



Media Release

SG CARES HAS STARTED TO OFFER FLEXIBLE AND MEANINGFUL VOLUNTEERING PROJECTS

Singapore, 3 July 2009 – SG Cares, a new initiative from NVPC, has started providing flexible volunteering opportunities for community service.

In collaboration with its partners, SG Cares has been structuring episodic volunteer projects for people to sign up based on their availability, interest and location, even ahead of their new online portal being ready.

Since the announcement of this new initiative in February this year by Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, over 1200 volunteers have signed up with SG Cares, in which more than 370 have attended the eight volunteer orientations that were conducted. About 150 of these volunteers have been mobilised with 220 volunteers hours clocked in the pilot phase.

To date, over 30 non-profit partners have joined SG Cares and several of these have been working closely with the SG Cares team to test pilot selected projects. Some examples are:

1) Singapore Environment Council (SEC) Monthly Coastal Cleanup at Pasir Ris Beach

The 13 SG Cares volunteers who were there helping the environment for the very first time found the activity to be extremely meaningful and enjoyed themselves. They were amazed with the amount of rubbish collected and pleased with their efforts. Most of the volunteers indicated they would sign up for the next beach cleanup session.

2) Animals Concerns Research and Education Society (ACRES) – Maintenance Work at ACRES

Four volunteers were at ACRES for the maintenance of their premises. Though the work was physically demanding, the volunteers enjoyed themselves. They found the volunteering experience productive and humbling.

3) Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH) – Sheltered Workshop Activity

The befriending volunteer activity at SAVH had 11 volunteers who brought much cheer to the beneficiaries as well as the volunteers themselves. Many of the volunteers were looking forward to either another activity with SAVH or with SG Cares.

4) All Saints Home Monthly Charity Food Sale

The monthly charity food sale attracted three volunteers who helped in the preparation and sale of food items to raise funds for the home.

“Volunteers are the extended helping hands to our work in serving the beneficiaries in many ways. They serve because they care and that is an encouragement to us as they understand the challenges we face when we serve together for an episode. We are glad the volunteers from SG Cares had thoroughly enjoyed helping out in our activity. We hope they will continue to come and that many more will volunteer for other needs,” said Surin Lee of All Saints Home.

Volunteer responses to the SG Cares way of volunteering have been encouraging as well. They welcome the option of volunteering for activities that fits into their schedule. Many felt that the flexibility of SG Cares volunteering activities allows them to pick and choose the cause and timing of volunteering which best suits their interests, aptitude and schedule.

"Thank you, SG Cares, for caring enough to spin off something like this for those of us out there who want to do something good but not sure how & where to start.

And I am so glad I have finally started my journey of discovery. I am looking forward to more interesting "do-good" opportunities coming from SG Cares!" said Jaclyn Chew, who volunteered at the SAVH activity.

In addition, SG Cares has identified potential volunteer leaders among those who had volunteered with the test pilot activities. In all, 47 volunteers have attended the volunteer leader training sessions. The role of the volunteer team leader is to ensure that volunteers are deployed effectively by the VHOs, track the reliability of individual volunteers and report feedback so that the activity can be fine-tuned. Mr How Kok Koon, volunteer leader at SEC's Coastal Cleanup said, "It's great to see smiling faces at the end of the activity".

Information on SG Cares and the volunteer activities are currently hosted on the NVPC website as the SG Cares portal is currently under construction. The new portal will make searching and signing up of volunteering projects simple and convenient for volunteers. The SG Cares portal will be ready in late August and will be commissioned at the official launch of SG Cares on 6 September 2009 by President SR Nathan at Run Singapore.

SG Cares looks to partner more VHOs in this new volunteering journey and urges all interested to contact SG Cares directly. Those who want to volunteer with SG Cares can do so at www.sgcares.org or email volunteer@sgcares.org.

--- END ---

For media enquiries, please contact:

David Fong
Director
SG Cares & Corporate Communications
DID: 6550 9567
HP: 9635 5464
Fax: 6221 0625
Email: david@nvpc.org.sg

Rodney Goh
Senior Executive
Corporate Communications
DID: 6550 9584
HP: 9366 5813
Fax: 6221 0625
Email: rodney@nvpc.org.sg



FACTSHEET - THE GENESIS OF SG CARES **Everyone Can Do Something Good**

According to NVPC's national survey on volunteerism in 2008, the volunteerism rate in Singapore was 16.9% as compared to 15.5% in 2006. Although the percentage has increased, volunteering hours has decreased from 49 million hours to 45 million hours. This shows that while more people are volunteering, they put in less volunteering hours or do so less regularly.

It was noted that people who lead busy lives still want to volunteer. They want to help the less fortunate especially if they believe personally in the cause and when they have been approached by someone or know of someone involved with the cause. Overall, the number of people who volunteer occasionally rather than monthly or weekly - has increased to over 20 hours per year as compared to over 16 hours in the 2006 survey.

From the survey, NVPC found that the main reason why people stop volunteering is because they have no time. In particular, given the hectic lifestyle that most people living here lead, they have no time to source for volunteering opportunities nor can they commit to a fixed and lengthy period of time.

However, if there was more time flexibility or flexibility in volunteering workload, then they are more likely to want to volunteer.

Given these findings and also based on NVPC's ground knowledge in working with agencies / volunteers these past few years, there was the need to develop an informative and flexible volunteering system that will allow people with little time, or those who cannot commit to a fixed schedule, to volunteer.

Singapore Cares (SG Cares) was conceptualised to enable caring but busy people in Singapore to volunteer as and when they can. In collaboration with its partners, SG Cares will structure episodic volunteer projects and post them onto a real time online portal for individuals to sign up for flexible and meaningful volunteer opportunities that do not require ongoing commitment to a fixed schedule. It seeks to make volunteering easy; providing opportunities for people from all walks of life in Singapore to contribute actively and meaningfully to a wide range of causes.

SG Cares' vision is to nurture a caring and engaged society where those who can, spontaneously and regularly volunteer their time and talent to meet community needs. We believe that everyone wants and can make a difference in the community.

Those who want to volunteer with SG Cares can do so at www.sgcares.org or email volunteer@sgcares.org.