

**DELIVERED OPENING ADDRESS  
BY MR DESMOND CHOO, MAYOR OF NORTH EAST DISTRICT  
AT VIRTUAL LAUNCH OF LAW AWARENESS WEEKS @CDC 2021  
(LAW@CDC)  
ON SATURDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2021, 11AM**

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Thank you, Minister Edwin Tong

Fellow Mayors

Chairman of Law Society Pro Bono Services, Mr Gregory Vijayendran

CED of People's Association Mr Lim Hock Yu

Dear Friends

1. Good morning and thank you for joining us for today's launch.

**Background of LAW@CDC**

2. As Minister Edwin Tong has mentioned, we have a robust rules-based society.

But we also have a very complex society. Understandably, frictions will increase.

People demand for more legal services and justice. But law can be expensive.

So, In 2014, the five CDCs and LSPBS improved access to justice. We expanded

the Community Legal Clinic network or the CLC network. In 2017 and 2020,

NUS, SMU SUSS, and SCCA then took legal services in the community to the

next level.

3. We took LAW@CDC to the heartlands. We want Singaporeans to know their rights. To be empowered when faced with common legal issues. So, we use legal talks to promote awareness and understanding of the law. This year, 12 law awareness webinars will be aired ‘live’ online from 25 September till 7 November over the next 6 weeks.

### **LAW@CDC 2021**

4. As Minister also mentioned, Covid-19 affects everyone and everything. Apart from the devastation of the World Wars, I think that The Great Pandemic is perhaps the worst disaster of modern history. And it is not even over yet. Brokenness and strife abound. People are spending long hours at home. They are either alone or cramped in tight spaces with their family members. Tension runs high. Employers also start to close companies. Workers lose jobs. Some people face and are still facing financial difficulties. The Pandemic battleground is littered with victims of psychological, economic and social trauma. We need to provide residents a safe place to mend broken relationships within the family and the community.

5. So, disputing parties must talk. We must engage in dialogues. Mediation is that better alternative to litigation. This year, we will focus on Relationships and Healing in the context of Family, Community and Employment. We will tackle difficult issues such as Divorce, Anger Management, Mental Health, Good Cyber

Community and Labor Law. With mediation as the cornerstone, we can reduce litigation. More importantly, we can promote healing.

### **Highlighting of Grassroots Leaders**

6. Our heroes in this healing journey are our mediators. We have here amongst us, Mr Pang Loo Seng BBM. He is a retired senior grassroots leader with the Eunos division.
7. And we know that Mediation requires good people with the right standing, passion and disposition. We needed good people to help others resolve their conflicts. When that call came Mr Pang stepped up. And he served with passion and distinction for two decades.
8. He shares fondly of mending the brokenness between a mother and her son. The years of mistrust and misunderstandings had torn them far apart. Litigation was something they considered. But thankfully, they met Mr Pang and he managed to bring them back together again. That satisfaction of helping to mend the mother and son's relationship brought him back to mediation time and time again, and that has lasted for two decades.
9. Today, we have 9 active Community Mediators with the CMC. We hope to see more of our community leaders to join them.

## **Commencement and recognizing the volunteers and partners**

10. On behalf of our Mayors, I would also like to thank all our partners and volunteers.

11. Lastly, I would like to give a round of applause to the volunteer lawyers who are with us today, both physically and over zoom. They have been serving pro bono at the various Community Legal Clinics across Singapore.

12. We want to thank them for their passion and dedication. On behalf of the mayors, we want to thank you for joining us at today's launch and for helping us spread the good work of law in the community. Thank you very much.