

To:
cc: (bcc: NHB NASReg/NHB/SINGOV)
Subject: Embargoed speech by Mrs Yu-Foo Yee Shoon, 15 Jan 2000, 4pm

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

Media Division, Ministry of Information and the Arts, #36-00 PSA Building, 460 Alexandra Road,
Singapore 119963. Tel: 3757794/5

EMBARGO INSTRUCTIONS

The attached press release/speech is **EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY**.
Please check against delivery.
For assistance call 3757795

SPRInter 4.0, Singapore's Press Releases on the Internet, is located at:
<http://www.gov.sg/sprinter/>

Embargoed Till After Delivery
Please Check Against Delivery

SPEECH BY MRS YU-FOO YEE SHOON
SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF BUKIT BATOK HOSTEL
SATURDAY, 15 JAN 2000, 4.00 PM

National Archives of Singapore

Rev Dr Patrick Lau Kim Thiam, President, Teen Challenge

Mr Sam Kuna, Executive Director, Teen Challenge

Management Committee of Bukit Batok Hostel

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon to all of you

1. The Bukit Batok Hostel is another testimony to the strong partnership between the people sector and the government. The Bukit Batok Hostel is a gazetted institution set up by the Ministry of Community Development under the Probation of Offenders Act for male offenders who are placed on probation by the Court. Though the Bukit Batok Hostel is an MCD institution, its day-to-day operations is managed by the Teen Challenge, a voluntary welfare organisation. This is the eighth MCD institution that is managed by a voluntary organisation appointed by the Ministry. The other seven institutions are three children's homes and four welfare homes for adult destitutes. Such partnerships between the government and the people sector, help to galvanise resources and maximise effectiveness of programmes for the community. We also believe that the involvement of VWOs in the management of such facilities will allow for innovation and greater flexibility in implementation and service delivery.

2. This place was the site of the Bukit Batok Boys Hostel which was administered by MCD. It then catered for all male probationers including juveniles below the age of 16 years. Early last year, the former residents of this place moved to a new hostel built in a complex for male juveniles at Jurong Road. The Ministry retained this place to cater to young adult probationers above 16 years olds. This new initiative separates the young adult probationers from the juveniles. Such a separation allows the management of both hostels to be more focussed in their programme development and implementation as the residents are more homogenous in age. Rehabilitation can be more effective this way. This hostel has a capacity for 60 probationers.

3. This is not the first time that Teen Challenge has responded to the government's call to serve the community. I understand that since its inception in 1976, Teen Challenge has been active in helping the down and out in Singapore, especially the youths. Prior to becoming the managing agent for Bukit Batok Hostel, Teen Challenge has also been working closely with MCD by extending its expertise in programmes for inhalant abusers to MCD Homes. Other programmes of Teen Challenge include the Drug Abuse Recovery Training Programme and Teenage Care Training Centre in Choa Chu Kang, and Streetwise Programme which are conducted in collaboration with the National Youth Council. I commend Teen Challenge for its good work with youth and its response to the needs of the community.

4. MCD believes in working closely with the people sector to bring social services to the people. MCD works with the National Council of Social Service and various voluntary welfare and civic organisations to provide a range of social services to meet the needs of the community. MCD provides support in the form of financial support and release of land and premises to these organisations for the development and operation of needed facilities. We also assist in facilitating administrative matters and training programmes for the organisations' staff and provide advice. Joint efforts by MCD and VWOs has led to some 450 on-going programmes such as hotline and meal services for the elderly, community probation service, foster care programme. *(based on the number of VWOs affiliated with NCSS, the number of FSCs, child care centres, student care centres, elderly care centres etc. there is no statistics for ad-hoc activities)*

5. I am indeed happy to note the close working relationship between MCD and VWOs. The government on its own will not be able to solve the social problems that Singapore faces. We need the support and collaboration of voluntary agencies and the community. The social service sector needs the support of individuals as well and many VWOs do rely heavily on the support of individuals as volunteers. I would therefore like to encourage individuals who can spare the time to come forward to offer their time to support the efforts of voluntary organisations. There is no boundary for age in volunteerism. I would like to encourage both the young and the elderly. The younger ones with lots of expendable energy and the elderly with their life experience and knowledge can contribute as volunteers.

6. We need to develop the people sector and realise our Singapore 21 vision of building a vibrant society. The often-cited slogan "Everyone Matters" can be interpreted both ways. "Everyone matters" can mean that everyone in the community has a role and every individual can contribute in whatever small ways to make a difference to others around him. It can also mean everyone matters regardless of who they are and it includes those who are not able to keep pace with the rest of the society, those who are on the fringe and that the community cannot lose sight of this group who are in the minority. The community needs to support efforts to pull these groups back into mainstream society. Together we can make Singapore a better place for everyone.

7. Let me conclude by thanking Teen Challenge once again for coming forward to accept the challenge of running the Hostel and to help reach out and help our youths. I would like to assure Teen Challenge that MCD will continue to give its

support to you to help you in carrying out your task. I extend my warmest wishes and regards to Teen Challenge and the staff and residents of Bukit Batok Hostel.

Thank you.

National Archives of Singapore