

MEDIA RELEASE

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COMMUNITY CHEST RALLIES AROUND FAMILIES AND SETS \$55.7 MILLION TARGET

Past beneficiaries go from receiving help to giving help

SINGAPORE, APRIL 25, 2011 – Community Chest, the fund-raising arm of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), targets to raise \$55.7 million for Financial Year (FY) 2011. Funds raised will go towards helping 70 Voluntary Welfare Organisations manage 158 social service programmes, which will benefit about 300,000 people¹.

From receiving help to giving help

Instead of receiving help, three special beneficiaries of Community Chest are now able to give help to others.

19-year-old Nantha Kumar S/O Rajendran was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy at birth. In 2009 when he was 17, he was admitted to the Cheshire Home which is under the care of Community Chest. Being wheelchair-bound, he benefits from the Home's physiotherapy services. Today, Kumar is a voluntary assistant teacher at his alma mater and teaches Mathematics and Science to students with autism and other learning disabilities while studying for his "O" levels.

80-year-old Toh Heok Khin, an elderly beneficiary of Community Chest, was lonely and withdrawn when he was first befriended by Lions Befrienders 17 years ago. He had cysts in his nose, which made breathing difficult. Motivated by the assistance he received from his Befriender, which included helping him seek medical treatment, he has been helping other needy elderly by distributing food items like packed meals, vegetables and canned food to about 100 of them living in his neighbourhood twice a week for the past 15 years.

¹ The figure includes direct service users, caregivers and public education outreach and is rounded to the nearest 10,000.

Rebecca Lim is also one of our beneficiaries who has been touched by the assistance she received from the charities supported by Community Chest. When she was in primary school, Rebecca's family received financial assistance from Covenant Family Service Centre (FSC) and she also benefited from the FSC's tuition programme. Last year, she was one of the 10 recipients of the Social Work Associate Training Sponsorship offered by NCSS and the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, and will be giving back to society as a social work associate after graduating from Nanyang Polytechnic with a Diploma in Social Sciences (Social Work).

The above three beneficiaries are shining examples of individuals who have risen above their personal challenges. Kumar and Mr Toh are contributing back to society by helping other needy people, while Rebecca will also be doing her part when she graduates from Nanyang Polytechnic.

Heightened focus on services for families

Serving families continues to be a key focus for Community Chest in FY2011.

A new FSC at Telok Blangah Way, called @27 FSC, will be set up and run by Marine Parade FSC. Telok Blangah was identified as the area has a high population density and a growing concentration of seniors. The new centre will be set up by end of FY2011 and will bring the total of such centres in Singapore to 38 by March 2012.

"The setting up of @27 FSC at Telok Blangah will increase accessibility of services for the needy families in the area. Our social workers will be able to reach out to more elderly, low-income families and at-risk youths who need our assistance. We also hope to introduce programmes more targeted at serving the community's needs in the near future," said Ms Han Yah Yee, General Manager of Marine Parade FSC.

New programmes to be funded by Community Chest

In addition to the new FSC, there are five other new programmes that will be funded by Community Chest in FY2011. The Special Education Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS), recently announced by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and co-funded by Community Chest, provides special education students from low-income families with subsidies for school fees, uniforms, textbooks and examination fees.

"The FAS has come at the right time to assist our special needs students. Approximately 25% of our students would benefit from this initiative to allow them to continue receiving education to improve their quality of lives. We would like to thank Community Chest and MOE for providing this important source of funding to help our students," said Mrs Noreen Lim-Yeo, Principal of Grace Orchard School.

Other new programmes include the Canossian Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children and three Centres of Specialisation dealing with children, youths and families, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

NCSS will continue to ensure that the funds raised are optimally distributed to programmes that meet the needs of the community. In line with good fund-raising practice, Community Chest has maintained its fund-raising cost to below 12 per cent of total funds raised for the last ten years.

Attached for your reference is the programme for the event and detailed write-ups for the three beneficiaries mentioned.

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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 fund-raising and other operating costs are kept to a minimum. As these costs are covered mainly by Tote Board and Singapore Pools, 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.

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National Council of Social Service
Monday, 25 April 2011

COMMUNITY CHEST LAUNCH OF FUND-RAISING YEAR 11/12

PROGRAMME

9.45am	Arrival and registration of guests and media
10.20am	Performance by SIA-MINDS Employment Development Centre (Taiko Drums)
10.30am	Opening address By Ms Jennie Chua, Chairman, Community Chest
10.40am	Video presentation
10.45am	Briefing of FY11/12 funding needs By Ms Ng Ling Ling, Director, Resource Allocation Division
10.55am	Panel question and answer session - RADM (RET) Kwek Siew Jin, President, NCSS - Ms Jennie Chua, Chairman, Community Chest - Ms Ang Bee Lian, CEO, NCSS - Ms Ng Ling Ling, Director, Resource Allocation Division
11.10am	Photo opportunity - Photo opportunity with RADM (RET) Kwek Siew Jin, President, NCSS, Ms Jennie Chua, Chairman, Community Chest, Ms Ang Bee Lian, CEO, NCSS, VWOs, Community Chest Committee members and beneficiaries.
11.25am	Tea reception / Media interview
12noon	End of programme

COMMUNITY CHEST LAUNCH OF FUND-RAISING YEAR 11/12

DETAILED WRITE-UPS OF BENEFICIARIES

Nantha Kumar S/O Rajendran

19 years old

Cheshire Home

19-year-old Nantha Kumar was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy at birth. Being wheelchair-bound, he benefits from the Cheshire Home's physiotherapy services. He also enjoys the social and recreational activities organised by the Home.

Today, Kumar is a voluntary assistant teacher at a special education school, teaching Mathematics and Science to students with autism and other learning disabilities twice a week. He started teaching three years ago and enjoys the interaction with the children. He is also studying to take the "O" level examinations as a private candidate.

He said, "Initially I don't know what to do when facing a whole room of children. I broke the ice by telling them about myself and the daily challenges I face being wheelchair-bound. I also told them how I could do many things even though I am on the wheelchair and that it could be the same for them."

Toh Heok Khin
80 years old
Lions Befrienders

Toh Heok Khin lives alone in his 1-room flat in Kim Tian Place. When he was first befriended by Lions Befrienders about 17 years ago, he was lonely and withdrawn as he had cysts in his nose, which made breathing difficult for him.

The care and concern extended by his Befriender helped him to open up and become a more cheerful person. His Befriender even made special arrangements for him to receive treatment at the hospital.

Motivated by his Befriender's kindness, Mr Toh today helps other needy elderly by distributing food items like packed meals, vegetables and canned food to about 100 of them living in his neighbourhood twice a week. He has been helping for the past 15 years. Through helping out in the distribution, he has made many new friends over the years. He intends to continue helping out for as long as he can.

Rebecca Lim Qin Rong

19 years old

Recipient of the Social Work Associate Training Sponsorship offered by the National Council of Social Service and the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports

Rebecca Lim is the third child in a family with five children. Her mother is the main breadwinner of the family and the family used to face financial difficulties sending all the children to school.

The family was referred to Covenant Family Service Centre (FSC) for financial assistance 11 years ago by Rebecca's school teacher, where the family received food rations and free tuition for her and her siblings.

When she was in secondary school, Rebecca was introduced to the "Coaching for Excellence" programme run by Fei Yue FSC (Yew Tee) through a social worker who was helping her family with her youngest brother's dyslexia problem. She participated in several youth activities and community involvement projects including an overseas trip to Malacca where she helped with the cleaning of an elderly home. She also came to know a volunteer mentor who inspired her to take up social work.

She said, "One day, he treated me and my siblings to pizza at a restaurant. We were very excited as it was our first time there. When we told him that we would give him a treat once we start working, he told us that we don't have to. Instead, we should think of ways to help others around us, so that more people will benefit."

Touched by the assistance she received from the charities under the care of Community Chest since young, Rebecca aspires to be a social work associate after she graduates from Nanyang Polytechnic with a Diploma in Social Sciences (Social Work).