

**SPEECH FOR CHAIRMAN, MAYORS' COMMITTEE,  
DR TEO HO PIN AT THE  
WECARE ARTS FUND TEA SESSION  
ON 21 MAY 2015 AT 2.30PM  
AT BISHAN COMMUNITY CLUB**

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Distinguished Guests

Kathy Lai, Chief Executive Office of National Arts Council

Partners from the Voluntary Welfare Organisations

District Councillors

Friends and Colleagues

A very good afternoon to all of you

**Introduction**

On behalf of the Community Development Councils, in short, CDCs, I would like to say a big thank you to everyone for making the WeCare Arts Fund a success. Many of the VWOs, that is, volunteer welfare organisations, are here with us today. I would like to express my appreciation to the VWOs which have been working closely with the CDCs and the National Arts Council to reach out to the beneficiaries. I understand that some of you will be sharing your experiences of the working on the various arts projects and how the participants who have benefitted from the programmes supported by the Fund. I hope that the impact that we have made to the lives of the beneficiaries will continue to be a motivation for all of us to do more for the community.

2            Since the launch of the WeCare Arts Fund by the five CDCs and the National Arts Council, in short, NAC, in May 2014, I am heartened to know that we have made good progress over a short period of time. The WeCare Arts Fund is a meaningful scheme that brings arts closer to the beneficiaries within the social service sectors, fostering friendships amongst the elderly and boosting the confidence and self-esteem of the youths. So far, the Fund has supported 50 arts programmes for beneficiaries from 50 VWOs and reaching out to about 1,437 beneficiaries.

3            Staying true to its mission to build a caring and cohesive community, where we assist the needy, bond the people and connect the community, the CDCs have been working very closely with our partners such as NAC to identify emerging needs in the community. The CDCs have always taken a resident-centric approach, ensuring that we proactively respond to the ground and feel the needs of the residents; and build a supportive social infrastructure around them to enhance their well-being. The WeCare Arts Fund is an excellent example where we bring different partners together to do good, and reach out to more people in the community, to care for the community and help the vulnerable lead a healthy and socially engaged life.

4            At the heart of all projects and success is **PEOPLE**. Therefore, we have seated all of you in mixed groups so that you get to know each other better, learn more about the programmes supported by the Fund, and share your experiences so that we

can all learn from each other some of the good practices to enhance our programme for the benefit of the beneficiaries.

5           The project “Batik Painting” is one of the outreach efforts by one of the VWOs, Cerebral Palsy Alliance to involve members of the community and to integrate people with special needs into the society. Participants were introduced to arts and many picked new skills and found fulfilment in their lives. Michelle Low, aged 30, who cannot communicate effectively verbally, fell in love with batik painting because of the vibrant colours. Through the workshop she learnt to draw flowers, boats and most importantly, learnt to express herself through art and the pictures that she painted tell a thousand words. Another participant, 31-year- old Adrian Ng observed a difference in himself after going through few art sessions. Painting cultivated his patience when he handles people around him and he has learnt to be more organised. Rong Xian, aged 24, shared that though learning waxing is difficult, he enjoyed the process thoroughly as it was fun and fulfilling and he has made many friends.

6           We should continue to expand such good programmes and other programmes by; firstly, encouraging more VWOs to collaborate with artists to organise meaningful projects for their beneficiaries and providing more opportunities and platforms such as today’s session for all the key players to meet, understand each other better and forge new networks and working relationships. We hope through these players, they can help motivated like-minded artists and VWOs to tap on the

WeCare Arts Fund and support the arts as an important tool in supporting the social service sector. Secondly, we should encourage our participants to move beyond participating in our programmes to become active volunteers to help spearhead more programmes and play a part in giving back to the community. In this way, every participant will be a potential catalyst and the best ambassadors for the WeCare Arts Fund. And thirdly, we should continue to build on the capabilities of volunteers through engaging them in different learning opportunities, so as to empower them to take on more challenges in helping the vulnerable. We must help our volunteers increase their capacities in reaching out to the vulnerable.

7           Once again, let me end by taking this opportunity to thank all our distinguished guests, partners, volunteers, councillors, friends and colleagues for making this programme possible.

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