

WELCOME ADDRESS

**BY MR SIM GIM GUAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE
AT THE SSI GRADUATION AND AWARDS CEREMONY 2017/18
ON SATURDAY, 20 JANUARY 2018**

**Mrs Josephine Teo, Minister, Prime Minister's Office; Second
Minister for Manpower and Home Affairs**

Mr Fong Yong Kian, Chief Executive, Tote Board

Mr Gilbert Tan, CEO, Employment and Employability Institute

NCSS Board members,

Partners,

Graduands and Award Recipients,

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. Good morning. Welcome to the Social Service Institute (SSI) Graduation and Awards Ceremony. Today marks a milestone for our 280 graduands, scholarship and award recipients, whose hard work and perseverance have paid off. I would like to congratulate all of you.

Social Service Sector Strategic Thrusts

2. NCSS has recently launched a 5-year social service roadmap, which was developed together with our stakeholders in the public, private and people sector. This is the 4ST, or social service sector strategic thrusts, which will guide us, so that we can remain relevant and responsive to future challenges, and changing needs of our society.

3. One of the key thrusts that NCSS is focusing on is to enable social service organisations to be more effective in delivering quality, innovative and sustainable solutions, to the meet the needs of the people we serve and empower them to live dignified lives.

4. The key to effective organisations lie in the skilled professionals in the sector. We encourage more sector professionals to be equipped with relevant technical knowledge and an enterprising mindset to continuously innovate, adapt and learn.

5. Social Service Institute, or SSI, the NCSS human capital development arm, is crucial in providing the training and enabling the career pathways for sector professionals at all levels. In order to do this, SSI have partnered SkillsFuture Singapore, and will continue to work with

many other education partners and government agencies to meet our sector professionals' learning needs.

Boosting of the number of social workers

6. Among our graduands and award recipients today, some are new to the social service sector, while others are sector professionals who will be assuming greater responsibilities and new roles.

7. It is apt for me to share the inspiring story of social worker Teresa Hsu, who was dubbed Singapore's Mother Theresa. She was 113 years when she passed on in 2011, but all through her life, she had dedicated it in service of others. She said, "All my life, I think of people who have less than me. This has been my guiding light."

8. Teresa was born into extreme poverty in China. The horrors of wars during her time led her to volunteer in various countries. At the age of 47, she went to London to study nursing after the World War 2 ended. She arrived in Singapore in 1961, and subsequently became the founder of two charities - the Home for the Aged Sick, one of the first homes serving the old and the destitute, and the Heart-to-Heart Service. Teresa was still actively involved in charity work even towards the end of her life. Her

steadfast values and determination were admirable, and something we could all learn from.

9. There are also many inspiring stories that have come out from among our graduates, award and scholarship recipients. They embody a spirit of service and passion for making a difference in the lives of those we serve.

10. This year, we will see the last graduating batch of the SSI Diploma and Higher Diploma in Social Service, as we moved from the SSI Diplomas to the WSQ Advanced Certificate and Diploma. From 2012 to 2017, we have a total of 81 SSI HDSS graduates accepted into the Bachelor of Social Work programme at the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS), formerly known as UniSIM. The part-time programmes are part of an accelerated education pathway for working adults to study at the same time.

11. Shortly, you will hear from valedictorian Beng Kim, a recovery coach in Highpoint Halfway House, which offered him his first job since his release from prison five years ago. He prepared for his diploma examinations while still under care of the police. Even so, he overcame

odds to emerge victorious in his learning journey. Well done Beng Kim, we are all proud of you!

12. We have also among us the first batch of graduates from the WSQ Advanced Certificate and Diploma in Social Service programmes. Mid-career professionals can also take advantage of the Professional Conversion Programme for Social Workers, an alternative pathway made possible by Workforce Singapore, SUSS and NCSS. Together, these programmes serve to boost the number of social workers we need in Singapore.

STAR Adult Educator Award - Recognise AEs for their contribution towards capability building

13. Another group of critical partners on this learning journey are our adult educators. They train and develop our sector professionals in various areas of expertise, including eldercare, disability, mental health, children, and youth and family.

14. Today, we are presenting the inaugural STAR Adult Educator Award to 5 persons for their achievements and contributions in 2016. They received the highest scores of trainer-effectiveness, evaluated by the learners themselves; participated in the Adult Educator Professional

Development initiative, and were actively involved in SSI's events and initiatives.

15. One of them, Dr Joel Yang, a clinical psychologist by training, went beyond his duty to support SSI in delivering the best learning experience for his students. Not only did he produce the storyboard content to convert one of his courses to blended learning, he also created an online exercise for the learners to apply the knowledge they had gained.

16. Interestingly, Joel was also the voice-over for this e-learning course and I was told the voice-over could not be differentiated from one that was professionally done! All these would not be possible without his passion for the social service sector.

17. To all the adult educators, we applaud your efforts, and thank you for being a pivotal force to help us professionalise the sector.

Awards and Scholarships

18. In addition, 60 promising students and social service professionals will also be receiving their scholarships and awards today. These outstanding individuals display strong leadership qualities, a passion for

the social service sector and an unwavering commitment to pursue their studies in relevant disciplines.

Acknowledging Partnerships

19. At this juncture, I would like to acknowledge SkillsFuture Singapore and Tote Board for your strong partnership in strengthening the capabilities of the sector. In particular, Tote Board is a valued partner in our ACE Capstone Leadership programme for Non-Profits. Tote Board has also supported this graduation event. With cross-sector collaboration such as these, we can tap on more resources and ideas to generate new and better solutions.

Conclusion

20. Let me end my speech with this. The ability to combine one's passion with a meaningful purpose – to make a positive difference to the lives of others and ultimately of our society – brings great meaning to the work we do.

21. I wish all graduands, scholarship and award recipients success in your journey ahead. Congratulations and thank you.