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SPEECH BY DR OW CHIN HOCK,

MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS,

MAYOR OF TANJONG PAGAR CDC DISTRICT AND

MP FOR TANJONG PAGAR GRC AT THE
EDUSAVE AWARDS PRESENTATION CEREMONY ON

10 JANUARY 1999 AT 9.30 AM

AT THE LENG KEE COMMUNITY CENTRE

1 I am pleased to be with you this morning to present the Edusave Scholarship and Merit Bursary Awards to the students of Leng Kee Division, Tanjong Pagar GRC.

2 Singapore's most important asset is her people and the Government has always placed great emphasis on the education of our young. Our educational system aims to bring out the best in our children, equip them with the requisite knowledge and

skills to adapt to a rapidly-changing world, and instill in them sound moral values so that they will grow up to be morally upright, culturally rooted adults, responsible members of the family and community, and above all, good citizens. Hence, we have a bilingual policy, moral education, and information technology programmes in our education system.

3 In order to encourage our students to excel in their studies, the Government has been giving out the Edusave Scholarships and Merit Bursaries for the past four years. This year, in Leng Kee Division alone, 621 students will receive Edusave Awards, and these comprise 185 in the Edusave Scholarship category, 394 in the Edusave Merit Bursary category, 11 in the ITE Bursary category, and 31 in the Polytechnic/University Bursary category. The value of these awards amounts to some \$185,000.

4 To supplement the government's efforts in educating our young, our Tanjong Pagar CDC has made the enhancement of educational attainment one of the key objectives in our Youth Development Plan.

5 Under this plan, the CDC, together with CDAC and Leng Kee grassroots organisations, has set up the first Student Service Centre at Blk 83 Redhill Road. The centre provides students with a conducive environment to study in. It also conducts tuition classes, confidence-building and other enrichment courses, as well as programmes on student mentoring and counselling. Another Student Service Centre will be jointly set up by our CDC, Mendaki and West Coast Grassroots Organisations in mid-1999. By the year 2000, our CDC district will have 5 Student Service Centres, and 10 Before and After School Care Centres (BASCs).

6 With today's fast-paced developments and rapid technological changes, our children must be plugged into information technology, or IT. To cater to this need, our Student Service Centres will be equipped with computers and IT facilities. This will enable our students, especially those from the lower income families, to have access to computer-aided learning and IT training. In addition to the computer clubs at Alexandra and Telok Blangah Community Centres, the CDC also plans to set up a computer training centre at the Bukit Merah Community Centre in June 1999. These computer clubs/centres enable our youths to gain access to Internet and they provide computer courses at affordable rates.

7 The desirable education outcomes are to groom and nurture as many students as possible who are morally upright, academically proficient, IT literate and effectively bilingual. It may seem like a very difficult challenge but with good education policies, full support of principals, teachers and parents, and hard work and sheer determination on the part of students, the education outcomes can be achieved. All the Scholarship and Bursary Award winners we see here today are good examples of what the energy and drive of our young can accomplish.

8 I would like to congratulate all of you, award winners. The award is a recognition of your achievements. You should thank your teachers and parents for their guidance and support. I note that many of the recipients are from neighbourhood schools. This shows that through perseverance and hard work, students from neighbourhood schools can perform just as well as their counterparts in the more established and popular schools.

9 I hope that as proud recipients of the award, you will serve as role models to inspire your schoolmates to strive for academic excellence. With this, I wish you all success in your future endeavours and hope that you will continue to give of your best in everything that you do, and contribute to our community, society and nation.

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