

# PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY MR ABDULLAH TARMUGI,  
MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT,  
AT THE HANDOVER CEREMONY TO DONATE VEHICLES  
TO VOLUNTARY WELFARE ORGANISATIONS  
HELD AT CYCLE & CARRIAGE ALEXANDRA COMPLEX  
ON TUESDAY, 7 OCTOBER 1997 AT 10.30 AM**

It gives me great pleasure to be here with you today for this handover ceremony of Cycle & Carriage's donation of vehicles to four voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs).

Today's ceremony is only the start of a five-year commitment by Cycle & Carriage to donate vehicles, worth \$750,000 to VWOs to meet the transportation needs of people with disabilities. The four organisations here with us today, namely, the Asian Women's Welfare Association TEACH ME Programme, Handicaps Welfare Association, Singapore Cheshire Home and SUN-DAC Centre for the Disabled, are the first beneficiaries of the generosity of Cycle & Carriage.

Ever so often, we read in the newspapers of the difficulties people with disabilities face in making use of public transport, whether it is to go to school, work or merely to move about outside their homes. For those who are unable to afford the transport fees, they are being helped by a variety of schemes such as the bus and taxi subsidies given by the National Council of

Social Service (NCSS) for students and trainees attending NCSS-funded special schools, sheltered workshops, day activity centres or rehabilitation programmes. The Care Cab scheme, in which taxi drivers come forward to assist in ferrying disabled persons, has also been of considerable help to lighten the latter's transport problems.

Our public transport system - indeed any public transport system - must be geared towards moving large numbers of people safely, quickly and conveniently. But we should, over time, see how we can make the system more user-friendly to persons with disabilities and to our senior citizens as well without sacrificing efficiency. Examples of these include providing lifts, travellers and ramps to aid people with disabilities, especially those who are physically disabled, to make our public transport system more accessible to them. I am confident that the relevant authorities will consider such features where they are feasible. However, it is not realistic to expect every disabled person to be able to use the public transport system fully and without any problems.

This corporate donation of vehicles by Cycle & Carriage is indeed commendable, and will serve as an encouragement especially to those with disabilities who are unable or find it difficult to make use of public transport. It will also facilitate the work of the VWOs working with people with disabilities. Your contribution enables the disabled to be more mobile and opens up a whole new world for them - a world of rehabilitative services, social and recreational activities and a world where working in the community becomes a reality. In the process, it increases the chances of the disabled being

integrated into mainstream society to be useful members of society. This is something we should aim at.

By increasing their mobility in the community, we make people with disabilities feel that they are part of society. Instead of being confined to their homes or institutions. This, alone, helps to improve their quality of life and outlook. The same goes with our senior citizens. It is therefore important for us to ensure that no one feels left out of the community because it is inaccessible to him or her due to age or disability.

I would like to conclude by thanking Cycle and Carriage for its generous donation. I hope this gesture will be an example for other companies to follow. I wish you all a pleasant day.

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