

Close to 200 diploma graduates, scholarships and award recipients to be recognised for boosting and upskilling social service sector workforce

Minister Tan Chuan-Jin to launch book to commend inspiring efforts by social service professionals

Singapore, 19 September 2015 – Eighty four graduands from Social Service Institute (SSI)'s flagship programmes – Diploma in Social Service (DSS) and Higher Diploma in Social Service (HDSS) – celebrated the completion of their programmes at the SSI Graduation & Awards Ceremony 2015 today. SSI is the human capital development arm of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS).

Minister for Social and Family Development Mr Tan Chuan-Jin was the Guest-of-Honour for this annual ceremony, which aims to recognise social service professionals – new entrants, mid-career switchers or existing sector practitioners – for their hard work and exemplary performances.

The DSS and HDSS programmes have seen a steady increase in the number of participants since their inception in 2008 and 2010 respectively. A total of 54 individuals completed the DSS programme this year, almost doubled that of the first batch of graduates, which was 29. Another thirty individuals received their HDSS certificates today, more than quadrupled the seven in the pioneer batch. Close to 300 individuals had since graduated from either the DSS or the HDSS programmes.

The DSS and HDSS programmes are part of an accelerated education pathway by SSI and SIM University (UniSIM) to help individuals with different educational backgrounds to ease into their roles in the social service sector and boost the number

of social workers in Singapore. HDSS graduates can apply to enrol in the UniSIM Bachelor of Social Work programme if they meet the minimum entry requirements.

Among the 30 HDSS graduates today, eight of them have enrolled into the UniSIM Bachelor of Social Work programme while two more will be articulated into the course in January 2016.

Close to 100 recipients of various scholarships, study and training awards were commended for their potential to make significant contributions to the social service sector. Please refer to **Annex A** for list of scholarships and awards given at the ceremony.

A new book on social service professionals – Nurturing Career, Inspiring Lives – was also launched at the ceremony by Minister Tan. The book, with foreword penned by Madam Halimah Yacob, Adviser to NCSS, is a collection of personal stories of 10 graduates, from various batches of DSS and HDSS, where they shared what motivated them to join the social service sector.

One example is that of Mr Richard Khalil, 54, who is an HDSS graduate and a Book Prize winner this year for topping his batch. Mr Khalil was admitted to The Helping Hand, a halfway house for the rehabilitation of former addicts two decades ago to seek help. He has since turned over a new leaf and is now focusing on how he can upgrade and better equip himself with the necessary skills and know-how to extend his helping hand to others in need. Mr Khalil is now the executive director of The Helping Hand and oversees its rehabilitation programmes.

Another HDSS graduate featured in the new book is 38-year-old Ms Michelle Sim. A fulltime homemaker for 10 years before she joined the social service sector, Ms Sim loves working with children but found her “home-trained” skills inadequate when she joined Care Community Services Society as a programme executive. She was thrilled by the professional and useful knowledge and skills that she picked up from the DSS programme and was motivated enough to sign up for HDSS, of which she emerged first in her cohort and is one of the Book Prize winners at today’s ceremony.

Mr Fermin Diez, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Group Director for Human Capital Development, NCSS said, “We are pleased to see that many individuals have recognised the value and relevance of the DSS and HDSS programmes. More importantly, we welcome the positive attitude shown by our social service practitioners in their quest to learn the latest skills, updated knowledge and best practices in the sector. These well-trained professionals will be a great boost to creating a more dynamic social service sector.”

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National Council of Social Service

NCSS is the umbrella body for over 450 member voluntary welfare organisations in Singapore. Its mission is to provide leadership and direction in social services, to enhance the capabilities of social service organisations, and to promote strategic partnerships for social services.

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Annex A

Scholarship / Award	Description
Ee Peng Liang Study Awards	In partnership with Temasek Cares, the Ee Peng Liang Study Awards aims to build capabilities of the voluntary welfare organisations in the social service sector. It is awarded to individuals for studies in occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech therapy and early childhood.
Social Service Award	The Social Service Award aims to groom talents for the sector and is awarded to individuals for studies in social work, psychology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech therapy and early childhood.
Sabbatical Leave Scheme	The scheme rewards experienced social service professionals with paid leave to recharge and refresh themselves
Professional Development and Management Programme	The programme develops middle-level management and professionals for supervisory roles and deepens their professional skills.
Leadership Development Programme	The programme develops high potential staff to fill organisational or specialist leadership positions.
Singapore-Industry Scholarship	The Singapore-Industry Scholarship (SgIS) was launched by Ministry of Education, Singapore Economic Development Board and partnering government agencies (including NCSS), to develop a strong core of local talents to anchor strategic sectors in Singapore.
Social Service Scholarship	The Social Service Scholarship aims to groom talents for the sector and is awarded to outstanding individuals for studies in social work, psychology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech therapy.
Prime Minister Social Service Award	The Prime Minister Social Service Award was introduced in 2012, to encourage more Singaporeans to choose careers in social service. Applicants will be evaluated based on their outstanding academic achievements, exemplary passion, drive to tackle social problems and improve the lives of the disadvantaged.