

**REMARKS BY MR DESMOND LEE, MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AND
FAMILY DEVELOPMENT, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE TEMASEK
FOUNDATION CARES - WHEELS PROGRAMME AT SUNLOVE-
KAMPONG CHAI CHEE SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTRE ON 4 OCTOBER
2017, 10.30AM**

Mr Richard Magnus,
Chairman, Temasek Foundation Cares

Mr Dhanabalan
Chairman, Temasek Trust

Our seniors

And Friends

Introduction

1 Good morning.

2 Last Sunday was the International Day of Older Persons.

- This year, the UN celebrates the talent, contribution and participation of older persons in society.
- So it is very apt that we are launching the WHEELS Programme today.
- Because the Programme essentially taps the skill and experience of our seniors, and provides them a platform to look out for and to help fellow peers.

Valuing our seniors in our community

3 Singapore is evolving into a Silver society. By 2030, one in four of us will be 65 years of age and above.

4 Our seniors had played an important role in nation-building, and remain important contributors to society.

5 In their golden years, many of our seniors keep fit and active, and have so much to offer.

- I am glad to see more and more seniors coming forward to give their time, to serve fellow Singaporeans of all ages.
- Today, we see seniors volunteering in Senior Activity Centres to organise and run programmes for other seniors. We also have seniors volunteering to visit and befriend other more vulnerable seniors.
- Seniors with good culinary skills, who have expertise in IT, or who used to work as nurses and teachers, also impart their knowledge and experience wherever they choose to volunteer.

6 The WHEELS programme is a fine example of how seniors can be equipped to help others in the community.

- Instead of recruiting younger volunteers, the WHEELS programme has been intentionally designed to involve seniors, and training them to help their fellow seniors who are wheelchair users.

7 Programmes such as this achieve multiple objectives:

- First, by enabling our seniors to actively drive the programme, they recognise that our seniors continue to have so much to contribute.

- Second, society benefits greatly, because we tap and unlock the lifetime of experience and wisdom that our seniors have amassed.
- Third, they enable our seniors to continue with lifelong learning.
- Fourth, these are programmes and platforms that allow our seniors to remain socially connected, and to make new friends.
- And fifth, they deconstruct myths and false impressions about our seniors, from being beneficiaries of social services, to being active volunteers and role models for younger people.

8 I am encouraged that this programme will be implemented in five Senior Activity Centres in Bedok and Tampines, reaching out to about 600 elderly wheelchair users.

- Seniors who are from more disadvantaged backgrounds from these Centres who need help in repairing and servicing their wheelchairs, will now be able to receive help from fellow seniors at no cost.

9 I would like to thank Temasek Foundation Cares, Kampung Senang Charity & Education Foundation and the Agency for Integrated Care for making this Programme possible.

CONCLUSION

10 We are all at different stages in life, and I hope the launch of this programme will remind us that regardless of where we are, there is much that we can achieve together when we all make time to give back to society.

11 Thank you.