



MEDIA RELEASE

Sport 'Play-Ability' For All

Pilot programme by Temasek Foundation Cares and SportCares enables persons with disabilities to access and participate regularly in community-based sports

Singapore, 17 March 2018 – ‘Everyone should play’ is the inner belief that prompted Temasek Foundation Cares and SportCares to pilot the ‘Temasek Foundation Cares - Play-Ability’ programme in partnership with Special Education (SPED) schools and Voluntary Welfare Organisations serving persons with disabilities.

2 Temasek Foundation Cares has committed \$615,000 to support this programme over a three-year period. The programme will offer greater support for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) to participate in recreational sport activities and provide more opportunities for social interaction and relationship building with all in the community. It is designed specifically to use recreational sport opportunities as a vehicle through which PWDs can have fun, meet new people and adopt an active lifestyle. Ongoing sessions are facilitated by coaches, who are closely assisted by volunteers from Team Nila and ITE College West.

3 Patron of SportCares, President Halimah Yacob officially launched the Temasek Foundation Cares - Play-Ability programme at Heartbeat@Bedok today. Minister for Culture, Community and Youth, Ms Grace Fu was also present at the event this morning. The launch saw over 100 PWDs from the community coming together to play sports such as Badminton, Basketball, Boccia, Sitting Volleyball, Table Tennis and Futsal.

4 Accentuating the principle of one’s ability should never be a barrier to play, Chief Executive Officer of Sport Singapore, Mr Lim Teck Yin, shared, “*Sport is a common language that breaks down barriers. Many people are apprehensive when interacting with persons with disabilities, and we want to leverage on sport as the bridge to develop normalcy in their interactions as well as making it commonplace where people of all abilities can play together.*” Mr Lim added that it makes it easier when likeminded entities join this journey. “*We are very pleased and appreciative of Temasek Foundation Cares’ support. Temasek Foundation Cares has chosen to make a difference in PWDs lives through sport. Their lives will never be the same. It will be better.*”

5 Mr Richard Magnus, Chairman of Temasek Foundation Cares, said: *“Play-Ability is the first programme of its kind that actively promotes a healthy lifestyle amongst persons with disabilities by systematically addressing the obstacles that prevent them from participating in sports. The community-based nature of the programme also creates intentional opportunities for social inclusivity, where persons of all abilities learn, play and bond together. We are glad to partner SportCares in this pilot programme to care for Singaporeans with disabilities and special needs.”*

6 Play-Ability also aims to address some of the barriers of entry to participation in sport in community spaces for - but not limited to - graduates from special education (SPED) schools and residents of special homes. The former, for example, may stop participating in sport and exercise once they leave the school structure, where Physical Education is part of their curriculum. While these students were in school and participated in sports, these sessions may have taken place mostly within the school compounds and rarely in a public setting. Since November 2017, SportCares has been reaching out to social service organisations, support groups, homes and SPED schools to have a better understanding of the sporting interests of PWDs, and the support required for them to take up recreational sport.

7 Play-Ability leverages on ActiveSG’s inclusive sports facilities and schools (under Dual-Use Scheme¹) to provide safe and conducive spaces for PWDs, their caregivers, families and friends to bond through recreational sport. The sport facilities chosen will have disability-friendly options such as wheelchair ramps in swimming pools.

8 As a start, PWDs can look forward to participating in Badminton, Aqua Activities such as Flippa Ball, Basketball, Wheelchair Rugby and Futsal. These sports were chosen based on popularity in the community as well as being able to cater to people with different degrees of disabilities. Each of these programmes will run on an 8-12 week cycles to allow participants to experience the benefit of regular sport participation, and to build a lasting relationship between participants and volunteers.

9 Maimunah Binte Mohamed Nasir, Programme Executive at the Thye Hua Kwan home for Disabled Adults shared that the residents now look forward to playing sports. “The residents didn’t really like P.E. (physical education) lessons previously, now they look forward to weekly badminton sessions. Because the residents enjoy the sessions, this has brought a new method of communication for us. Now, they are more willing to trust me and also share

¹ Dual-Use Scheme (DUS) is a collaboration between Ministry of Education and Sport Singapore where school fields, indoor sports halls and running tracks are open for booking on the weekends for members of public to use.

with me what else they would like to do. Now, some of our residents have also suggested that they want to play basketball. We will be letting them try it out today.”

Volunteers lead the way

10 So far, four experienced coaches have been working closely with 30 volunteers from Team Nila and ITE College West in weekly sessions. Play-Ability provides volunteers who show potential and interest in coaching with opportunities to further their skills through courses such as the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Introduction to Para Sports Coaching course. Provision of free or subsidised training under the Play-Ability programme and serves to equip volunteers with the skills necessary to lead and coach sessions in the future. Building a base of trained volunteer coaches is key to the sustainability of this programme.

11 Jared Chew, a student volunteer from ITE College West shared his experience on volunteering for the programme. Being new to interacting with a participant with intellectual disabilities, Jared shared about some of his challenges and how he learnt to overcome this. “On the first day when I got to know the participant I was assigned to, I was a bit lost on how to talk to him. I even got quite frustrated when he did not want to listen to me. Once I realised that he took to certain words and counting from 1 to 3 calmed him down and helped him to pay attention, things got easier. I feel like we are friends now and we get along really well.”

12 Interested parties can log on to www.sportcares.sg or email sportcares@sport.gov.sg for more details.

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ANNEX A – Temasek Cares Foundation - Play-Ability Fact Sheet

About the Programme: Funded by Temasek Foundation Cares (TFC), ‘Temasek Cares Foundation - Play-Ability’ programme is a recreational sports programme for persons with disabilities (PWDs) to enjoy sports in a fun and recreational setting. Through Play-Ability, PWDs can bond and socialise with friends, family, caregivers, volunteers, and build social capital through sport. Through this, the community can become better equipped to accept PWDs in shared spaces. The pilot programme has been ongoing since 5 February 2018.

- **Who is this programme for?**

1. PWDs who have acquired sports skills or experience playing sport (through Yes! I Can or similar programmes) who want to continue playing with friends, families and caregivers on a recreational level.
2. SPED School graduates or employed PWDs who are or may become inactive since leaving the structured school system.
3. PWDs with limited or no opportunity to do sports as they are under residential care or day care centres, or face barriers to entry (social and physical) to regular sports.

- **What Play-Ability Offers:**

1. Free Access to ActiveSG facilities during Play-Ability sessions because SportCares believes that everyone should be allowed to experience the joy of sport in a community setting.
2. An opportunity to meet new people because we use sport as the common language to bond and have fun.
3. A chance to kick-start an active lifestyle. All programmes run in 8-12 week cycles so sport can start to become a way of life.
4. For Volunteers: Access to Disability Sports Coaching courses and other courses that will help them acquire the skills necessary to become session facilitators.

Interested parties can email sportcares@sport.gov.sg for more information.

- **Ongoing Sessions**

	Sport	Organisation/Group	No. of Pax	Location	Time
1	Badminton	Thye Hua Kwan Home for the Disabled (Chai Chee)	11	Heartbeat@Bedok	3.30PM – 4.30PM
2	Badminton	Thye Hwa Kwan Home for the Disabled (Eunos)	10	Heartbeat@Bedok	11AM – 12PM
3	Aqua Activities	Thye Hwa Kwan Home for the Disabled (Eunos)	5	Heartbeat@Bedok	3.15AM – 4.15AM
4	Basketball	Families with Children with Autism	20 (10 per venue)	Nan Hua High School, Ping Yi Secondary School	4PM – 5PM

Other Sports on Offer

- Futsal/Football
- Wheelchair Rugby