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Media Release



30 Nov 2018

News Editor

LIFTING THE WEIGHT OFF CAREGIVERS' SHOULDERS: CAREGIVING @ SOUTH WEST LAUNCHES WAVE OF SUPPORT

- **In response to needs of caregivers, South West CDC launches phase two of district-wide Caregiving @ South West programme to support caregivers**
- **First wraparound initiative for caregivers to provide support, information and seamless caregiving experience; comprising triple firsts of:**
 - **Interim assistance for caregivers,**
 - **Care guide and handy test on stress levels for caregivers, and**
 - **Caregiver-friendly workplace advisory for employers**

Caregiving can be challenging on many fronts, emotionally, physically and financially. According to The Survey on Informal Caregiving commissioned by the Ministry of Social and Family Development, the level of functional ability of care recipients and negative perception of the caregiving experience may predispose caregivers to the development of stress¹. The survey recommended some areas that could relieve caregiving stress, such as access to respite services, having adequate preparation to be a caregiver, and flexible work arrangements. Supporting caregivers with the relevant skills, services and environment is therefore essential to their well-being.

¹ Ministry of Social and Family Development, *The Survey on Informal Caregiving – Summary Report*. May 2012.

2 The first whole-of-community programme dedicated to caregivers, Caregiving @ South West, was launched in January this year. Organised by the South West Community Development Council (CDC), the three-year programme will *Celebrate* caregivers and caregiving, *Support* caregivers, and *Empower* a caring community for caregivers. As it approaches its second year, Caregiving @ South West will push out its Support wave, to provide more support and resources for caregivers.

3 Taking a wraparound approach, the South West CDC has been working closely with partners, including the Ministry of Health, Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) and St Luke's ElderCare Ltd to develop key initiatives to support caregivers in the following aspects:

Financial Support

4 Financial strain is a common problem that caregivers face, as caregiving duties and full-time employment can stand in the way of each other. To lift this burden off caregivers' shoulders, the South West CDC is rolling out the new **South West Caregiver Support Fund**, which will give caregivers \$500 as interim assistance. Other than helping to offset out-of-pocket expenses such as medical services, equipment and consumables for their care recipient, caregivers can also tap on this Support Fund for their training¹ and well-being. These include respite care services, counselling services, self-care activities and workshops, and caregiver training to better equip them in their role as a caregiver. The Support Fund will be disseminated through the grassroots to provide caregivers with greater access to assistance. More importantly, by covering services that focus on the welfare of caregivers, it sends a message to caregivers that their well-being is important too, and that they should not forget to take care of themselves.

5 For holistic and seamless assistance, South West CDC Local Assistance Schemes will be jointly administered with the Support Fund, spanning meals

¹ on top of existing grants like AIC's Caregiver Training Grant.

delivery, utilities vouchers, assistive and mobility devices, and other healthcare aids.

Informational Support

6 New caregivers are almost always overwhelmed by the sudden influx of caregiving duties and the emotional turmoil of their loved one being unwell. Navigating the complex web of aid and assistance can prove to be challenging in such a frame of mind.

7 In collaboration with AIC, South West CDC will roll out the **South West Caregiver Care Guide** to help both new and existing caregivers. This Care Guide serves as a comprehensive yet easy-to-read reference guide to help them not only care for their loved ones, but to care for themselves too. With the principles of A.S.K and C.A.R.E, which list key steps and things to look out for, new caregivers will have an easier time figuring out what to do. The Care Guide also includes a handy test that caregivers can take as a quick self-examination of their stress levels, to determine if they should seek support.

8 AIC's Chief Executive Officer Dr Jason Cheah said, "We are happy to partner South West CDC in their efforts to better support caregivers. Caregiving can be a long journey and knowing what to look out for can make a difference. We hope that this Care Guide will provide them with a quick way to remember key things to note while at the hospital or at home after discharge."

9 Residents will also receive the new **Live Well, Age Well Calendar 2019**, which shares wellness tips with seniors, translated in the four local languages. Apart from physical, mental and social wellness, the Calendar also provides tips for caregivers. This year's edition brings in a new focus on financial management. To bring these tips to as many residents as possible, the Calendar will also be distributed through various community touchpoints such as social service organisations and grassroots organisations.

Workplace Support

10 Based on The Survey of Informal Caregiving, three (3) out of (4) caregivers have to juggle work commitments and caregiving responsibilities. When the responsibility for caregiving gets heavier, caregivers often have to make career adjustments, ranging from reducing work hours to quitting their job entirely. With understanding and flexibility from employers, more caregivers will be able to continue working and have a steady income to support the financial needs of their care recipient.

11 The **South West Caregiver-Friendly Workplace Advisory** will be introduced to guide employers and Human Resource managers to better attract and retain employees that have caregiving duties, by creating a caregiver-friendly workplace through work-life strategies, flexible work arrangements as well as unpaid leave for unexpected care needs.

12 Co-developed by South West CDC with Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) and Workforce Singapore, the Workplace Advisory offers a simple 3E framework that employers can follow to create a caregiver-friendly workplace for their staff: Entitlement, Environment, and Enrichment. Since employers are well-poised to spot caregiver stress in their employees, a simple checklist is also included for employers' reference so that they can render timely assistance.

13 Caregiver to her bedridden father and her two younger siblings who have developmental and mental health issues, 53-year-old Ms Elizabeth Swee knows what it's like to have to juggle work and her family's needs. Her father suffers from dementia, and his health condition deteriorated further after a stroke six years ago.

14 Elizabeth says, "Caregivers need flexibility and understanding from their bosses, as it's not easy to take care of dependents and work in a full-time job. I had the flexibility to plan my work schedule and that helped immensely in managing my caregiving responsibilities, such as bringing my father or siblings to

doctor's appointments. The stress of caregiving can really take a toll, and we need to remember to take care of ourselves as well." She emphasises, "At the end of the day, it's the love that we have for our family that will carry us through the challenges. Love conquers all."

Community Support

15 The **South West Cares Referral Guide**, a local community directory of social support services for social service professionals and grassroots volunteers, has also been updated to better address emerging needs of the community. To address the rise of caregiving-related concerns, the enhanced guide now features a new section on resources that provide social care and emotional support for caregivers and their families, and includes counselling services, hotlines and support groups.

16 A/Prof Kenny Tan, Chief Executive Officer of St Luke's ElderCare Ltd, said, "In a fast-ageing population with increasing incidence of chronic illnesses, coupled with increasing healthcare costs and limited supply of healthcare professionals and services, the caregiving landscape has transformed from a typical healthcare environment by professionals to ageing-in-place with family members, home help or community organisations providing care and increased use of technology to facilitate it. With the latest edition of South West Cares Referral Guide, we are heartened that it features resources on caregiving as this allows the frontline staff to provide a direct, seamless and holistic assistance to our clients and grapple with the issue of ageing population."

17 Mayor Low Yen Ling says, "In any part of our lifetime, each of us will very likely become a caregiver. Besides time and resources, caregiving takes a lot of emotional and physical energy. With smaller families and more elderly persons in our midst today, the community has an even greater role to play. Caregiving @ South West aims to support and empower caregivers, as well as celebrate their contributions. We hope these local initiatives will complement national efforts to uplift caregiving. By caring for caregivers from their homes to their workplaces,

we start a virtuous cycle of love, encouragement and strength in our community, and this makes us all more resilient.”

18 We would like to invite your reporter and photographer/TV crew to the **Launch of Caregiving @ South West (Support)**. Interviews will be arranged prior to commencement of the event. Please contact our media liaison officer for queries. We look forward to receiving you and your crew/photographer.

Date: Saturday, 1 December 2018
Time: 9.55 am – 11.30 am (Media is invited at 9.40 am)
Venue: Hard Court in front of Blk 372 Bukit Batok Street 31
Singapore 650372
Guest of Honour: Mr Gan Kim Yong
Minister for Health
Host: Ms Low Yen Ling
Mayor of South West District

Media Liaison Officer

Ms Leong Pei Xin
Manager (Corporate Management & Communications)
South West Community Development Council
DID: 6551 9290
Mobile: 9231 4085
Email: Leong_Peixin@pa.gov.sg

Ms Amy Ko
Manager (Projects Management & Development)
South West CDC
DID: 6551 9287
Email: Amy_Ko@pa.gov.sg

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 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
09.00 am	Talk on the Importance of Self-Care
09.45 am	Morning Mass Workout
09.55 am	Arrival of Host Ms Low Yen Ling Mayor of South West District
10.00 am	Arrival of GOH Mr Gan Kim Yong Minister for Health
10.05 am	Opening Address by Minister Gan Kim Yong
10.15 am	Speech by Mayor Low Yen Ling
10.30 am	Launch of Caregiving @ South West (Support)
10.45 am	Tour of Caregiving Exhibits and Awareness Booths <i>*Media interview will be arranged, if any</i>
11.15 am	Skit on Advance Care Planning
11.30 am	Malay Language Talk by Jamiyah Nursing Home: 'Challenges of an Elderly Caregiver'
12.00 pm	End of Programme