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Subject: (Embargoed) Speech by RADM (NS) Teo Chee Hean, 30 Mar 2000, 7.35pm.

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY RADM (NS) TEO CHEE HEAN, MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND SECOND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE, AT Ngee ANN PRIMARY SCHOOL 60TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER CUM CONCERT ON THURSDAY 30 MARCH 2000 AT 369 TANJONG KATONG ROAD @ 7.35 PM.

Mr Teo Chiang Long, President of Ngee Ann Kongsi,
Principal, Vice- Principal,

Community Leaders,
Teachers, Parents,

Pupils and Ex-pupils of Ngee Ann Primary School,

Good evening.

May I extend my heartiest congratulations to Ngee Ann Primary School on this auspicious

occasion of your 60th Anniversary Celebration.

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Sixty years is an important milestone, be it for an individual or an organisation. Ngee Ann

Primary School has grown from its humble beginnings as a private Chinese school for girls into

an established and well regarded primary school for girls and boys. Today, it provides a holistic

education of high calibre for more than one thousand eight hundred pupils.

In this era of rapid global transformation, it is essential that a society equips its people with

the skills necessary to learn how to learn. In this respect, the efforts of Ngee Ann Primary School

towards realising the vision of “Thinking Schools, Learning Nation” are commendable. This is

clearly evidenced by the school’s innovative approach towards teaching and learning.

The school spares no effort in equipping its pupils with the requisite skills for the modern

information society. The school has embarked on a collaborative programme with Ngee Ann

Polytechnic, in which its pupils work on projects using the Internet, with the students from the

polytechnic as their mentors. To further develop thinking skills, pupils from as young as Primary

Three are taught a variety of problem-solving skills such as the use of WITs tools to analyse and

solve problems.

Preparing our young to be able to cope successfully in a knowledge-based economy

requires more than just changes in the curriculum and teaching strategies. It entails a change in

the attitude and mindset of every member of the community. In Ngee Ann Primary School,

teachers and administrators facilitate this change by providing their pupils with support, guidance

and inspiration to rise to new challenges.

Parents and the community are key players in ensuring that our young are provided with the best education. The large number of parents present here tonight bears testimony to the close

relationship that has been forged between Ngee Ann Primary School and its parents. I understand

that the Parents Support Group has been active in helping the school to put up tonight's concert.

They are also involved in helping the school to conduct its English and Chinese reading

programmes.

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Ngee Ann Primary School is also fortunate to enjoy the support of Ngee Ann Kongsu. The

Kongsu has provided the school with financial support, resources and the voluntary service of its

members. Its contributions have benefited the school tremendously and should be further

encouraged.

It is heartening that Ngee Ann Primary School subscribes to the belief that “Every Singaporean Matters”. The commitment to develop the unique and varied talents and abilities of its pupils is evident in the way the school places equal emphasis on academic and non-academic pursuits. Besides focusing on achieving good academic results, the school has carved a niche in the aesthetics. Both the Chinese and Malay Dance Clubs, and the Chinese Orchestra have won numerous gold awards at the Singapore Youth Festival. I look forward to seeing some of these talented young musicians and dancers performing tonight.

Ngee Ann Primary School has witnessed much development and progress since its founding. The school can also look forward to moving into its new premises, back at its former Marine Terrace site at the end of the year. With these new premises the school will be able to provide its students with a better environment, and even better facilities. With the support of the School Management Committee, community, parents and ex-pupils, the able leadership of the principal, and the dedication of the staff and pupils, I am confident that Ngee Ann Primary School will “shine with brilliance and in harmony with the community” in the years ahead.

Thank you and congratulations once again.
