

PRESS RELEASE

Embargoed for release till 20 November 2015 at 6.00pm

ChariTrees @ Marina Bay to celebrate families and spread the joy of giving this Christmas **- Christmas trees to feature inspiring stories of the struggles and triumphs of beneficiary families**

SINGAPORE, 20 November 2015 – A total of 30 ChariTrees featuring inspiring family stories will line the Marina Bay waterfront promenade for six weeks from today, enchanting visitors as they soak up the year-end festivities. Guest-of-Honour, Dr Lily Neo, Member of Parliament for Jalan Besar GRC, officiated the Light-Up Ceremony today.

Jointly organised by TOUCH Community Services, Community Chest and the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) for the 5th year, *ChariTrees @ Marina Bay 2015* celebrates the tenacity and resilience of families, as well as creates greater awareness about the needs of disadvantaged families cared for by charities under Community Chest and TOUCH. Having raised around \$200,000 this year donated by 16 corporate partners and individuals through adoption of the trees and donations, the fundraiser embodies the spirit of giving among members of the public during the festive season.

Mr Eugene Seow, Executive Director of TOUCH Community Services, said, “This year’s *ChariTrees @ Marina Bay* light-up is truly special because each tree tells the story of families who have been impacted by setbacks. Through the touching experiences of these families, we hope that visitors to *ChariTrees @ Marina Bay* will be inspired by the resilience and determination of the families to overcome challenges and to rise above their circumstances. As SG50 draws to a close, we are very glad that the importance of family is highlighted through this event because the work to strengthen families will continue to be an important pillar for Singapore as she pursues her dreams for SG100.”

ChariTrees tell inspiring stories of families

An inspirational example is Mdm Chua Kwee Lan, who was bedridden for 14 years after a fall. Since the fall, she has been afraid to get out of her bed, compromising on quality family time outdoors. With perseverance and physiotherapy sessions, she eventually overcame her phobia of going outdoors and is now able to spend more time with her family and attend community gatherings. TOUCH Home Care was also pivotal in providing home care services and encouragement to Mdm Chua and her family.

Another uplifting story of resilience is about Mr Leo Kok Ong, who is the sole caregiver to his intellectually challenged wife and his son with cerebral palsy. Having to care for both his wife and son alone, coupled with the piling medical bills, has put a constant strain on his finances. His struggle was eased through counselling sessions, financial assistance, food rations and intervention for his son’s condition provided by Fei Yue Family Service Centre, a Community Chest charity. In spite of the difficulties, the Leo family has persevered with support from the community and is now able to see an improvement in their lives. More stories of beneficiaries can be found in Annex A.

Mr Tan Puay Kern, Chairman of the ChariTrees @ Marina Bay 2015 Organising Committee and Vice-Chairman of Community Chest, said, “Community Chest is extremely pleased to work with our supported charity, TOUCH Community Services, to run this meaningful project for the first time. We hope to share our knowledge of fund-raising and engagement through such collaborations so that our supported charities will

be able to strengthen their fund-raising capabilities. Together, we can mobilise our resources to achieve better outcomes for our beneficiaries.”

Gathering the community for a meaningful cause

Prior to the Light-Up Ceremony on 20 November, staff volunteers from donors – Arrowcrest Technologies Pte Ltd, State Street Singapore, DBS Bank and POSB – decorated the trees together with Community Chest’s beneficiaries.

With the extension of the government matching grant under the Care & Share Movement for SG50 till the end of March 2016, donations from the partners will be doubled. The matched amount will go towards building the capabilities and capacities of the social service sector.

Mr Ng Lang, Chief Executive Officer of URA, said, “It is heartening to see the community and corporate donors come together to contribute towards a meaningful cause. On top of raising funds for charity, the ChariTrees also bring a festive cheer to the Marina Bay waterfront promenade that we hope the public will enjoy. Marina Bay is a place for our community and this project is a good testament of this ideal.”

ChariTrees @ Marina Bay was first held in 2011 as an initiative to remind the community of the needy as we celebrate the festive season. To date, the initiative has raised some \$1.3 million. ChariTrees will be lit from 20 November to 27 December 2015 nightly from 7 pm.

Media invitation

The *ChariTrees @ Marina Bay* Light-Up Ceremony will take place on 20 November 2015 at 6pm.

We are pleased to invite your reporter and photographer / camera crew to cover the launch of *ChariTrees @ Marina Bay* 2015. Please refer to the detailed programme in Annex B.

Date: Friday, 20 November 2015
Time: 6.00 pm
Venue: Marina Bay waterfront promenade
(see Annex C)

Notes:

Interviews / photography may be specially arranged with the spokespersons from the respective organisers and beneficiaries’ families.

For media enquiries and attendance, please contact:

Priscilla Toh

Assistant Manager, Corporate Communications, Community Relations

Tel: 6317 9268

HP: 9694 2364

Email: priscilla.toh@touch.org.sg

This event is jointly organised by:



In Celebration of:



About ChariTrees @ Marina Bay

Launched in 2011 and now into its 5th year, ChariTrees @ Marina Bay is a valuable platform for companies to express their corporate social responsibility during the festive season.

ChariTrees @ Marina Bay is a unique and exclusive fundraising initiative by Community Chest and TOUCH Community Services, in collaboration with Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) to raise funds for the less fortunate.

About TOUCH Community Services

TOUCH Community Services is a not-for-profit charitable organisation, dedicated to meeting the needs of children from low-income or single-parent families, youths-at-risk, needy families, people with special and healthcare needs, and the frail elderly. Through its network of 17 services, as well as an international arm, TOUCH is committed to serving people of all ages, races, religions and backgrounds. Each year, its programmes and services meet the needs of more than 29,000 clients and 156,000 service users.

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 more than 80 charities in Singapore, allowing them to focus on caring for the less fortunate. As Community Chest's fund-raising and operating costs are covered mainly by Tote Board and Singapore Pools, every dollar you donate will help:

- Children with special needs to reach potential
- Adults with disabilities to integrate into society
- Relationships of families in difficulty to stay strong
- Elderly to age graciously in the community

To make a difference, visit comchest.sg.

About the Care & Share Movement

Care & Share is a national fund-raising and volunteerism movement led by Community Chest for the social service sector, in celebration of SG50 this year. It aims to bring our nation together to show care and concern for the less fortunate, and recognise the contributions made by voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs). Eligible donations raised by Community Chest and participating VWOs from now till 31 March 2016 will be matched dollar-for-dollar by the Government. The matched amount will go towards building the capabilities and capacities of the social service sector and supporting social services to meet rising needs.

To contribute to this Movement, please visit careandshare.sg or email to csm@ncss.gov.sg.

About Urban Redevelopment Authority

The Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) is Singapore's national land use planning and conservation agency. URA's mission is "to make Singapore a great city to live, work and play". We strive to create a vibrant and sustainable city of distinction by planning and facilitating Singapore's physical development in partnership with the community.

As the main land sales agent for the State, our multifaceted engagement strategy includes the sale of State land to attract and channel private capital investment to develop sites for meeting our land use needs. As the place manager for Marina Bay, we promote exciting activities within Marina Bay in collaboration with other government agencies and private stakeholders. To create an exciting cityscape, URA also actively promotes architecture and urban design excellence. For more information, please visit us at www.ura.gov.sg.

1. I was bedridden for 14 years after a fall left me physically and psychologically paralysed. TOUCH Home Care (THC) helped lessen the burden on my family with home care services and also encouraged me to overcome my phobia of getting out of my bed through physiotherapy sessions. I am now able to spend more time with my family out of the house, and attend community gatherings organised by THC. Your giving helps families like mine overcome our challenges and live life to the fullest!

Mdm Chua Kwee Lan

48 years old

Beneficiary of TOUCH Home Care

A service under TOUCH Community Services that delivers medical, nursing, rehabilitation and home help services to the doorstep of the frail elderly.

2. My family has always relied on financial assistance from PPIS Family Service Centre (West) to put our children through school. When my husband passed away in 2008, their social workers supported me emotionally, and encouraged me to sign up for the Skillz@HOME programme, which enabled me to earn some income for the family. Your giving provides families like mine with the emotional and practical support we need to turn our lives around despite our difficulties!

Mdm Noridah Binte Haron

55 years old

Beneficiary of PPIS Family Service Centre (West)

A Community Chest supported charity that empowers Muslim women with skills and opportunities through quality programmes and services to live out their multiple roles in life.

3. Both my parents are diagnosed with medical conditions that hinder them from securing jobs. Through the financial subsidies sourced by TOUCH Young Arrows, we are able to tide through the financial difficulties my family faces. Your giving offers families like mine the practical support that we need to get by in our day-to-day lives!

Ng Jing Ping

12 years old

Beneficiary of TOUCH Young Arrows

A service under TOUCH Community Services that helps community children from low-income and/or single-parent families.

4. As the sole caregiver to my intellectually challenged wife and a son with cerebral palsy, I have always struggled with my family's financial and medical expenses. Our living conditions improved greatly with help from Fei Yue Family Service Centre. We received counselling sessions, financial assistance, food rations, as well as access to various interventions for my son. Your giving provides families like mine with the holistic support to overcome our challenges in life!

Mr Leo Kok Ong

75 years old

Beneficiary of Fei Yue Family Service Centre (Bukit Batok)

A Community Chest supported charity that meets societal and familial needs of the community through its programmes and services.

5. I was plagued with constant worry about my limited finances and frail health. Lions Befrienders comforted me and helped me through my darkest times. They also accompanied me to the doctor when I was sick. I am grateful for their help, and today, I visit other seniors in my community, encouraging them to be positive about their lives too. Your giving has helped me overcome my illness and provided me with companionship and care through the Lions Befrienders.

Mr Heng Choon Teck

86 years old

Beneficiary of Lions Befrienders

A Community Chest supported charity that aims to help the elderly live happy, fulfilled lives, without depression and loneliness.

6. I was overwhelmed with distress when my late husband of 50 years was diagnosed with cancer. The staff at TOUCH Seniors Activity Centre (TSAC) stepped in to offer us the emotional and practical help we needed during that period. With their support, I managed to recover from my grief after he passed away. Today, I volunteer regularly in TSAC's Seniors Caring for Seniors programme. Your giving enables families like mine to rise above our circumstances and live our lives with renewed meaning!

Mdm Chan Ngan Foon

80 years old

Beneficiary of TOUCH Seniors Activity Centre

A service under TOUCH Community Services that promotes active ageing and volunteerism among seniors.

7. My siblings and I grew up under the care of TOUCH Young Arrows, and were greatly impacted by their weekly mentoring sessions and activities which helped develop our values and characters. After graduating from Primary School, we returned as regular volunteers to help build the lives of other disadvantaged children. Your giving empowers families like mine to fulfil our potential in spite of our difficult circumstances!

Nor Aqil Putra Bin Ismadi

14 years old

Beneficiary of TOUCH Young Arrows

A service under TOUCH Community Services that helps community children from low-income and/or single-parent families.

8. After enrolling my daughter into TOUCH Centre for Independent Living, she has been equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to live self-sufficiently in spite of her intellectual disabilities. Your giving helps families like mine integrate successfully into the community despite our challenges, and allows us to live with dignity!

Mdm Leong Lai Cheng

Parent of Mei Yee

22 years old

Beneficiary of TOUCH Centre for Independent Living

A service under TOUCH Community Services that equips persons with intellectual disabilities with skills for independent living.

The following beneficiaries will be present at the Light-Up Ceremony on 20 November 2015.

- Nor Aqil Putra Bin Ismadi, 14 years old, and family (TOUCH Young Arrows) @ Tree 5
- Community Chest Benes from Lions Befrienders (about 20pax) will be seated @ Tree 6. The donor for that tree is Arrowcrest Technologies. For the past two years, staff of Arrowcrest Technologies have been taking the Lions Befrienders beneficiaries out for dinner before the Light-Up Ceremony.
- Mei Yee, 22 years old, and family (TOUCH Centre for Independent Living) @ Tree 7

Programme Details**Annex B**

6.00pm	Media Registration (Please contact Priscilla Toh at HP: 96942364)
6.20pm	Arrival of Guest of Honour (GOH), Dr Lily Neo , Member of Parliament, Jalan Besar GRC Opening Performances by the Singapore Police Band & TOUCH Young Arrows
6.55pm	Welcome Address by Mr Tan Puay Kern, Chairman of the ChariTrees @ Marina Bay 2015 Organising Committee and Vice-Chairman of Community Chest
7.00pm	Presentation of Tokens of Appreciation to Donors & Partners by GOH
7.15pm	“Light-Up” Ceremony <i>(Photo Opportunity)</i> GOH will launch the “Light-Up” together with key representatives from TOUCH, Community Chest and URA. Closing Dance GOH will then tour the ChariTrees. Selected beneficiaries and their families will be standing by their adopted trees. GOH will greet and interact with the families. <i>(Photo Opportunity)</i>
7.30pm	Reception <i>(Start of media interviews with key representatives from the organising committee and beneficiaries.)</i>
8.15pm	GOH will take her leave End of Programme

LOCATION MAP

