

MEDIA RELEASE

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In support of



STRONG SUPPORT FROM DONORS SAW \$2.5 MILLION RAISED FOR NEWLY LAUNCHED PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE EMPOWERING FOR LIFE FUND

- *70 top donors and volunteers lauded at annual President's Challenge Appreciation Night*
- *Record \$13m expected to be raised for President's Challenge this year*

SINGAPORE 28 NOVEMBER 2018 – The President's Challenge has raised \$2.5 million for the Empowering for Life Fund (ELF) which was launched earlier this year. This amount was made possible by the strong support of donors who believe in empowering the disadvantaged in our society so that they can lead more independent lives. The ELF will be matched by the Government, doubling the total amount to \$5 million.

2 The ELF is supporting 13 organisations in 2018 to empower individuals through skills upgrading to increase their employability. This amount raised for ELF was announced at the annual President's Challenge Appreciation Night, which was held at the Istana this evening, with President Halimah Yacob as Guest-of-Honour.

3 One of the service users who will benefit from the ELF is Heng Shen, who helped to prepare handmade cookies as door gifts for guests at the Appreciation Night. A youth with special needs, Heng Shen is currently working at Metta Café, an initiative under the Metta Welfare Association to provide F&B vocational training, such as baking, food preparation, customer service and table cleaning, to its service users. With funding support from ELF, Heng Shen and other youths with special needs are able to receive skills training in a familiar environment, where they receive actual job training and wages. By the end of the apprenticeship, Heng Shen will be placed in open employment, where he will reach another stage of independence.

4 "The strong and committed support of our partners is what helped sustain the President's Challenge over the past 18 years. This has enabled President's Challenge to evolve to meet the changing needs of the vulnerable in Singapore, including more customised and upstream support in skills upgrading and employability. Employment is important, as it helps our service users sustain a livelihood and be independent. More importantly, it helps them regain dignity and self-worth. As we talk about

SkillsFuture and lifelong learning as a nation, it is perhaps even more critical that we support those who are less fortunate to upgrade their skills, so that they too have fair opportunities to secure employment.”, said President Halimah Yacob.

Holistic Giving

5 The event saw President Halimah giving out tokens of appreciation to 70 top donors and volunteers. Among them include two organisations that received both the Donor and the Volunteer appreciation token. Not only did these partners raise funds for President’s Challenge, they also made the effort to include the service users of President’s Challenge in their activities. This is in line with the spirit of SG Cares, which is a national movement to support the efforts to build a more caring and inclusive home for all.

6 In particular, Institute of Technical Education, ITE has shown exemplary efforts in holistic giving. The students volunteered to help out at four of the Istana Open Houses this year, and ITE also organised a drone challenge fund-raiser – The Daedalus Drone Challenge, where their industry partners were invited to make a donation to President’s Challenge in order to participate. Service users from benefitting organisations of President’s Challenge were also invited to the event.

7 Another holistic giving partner is the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF), which raised \$40,000 for the President’s Challenge. The RSAF commemorated their 50th anniversary this year and invited service users of President’s Challenge to a number of celebratory events. Over 50 service users, caregivers and employees from four benefitting organisations supported by President’s Challenge – Care Community Services, Dyslexia Association of Singapore, Focus on the Family Singapore Ltd and Association of Muslim Professionals, were invited for a flight on board the RSAF’s C-130 transport aircraft.

8 The C-130 aircraft captain, MAJ Wong Jian Wei, shared that, “Part of our RSAF50 celebrations is about bringing what we do to the community. This year, beyond monetary donations to the President’s Challenge, we brought the service users on a special flight. After the flight, many of the younger participants approached us to ask about the aircraft and our flying operations. It was really heart-warming to see the service users enjoying this unique experience.”

Record Fund Raising Year

9 The President’s Challenge is on track to raise over \$13 million this year. This amount is the highest since the inception of President’s Challenge.

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About the President's Challenge

President's Challenge is an annual community outreach and fund-raising campaign to help those less fortunate. President's Challenge 2018 supports 59 benefiting organisations in a wide range of social causes, including children, youth, family, disabled, elderly, mental health, healthcare, rehabilitation and sports.

The movement is supported by the kindness and generosity of people from all walks of life. It is the President's call to the nation to do their part to help the less fortunate in Singapore and build a caring and inclusive society.

President's Challenge was established in 2000 by the late Mr S R Nathan to bring the community together to help the less fortunate. In 2012, Dr Tony Tan expanded the areas of focus to include Volunteerism and Social Enterprises. In 2018, President Halimah Yacob refocused the effort of President's Challenge towards the empowerment of vulnerable groups with skills and employability. An Empowering for Life Fund was set up to support programmes in skills upgrading, capacity building and employment of vulnerable groups. President's Challenge aims to raise \$10 million for the Empowering for Life Fund over the next 5 years, and the Government will provide dollar-for-dollar matching.

About the Empowering for Life Fund (ELF)

The ELF aims to provide holistic support to vulnerable groups, build their capacity to live independently and enable them to participate actively in workplace and society. The overall objective is for the service users to be able to change their circumstances, and sustain these changes.

Programmes supported by ELF 2018 include NTUC's LIFT-UP Pathfinder initiative, the Autism Resource Centre's Sewing and Embroidery Class, SPD's Employment Support Programme, Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped's Skills Training Centre, HCSA's Culinary Training Academy and Meta Welfare's School Alumni.

About SG Cares

SG Cares is a national movement dedicated to building a more caring and inclusive home for all. The movement invites all who live in Singapore to put values into action through active volunteerism, ground-up efforts and everyday acts of care. It also aims to build capability across various sectors and organisations to grow opportunities for volunteering. By inspiring and supporting one another, we can show the world that we are a nation with a big heart. www.sgcares.sg

Annex A

President's Challenge Appreciation Night 2018 Wednesday, 28 November 2018 Istana

Programme

6.15pm	Media Registration (All to be seated by 7:00 pm)
7.15pm	Arrival of President Halimah Yacob
7.20pm	Performance by String Quartet
7:25pm	Speech by President Halimah Yacob
7.30pm	Sharing by Metta Welfare Association
7:45pm	Performance and sharing by Dyslexia Association of Singapore
7:50pm	Presentation of tokens of appreciation by President Halimah Yacob
8:15pm	Closing Performance by Faith Music Centre
8.25pm	Photo-taking and mingling with performers and service users: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Photo plan for Samuel Kwan's String Quartet2. Photo plan for Dyslexia Association of Singapore3. Photo plan with Metta Welfare Association
8.35pm	Buffet reception
9.00pm	President takes her leave (End of programme)