



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Heart@work

Each one of us, individual or corporate, is like a piece of a giant jigsaw puzzle, fitting together to form our social service landscape. We bring with us resources such as knowledge, expertise, funds, talents, time and passion, to build and grow the social service sector. Every piece is important and critical to complete the picture. No contribution is too small. NCSS, itself a piece of the puzzle, is in turn also responsible for putting the pieces together, working with everyone to meet existing and emerging needs, provide and maximise resources, build capabilities and achieve desired outcomes. This is the essence of Heart@work, the theme of this year's Annual Report.

Meeting the needs

I am pleased to share that Community Chest has once again been successful in meeting its target and has raised \$52 million in the past year to fund 147 social service programmes, serving more than 310,000 people. Their achievement is all the more remarkable in that this is the highest target ever set for Community Chest in the 25 years of its history.

Much has been said and done about the help and services being provided for persons with disabilities. I am pleased to share that a new piece of the puzzle has been put in place with the establishment of a non-profit trust company to see to the long-term financial and caregiving needs of persons with disabilities. This is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS), Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore (MINDS) and NCSS. Another new collaboration is the Foreign Domestic Worker

Levy Concession for persons with disabilities which received very favourable feedback. This, together with the Caregivers Training Grant, provide additional resources to the community for the care of persons with disabilities and seniors.

On another front, NCSS together with MCYS jointly set up five Multi Service Clusters in five Community Development Council (CDC) districts. These one-stop service clusters provide a spectrum of needed family support services, thus further enhancing public access to services.

Maximising resources

In the past year, NCSS has introduced several new schemes and provisions such as pro-bono and shared services to help VWOs keep costs affordable in order to maximise resources. These schemes such as the shared audit service, help VWOs to minimise the cost of meeting new audit regulations and governance

requirements. In addition, NCSS also brokered for IT maintenance and support, design and printing services at competitive rates for VWOs.

Building capability and professionalism

Building manpower capability in the sector continued to be one of NCSS's key focuses last year. Nearly 10,000 training places were filled for courses offered by NCSS's training arm, Social Service Training Institute (SSTI). This represents a 58 per cent increase in the number filled in the previous year. This markedly upward trend is a positive indication of VWOs' increasing commitment towards building internal capability, as well as SSTI's strength in meeting the training needs of the sector.

Beyond training, the key to the development of the sector must be a continuing and relentless upgrading of skills and sharing of knowledge in the areas of specialisation. In this regard, NCSS introduced the Centre of Specialisation concept with the appointment of four agencies specialising in the areas of early dementia intervention, integration of children with special needs in the mainstream pre-school setting, school social work, and the training of befrienders. These Centres will be provided with additional resources to conduct research, document processes and procedures, and to share their accumulated knowledge with other VWOs, shortening the learning time and ensuring uniformly high standards of service delivery.

Outcome driven, client focused

In Financial Year 07/08, we introduced Outcome Funding Agreements, moving up another step in our outcome management journey, which began with the measuring of outputs and initial outcomes under the Programme Evaluation System (PES) in 2001. Outcome Management helps to focus resources and efforts on desired improvements in our clients' lives. I am happy to report that outcome measurements have already been developed for 205 programmes funded by NCSS and MCYS, with many non-funded programmes also adopting this in their bid to be more effective.

The heart of the matter

The past year has been a very successful one for NCSS. However, these achievements are not just the work of NCSS alone, but of every dedicated social service professional, selfless volunteer, supportive corporate partner and generous donor who believes in the work that we do together in the sector. The

progress of the social service sector would not have been possible without the effort of all these people, people like you. On behalf of all the beneficiaries, thank you for making a difference to their lives.

My heartfelt thanks also go out to my fellow Board and Committee members for their dedication and invaluable insights, and their guidance and wisdom. In addition, I would also like to thank the NCSS staff, led by our new Chief Executive Officer, Ms Ang Bee Lian, for their hard work and commitment. Since her appointment as CEO of NCSS in early June last year, Bee Lian has worked tirelessly with the staff in rolling out many new initiatives. With her wealth of experience in the social service sector, we look to her to bring NCSS and the sector to a new level in the years to come.

The next lap

This year, the sector celebrates 50 years of structured social service, beginning with the formation of the Singapore Council of Social Service (SCSS), the precursor to NCSS, in 1958. 2008 is also special as it marks Community Chest's 25th Anniversary. These are important milestones in our history, and calls for a celebration within the community. Together with the VWOs and corporate partners, NCSS will lead a sector-wide celebration, featuring a mega carnival event at the Esplanade Park in August, an Anniversary Dinner in October and the publication of a commemorative book depicting the rich history and significant developments of the sector over the last 50 years. NCSS is grateful to Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and President S.R. Nathan for graciously agreeing to attend the celebrations.

We have certainly made great strides in the last 50 years. But what will the next 50 years be like for the sector? The answer lies in each of us as we continue to do our part, putting heart and soul to work together as a community, to bring dignity and hope to the people who need our help.



RADM (RET) Kwek Siew Jin
President