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## **PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE ENCOURAGES YOUTHS TO ADDRESS SOCIAL NEEDS THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM**

- *The President's Challenge PULSE! Sports Fiesta 2019, led by youth volunteers from the PA Youth Movement, brings fellow youths together and encourages them to give back to the community*
- *Youths make up over 80% of volunteers supporting President's Challenge 2019*

**SINGAPORE 20 JULY 2019** – The President's Challenge is engaging more youth volunteers to address social needs through activities that promote social mixing and community bonding. One of the activities held in support of President's Challenge Volunteer Drive (PCVD) was the PULSE! Sports Fiesta, organised by the People's Association (PA) and its youth volunteers.

2 The annual PULSE! Sports Fiesta engages youths in the community to bond over sports, such as street soccer, basketball, netball and dance. Besides forging and strengthening friendships, the event also encourages youth volunteers to give back to the community through sports. Over 1,000 youths, volunteers from PA's youth network and beneficiaries from President's Challenge participated in the event, which was held at \*SCAPE. President Halimah helped to raise funds for PC by participating in a friendly netball match with youth volunteers and PC beneficiaries – where \$10 was donated by PA for every goal netted. In addition to the game, PA has also pledged to raise \$250,000 to support 67 benefitting organisations under the President's Challenge.

3 Since 2006, PA's PULSE! Sports Fiesta has provided a platform for youths to engage other youths in the community meaningfully, by coming together through their passion for sports, regardless of their background, to give back to the society. For the first time this year, the Sports Fiesta is being held in conjunction with the PC, which hopes to encourage all Singaporeans, especially youths to contribute their time and expertise to benefit others.

### **At-risk youth turned volunteer advocate**

4 Daron Hoon is one such passionate youth volunteer who overcame his personal struggles to give back to the community. Daron's first volunteering experience was as a kayaking trainer

with the People's Association Water Venture, now known as PAssion WaVe. It was then that he discovered that coaching other youths in sports helped him overcome his personal troubles and pick up leadership skills at the same time. Today, he serves as the Chairman for the Geylang West Community Club YEC and leads his team through community service initiatives such as Smiles on Wheels.

5 Daron's passion in galvanising youths to pick up sports as a way to make friends and give back to the community stems from his own experience. The 33-year-old said, "Growing up, I struggled with my self-esteem after my parents went through a divorce. This affected my studies, causing me to fail my secondary school education. When I first started volunteering as a kayaking trainer, it changed my outlook in life and gave me a more meaningful purpose. Being able to coach other youths, and seeing how sports can be a tool to help them be more positive and lead more meaningful lives, inspired me to do more. That spurred me to start 'Smiles on Wheels', an annual event where we encourage volunteers and residents from different backgrounds, including the less privileged, to cycle together and make friends as they complete activities along the route."

6 PAssion Children's Football is another PA programme that engages youth volunteers meaningfully to coach young children between the ages of five and 12 in football. These children come from different backgrounds, including those with special needs and from low-income families. Often, the youths who graduate from the programme would return to mentor the younger ones, as they found the programme beneficial and wanted to give back. This is another example of how volunteering enabled youths to channel their energy on meaningful activities that addressed the needs and interests of others.

7 "By leveraging the energy of youth volunteers, President's Challenge hopes to harness the collective efforts of everyone to provide an ecosystem of support to the vulnerable groups in the community," said President Halimah Yacob.

8 The President's Challenge has rallied over 6,000 volunteers to support its benefitting organisations since the start of the year. Over 80% of the volunteers are youths. They include over 50 students from Dunman High School (Senior High) who embarked on a project to observe and interact with vulnerable seniors in the Chai Chee area. They learnt to identify the problems that these seniors face – such as the lack of income and social isolation. The students then brainstormed solutions to address the problems – such as engaging more volunteers to befriend

the seniors, starting donation drives to raise funds for the seniors and leveraging assistive technology to aid the seniors in their daily lives.

9 Other youth volunteering activities include organising carnivals, dialect workshops, house-cleaning, and interacting with disadvantaged seniors and families in the community.

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**About President's Challenge Volunteer Drive**

The President's Challenge Volunteer Drive (PCVD) is a President's Challenge (PC) initiative where individuals, schools and organisations are encouraged to participate in a host of programmes and volunteer activities. PCVD aims to help people understand the critical needs facing the less fortunate in Singapore, and at the same time to experience the satisfaction of volunteerism. Besides creating volunteer opportunities and matching the needs of benefitting organisations with interested volunteers, PCVD also carries out workshops to train volunteers to make them more effective and to enhance capability in the sector.

## **About People's Association**

The [People's Association](#) (PA) is a statutory board established on 1 July 1960 to promote racial harmony and social cohesion, and to act as a bridge between the Government and the people. We offer a wide range of community [programmes](#) and volunteering opportunities for Singaporeans from all walks of life. Our network includes more than 1,800 [grassroots organisations](#) (GROs), over 100 Community Clubs, five Community Development Councils, National Community Leadership Institute and PAssion WaVe. More information at [www.pa.gov.sg](http://www.pa.gov.sg).