



PRESS RELEASE

**New Community Volunteering Network Opens Up
More Opportunities for Volunteering**

Volunteers of HDB's community bonding programmes, who are keen to deepen their involvement in volunteering, will now have more opportunities to do so with the **"Friends of Our Heartlands"** network. This new network will provide a continuum of volunteering opportunities across different tracks, opening up more ways for volunteers to deepen their involvement and capabilities, as their experience, skills and interests evolve over time. Minister for National Development & Second Minister for Finance, Mr Lawrence Wong, announced this at the launch of the HDB Community Week 2017 today.

More Opportunities for Community Involvement

2 HDB has, over the years, introduced a wide range of community building and volunteering programmes. Some 130,000 members of the public and school students have volunteered their time and effort through the various programmes, such as the Heartland Ambassador Programme, Project SPHERE, Good Neighbours Project, and Friendly Faces, Lively Places Fund (please refer to Annex A for details of the programmes). The efforts of these volunteers have helped to build a stronger community and make the heartlands a more harmonious living environment for all residents.

3 To further tap into the zeal and energy of the community, the new "Friends of Our Heartlands" network will amalgamate the different HDB community-bonding programmes and the volunteers into a single concerted network. The volunteering opportunities offered by existing programmes will be consolidated under the tracks of "Cultivate", "Activate" and "Facilitate". For instance, the activities currently carried out by Heartland Ambassadors would be offered under the 'Cultivate' track to share neighbourliness and eco-living tips, and eco-themed guided tours.

4 This new network will enable more volunteer participation across the different programmes, and allow optimal deployment of resources such as manpower and community

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resources. Volunteers will find it easier to take up multiple volunteering opportunities as they can submit a single application instead of signing up separately for individual programmes.

5 Volunteers will be able to choose how they wish to contribute to the community across the three tracks, and deepen their level of involvement along the way:

- (i) **Cultivate** – Young or new volunteers may start out by participating in outreach events to share tips on neighbourly behaviour and eco-living, to encourage positive behaviours for better HDB living.
- (ii) **Activate** – As these volunteers mature and become more active in their community, they may want to go one step further to initiate their own community bonding or place-activation projects to bring fellow residents together, facilitated through the HDB Friendly Faces, Lively Places Fund.
- (iii) **Facilitate** – For volunteers who wish to contribute through a deeper level of engagement, the “Facilitate” track offers opportunities for them to facilitate conversations among residents in the community, and build consensus on local estate renewal plans that will improve residents’ day-to-day living.

6 From spreading messages to initiating projects, facilitating conversations or training younger volunteers, volunteers will be able to grow and deepen their level of community involvement according to their own interests and capabilities. They will also benefit from being able to network with like-minded individuals and organisations, and tap into the synergies or partnership opportunities.

7 To equip volunteers with skills to perform their new role effectively, training will be provided, for instance, in areas such as communication, facilitation, project management, etc. In the long run, they will be able to build up a rich reservoir of knowledge, skills and experience in facilitating community conversations, which could be applied in other areas, beyond housing.

8 The first to take on the new role of community facilitators for HDB projects is a group of 70 students from NUS. They will be involved in facilitating projects such as:

- (i) **Build-A-Playground** - A project arising from a winning idea in the earlier HDB Build-a-thon workshop. The project commenced in April 2017 and the students were involved in planning the residents’ engagement session and design workshops.

- (ii) “One Community Sports” project which was supported by the HDB Friendly faces, Lively Places Fund, where they will help to plan how residents can create an activity area from an empty void deck space.
- (iii) Engaging residents in the activation of social linkways or social nodes as part of the Remaking Our Heartland (ROH) programme for Woodlands, Toa Payoh and Pasir Ris towns. The students will be involved in various aspects, such as the design and planning of the engagement process, facilitating the consultative sessions, and collating feedback from the community on how to activate the linkways or nodes in the estates for greater community interaction and bonding.

Celebrating our Heartland Ambassadors

9 To nurture youths to be champions of gracious and responsible heartland living, HDB introduced the Heartland Ambassador Programme in 2010. The programme was extended to seniors in 2014. Since then, HDB has engaged more than 3,600 ambassadors under the programme, reaching out to over 16,000 residents through visits, outreach activities and learning tours.

10 In appreciation of their efforts and contributions to the community, the **Heartland Ambassador Appreciation Day** will be held on 28 May 2017. Over 200 student and senior ambassadors will be receiving certificates of recognition from Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Communications and Information & Ministry of Education Dr Janil Puthuchear. More information about the Heartland Ambassador Appreciation Day is in Annex B.

Good Neighbours, Great Communities

11 Good neighbours make living in the HDB heartland more pleasant for all. As part of Community Week, the **Good Neighbour Award (GNA)** is held biennially to recognise individuals who have gone the extra mile to enrich their community with acts of care and neighbourliness. This year, a total of 2,960 nominations were received, making it a record number since the inception of the GNA in 2009. The recipients will be receiving their awards from Minister Lawrence Wong at the launch of Community Week 2017.

About HDB Community Week

12 The HDB Community Week will run from 27 May to 2 June 2017 at the Punggol Town Square, located near Punggol MRT station and Waterway Point. Various fun and exciting

activities for the whole family have been lined up for the week. Besides visiting the exhibition which showcases the heart-warming stories of the community, the public can also enjoy musical performances by local talents while taking in the scenic views of My Waterway@Punggol.

13 They can also sign-up for workout sessions such as Zumba and Yoga, movie screening, terrarium and craft workshops, as well as other activities throughout the week. More details on the HDB Community 2017 are available on the HDB InfoWEB (hdb.gov.sg/communityweek). Members of the public who are keen to join the “Friends of Our Heartlands” network as volunteers can also sign up online via the HDB InfoWEB.

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HDB's Volunteering Programmes

Project SPHERE

Project SPHERE (**S**tudents, **S**ingapore **P**ools and **HDB** **E**nriching and **R**eaching out to **E**lderly) is run in partnership with programme funder, Singapore Pools, supported by Nippon Paint Singapore and the Ministry of Education.

The initiative promotes the spirit of volunteerism and care for the elderly especially among the younger generation, while encouraging intergenerational bonding and fostering neighbourly behaviour. This is achieved by providing the community with opportunities to carry out spring cleaning and gate painting sessions for elderly residents living in rental flats. With funding support from HDB, participants of these activities can continue and deepen their engagement with elderly residents as Friends of SPHERE by initiating other activities to show care towards the elderly and encourage active ageing.

Since its inception in 2002, Project SPHERE has benefitted over 95,000 elderly residents through the efforts of some 120,000 volunteers who have organised over 3,000 activities for the elderly.

Heartland Ambassador Programme

The Heartland Ambassador Programme was introduced in 2010 to nurture our young and youth as champions for gracious and responsible heartland living. Since 2014, the programme has been extended to seniors, where they could conduct eco-learning journeys for the community.

To date, we have nurtured over 3,600 Heartland Ambassadors who have reached out to more than 16,000 residents by sharing tips on gracious and responsible heartland living.

Good Neighbours Project

The Good Neighbours Project was first launched in 2014 as part of HDB's Good Neighbour Movement to facilitate and inspire ground-up initiatives that encourage neighbourly behaviour, vibrancy and cohesiveness in HDB estates.

Organised as a competition, funding of up to \$1,000 was given to each successful project applicant to carry out their projects. 3 runs of the competition were carried out between 2014 and 2016 with a total of 83 projects being implemented. Over 10,000 residents have been engaged through activities organised under this initiative, helping them to get to know their neighbours better.

Following the success of the initiative, the Good Neighbours Project was expanded into a non-competitive funding programme – HDB Friendly Faces, Lively Places Fund – to support ground-up projects all year round. The upper limit of the seed funding was also raised to \$10,000 under the new programme.

HDB Friendly Faces Lively Places Fund

The HDB Friendly Faces, Lively Places Fund, introduced in May 2016, aims to encourage residents to initiate and implement projects that activate common spaces in HDB estates. The

fund is available all year round and each project can apply for funding of up to \$10,000 from HDB.

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Heartland Ambassador Appreciation Day

The Heartland Ambassador Programme started in 2010 to nurture youths to be champions for gracious and responsible heartland living. Observing that other members of the community can also contribute to the cause, HDB extended the programme to seniors in 2014, where they could conduct learning tours for the community.

To date, HDB has nurtured over 3,600 Heartland Ambassadors, reaching out to over 16,000 residents with on tips on gracious and responsible heartland living, and 213,000 youths through the 'Outreach to Young and Youth (OHYAY!) programme.

The annual Heartland Ambassador Appreciation Ceremony recognises and shows HDB's appreciation to Heartland Ambassadors for their efforts and contributions to the community. This year, over 200 Heartland Ambassadors will be receiving the Certificate of Completion and Certificate of Achievement and 15 schools will be receiving the Appreciation and Partnerships Award. To acknowledge the contribution of our Senior Heartland Ambassadors since the start of the programme in 2014, we will be presenting Certificates of Appreciation to 21 active ambassadors for the first time this year.

The heartland ambassadors will also be carrying out several activities during HDB Community Week 2017.

(i) Workshop by Youths

As an extension of their Friendly Faces, Lively Places (FFLP) Project, Heartland Ambassadors from Chongzheng Primary School and their peers will be facilitating a bookmark making workshop for pre-school children on 29 May 2017. The bookmark making activity is centred on the theme of good neighbourly behaviour. The team hopes to raise awareness and inspire others to be a good neighbour through the activity.

(ii) Heartland Ambassador Visits @ Punggol

20 Heartland Ambassadors Springfield Secondary School and Post-Secondary Institutions will be engaging visitors at the HDB Community Week event to spread messages on gracious and responsible heartland living, encouraging them to be good neighbours.

(iii) The "Punggol Waterway Brisk-walking cum Heartland Trail"

Senior Heartland Ambassadors, together with their peers, will be initiating a brisk-walking activity on the morning of 28 May 2017 for residents from Punggol Meridian and Waterway Brooks.

The brisk-walking activity will be an interactive journey for residents to gain new insights on familiar landmarks and lesser known places in Punggol as they interact and forge stronger friendships with each other during the walk. The walk will be facilitated by 'Our Heartland Trails' mobile application, passing by spots featured in the mobile application like the Punggol Town Square. The activity will end with a visit to the HDB Community Week 2017 exhibition.