

Organised By



In Support Of



Supported by



MEDIA RELEASE

Persons With and Without Disabilities Will Interact With Each Other at an Inclusive Community Chest Heartstrings Walk

- *Young man with autism is the event's co-emcee for the first time*
- *Experiential booths will give participants a first-hand understanding of challenges faced by persons with disabilities*

SINGAPORE 31 JULY 2016 – This Sunday, more than 7,000 people will be participating in **Community Chest Heartstrings Walk 2016**, which is designed with family-friendly activities appropriate for people with and without disabilities to interact.

Co-organised with **Marina Bay Sands**, Community Chest Heartstrings Walk 2016, which is also the finale event for Marina Bay Sands' Sands for Singapore Festival 2016, will bring together corporate partners, volunteers, beneficiaries, social service organisations and members of the public in an engaging and inclusive way. Highlights include a **4 km Fun Walk**, **"Race to the Sky" Vertical Marathon** and a **Family Carnival** that will also feature experiential booths to help promote a better understanding of the challenges faced by people with disabilities on a daily basis.

At the forefront of the morning activities will be 18-year old Muhd Aqram bin Mohd Yazed, a young man with autism, who will be the co-emcee for the event. He was a quiet boy who got along well with his friends, but struggled in a mainstream primary school. At the school's recommendation upon assessment, Aqram attended a special education school where he flourished. He is now determined to secure a job to be financially independent. His proud parents, Mdm Norashikeen bte Abdul Samad and Mr Mohd Yazed bin M Affandee, said: "We are so proud of Aqram taking on this role as co-emcee at the signature fund-raising event of Community Chest this year. He was diagnosed with mild autism when he was in Primary 3.

Today, after five years at Eden School, Aqram is more confident and well-rounded, and is looking forward to getting a job at the Enabling Village.”

Guest-of-Honour Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean will be flagging off the 4 km Fun Walk, with **Special Guest, Minister for Social and Family Development Tan Chuan-Jin**. They will then walk with the crowd along a scenic trail around Marina Bay, before returning to mingle at the Family Carnival and enjoy an Opening Performance by Metta School’s Circus Arts and SPARKS group.

Among the participants of the Walk will also be the ambassadors from the on-going **“See The True Me” campaign** that was recently launched in early June to encourage greater awareness and appreciation of persons with disabilities. They will be present with their families – and they are Chen Wanyi, who has Down Syndrome, Ivan Gomez, who has autism, and Ong Peng Kai, who has cerebral palsy.

Many beneficiaries from social service organisations, such as Club Heal, Care Corner Singapore Ltd, and Bright Hill Evergreen Home, have also chosen to volunteer for various support roles at the walk, such as distributing 8,000 goodie bags, motivating participants to the finish line and handing out water bottles, and manning booths to raise awareness and raise funds. They are paired with volunteers from organisations, such as Euro Asia Motorwerkz and Nanyang Technological University to work together, interact, and get to know one another.

Chairman of Community Chest, Mr Phillip Tan, said: “We are delighted that this year’s Community Chest Heartstrings Walk will offer many opportunities for persons with and without disabilities to interact with each other. These opportunities will encourage greater understanding and appreciation of persons with disabilities in our community.”

“Community Chest is heartened by the generosity of our partners, beneficiaries, volunteers and members of the public for their contributions. Indeed, this reflects our collective aspiration to be a more inclusive, caring and compassionate society, as we come together to serve the vulnerable and underprivileged in Singapore,” Mr Tan added.

Mr George Tanasijevich, President and Chief Executive Officer of Marina Bay Sands, said: “Marina Bay Sands has forged a strong partnership with Community Chest, organising the annual Community Chest Heartstrings Walk and Race to the Sky Vertical Marathon. Each year, we strive to encourage more individuals and corporates to come forward to donate generously to help local charities and underserved communities. This is why we created our very own Sands for Singapore Charity Festival. The Community Chest Heartstrings Walk may be the finale to our charity festival, but the message of building a compassionate and inclusive society is an important one that Marina Bay Sands is keen to help champion.”

Event Highlights

- More than 180 individuals from corporate organisations across different industries and social service organisations will be participating in the “Race to the Sky” Vertical Marathon. Among them are Marina Bay Sands, the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore, para-athletes from Singapore Disability Sports Council, and beneficiaries from Delta Senior School. The youngest participant in this grueling race up 57 stories at Marina Bay Sands is 17, while the oldest is 54.
- The experiential booths include a blindfolded drinking challenge to experience how individuals with visual impairment cope with simple daily activities, and a lip-reading exercise.
- Metta School, a Community Chest-supported social service organisation, will also stage a circus arts performance showcasing juggling, plate spinning and diabolo skills. The students, who had practised enthusiastically, are aged between nine and 17 years old and have mild intellectual disability or autism.
- Every registered participant at Community Chest Heartstrings Walk 2016 will receive a Goodie Bag. SPD, a social service organisation serving people with disabilities, coordinated the packing of these bags, together with their beneficiaries and with added support by volunteers from **A*Star and the Ministry of Trade and Industry.**

- All donations, including the registration fee of \$10 for the fun walk, will be fully channeled towards charities supported by Community Chest.

For media enquiries, please contact :

Ms Jacqueline Cai
Senior Associate
Ogilvy Public Relations
Tel: 213 9974 / 9274 6896
Email: Jacqueline.cai@ogilvy.com

Ms Shazliana Heron
Manager, Corporate Communications
National Council of Social Service
Tel: 6210 2639 / 9844 2775
Email: shazliana_heron@ncss.gov.sg

About Community Chest

For over 30 years, Community Chest has been engaging the community to support people in need through fund-raising and volunteering. Community Chest supports about 80 charities in Singapore, allowing them to focus on caring for the disadvantaged. As Community Chest's fund-raising and operating costs are covered mainly by Tote Board and Singapore Pools, 100% of your donations will go towards helping:

- Children with special needs and youths-at-risk to reach their potential
- Adults with disabilities to integrate into society
- Relationships of families in difficulty to stay resilient
- Elderly to age graciously in the community
- Persons with mental health issues to integrate into society

Give Hope. Share Joy at comchest.sg.