

# PRESS RELEASE

Information Division, Ministry of Culture, City Hall, Singapore 0617 • TEL: 3378191 ext 352, 353, 354 / 3362207 / 3362271

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**SPEECH BY MR TEO CHONG TEE, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
(ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS), AT THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATION OF THE TAI PEI OLD PEOPLE'S HOME  
AT JALAN AMPAS ON SUNDAY, 10 JUNE 1984 AT 2.00 PM**

I am pleased to be here this afternoon to celebrate with you the first anniversary of the Tai Pei Old People's Home. The founding of this Home and its success is testimony to the partnership between the Government and the voluntary sector to cope with the problem of our growing aged population.

Better health services and a higher standard of living have meant a longer life span for our population. It is expected that, by the year 2,000, there will be approximately 300,000 Singaporeans, or one in every 10, aged 60 years and above. This greying of our population brings with it numerous social problems - problems which are best solved by the community and not just by the Government. It calls for a close partnership between public and voluntary bodies, families and individuals.

About 2.6 per cent of the 121,000 persons who are now aged 65 years and above are living in Homes for the Aged. An overwhelming majority of our elderly are thus still living in the community. We should encourage our elderly to stay within the community for as long as practical.

As our next generation of senior citizens are likely to be better educated and economically self-reliant with substantial CPF savings, it is inevitable that organisations catering for senior citizens would need to upgrade and review their services in response to new emerging needs.

The healthy aged, if they are to continue living on their own within the community, would need supportive services. It is heartening to note that more and more civic organisations, interest groups and religious groups are coming forward to initiate services and programmes to promote the welfare of the aged. Supportive services include:

Senior Citizens' Clubs or Recreational Centres;  
Day Care Centres; and  
Befrienders' services.

Our elderly should be encouraged and supported by family members to participate in organised activities as a means of keeping their bodies and minds healthy. Even so, illness will creep up on the aged. The Committee on the Problems of the Aged stated in its report that there will be an increasing demand for the care of the aged sick. The social pattern in Singapore where both spouses work to maintain the family inevitably adds on to the problems to be faced by the family in the care of their aged and aged sick. We should recognise that sometimes the responsible family needs to take a break to recharge their energies so that it can continue to care for their aged. Sometimes it needs support, assistance and relief in the event of some family crisis, such as death or illness, when the family temporarily cannot provide sufficient care for their aged relatives and parents. There is, therefore, a need to provide services like respite care and transient care or domiciliary help which families in crisis situations could rely on for support.

The Tai Pei Old People's Home was opened a year ago to house 200 destitute aged females. The number of destitutes is fast declining with the phasing out of the first generation of immigrant singles. There will come a time when there will be few destitutes in need of

accommodation in Homes for the Aged. I am confident that the Tai Pei Old People's Home would, in keeping pace with the changing social needs and circumstances, continue to review its services. There is a need to take in the aged sick who are unable to live with their families and the community and to provide day and transient care services I mentioned earlier. I am sure that the Tai Pei Old People's Home under the very capable leadership of the Reverend Sek Fatt Kuan and her Management Committee will be able to meet the changing requirements for the care of the aged.

May I now congratulate the Reverend Sek Fatt Kuan and her Management Committee on the Home's successful first year and to wish her and her Committee greater success in the future.

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