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Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY DR ALINE WONG, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION, AT THE OFFICIAL BLESSING AND OPEN HOUSE OF THE CANOSSIAN SCHOOL FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED AT 1 SALLIM ROAD ON SATURDAY, 22 JANUARY 2000 AT 3.00PM

Good afternoon,

- Mr Gerard Ee, Chairman, School Management Committee
- Sister Janet Wang, Supervisor, Canossian School for the Hearing Impaired
- Sister Anne Tan, Principal, Canossian School for the Hearing Impaired
- Parents, teachers, boys and girls.

2 Today is a very special occasion for Canossian School for the Hearing Impaired – the Official Blessing and Open House of the School. The school can be proud of its growth from a humble beginning in 1957, when it started as a boarding school. It was here on this very premises that the Canossian School for the Deaf was established. On account of expanding pupil enrolment, it moved to Jalan Merbok and became known as Canossian School for the Hearing Impaired. The change of school name from CSD to CSHI reflects an enlightened approach to the education of children with hearing impairment. It shows that you believe in the dignity of every human being, and you are committed to providing maximum opportunity for every child to develop his

spoken language. I see your relocation here in Sallim Road not only as a homecoming, but also as a significant milestone in the history of the school.

3 This brand new school indeed marks a significant milestone in your work. I know that you have waited patiently for it to be ready. Much thought and hard work have gone into the planning and building of this beautiful school. Among the facilities which are built to your special requirements are rooms which have acoustic treatment, individual conversation rooms within the classrooms, a modern Audiological and Parent Guidance department, a fine music room, a computer room and a multipurpose hall. I am told that all the classrooms are acoustically treated to enable HI children to hear and learn better. In nurturing the whole person in each pupil, CSHI uses the auditory-oral method of instruction to maximise pupils' residual hearing and enable each pupil to realise new capability.

4 My ministry shares with you the sense of achievement that you feel in providing such excellent facilities. Built at a cost of \$3.4 million, of which MOE's share is 90%, CSHI will be able to provide an enriched learning environment which will benefit all its pupils. In addition, MOE's IT MasterPlan has been extended to CSHI and 2 other SPED schools which follow mainstream curriculum. I am told that your computer room has been set up complete with server room and networking.

5 Here, I would like to add that, however wonderful the infrastructure, it is not the physical building which makes for quality education. It is the heartware – and by that I mean the people, the programmes and your strong sense of mission - which brings hope and harnesses the potential of our young who need special support.

6 Another form of heartware is the support programmes which the school provides such as the Early Intervention, Parents' Counselling and Family Therapy, Ear Care and financial assistance programmes to needy children. I commend you for your commitment to the education of children who come to you with hearing impairment. Indeed, the Principal and staff of CSHI have upheld the vision and mission of your early founders. Your dedication in the spirit of love has worked wonders for the holistic development of the children in your charge.

7 I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the school on the success of 9 pupils who did well in the 1999 PSLE exams. Among them were 2

who did well enough to qualify for the express course in the secondary school. In particular, I want to congratulate Chen Ziyue who scored As in English, Mathematics and Science. I am also happy to note that Nicholas Eng Guo Qing has scored 222 points in his PSLE exam. Congratulations to Ziyue and Nicholas on your good performance. You will inspire others to overcome their disabilities and to strive and succeed.

8 The Ministry of Education is happy to be associated with the school in the education of HI children. In our mainstream schools, hearing impaired pupils who can cope with national curriculum are integrated with the other pupils in class. For these pupils, MOE has also set up 3 remedial centres with additional resources and teachers to tutor and support their learning. (Ang Mo Kio North Primary, Anderson Primary and Delta Secondary School.)

9 Furthermore, MOE provides additional teachers and resources to 2 designated schools for HI pupils. (Upper Serangoon Secondary and Boon Lay Secondary School.) These schools provide a total communication approach, and MOE assigns additional teachers to them to do signing for the pupils.

10 Early this year, my Ministry also announced that FM equipment would be provided to HI pupils who can benefit from the hearing aid. Under phase 1 of this scheme, 21 HI pupils from Assumption English and Upper Serangoon secondary schools have been fitted with FM receivers and their teachers have been trained to use the equipment. MOE officers from the Special Education unit are monitoring the effectiveness of the FM and are working closely with the teachers to enhance the teaching and learning of HI pupils. If all goes well, we will equip more HI pupils with FM equipment.

11 For children with special needs and who are unable to cope in mainstream schools, MOE will continue to work with Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs) to provide education which is specific to their needs. Ever since MOE started the redevelopment programme for SPED schools, 3 projects have been completed. CSHI is the 3rd school to be completed. Currently 5 other SPED schools are in various stages of planning or constructing their purpose-built schools. As SPED schools move into their new schools, we will be able to provide more places and better facilities for disabled children.

12 I congratulate CSHI's School Management Committee and NCSS for your vision in building this new school and its co-location with the primary school and kindergarten. I am confident that with bigger space and better

facilities, your teachers will continue to make learning an enjoyable and exciting experience for the pupils. On that note, I wish you every success as you start another exciting phase in your new school.

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