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MEDIA RELEASE

Community Chest stands by families in need when the going gets tough *Targets to raise \$52.6 million*

Helping Families Through Tough Times

Against the backdrop of the worst global economic slump predicted since World War II and increasing unemployment with the shrinkage of the Singapore economy, Community Chest would focus on helping families in need for this financial year.

Community Chest Rallies Support from the Community

With more Singaporeans affected by the sharp economic downturn, Community Chest anticipated greater challenge in its fund-raising efforts and would only raise what is needed. During these tough times, Community Chest rallies the support of the community to help those in need. Community Chest hopes to see more individuals like Mr Tan Tiong Heng, a regular donor who continues to contribute despite his own challenges. Spurred by the financial aid through a Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited scholarship which enabled him to complete his studies in the polytechnic, Mr Tan wanted to give back to the needy. However, in 2003, he ended his regular donations as he lost his job. When he gained employment four months later, Mr Tan was determined that his spirit of giving would not be disrupted again. He set up a personal fund so that he could continue to contribute to Community Chest, even during rainy days.

“Community Chest is privileged to have received the unwavering support from foundations, corporates, associations, individual Singapore residents and their friends over the past 25 years. We remain optimistic and hopeful that our donors both old and new will rise to the challenge during these difficult times when donor dedication and generosity are most needed,” said Ms Jennie Chua, Chairman of Community Chest.

“Every donation, whatever the amount, is important to us. The contribution of Singaporeans like Mr Tan Tiong Heng who has given for the past 14 years and an anonymous donor who mailed a \$4 donation to Community Chest in January this year are inspiring and are encouraging signs that our donors will continue to give.”

Fund-Raising Target

For this Financial Year, Community Chest aims to raise \$52.6 million to help needy Singaporeans tide over this difficult period. The amount raised would focus on:

- ❑ Enabling families: \$28.8 million or 55% of \$52.6 million
- ❑ Sustaining families and services: \$23.8 million or 45% of \$52.6 million

The funds raised would support 153 social service programmes that are managed by 68 charities, serving more than 340,000¹ people and enabling them to live to their fullest potential.

Enabling and Sustaining Help for Families

Community Chest's role in reaching out to the less fortunate extends throughout the community. 42 year-old Madam Lu Kwee Hwa and 12 year-old Siti Sakinah are two beneficiaries, who like many others, continue to be helped by programmes funded by Community Chest.

Madam Lu, a single-mother of two young children, has been a client of Care Corner Family Service Centre (Toa Payoh) since 2007. Madam Lu has received financial assistance for her son's school expenses and counselling for both mother and son to improve their relationship.

Madam Lu commented on the assistance received, "Thank you Community Chest. Your funding to Care Corner Family Service Centre (Toa Payoh) has enabled my children and I to access the numerous services provided by the Centre. It is with the help of both Community Chest and Care Corner Family Service Centre that the living and financial conditions for my children and I have improved."

Siti Sakinah Binte Zainal, who was born blind as a result of Severe Retinopathy of Prematurity, is a beneficiary of Community Chest for 11 years and currently receives mainstream education in Braille from Lighthouse School. Siti failed her Primary 1 examinations, as she had no knowledge of Braille when she was admitted to the Lighthouse School. With much perseverance and hard work, Siti managed to learn Braille, an important medium of communication for the visually impaired, and she is now in the EM2 stream. She would be taking her Primary School Leaving Examinations at the end of this year. Siti also enjoys playing the piano, which she picked up.

"Without Community Chest's support to Lighthouse School, the course fees would be too costly for us," said Mr Zainal Bin Osman, father of Siti. "Mainstream education has helped Siti integrated well into society, and we are hopeful that she would be able to lead an independent and fulfilling life."

For the 68 charities, they also recognised the fund-raising challenge ahead and are appreciative of the funds raised by Community Chest in support of their programmes. "Tanjong Pagar Family Service Centre has been funded by Community Chest for 10 years and we are grateful to Community Chest. Without having to worry about fund-raising, it enables us to concentrate on providing better quality and professional services to meet the

¹ This number is based on service-use count including public education outreach

needs of the community, especially the low-income and dysfunctional families,” said Mr Wong Kwong Sing, Executive Director of Tanjong Pagar Family Service Centre.

Assurance to Donors

Given these difficult times, Community Chest is especially mindful that the donations need to be put to good use and that they meet the relevant needs of the clients. Hence, a series of checks and balances are put in place to ensure accountability and transparency of donations received.

The National Council of Social Service (NCSS) has developed several initiatives to help VWOs attain acceptable service standards. Besides service guides and training, service standards are also implemented to ensure clients’ outcomes are met. A check on clients’ satisfaction was done through its clients’ satisfaction survey last year. A total of 1,800 responses were gathered from three service sectors, i.e. Children, Youth and Families Sector, Eldercare Sector and the Disability Sector. Clients’ satisfaction for the various programmes was high, with many complimenting the VWO staff for their quality service. Staff competency and responsiveness were identified as key drivers of client’s satisfaction for all sectors. In addition, appropriate feedback channels and the ability to contact key staff at the VWOs were also identified as critical to client’s satisfaction.

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Community Chest

Community Chest raises funds on a yearly basis to meet the needs of the social service programmes we help support. Community Chest ensures that the fundraising costs are kept to a minimum. As these costs are covered mainly by Tote Board and Singapore Pools (Private) Limited, every dollar raised by Community Chest will be made available to social service programmes under its care.

Community Chest has made it easier for individuals to donate from the comfort of their homes via websites such as www.comchest.org.sg and www.vpost.com.sg, through the internet (DBS, UOB or Citibank) or phone banking (DBS or POSB) and even at SAM machines across the island. Individuals can also reap tax benefits on donations through

hassle-free modes like the Community Chest's SHARE programme (the sign-up form is available at www.comchest.org.sg) where one can make monthly donations via GIRO, credit card or payroll and have his or her tax deductions automatically included in their tax assessments.