

**SPEECH BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (YOUTH CORPS SINGAPORE)  
MR ONG KAH KUANG  
AT THE YOUTH CORPS FIREFLIES 2022 PARTNERS'  
APPRECIATION,  
ON 17 DECEMBER 2022**

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1 Good afternoon Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of Health and Ministry of Law, and Chairperson of Youth Corps Advisory Committee, Mdm Rahayu Mahzam, Chief Executive of NYC, Mr David Chua, Youth Corps Advisory Committee Members, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. Thank you for taking the time off to spend your Saturday afternoon here with us.

2 We last had our Partners Appreciation in 2019 when we celebrated our Youth Corps' 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and we did not have any partners appreciation event after that due to Covid-19. Now that the Covid-19 situation is more stable, it is apt for us to hold another partners appreciation event to thank you for your strong support in developing our youths and providing them opportunities to serve.

3 The last 3 years of Covid-19 has been challenging for many. Amidst the crisis, it was also an opportunity for us to rally our youths to step forward to serve the community and to do their part for Singapore in this crisis. I am thankful for the different partners that work alongside us to provide such a valuable platform for our youths. Thank you partners.

4 In the Chinese language, the word crisis (危机) is made up of two words - (危) Danger and (机) Opportunity. While we were responding to the crisis, we also took the opportunity to expand our partnerships, working with different partners. As we did so, we discovered new areas which youth volunteers could play a role. We started a few new programmes. I would like to share three of them here.

5 The first is the KidsLearn Programme. We found out from our colleagues in MOE and community partners about the wide developmental gap that surfaced at

Primary 1 between the mainstream children and those from the vulnerable family. We piloted a KidsLearn Programme this year, leveraging on an educational app to engage children on literacy. With the app, the role of the volunteer is changed from that of teaching to that of befriending, being a big brother or big sister to befriend and encourage the children, which is simpler to equip. The response for the programme has been very positive from the children, parents, partners and youth volunteers. We have since scaled it from the 2 pilot sites at Tampines and Bedok to 4 sites, with plans to scale to 8 more sites next year. If any of you wish to run such a programme, we will be happy to explore with you.

6 Another initiative is a revised model of volunteering. We called it community service event (bite size). In this model, we curate regular volunteering events with a host organisation managed for a start by a programme coordinator who will identify a small group of regular volunteers to anchor it. The rest of the volunteers are ad-hoc in nature. The motivation of doing this is to provide youths with more opportunities for ad-hoc volunteering and at the same time, help to make it easier for host organisations to manage these ad-hoc volunteers with the help of the regular volunteers. The pilot is currently ongoing. We have programmes for different causes like seniors, person with disabilities and migrant workers. We see potential to expand this model to reach out to more youths to volunteer. Do let us know if any of you is keen to pilot this model with us.

7 This year, we also launched the 5-months Youth Corps Community Internship to provide opportunities for youths to intern in the social and community sector. Unlike other internship, we have structured workshops and learning journey for the youths to further equip them and allow them to learn more about different career pathways. As part of the internship, we also structured in service opportunities to allow them to experience the joy of serving. With the support of the National Youth Fund, we are able to cover the stipends fully. Do reach out to us if you wish to send your students to be part of this or come onboard as a hosting organisation.

8 Besides the three initiatives, there are other programmes that we are running. We would not have been able to do all these without the support of all of you, partners. There are different groups of you here that I would like to thank.

9 Firstly, I would like to thank the social service and government agencies who partner us for our Youth Corps Leaders Programme, Regular Programmes, Community Service Events and clusters events.

10 During the last 3 years, despite the changing measures due to the evolving COVID-19 situation and the adaptations needed for the different programme modalities, I am thankful for your continual partnership. Thank you for staying committed to the mission of developing our youths as they serve your clients. Without your support, we will not be able to rally our youths to serve via the various volunteering and leadership programmes.

11 Next, I would like to thank all the partners that worked closely with us in engaging and developing our youths in programmes such as Mission X and the Red Box Programmes. Your role is crucial in equipping our youths with knowledge and skillsets so that they can serve the community better.

12 I would also like to thank the Corporates for rallying your employees to volunteer with us. We know that working adults are busy and stressed up with many commitments. Your support for your employees to volunteer means a lot in encouraging them to serve.

13 Finally, I would like to thank all the Institutes of Higher Learning and schools for partnering with Youth Corps. Your partnership allows your students to have access to complementary developmental opportunities outside your school and opportunities to interact with other youths as they serve together. We would not have been able to reach out to them without your support.

14 Partners, thank you once again for the strong support. I hope that you will enjoy this afternoon event and I look forward to catching up with you during the tea reception.

15 I would also like to wish you Merry Christmas in advance. Thank you.