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ADDRESS BY MR LEE KHOON CHOY, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION AT THE OPENING OF THE BASIC TRAINING COURSE FOR VOLUNTEER AFTERCARE OFFICERS FROM PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION ON TUESDAY, 11 JULY '78, AT 7.20 PM AT THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS CONFERENCE ROOM "A"

It gives me great pleasure to be here at the Opening of this Course. The problem of drug abuse amongst the young has been with us for about a decade. Drug abuse is a multi-faceted problem. The pressures and stresses of modern living have aggravated this problem. The government is doing its best to eradicate this menace by preventive education, cutting off the sources of drug supply and identifying the abusers to give them early treatment. What is needed now is the concerted efforts of the community to assist in the social rehabilitation of the abusers.

Since the reorganisation of the People's Association, the Youth Movement has placed greater emphasis on service-oriented programmes. The establishment of the PA Youth Aftercare (Counselling) Service for Drug Takers, with an initial recruitment of 370 youth volunteers, is the result of this policy.

The first batch of PA Youth volunteers have already begun training. This, the second batch will begin its month-long training today.

It is indeed heartening to see so many of our youths are willing to sacrifice their time and energy on the task of drug rehabilitation. I am sure you are aware that drug rehabilitation process is a time-consuming, arduous and sometimes heart-breaking affair. It requires a great amount of patience, perseverance, understanding and persuasiveness to get an ex-drug addict wipe out the bitter-sweet memories of the past and to turn over a new leaf. I am no expert in drug rehabilitation but, to my mind, the success

or failure of your endeavour depends to a large extent on your ability to win over the patient's confidence and to cultivate a personal friendship in the first instance. Without this personal touch, no amount of lecturing or nagging will be effective.

This course is meant to teach you some of the methods of rehabilitation. Given the right attitude and will power, I am sure you will succeed in your endeavour. The reward will be satisfying and worthwhile.

Your participation in this worthy project will help to eradicate the often wrong impression that Singaporeans are ego-centric and selfish. Your success in your endeavour will help generate the sense and spirit of sacrifice for the welfare and healthy development of our society.

Let's hope that your example will inspire more volunteers to come forward to render their services.

It now leaves me to declare the Basic Training Course for Volunteer Aftercare Officers for members of the People's Association Youth Aftercare (Counselling) Service for Drug Takers open.

Thank you.

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