

President Halimah Yacob visits HCSA Dayspring

Home provides safe haven for repeatedly abused teenage girls and support to single parents

SINGAPORE, 25 September 2017 – President Halimah Yacob visited HSCA Dayspring this morning, barely two weeks after being sworn in as Singapore’s eighth President.

Accompanied by MPs Christopher De Souza and Alex Yam, the 63-year-old President toured the newly-renovated premises at Dayspring’s Residential Treatment Centre (RTC), the only Home in Singapore that provides trauma-informed care treatment to teenage girls.

The first of its kind in Singapore, Dayspring RTC is pioneer programme in Singapore focusing on the small group clinical approach, approved and licensed by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF). RTC had recently been upgraded to fulfil requirements under the enhanced care standard of a Therapeutic Group Home (TGH), which seeks to provide high quality care and targeted, specialised treatment to meet the needs of children and young persons who exhibit severe emotional, behavioural and/or sexual issues.

The enhanced care standard includes Trauma System Therapy (TST), an evidence based and comprehensive phase based treatment programme for children and adolescents aged between nine to below 16 years old who have experienced trauma, and have been assessed by MSF as having moderate to high needs. TST aims to stabilise the child’s environment while enhancing her ability to regulate emotions and behaviours. The focus is on addressing trauma alongside the child’s needs.

A small celebration was also held in honour of President Halimah, as she blew out the candles on a cake specially prepared to commemorate her inauguration as the eight President of Singapore. She was also presented with a handmade infinity bracelet – a representation of the empowerment of abused teenage girls and single parents as they overcome adversity to find renewed hope and a purposeful future. Shaped like a sideways figure of eight, the infinity symbol is also a reference to Madam President as the 8th President of Singapore, and signifies the infinite possibilities she will bring to the people of this country as its first female President.

The President was also introduced to members of SPIN (Single Parents INformed, INVolved and INcluded), a new initiative that aims to improve the quality of single parents in caring for their children by improving their access to organised information and strengthening their social network.

Initiated by HCSA Dayspring, in collaboration with and supported by the National Council of Social Services (NCSS), SPIN seeks to reach out to and serve single parents (including lone caregivers of children under the age of 18) with limited or no social support network, helping them make well-informed decisions, as well as increase sources of practical and socio-economic support, through an ally volunteer network and interactive website that is currently in progress.

“We are extremely honoured that Madam President took the time to visit Dayspring today, despite her busy schedule,” said Ms Dominique Choy, Co-chairperson of Dayspring, Executive Board Member and CEO, HCSA Community Services. “I remember Madam President last visited Dayspring in Feb 2012, when she was Minister of State for Social and Family Development and adviser to the National Council of Social Service. We are extremely blessed that her heart has always been and remains in the social services sector.”

Added Ms Choy: “HCSA Community Services is privileged to be able to transform the lives of both men and women in need, helping them move out of

a life of despair into one where they have a future and a hope. We hope that Madam President's recognition of the important role social service organisations play in helping the vulnerable in society, will help to raise awareness for HCSA's cause, and enable us to better serve those in need."

Said President Halimah: "Teenagers who are troubled and have been abused, need a safe place to recover, recuperate, to be assisted with therapy. The work that HCSA Dayspring is doing under their Residential Training Centre programme is very important. They need a lot of support and I'm very happy to see that apart from the Board members and the staff, there are also a lot of volunteers coming to help. That really helps to provide the young girls who need a safe place for them to recover and reintegrate back to society."

Added Madam President: "In addition, HCSA Dayspring SPIN provides tremendous support to single mothers, particularly those who have very young children, or who are going to give birth. These mothers need to go through a healing process to recover and one can see that with support, the mothers can also regain that confidence in themselves. I met a mother who said that she lost her husband about 20 months ago and she has four children. She came here to heal herself and also support other mothers. This is truly very important and I'm glad that HCSA is doing very good work in this area."

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Formerly known as Highpoint Community Services Association (HCSA), HCSA Community Services was started in 1996 as a halfway house for recovering drug addicts and ex-offenders. Today, our work has expanded to include ex-offenders, teenage girls undergoing duress and single parents. Our mission to empower these vulnerable populations is achieved through two programmes: HCSA HIGHPOINT and HCSA DAYSPRING.

HCSA Community Services is a charitable organisation with the Institute of Public Character (IPC) status and a member of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS). As a family of dedicated staff, volunteer teams and corporate and community partners, we continue to serve some of the most vulnerable in society to give them a future and a hope.

HCSA Culinary Training Centre: A new initiative which will be launched in Q1 2018, the Culinary Training Centre aims to equip HCSA's beneficiaries, as well as those of other social service organisations, with industry-recognised Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ) certification. This will help beneficiaries secure a stable job in the F&B industry, give them a steady income and the ability to stand on their own two feet.

HCSA HIGHPOINT

HELPING EX-OFFENDERS REBUILD LIVES

HCSA Highpoint halfway house began as a shelter in 1995 for drug addicts, and now provides a safe and drug-free temporary residence to help and support homeless male ex-offenders and those in recovery from addictions.

Through an individual transitional programme, these ex-offenders are empowered to attain more permanent housing, gainful employment and financial independence. This enables them to live a productive life free from addictions and successfully reintegrate into society, and possibly even reconcile with their families.

Support services are also offered to discharged residents and released prisoners who do not require Highpoint's residential facilities. These include planned interventions that enhance their sense of resilience and reduce their chances of re-offending.

As of December 2016, HCSA has helped over 1,000 drug addicts and ex-offenders.

HCSA DAYSPRING

EMPOWERING ABUSED TEENAGE GIRLS & SINGLE PARENTS

HCSA Dayspring provides hope to abused teenage girls and single parents through the Dayspring Residential Treatment Centre (RTC) and Dayspring Single Parents INformed, INVolved and INcluded (SPIN).

Since March 2011, RTC has provided a safe and healing living environment for teenage girls who have been repeatedly abused. Through the application of effective clinical therapies, the girls become healthy individuals who can successfully reintegrate into their schools, families and society.