

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR TEO CHONG TEE, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS), AT THE INSTALLATION
CEREMONY DINNER OF THE KIWANIS CLUB OF SINGAPORE
AT YORK HOTEL ON SATURDAY, 1 OCTOBER 1983 AT 7.45 PM

We are gathered here tonight to witness the changing of the guard in one of the major service clubs - the Kiwanis Club of Singapore. The occasion signifies the successful completion of the tasks set for itself by the outgoing committee. There is naturally an expectation that the new committee will set new targets and achieve even greater success. I congratulate the outgoing officials of the Club for a job well-done. I also wish to congratulate the new committee members on their election to office, and wish them an exciting term.

Traditionally, service clubs have played a useful social role in raising funds in aid of organisations which provide welfare services to the aged, the disabled and the needy. In recent years, however, there has been a slow but clear shift to their providing more direct services as well. For example, the Kiwanis Club has, among its many projects, adopted Perak House, which is administered by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Home provides accommodation and care to 70 children whose families are not in a position to provide them proper care in their own homes. Apart from organising parties during festive occasions to bring joy to the children, members of the Club also hold monthly birthday celebrations in the Home.

Such activities are actually highly significant. By frequently visiting the children and celebrating their birthdays and the festive occasions with them members of the Club could develop a lasting and healthy relationship with the children, thus helping them overcome the psychological barriers to lead a normal life as a result of institutionalization. Of course, other useful relationships could develop between a service organisation and a welfare institution if the commitment on the part of the former is regular in nature. Schools, army units, youth and civic organisations which are having ad hoc community service projects would do well to review their service patterns with a view to adopting a welfare organisation. They will find that their efforts will produce more satisfying and significant results.

Service clubs should also review their choice of beneficiaries for their fund-raising projects in the light of the establishment of the Community Chest of Singapore. The Community Chest is a new concept in Singapore though it has been in existence in the USA, Japan, Hong Kong and other countries for some time. It aims to centralise the collection and allocation of funds for charities. Its main advantages over the existing system of each charitable organisation raising its own funds are that it could mobilise a wider base of welfare contributors more effectively while repeated reliance on a few donors is avoided. The funds available can also be more equitably distributed to the welfare organisations according to their needs and the significance of their services, rather than to their individual fund-raising abilities. I would suggest that service clubs find out more about the Community Chest from the Singapore Council of Social Service with a view to working out a satisfactory arrangement with respect to financial assistance for charities.