

**OPENING ADDRESS BY MISS TINA HUNG  
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE (NCSS)  
AT THE SOCIAL SERVICE INSTITUTE GRADUATION AND AWARDS  
CEREMONY 2015  
ON SATURDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2015**

**Mr Tan Chuan-Jin, Minister for Social and Family Development,**

**Dr Ang Seng Bin, Vice President of NCSS**

**Graduands and Award Recipients,**

**Community partners,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

1 Good morning. Welcome to the Social Service Institute (SSI) Graduation and Awards Ceremony 2015. Today, we gather here to celebrate the graduation of 84 students from the SSI Diploma in Social Service (DSS) and SSI Higher Diploma in Social Service (HDSS). Your hard work and perseverance, over 13 months for DSS students and 18 months for HDSS students, have paid off and I congratulate you for your success.

2 I would also like to congratulate the 100 promising students and practitioners who will be receiving various scholarships and awards. For those who are new entrants to the sector, welcome to the social service family. For those who have already started contributing to the sector and will be taking on greater responsibilities and roles, I applaud you for your exemplary performance and look forward to your continuous contributions to the sector.

3 I am delighted to know that more than half of the DSS cohort graduating today is currently pursuing the HDSS, which commenced in July 2015. In addition, 8 of our HDSS graduands have already enrolled in the UniSIM Bachelor of Social Work degree programme, while 2 more will begin the same degree programme in January next year. This accelerated education pathway by SSI and UniSIM (from DSS, HDSS then to UniSIM Bachelor of Social Work programme) helps individuals with different educational background to effectively ease into their roles in social service sector, and boost the number of social workers we need in Singapore. I am pleased to see that many of you, at varying stages in their career - new entrants, mid-career or existing practitioners - have recognised the value of this pathway and have taken advantage of the opportunities now available.

4 SSI was appointed the Continuing Education and Training centre for the social service sector from 1 October 2013, as a further nod of acknowledgement of SSI's relentless efforts to conduct and facilitate useful social service relevant courses and programmes. The DSS and HDSS will achieve the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualification certification in February 2016. This is an important recognition of the value of the two courses and we hope many more will be motivated to upgrade themselves through participation in these courses.

5 Besides long-term courses such as DSS and HDSS, SSI also offers many short courses such as a two-day course on 'Practice Transcultural Marriage Counselling'. This course aims to equip social workers, counsellors and psychologists with the knowledge and skills to take a multicultural approach to engage individuals facing challenges in transcultural marriages. Course participants also learn to identify the changes that these individuals are experiencing and apply the relevant approaches when rendering assistance.

6 SSI constantly seeks feedback from sector professionals and ensures training courses remain relevant, engaging and address the needs and challenges in the social service sector. We encourage more employers to send your staff for these training courses, to invest in our most precious asset – our people - so we can better serve the needs of the community.

7 Today, as we celebrate the hard work and potential of our graduands and award recipients, we also want to recognise the contributions of many alumni who have gone on to serve the sector ably after graduation. It is with this in mind that we have produced a new book – **Nurturing Career, Inspiring Lives** – which will be launched by Minister Tan Chuan-Jin later. We are most privileged to have Madam Halimah Yacob, Adviser to NCSS, to pen the foreword for this book. The book is a collection of personal stories from 10 of our graduates. They shared candidly on why and how they decided to join the social service sector, what motivated them to take up the SSI courses and how they have applied what they learnt to bring about improvements in others' lives.

8 Take for example Miss Elean Yeo, a supervisor at the Moral Student Care Centre (Bukit Panjang). Having grown up in a single-parent family and bringing up two children by herself, Elean understands the importance of strong family ties and support for youths. Her experience of working with families and youths, together with a keen eye for details, prompted Elean to find out more about the family conditions of a pair of siblings, who often turned up at her centre with creased and discoloured school uniforms. Elean later found out that the siblings faced deeper family problems and she extended her help, even after referring the parents to a social worker. Elean, an HDSS graduate and an award recipient in 2013, is now pursuing a degree in social work at UniSIM.

9 We also read about Mr Richard Khalil, whose life was transformed when he received help from The Helping Hand - a halfway house for former drug addicts about 20 years ago. Having turned over a new leaf, Richard is now the Executive Director of The Helping Hand, performing the role of the helping hand himself, by overseeing the rehabilitation programme and helping former drug users to reintegrate back to the society. Richard is one of the HDSS graduands and Book Prize winners here today. Congratulations, Richard!

10 As we showcase the commitment to service, positive learning attitudes and heart-warming life stories of these 10 individuals, we hope that you will also draw inspiration from their devotion to the social service sector.

11 As social needs evolve with time, the road ahead will be challenging and exciting. I wish all graduands and award recipients will find purpose, fulfilment and success in your social service career and may you make a difference in the lives of those you serve. Thank you.