

Embargoed until 19 November, 10.15am



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16 November 2023

To News Editor

**LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD FOR OVER 2,000 STUDENTS FROM
LESS-PRIVILEGED BACKGROUNDS**

Primary school students in the North West District benefit from equal learning opportunity, instilling confidence that they can realise their dreams

This year, for over 200 students from less-privileged background who may not have the same starting point in life as their peers, the **North West Student Wise Enrichment Programme (SWEP)** has given them equal learning opportunity that will better equip them to excel in school and beyond. They follow in the footsteps of around 2,000 students before them, from similarly less-privileged backgrounds, in benefitting from learning soft skills through SWEP. Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, the programme continues to evolve to maintain its relevance. In 2023, **North West**

Embargoed until 19 November, 10.15am

Community Development Council (CDC) has introduced a new module on Financial Literacy, which will empower the next generation with financial knowledge and skills from a young age to cultivate good spending habits and build a stronger foundation for their financial awareness.

2 To celebrate the 2023 batch of students' successful completion of SWEP and recognise their efforts, the SWEP Graduation Ceremony will be held on 19 November 2023 at the Singapore Zoo. This is the first time that the graduation ceremony will be held outside of school compounds. The ceremony will recognise more than 200 Primary 3 to 6 students who have successfully completed the programme. (See *Annex A for Media Programme*)

3 **Mayor of North West District, Mr Alex Yam** says, "Not everyone has the same starting point in life. Students from less-privileged backgrounds may have less opportunity than their peers to learn about social skills, which are as important as academic knowledge. The North West SWEP addresses this gap, and fulfils the CDC's role of building a Caring Community. Through SWEP, we hope that the students enjoy their learning opportunities and are able to take away some useful life lessons. I congratulate the graduating cohort and strongly encourage all of them to continue to adopt a mindset of lifelong learning."

4 Prior to joining SWEP, 11-year-old Calista Chua was rather shy, making interactions with others challenging. However, her participation in the programme has brought about a noticeable boost in her self-

Embargoed until 19 November, 10.15am

confidence. In addition, her tendency to spend impulsively has been replaced with a newfound sense of financial responsibility after going through the Financial Literacy module. She now plans, saves, and carefully considers her expenditure. The module has enabled her to recognise the value of money and importance of making thoughtful financial choices. In the eyes of her mother, Crystal Angelica Yusin, 34, SWEP has been instrumental in Calista's development. Crystal shared that the programme has helped provide her daughter with the essential life skills such as financial literacy, polished table manners, and the ability to communicate confidently. These are valuable assets that will serve her well in the future as she continues to engage with and meet new people.

5 As the driving force behind the Greenwood Primary School's participation in SWEP, Daniel Ng, 35, Head of Department, Character, and Citizenship Education shares that the programme resonated with their commitment to uplift vulnerable students, and SWEP helps to equip their students with skills to reach their full potential and develop these young minds more holistically. For example, the newly introduced Financial Literacy module helps to develop a strong money sense in the students at a young age, preparing the students for the future. (See [Annex B](#) for *additional media profiles*)

6 Working closely with 16 schools in the North West District, North West CDC enrolls student beneficiaries of Ministry of Education's Financial Assistance Scheme or The Straits Times' School Pocket Money Fund into SWEP. In line with the CDC's efforts to uplift students from less privileged backgrounds, the programme is designed to provide equal opportunity for less-privileged students to excel and develop to their fullest potential

Embargoed until 19 November, 10.15am

through a series of workshops which complement the academic syllabus. The workshops cover topics including listening and communications, social etiquette, and public speaking. (see [Annex D](#) for Media FAQs)

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Media Invitation

Media is invited to **North West Student Wise Enrichment Programme (SWEP) Graduation Ceremony 2023** at Singapore Zoo on 19 November 2023. CDC can assist by facilitating a media doorstep with spokespersons, on request. We can also provide clarifications and additional pointers as required. See below for details of the media event.

North West SWEP Graduation Ceremony 2023

Date: Sunday, 19 November 2023
Media arrival: 10.15am
Venue: Singapore Zoo
80 Mandai Lake Road Singapore 729826

Contact Person for Media:

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Enclosed:

- 1) Annex A – Media Programme
- 2) Annex B – Media Profiles
- 3) Annex C – Key Translation Terms
- 4) Annex D – Media FAQs (separately enclosed)

[About North West Community Development Council \(CDC\)](#)

The Community Development Councils (CDCs) were established to build a tightly knit, compassionate and self-reliant community. North West CDC works closely with various community and corporate partners to strengthen Singapore's social fabric; and encourages the more able and successful to come forward to help the less successful, and to foster greater sense of community ownership and self-help among the residents.

We strive to align our activities and efforts with our mission:

(a) Aggregator of Needs and Resources

To help the less fortunate through local assistance programmes

(b) Builder of Capabilities and Capacities

To bond the community through projects & programmes to bring them closer to one another

(c) Connector of Communities

To develop strategic partnerships with corporate and community partners to better serve our residents

To achieve our mission, North West CDC continues to build programmes to provide support to residents under our five community pillars:

i. Caring Communities

Embargoed until 19 November, 10.15am

Encourage a giving culture and uplift the lives of residents through social support programmes and networks

ii. Healthy Communities

Promote healthy lifestyle, encourage residents to bond and take charge of their own health

iii. Inclusive Communities

Strengthen social fabric by embracing and involving different segments of society

iv. Learning Communities

Promote lifelong learning mindset for personal and professional development

v. Sustainable Communities

Cultivate an eco-friendly lifestyle and building a green environment for our future generations

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Annex A

North West SWEF Graduation Ceremony 2023

**Sunday, 19 November 2023
80 Mandai Lake Road Singapore 729826
MEDIA PROGRAMME**

Time	Programme
10:15am	Media arrival
10:45pm	Arrival of Mayor Alex Yam
11:00am	Opening Address by Mayor Alex Yam
11:10am	Sharing by Student Graduates
11:20am	Award Presentation Ceremony & Group Photos
12.00pm	Media Doorstop (upon request)
12.15pm	End of Programme

Profile Stories

Toh Chin Kai, 11, Student

As one of the student speakers at the Graduation Ceremony, Chin Kai, 11, shares that the programme has allowed him to feel more confident when speaking in front of his classmates. His favourite among the modules is Social Etiquette, which brings him great joy in learning the nuances of formal greetings and exploring the intricacies of Western table settings, which he now enjoys adopting into his daily life.

Nur Hazilah Sabihah, 10, Student

Harry Shamrizan, 42, Father

Hazilah, 10, shared that SWEP has had a positive impact on her self-confidence. One of the programme's highlights for her is the new Financial Literacy module, which has equipped her with the essential knowledge to manage her finances better and learn the importance of saving money for her future endeavours. On top of that, Hazilah has developed an appreciation for social etiquette, enhancing not only her dining etiquette but also prompting her to share these skills she has learned with her younger siblings.

Her father, Harry, 42, shared his appreciation for her newfound ability to manage her finances, recognising that Financial Literacy is a fundamental skill that every child should possess. In Harry's view, these fundamental skills are essential for children, providing them with the tools to navigate life with confidence and competence.

Hsu Li Ting, 9, Student

Wong Wan Wen, 38, Mother

For 9-year-old Li Ting, the one module that stood out as her absolute favourite was Social Etiquette. She shared that the module resonated deeply with her, as her father who is a chef, has instilled a love for all things culinary in their household. At home, she would teach her younger siblings the various dining etiquettes she has learned.

Her mother, Wan Wen, 38, shares the importance of instilling these soft skills at a young age, especially in a traditional Asian family where such etiquettes may not always be the focal point of education. She underlines the value of these soft skills, emphasising that they are instrumental in preparing her daughter to be more confident and presentable in future.

KEY TRANSLATION TERMS

North West Community Development Council (CDC)	西北社区发展理事会 / 西北社理会
North West District	西北区
Mr Alex Yam Mayor of North West District	任梓銘先生 西北区市长
North West Student Wise Enrichment Programme (SWEP)	西北学生深广课程
North West Student Wise Enrichment Programme (SWEP) Graduation Ceremony	西北学生深广课程毕业典礼
Aggregator of Needs and Resources	顺应需求，汇集整合资源
Builder of Capabilities and Capacities	提升能力，扩大网络
Connector of Communities	加强联系，造福社群