

## MEDIA RELEASE



In support of



## MORE STEP UP TO OFFER TIME AND SKILLS IN SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE IN 2017

- *59 top donors and volunteers recognised at annual President's Challenge appreciation ceremony*

**SINGAPORE 23 NOVEMBER 2017** – Volunteers who contributed their skills in support of President's Challenge have increased two-fold in the past 2 years, from 211 individuals in 2015, to 403 individuals in 2017. The volunteers hail from all walks of life and include corporate employees, seniors as well as students. The skillsets contributed by PC volunteers are just as wide-ranging, and include financial management, marketing consultation, customer service, and services in the music and the arts.

Companies such as **Procter & Gamble (P&G)**, recognise that skills-based volunteering is more empowering and beneficial for the service users and charities in the long-run. The company initiated the P&G Beyond Borders Skills-Based Volunteering Programme, and provided free marketing consultation to 14 benefitting organisations of President's Challenge in 2017, including the President's Challenge Secretariat.

Mr Sameer Srivastav, Brand Director, Olay Asia Pacific, P&G, said, "The Skills-Based Volunteering program is integral to our efforts to make a positive impact in our community in every way we can. Over the last year, P&G volunteers shared their expertise in Brand Building to help the benefitting organisations to level up their capabilities and marketing skills, which is more sustainable, beyond just monetary donations. It was a very fulfilling experience for our P&G volunteers – myself included. We are glad that we are able to leverage our skills to do our part for a good cause."

Individuals too, have stepped up to contribute their time and skills for a good cause. 56-year-old **Shirley Tan**, a homemaker, volunteers to provide haircuts for the senior residents at All Saints Home, a benefitting organisation of President's Challenge. She has been doing so for the past 5 years and took up hair-cutting as she wanted to volunteer with seniors.

“Haircutting is my passion. I am merely making use of what I love doing and what I am good at doing, to help others. I see myself as more than a hairstylist to the seniors, I am their friend. They greet me warmly and tell me they look forward to seeing me again, and this really warms my heart. It is the reason I volunteer.”

Since 2012, President’s Challenge has expanded its scope beyond fund-raising, to include volunteerism. This year, volunteer numbers for the President’s Challenge soared to a record high of over 12,000.

The annual President’s Challenge Appreciation Night was held at the Istana this evening. 59 top volunteers and donors of President’s Challenge were recognised and received tokens of appreciation from Guest-of-Honour, President Halimah Yacob. The service users, volunteers and donors present at the ceremony bear testimony to the wide-reaching impact of PC.

Rossyazzrulnisyam Bin Rosman is a service user of REACH Community Services Society’s Rock Steady Programme, a music programme and community outreach that provides at-risk and community youth with a platform for creativity and expression. The programme was supported with funds raised by President’s Challenge in 2014. When Rossyazzrulnisyam first joined the programme in 2016, he was shy and still in the process of discovering his love for music and confidence in songwriting. Through the programme, he made new friends and developed his passion for music and the community with the help of mentors and a supportive environment.

Two years on, he has gained confidence and exposure from performing at events such as the PC Appreciation Night, and has grown to become an active and contributing member. He is also a role model who gives back and supports other youths in need.

This year, PC is supporting REACH Youth Powerhub, a developing key thrust of REACH that rests upon the value of training and empowering youth to become leaders and mentors to other at-risk youth. This platform and approach develops a healthy and sustainable eco-system where REACH can sustain their work with a bigger volunteer pool, and with more positive outcomes.

“I am glad to see members of the community – from students to corporate partners, and seniors – actively involved in this year’s President’s Challenge. They have devoted themselves tirelessly to help the less privileged and vulnerable groups in our society. As Singapore develops as a nation, I urge all segments of society to help those in need so we can progress together as one and not leave anybody behind.

Together we can build a better and more caring Singapore,” said President Halimah Yacob.

PC is on track to raise over \$11 million this year, with strong support from donors such as Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple, and Woh Hup (Private) Limited. The amount raised will go towards 52 benefitting organisations supported by PC this year.

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**About President’s Challenge**

The President’s Challenge is an annual community outreach and fund-raising campaign for beneficiaries selected every year by the President’s Office. Started in 2000, the Challenge represents a coming together of people from all walks of life, under the President’s patronage, to help those who are less fortunate, and is a call to all Singaporeans to do their part to build a more caring and inclusive society. 100% of donations raised under President’s Challenge go to charities, causes and social service organisations supported by President’s Challenge.

Since 2012, the Challenge was expanded to go beyond fund-raising, by including volunteerism and social entrepreneurship. In 2015, the President’s Challenge Silver Volunteer Fund was set up to encourage senior volunteerism. President’s Challenge will continue to rally the community to help the less fortunate among us through the giving of time, skills and enterprise. The operating costs of President’s Challenge are covered separately by a grant from Singapore Totalisator Board as a community initiative. The overall operating cost to donation ratio for President’s Challenge is also kept under 15%, well within 30% fund-raising efficiency ratio recommended by the Charity Council.

