

Speech by Encik Othman Wok, Minister for Social Affairs, at the presentation of Certificates to Kindergarten graduants of the Zehnder Road Community Centre, Pasir Panjang Community Centre, Alexandra Terrace Community Centre and Pulau Semakau Community Centre at the Hua Kiau School on 16 Nov. 75 at 12 noon

Ladies & Gentlemen, Girls & Boys

1 Today is a proud day for the parents and young graduants of the kindergartens of Zehnder Road Community Centre, Pasir Panjang Community Centre, Alexandra Terrace Community Centre and Pulau Semakau Community Centre. It must be a real joy to watch our children growing up and learning to equip themselves for a useful life ahead. This Graduation Ceremony concludes the first stage of your formal education, and it means that you are now ready to step forward into a proper school. In Singapore, we are fortunate to have adequate educational facilities, and I hope you will all make good use of the opportunities to obtain a sound education.

2 Through your long years of schooling and quest for knowledge, it is inevitable that some of you will be more successful than others. But no matter what you have to do, it is important to remember that you should always try your best.

Parents on their part, should not push their children too hard. They must instead try to understand the limitations of each child and to give him all the guidance and encouragement he needs to develop a genuine love for knowledge.

3 Singapore is a meritocracy and competition is keen even in the primary schools. However, we should never forget that a good education will not only equip us for a profession, but more important, it should prepare us for a good life. This means that education should not only be a pursuit for academic achievements. It must also be a process for inculcating the right sort of attitudes and values in our young citizens so that they will grow up to be well adjusted and happy adults.

4 Both parents and teachers have a positive role to play in guiding our young people. From our experience, we know that children learn more quickly by following the example of their elders than through mere exhortation. This is especially true where the inculcation of human values is concerned. The rewards will certainly be most satisfying if we can ensure that our children do not only develop their intellectual faculties, but also their

capacity to love and care for others. It is therefore vital for parents and teachers to show the way by maintaining a high code of conduct in their daily life.

5 And now may I congratulate all of you who are receiving certificates at this graduation ceremony, and wish you every success and happiness in your school life.

6 Thank you.

.....