

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY MR CHEW KWEE SAN,
VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMUNITY CHEST AT THE CHRISTMAS ON
A GREAT STREET LIGHT-UP CEREMONY 2024**

President Tharman Shanmugaratnam

Mr Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for Social and Family Development

His Excellency Mr Hiroshi Ishikawa, The Ambassador of Japan

Distinguished Guests, Friends of Community Chest, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1 Good evening! Thank you for joining us at this year's Community Chest Christmas On A Great Street Light-Up Ceremony.

2 Tonight is especially meaningful as we come together to celebrate not only the magical night of the festive season, but also Sharity the Elephant's 40th birthday. As we light up Orchard Road once again, we are reminded that "Caring Never Gets Old."

3 This is the 41st year of the Light-Up, organised by our long-standing partner, Orchard Road Business Association. Together, we have made this event a cherished tradition. Year after year, it has offered a beacon of joy and hope for communities in need.

4 I would like to extend our gratitude to Hitachi Group of Companies, our main sponsor for 34 consecutive years of unwavering support. Also, a huge thanks to our venue sponsor, ION Orchard.

5 I'm pleased to share that more than 30 prominent local personalities and social service agencies, or SSAs, are partnering Community Chest to raise funds in support of

individuals and families in need. We asked them to reimagine Sharity, paint his figurine in support of causes close to their hearts.

6 For example, Joseph Schooling, our very own Olympic champion, has created a figurine that reflects his passion for supporting families in need. While our football icon Fandi Ahmad expresses his support for adults with disabilities.

7 Our SSAs like SHINE Children and Youth Services, and Rainbow Centre are also onboard with us to champion for children with special needs and our youth-at-risk. We also have the Singapore Association for Mental Health supporting our cause to encourage everyone to be advocates for mental health. I'm encouraged by the spirit of caring and sharing. I invite everyone to visit the Sharity Reimagined Exhibition that will feature these figurines at ION Orchard from 10th to 17th November.

8 Regular and sustained contributions from partners and the wider community have enabled Community Chest to support critical social service programmes. In Financial Year 2023, we disbursed about \$34 million to over 200 social service programmes, including those empowering persons with disabilities.

9 A study by the National Council of Social Service has shown improvements in the quality of life for persons with disabilities, including children with special needs. I am happy and proud to share that Community Chest has played a crucial role in this positive outcome through its long-standing support of Special Education (SPED) schools.

10 Thanks to your generous donations, last year we were able to support 25 SPED schools to provide quality education for over 7,700 children with special needs. A further

261 students have also successfully integrated into mainstream schools. These numbers reflect the real impact that your contribution makes.

11 Finally, this season of giving is an opportunity for all of us to share the warmth and joy to individuals and families in need. Thank you, and I wish you all a wonderful evening ahead!