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Media Release



27 August 2019

News Editor

INSTILL HEALTHY HABITS FROM YOUNG FOR A BETTER HEAD START

- **Hands-on approach with technology, parental support and tangible actions taken to instil healthy living habits in young students through Healthy Schools @ South West programme**
- **Empowering students through the programme's health ambassadors training camp for students to lead the adoption of healthy habits amongst peers**

A worrying trend shows that 13% of children in mainstream schools in Singapore were overweight in 2017¹. A study conducted by the Health Promotion Board (HPB), published in 2017, showed that overweight children at 7 years old have a 7 in 10 chance of being overweight or obese at adulthood. Studies have

¹ Lee Wen-Yi (2018). Adults are getting fitter, but children are increasingly overweight: MOH figures. The Straits Times. <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/adults-are-getting-fitter-but-children-are-increasingly-overweight-moh-figures>

also found that interventions in childhood from ages five (5) to ten had the longest lasting impact compared to those targeted at early adolescence from ages 11 to 13². Inculcating healthy living habits from young can have lasting positive effects on one's lifestyle habits later in life. In view of this, South West Community Development Council (CDC), in partnership with HPB, will be launching Healthy Schools @ South West this Thursday, 29 August 2019, at Lianhua Primary School. Healthy Schools @ South West is a community-led programme aimed to foster healthy habits, empower students through ambassadorship, and build a healthy living environment for families and children.

2 Healthy Schools @ South West programme will first roll out two of five health goal modules³: Eat Wisely and Think Positively. These two health goals tie in with the focus areas identified by the NurtureSG taskforce in 2017^{4 5}. The Eat Wisely module addresses nutrition by encouraging healthy eating habits and raising awareness of the importance of drinking water. This is important to ensure that the child gets the essential vitamins, minerals and nutrients for their optimal growth and development. The Think Positively module addresses mental well-being and sleep health by encouraging healthy sleeping habits and promoting positive emotions and resilience. In addition, studies have found that good eating and sleeping habits can help children succeed academically as it improves their abilities in learning, concentration and memory⁶.

² Taylor, R. D., Oberle, E., Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2017). Promoting Positive Youth Development Through School-Based Social and Emotional Learning Interventions: A Meta-Analysis of Follow-Up Effects. *Child Development*, 88(4), 1156-1171. doi:10.1111/cdev.12864

³ The five (5) health goal modules are based on the CDC's five (5) community health goals: (1) Eat Wisely; (2) Exercise Regularly; (3) Think Positively; (4) Don't Smoke; and (5) Keep Clean, Don't Spread Bugs.

⁴ These focus areas identified by the NurtureSG taskforce in 2017 includes: (1) physical activity and nutrition; (2) mental well-being; and (3) sleep health.

⁵ Health Promotion Board. (n.d.). NurtureSG Action Plan Report. Retrieved from https://www.hpb.gov.sg/docs/default-source/default-document-library/nurturesg-action-plan-report.pdf?sfvrsn=460f572_0

⁶ University of Alabama at Birmingham. (2013, July 26). Good eating and sleep habits help kids succeed in school. *ScienceDaily*. Retrieved August 21, 2019 from www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/07/130726191525.htm

3 As students spend most of their time in school and at home, the programme curriculum features a 3-level engagement for each module, comprising mass engagement through assembly talks, school-based activities and home-based activities to reinforce health messages through various important aspects of a child's life.

Parents as Role-Models

4 Parents play an important role in the lives of their children. The home-based activities encourage parents to be part of their child's journey towards adopting a healthier lifestyle by setting the right example themselves. Having parents involved in the process also ensures that the health messages that students receive at school are also reinforced at home. During the launch, parents and students will participate in a healthy bento making workshop to learn how to incorporate healthier foods into meals. This activity teaches parents how to make healthier bento meals so they can reiterate what they have learnt back at home. Through the parent-child activities, parents can learn more about healthy living to be better role models at home for their children who are at an impressionable age.

5 Technology can also facilitate parental involvement in the child's journey towards a healthier lifestyle. Parents can use the POSB Smart Buddy watch⁷ to monitor the child's progress in cultivating healthy habits. POSB will introduce two new features on the Smart Buddy Watch to further enhance the use of the watch to help children develop healthy habits and a good sleep routine. One such feature is 'Alarms', an enhanced alarm watch function where parents can

⁷ The POSB Smart Buddy is a smartwatch with contactless payment capabilities used to help children take an early step towards digital payments and savings, as well as monitors their activity levels including food and beverage consumption and number of steps clocked daily. Since its official launch in 2017, the bank has distributed over 20,000 free watches and built cashless systems in close to 50 schools in Singapore.

establish routine of key activities that affect and shape their children's well-being by setting personalised reminders when it is time for meals, exercise and sleep. The 'Stay Active Alerts' will help encourage and remind children to stay active throughout the day by sending hourly vibration alerts when the POSB Smart Buddy tracks minimal physical activity, such as fewer than the recommended 250 steps during a period ranging from an hour to several hours in a day. With these new features, kids and their parents can track and make targeted improvements to lifestyle habits that are essential to getting fitter and healthier.

Empowering students

6 To empower the students to be more proactive in adopting healthy living habits, up to 100 students will be trained as Health Ambassadors of Healthy Schools @ South West to lead their peers in practising healthy living habits. Health Ambassadors will facilitate school-based activities such as healthy food scavenger hunts and games to encourage a healthy lifestyle amongst their peers. This is in view of peer-to-peer encouragement and bonding where students are more likely to adopt healthier habits when done together with their peers. The first health ambassador training camp will be held in the upcoming September holidays.

7 10-year-old student from Lianhua Primary School, Rayshan S Raymond Kumar, shares, "I am excited to be chosen as a health ambassador for Healthy Schools @ South West and I look forward to the camp to make more friends, learn more about healthy living and some of the habits I can adopt towards a healthier lifestyle. I will also share what I have learnt from the camp with my schoolmates, so we can all adopt a healthier lifestyle together."

8 Students are also empowered to take charge of their health by educating them on the importance of a healthy lifestyle and how to make healthier choices. Assembly talks will be held in schools to raise awareness of various health

benefits, in an effort to instil good health habits and advocate a healthy lifestyle. For instance, students will be taught to read nutrition labels so they can pick the healthier choice in future. Through these assembly talks, students will understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and be informed of the ways to carry it out too.

9 Mayor Low Yen Ling adds, “It is important to cultivate healthy habits from young as these daily practices continue into adulthood. Through peer support and encouragement to take ownership of their health, our children can develop positive attitudes towards eating healthily and sleeping well. This initiative also involves parents who are now empowered with the help of their child’s Smart Buddy Watch, to better support their children’s health and sleep goals at home. Our multi-partner community effort aims to lay in our children a firm foundation of healthy lifestyle habits to give them a good head start in life.”

10 Healthy Schools @ South West is a programme by the South West CDC, developed together with Health Promotion Board (HPB), with the support of five (5) other community and corporate partners and three (3) volunteers, to complement existing health promotion efforts. The programme will be rolled out to five (5) pioneer schools⁸.

11 Details of the event are as follows:

Event : Healthy Schools @ South West
Date : Thursday, 29 August 2019
Time : 10.00 am to 11.45 am (**Media is invited at 9.45 am**)
Venue : Lianhua Primary School, 2 Bukit Batok Street 52

⁸ The five (5) primary schools are Lianhua Primary School, Dazhong Primary School, South View Primary School, Clementi Primary and Shuqun Primary.

Singapore 659243

Host : Mr Walter Lee

Secretary of Healthy and Active Lifestyle Functional
Committee

11 We would like to invite your reporter and photographer/TV crew to **Healthy Schools @ South West**. Interviews can be arranged upon request. Please contact our media liaison officer for queries. We look forward to receiving you and your crew/photographer.

Media Liaison Officers

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About the South West Community Development Council (CDC)

The South West Community Development Council (CDC) was formed on 24 November 2001, with the mission to Assist the Needy, Bond the People and Connect the Community.

Through local help programmes, the South West CDC provides assistance to help the less fortunate in our community. The South West CDC also organises projects and programmes to promote community bonding and social cohesion. The South West CDC adopts the "Many Helping Hands" approach to

encourage community ownership among residents, community partners and corporations to realise its vision of “Owning Your Community”.

Programme

Time	Administrative Programme
10.00 am	Arrival of Guest of Honour (GOH), Mayor Low Yen Ling
10.05 am	Showcase of POSB Smart Buddy Watch
10.15 am	Opening address by GOH
10.25 am	Launch of Healthy Schools @ South West
10.30 am	<p>Presentation of Healthy Schools plaque to five (5) Healthy Schools</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Clementi Primary School</i> 2) <i>Dazhong Primary School</i> 3) <i>Lianhua Primary School</i> 4) <i>Shu Qun Primary School</i> 5) <i>South View Primary School</i>
10.40 am	Healthy Bento Making by ABC Cooking Studio
11.20 am	<p>Tour of Healthy Schools Activities showcase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Importance of drinking water by Dr Soh Poh Choong – Positive “Hopscotch” by FuturAsia Pte Ltd – Healthy Schools @ South West Exhibits showcase by Health Ambassadors – POSB Smart Buddy <p><i>*Media doorstep interview will be arranged upon request.</i></p>
11.45 am	End of Programme