

MEDIA RELEASE

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20 November 2019



In the spirit of



BE THE CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE - SPOTLIGHT ON COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES AND COLLECTIVE EFFORT AT PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE APPRECIATION NIGHT

- *72 top donors and volunteers lauded at annual ceremony*

SINGAPORE 20 NOVEMBER 2019 – Two community groups were lauded for their collective efforts to raise funds for the President's Challenge at the annual President's Challenge Appreciation Night 2019. Relay Majulah, and "Be the Change We Want" charity art exhibition, raised over \$1.6 million for President's Challenge this year.

2 Relay Majulah saw over 200 individuals, volunteers and community partners from all walks of life and with different abilities - coming together to conquer 2,000 kilometers in 200 hours to raise \$1.6 million for President's Challenge. The relay culminated at the President's Star Charity show, where the final runner, Speaker of Parliament Tan Chuan-Jin, handed over the baton to President Halimah Yacob, during the live telecast. Each of the runners had inspiring stories to share – including Tan Whee Boon, a quad amputee; and Elise Cheng and Betsy Chen, who both bounced back from depression by embracing sports.

3 "Everyone has a story to tell, each with our own struggles and difficulties. How we ran as a team makes it even more meaningful, with everyone unified through running. When negative emotions get to us, it may be hard to pick ourselves up. I hope that through my story, I can reach out to those facing adversities in life to start doing something for themselves, to believe in a strength yet to be discovered within themselves", said Betsy Chen.

4 A two-time stroke survivor and self-taught artist, Vincent Seet donated \$10,000 – proceeds from his charity art exhibition to the President's Challenge. Vincent titled his exhibition "Be the Change We Want", to highlight his motivation to give back to society, encourage other persons with disabilities to empower themselves to move forward in life, and for fellow Singaporeans to step forward to support those in need.

5 President Halimah Yacob said, "I am heartened to see more community-led initiatives this year in support of President's Challenge. These efforts harness the power from within the society to support those in need, which is what President's Challenge stands for."

6 President's Challenge is on track to raise over \$13 million this year to support 67 benefitting agencies. The annual Appreciation Night saw President Halimah presenting tokens of appreciation to 72 top donors and volunteers, including Far East Organisation, Keppel Club, Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple, Lee Foundation, Mediacorp Pte Ltd, SingHealth, Stephen Riady Foundation and Mr Terry Tan. Six organisations were recognised for their volunteering efforts. This year, over 11,000 volunteers from 80 organisations volunteered in support of President's Challenge.

7 In line with President's Challenge's focus on mental health awareness this year, and empowering persons with disabilities next year, one of the supported programmes is the Contemporary Art for All Programme by the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) which aims to integrate persons with mental health conditions and persons with disabilities into the community, through art. Guests at the Appreciation Night were able to experience artworks from the SAM TOUCH Collection which were specifically developed to be portable, interactive, and accompanied by audio-guides to cater to the needs of the visually-impaired community. Aside from the SAM TOUCH Collection, the museum has embarked on a journey to train its staff to be more inclusive.

8 Guests also received a paperweight door gift that was sewn by Ah Moy, a service user of Singapore Anglican Community Services (SACS), who is battling depression. Despite her condition, she does home-based sewing, with support from SACS, a benefitting agency of the President's Challenge Empowering for Life Fund (ELF).

9 The ELF was launched last year to support programmes that enhance the skills and employability of vulnerable individuals to help them sustain a livelihood and be independent. This year, ELF raised \$2.4 million to support 11 benefitting agencies. Earlier this year, the ELF funding period was extended from the initial one year to three years, to enable funded programmes to have more time and space to develop and grow.

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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 2019 supports 67 benefiting agencies in a wide range of social causes, including children, youth, family, disabilities, seniors, 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 in 2018 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.

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

**President's Challenge Appreciation Night 2019
Wednesday, 20 November 2019
Istana**

Programme

6.15pm	Media Registration (All to be seated by 7:00 pm)
7.15pm	Arrival of President Halimah Yacob
7.30pm	Performance by MINDS and MayBank Volunteers
7:35pm	Speech by President Halimah Yacob
7:40pm	PC2019 Highlights & Re-cap of PC2019 Theme – Empowering Persons with Mental Health Conditions
7:55pm	Presentation of tokens of appreciation by President Halimah Yacob
8:15pm	Closing Performance by Very Special Arts (VSA) Creative Dance Group
8.20pm	Photo-taking and mingling with performers and service users
8.30pm	Buffet reception
9.00pm	President takes her leave (End of programme)