring and inclusive Singapore society."

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About National Council of Social Service

NCSS is the umbrella body for over 450 social service 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. Community Chest is the fund-raising and engagement arm of NCSS and Social Service Institute (SSI) is the human capital development arm of NCSS. For more information, please visit: www.ncss.gov.sg

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ANNEX A: INFORMATION ABOUT SENIORS GIVE THANKS! VIDEOS

"I am thankful for all the little things he does for me."—Madam Mok Chow Mui, 72

Sometimes, it is the simple gestures that bring greatest happiness. Chow Mui 's greatest joy is having her husband, Raymond, by her side through thick and thin. Fondly recalling their courtship days with dates to Haw Par Villa and the cinema, Chow Mui and Raymond are inseparable even after 46 years of marriage. Chow Mui is thankful for all the little things that Raymond has done for her.

"Thank you for being just like family to me." —Madam Betty Lim, 59

Having worked as a domestic helper when she was a teenager, Betty has a soft spot for Christene, her foreign domestic helper of three years. She empathises with Christene, who left home to work abroad, and treats her with the same kindness as she would with a family member. Christene, on the other hand, is always looking out for Betty and often lends a listening ear to her. Betty is thankful for Christene's care and companionship, sharing that they often went out to enjoy their favourite Japanese food together.

"Thank you my sons, for working together to take care of the family and me."

—Mr Mohamed Hussin s/o Y Miabhai , 74

Mohamed Hussin's two sons, Hozehfa and Taher, though 15 years apart, have always been close. They may have different personalities but there is one thing that they have in common – the love for their father. Since Mohamed Hussin was diagnosed with 'stiff man's syndrome', his sons would often massage his sore limbs and accompany him to his physiotherapy sessions. Beyond caregiving duties, his sons also spend quality time with him. Though they say it's their duty, but Mohamed Hussin wants his sons to know how much he appreciates them.

ANNEX B: LIST OF PARTNERING ORGANISATIONS AND HIGHLIGHTS OF THEIR ACTIVITIES

S/N	Partnering Organisations	Celebration Details	Activity Highlights
Five celebration events on 1 October			
1	Kembangan-Chai Chee Active Ageing Committee	1 Oct, 4-6pm Sunlove SAC @ Blk 31 Chai Chee Ave	Main IDOP celebration event as detailed in the media release
2	Kembangan-Chai Chee Senior Activity Centre		
3	Sunlove Chai Chee Senior Activity Centre		
4	PEACE-Connect Senior Activity Centre	1 Oct, 8am-12pm Kampong Glam	Peace-Connect, Kampong Glam CCC and Hope Centre Singapore had training and outreach engagement in September and a breakfast engagement session with seniors in conjunction with Kampong Glam's Breakfast with Love
5	Kampong Glam Citizens' Consultative Committee (CCC)		
6	Hope Centre Singapore		
7	Tsao Foundation	1 Oct, 9am-12pm Whampoa	Tsao Foundation, along with its community partners, will be hosting a Family carnival focusing on intergenerational bonding.
8	City For All Ages (CFAA) Whampoa		
9	Jalan Besar Boon Keng Residents' Committee		
10	Jalan Besar Bendemeer Residents' Committee		
11	Whampoa Citizens' Consultative Committee		
12	Whampoa Drive Residents' Committee		
13	Whampoa View Residents' Committee		
14	Whampoa Lorong Limau Residents' Committee		
15	Whampoa Gardens Residents' Committee		
16	Whampoa Rajah Court Residents' Committee		
17	Whampoa McNair Residents' Committee		
18	Whampoa Towner Residents' Committee		
19	National University of Singapore		

20	Nanyang Technological University, Singapore		
21	Muhammadiyah Health and Day Care Centre	1 Oct, 9am-6pm Bedok Reservoir Park	There will be an IDOP segment where seniors present the 'Thank You Cards' to their family members at the Seniors Family Walk and Wheelathon.
22	Tembusu Senior Activity Centre		
23	Bedok Orchid Residents' Committee	1 Oct, 2-5pm Blk 15A Bedok South Road	There will be an IDOP segment in the "Way to Joy III" event organised by the three organisations.
24	Thye Hua Kwan Bedok Radiance Senior Activity Centre		
25	PropNex Realty Pte Ltd		
Other events held in conjunction with IDOP			
	Partnering Organisations	Activity Highlights	
26	Central Singapore Community Development Council (CSCDC)	Students had reached out to seniors at Sunlove Day Rehab Centre as part of a befriending session under Central Singapore CDC's Silver Friends programme..	
27	ITE College Central		
28	Sunlove Rehab Centre		
29	Silver Spring Pte Ltd	Silver Spring will prepare a special dessert for sale during October for customers. 'Thank You Cards' will be available at the Coffee Connect Café @ Wilkie Edge for seniors to pen their thanks to their loved ones.	
30	Buddhist Compassionate Relief Tzu Chi Foundation	Tzu Chi befrienders had reached out to seniors in August and September as part of their home visits. On Tzu Chi's islandwide charity day in October, Tzu Chi will invite seniors and the persons they would like to appreciate for a gathering.	
31	Pacific Activity Centre (PAC) Pte Ltd	Staff from PAC attended the IDOP workshop and 'Thank You Cards' would be placed at the PAC centres for engagement and celebration in October.	
32	Ageless Online	Ageless Online will promote NCSS publicity videos and also write an article to promote the campaign and the interaction tips from workshop to seniors who frequent the e-magazine portal in October.	
33	AWWA Senior Activity Centre	AWWA will be planning a celebration in October to gather seniors and their loved one. More information to be updated by AWWA at a later date.	

34	TOUCH Community Services	TOUCH has staff and befrienders who attended the training workshop, and will be collecting gratitude stories during engagement with seniors in October
35	South West Community Development Council (SWCDC)	As part of Adopt-A-Precinct @ South West, HP will be reaching out to seniors from West Coast division for a day out. The IDOP materials will be used as part of the engagement.
36	Hewlett Packard Inc. Singapore (Private) Limited (HP)	
37	North East Community Development Council (NECDC)	More information about engagement and outreach efforts as part of NECDC's SuperMind Showcase to be confirmed at a later date by the two organisations.
38	Temasek Polytechnic	
39	GoodLife! (A programme by Montfort Care)	GoodLife! And Yah! will carry out outreach efforts in October and November. IDOP messages will be weaved into their 15 th anniversary celebration.
40	YAH! (A programme by Montfort Care)	