

**SPEECH BY MS LOW YEN LING,
CHAIRMAN OF MAYORS' COMMITTEE AND
MAYOR OF SOUTH WEST DISTRICT AT LAUNCH OF WECARE
ARTS EXHIBITION AND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
(MOU) FOR WECARE ARTS FUND
ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2017 AT OUR TAMPINES HUB**

Minister Grace Fu

My fellow Mayors, Dr Mohamad Maliki, Dr Teo Ho Pin, Ms Denise Phua,
and Mr Desmond Choo,

Mrs Rosa Daniel, Chief Executive Officer, National Arts Council

Mr Desmond Tan, Chief Executive Director, People's Association

Partners from the Social Service Organisations

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good afternoon to all of you. It has been three years since the Community Development Councils (CDC) started the WeCare Arts Fund programme with the National Arts Council (NAC). Today, we celebrate the achievements of some of our seniors whose talents are showcased at the WeCare Arts Fund exhibition. We will also sign an MOU to mark the continuation of this meaningful partnership with NAC.

2 NAC has been a faithful partner of the CDCs for a decade. Our collaboration began in 2006 with the District Art Festivals in each district. Since then, as part of community building efforts and to foster a community pride, we have been working with NAC to showcase local talents, encourage the local community to participate in the arts as well as build up the fan-base for local talents.

3 In 2014, the CDCs and NAC decided to focus their efforts and started the WeCare Arts Fund Programme for the Social Service Sector. The arts can help in mental and personal development, build self-confidence, create opportunities for bonding and friendships, and encourage people to develop new skills.

4 By complementing NAC's resources with CDCs' wide network, we are increasing accessibility and participation in the arts for the vulnerable,

especially the youth and elderly, in the social service sector. Through a wide range of arts projects from visual arts such as handicraft and painting to performing arts such as drumming, the youth and elderly are able to enrich their own lives and in the process, help themselves.

5 This three-year collaboration has created a total of 348 projects, engaged 171 unique Social Service Organisations, involved 91 artists and touched the lives of 8,375 residents. Judith, a 22 year old with Down Syndrome, is a beneficiary of the WeCare Arts Fund Programme. When rehearsals first started for ***Nonsense***, a play about war and refugees under the WeCare Arts Fund programme, Judith was anxious and often could not participate in the practices. She had panic attacks and sometimes could not continue with the practices. Over time, with encouragement and support from her instructor and fellow participants, Judith overcame her fears and anxieties and went on to perform the play for two days at the Esplanade. She was also able to write an entire monologue reflecting her thoughts on the subject of war and refugees.

6 78-year-old Mdm Wong is another beneficiary of the WeCare Arts Fund Programme. A quiet person, Mdm Wong learnt how to play percussion instruments through the programme. Now she is more gregarious and enjoys entertaining fellow residents at the ElderCare Centre with her music. The music brings joy to Mdm Wong and also helps to uplift the spirit of others around her. The residents often sing along with her music, and the old songs bring back sweet and happy memories of their youth.

SG Cares @ CDC

7 As part of *SG Cares @ CDC*, the CDCs are very happy to continue this strong partnership with NAC. The injection of \$1 million for two years into the WeCare Arts Fund programme will enliven the activities and lives of the residents, giving them greater opportunities to learn new skills, and opportunities to make new friends.

8 I urge more our local artists to step forward to join us in this meaningful Programme. Help us to develop new and interesting

programmes for our residents. I also encourage more Social Service Organisations to tap on this funding for your clients.

9 Finally, on behalf of the CDCs, I would like to thank NAC; our fellow artists who have worked hard to curate the exhibition with the seniors – Lisan Denise Chng, Mary Bernadette Lee, Objectifs, Alexandria Neoh, Joanna Lio; the Social Service Organisations – Bright Vision Hospital, Jia Ying Senior Activity Centre and Serangoon Secondary school, Silver Cove-NTUC Health, Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities, Bedok Radian Senior activity centre and St Luke's Eldercare; and last but not least, our seniors for creating the beautiful works of art for us to enjoy. I would also like to thank our partner RSVP for volunteering today.

10 We look forward to working with all of you in making Singapore a more caring and inclusive Community.
