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MEDIA RELEASE

BOOSTING MANY HELPING HANDS:

**LAUNCH OF “SINGAPORE CARES” TO PROVIDE
NEW AND MORE FLEXIBLE WAYS TO VOLUNTEER**

The National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) will be partnering Community and Non-profit Organisations (NPOs) to launch a new initiative, **Singapore Cares (SG Cares)**, to mobilise caring Singaporeans and residents in Singapore to volunteer in a broad range of team-based projects that allow volunteering on a more flexible basis.

2 Participants in past surveys conducted by NVPC cited the lack of time as the main barrier to volunteering. As workplace and family demands increase, there is a growing preference for shorter term, more flexible volunteer opportunities.

3 Laurence Lien, Chief Executive Officer of NVPC, said “More Singaporeans are seeking to contribute in meaningful ways without having to commit to a fixed schedule. Singapore Cares will provide an informative, interactive and flexible volunteering system to attract new volunteers and ensure that the volunteering experience is fulfilling for both NPOs and volunteers. NVPC hopes that over time, these volunteers, with their positive experience, will become more regular and committed.”

4 SG Cares will work with the NPOs to create flexible volunteering programmes and engage experienced volunteer team leaders to lead and manage the volunteers during the entire duration of each project. These volunteer leaders will help ensure a positive experience for both the NPOs and volunteers.

5 SG Cares will provide an online portal with real-time updates on flexible volunteering opportunities at NPOs. This portal will be a vibrant online marketplace that facilitates information flow of volunteering opportunities and allows volunteers to find and sign up for the projects that best suits their time, passion and skill. Volunteers will be able to search for volunteer opportunities based on their interest, skill set, availability, as well as location.

6 Once the portal is set up, interested individuals will find it easy to find a volunteering opportunity to suit their taste with the click of a button. After signing up, the individual may need to attend an orientation depending on the specific project, and simply show up on the day of the project, where he will be briefed by the team leader. The project will have already been scoped carefully by the team leader to suit the skills and interests of the team so as to create a meaningful experience for both volunteers and NPOs. At the end of the day, volunteers will provide feedback so that the project can be refined in the future.

7 SG Cares is adapted from the Boston Cares and New York Cares models which have run very successfully in the respective cities for about two decades.

8 The NPOs which have been approached are supportive of the idea and a few have already agreed to be on board. NVPC looks to partner more NPOs in this new initiative and urges all who are interested to contact NVPC directly. SG Cares will be launched in the third quarter of this year.

ISSUED BY

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, YOUTH AND SPORTS

Enclosed attachments:

Information on SG Cares, Boston Cares and New York Cares

MORE ABOUT SG CARES

Key features:

- Structured and sustainable flexible volunteer programmes

SG Cares staff will work with NPOs and volunteer team leaders to structure sustainable programmes that NPOs, their beneficiaries and volunteers can all benefit from.

- Volunteer project leaders to lead and manage projects

SG Cares will identify and deploy dedicated and experienced volunteer project leaders to lead a team of volunteers for each project. These volunteer leaders will work with the NPO to ensure a positive experience for the NPO and volunteers, and manage the ad-hoc volunteers during the entire duration of each project.

- Online portal with real-time updates

SG Cares will provide an online portal with real-time updates on ad-hoc volunteering opportunities at NPOs. This portal will be a vibrant online marketplace that facilitates information flow of volunteering opportunities and allows volunteers to find and sign up for the projects that best suits their time, passion and skill. Volunteers will be able to search for volunteer opportunities based on their interest, skill set, availability, as well as location.

Examples of some NPOs with flexible volunteering opportunities:

B.Well, a non-profit organisation, provides services such as rehabilitation therapy, nursing care, home nursing and meals for needy and sick elderly. B. Well offers a variety of flexible volunteering opportunities. These include health screening exercises where volunteers help to register and take BMI measures for the elderly, and befriending opportunities with the elderly where volunteers

interact with the elderly and help to serve meals. Volunteers also help during rehabilitative therapy through arts and craft activities or games with the elderly.

In addition to long-term programmes, the National Library Board (NLB) has various flexible volunteering options for its volunteers, who are called 'Friends of the Library'; NLB offers an online calendar of programmes from which volunteers can select and sign-up for activities at the different library branches, based on their availability. Examples of such activities include programmes and activities to inform, and educate library users on library services, inventory of books, and children's crafts & story-telling programmes.

ABOUT BOSTON CARES

Boston Cares was founded in 1991 by six young adults who wanted to find meaningful volunteer opportunities that did not require an ongoing commitment - something their busy schedules would not allow them to do. They worked together to find non-profit organizations that could utilize the help of volunteers on a flexible basis.

Since then, Boston Cares has grown to be the largest volunteer movement in the New England area. In 2007, more than 16,000 Boston Cares volunteers contributed 49,000 hours to 165 non-profits in the Greater Boston area. Last year, Boston Cares mobilized 20,000 volunteers and generated almost 60,000 service hours.

Boston Cares' signature initiative, the Calendar Program, offers more than 150 flexible, team-orientated volunteer opportunities each month. Volunteers have the flexibility of signing up for projects as their schedules and interests allow.

Boston Cares also has other initiatives, such as a Corporate Volunteer Day for companies and Boston Young Active Hands to cater to the increasing number of youth and families who are interested to engage in community service.

For more information on Boston Cares, you can refer to their website at <http://www.bostoncares.org/>.

ABOUT NEW YORK CARES

New York Cares was founded by a group of friends who wanted to take action against the serious social issues facing their city in 1987. Their goal was to meet pressing community needs by mobilizing caring New Yorkers in volunteer service - and this continues to be their mission today.

Each year, New York Cares has over 43,000 volunteers serving more than 990 non profit agencies, public schools, and other deserving organisations throughout the five boroughs. Its program staff works with each organisation to identify their most pressing needs, create projects where volunteers can make a meaningful difference, and then recruit and deploy teams of volunteers to help meet those needs.

For more information on New York Cares, you can refer to their website at <http://www.nycares.org/>.