

## MEMORANDUM

Date : 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018  
To : Registered Social Workers  
SASW Members  
Subject : SASW President's Desk – 5<sup>th</sup> Message

---

Dear SASW Family,

I met many of you in various social work and/or community events since the last Annual General Meeting (AGM) where the Executive Committee reported our achievements after a year. These platforms included: Social Work Induction Camp, SUSS class sharing on SASW's role in ensuring good ethical practice, SG Cares in Bukit Batok, JurongHealth Campus Social Work Grand Round, Counselling and Care Centre's graduation night, and OSWA at the Istana on 16 Nov 2018. We launched a mentorship programme on 16 Nov 2018, tapping on our experienced and past awardees for OSWA and PSWA to mentor the younger social workers. Do read my welcome speech on SASW website to find out more. This year, the OSWA and PSWA awardees did well to publicise and educate the public on Social Work in health, disability and youth sectors. For the first time, I was interviewed LIVE on TV (Singapore Tonight), as President of SASW with Zoe Tee, one of our PSWA awardees.



(Photo on the left: With Zoe Tee, one of the PSWA winner and photo on the right: President Mdm Halimah Yacob and MSF Minister Mr Desmond Lee with Zoe Tee, Benjamin Yeo, Melissa Chew and Tay Yu Ping)

### Looking back

On 31 October 2018, I closed a chapter of my career and passed on headship to a new Head of Department, having set up the social work department from scratch. It was a once in a lifetime experience! Building social work leaders has been a focus for me at work and in SASW. After serving more than a year as President SASW, my Executive Committee members and I are



proud to stand before you, SASW members and all RSWs and RSSPs, as I reflected on the various initiatives and events organised by the team. For those who did not attend the AGM, do go to the SASW website to read the annual report. One key result which I would like to report is that we have recruited a record number of 50% increase in membership following the launch of a number of new initiatives! The Association also has a new administration team and we are on track to improve our governance, policies and finance processes, optimised our talents and improved operations within a short span of time. This was made possible by the strong collegial relationship that quickly developed between the EXCO and the staff team.

### **Looking Ahead**

We now plan ahead and approved budgets ahead of time so that members are able to plan their schedule and join us in various learning and fun events. Do check out our calendar of events. Our Chapters, Standing Committees and practice networks have developed slowly but strongly to grow on ideas expounded at various network meetings.

We hear you, our dear members, trainers and trainees, and have decided to give a facelift to our SASW premise at Block 324. Members can look forward to a renewed SASW as we embark on improving a much needed renovation and upgraded training facilities and office space so as to serve members better. We want to attract you to visit and share the space with fellow social workers. If you have some bright ideas, do drop a note to our admin team or the Project 324 RenoTEAM who will consider them, if these ideas are within scope and budget.

I want to guide and position SASW as a part of the Singapore Community, and have different populations looking to us as Thought Leaders in social issues. We have started this via SW Crisis Response Team (19 of you have stepped forward), partnering Ministry of Home Affairs. I am also looking for people with talents and expertise in specific interest areas and can represent SASW at various public and private platforms, i.e. be our profession's resource persons to educate, influence and present our stand or give expert advice. Soon, we will invite you to nominate or recommend to us those experts whom the fraternity will acknowledge and who are willing, able and ready to avail themselves to help us in our communications and public relations efforts to position social workers as thought leaders.

Our next event will be SWD 2019. Do look out for announcements and watch the space in SASW website and follow us on our Instagram and other social media.



### **Teaching and Sharing moments**

Recently, I interviewed a relatively young and promising social worker from the ILTC sector at a scholarship selection panel and I would like to share an exchange between one other interviewer (a doctor) and the interviewee which prompted a reflection in me. As the interview progressed, it became apparent that the interviewee had little inkling about the work and development of SASW. This prompted the doctor to jokingly tease the interviewee that she probably also did not know me as the President of SASW.

As I reflected on this exchange, I wonder what would it take for our social workers to be interested in SASW and other professional issues which are outside their immediate work and/or institutional boundaries. I also wonder how is it like for other professionals such as doctors and lawyers? Do these professionals have a better grasp of the various developments in their respective associations? Are they familiar with the different outfits and networks (such as Chapters and interest groups) in the associations?

I know many Social Workers are still confused and do not know that being a Registered Social Worker (RSW) is not the same as being a member. Accreditation and SASW membership are not synonymous. On 12 Jan 2019, there will be a launch of the Skills Framework where efforts are made to help secondary school children know about the various professions and how they can become a professional such as a Social Worker. I would like all social workers to be more attuned to professional issues and use SASW as a conduit or source of information on knowing current professional issues and concerns, via our Social Dimension and our websites. Our publication team can create new platforms to generate more active discourse and engage in healthy conversations. We are producing more scholars and I hope to see more PhD holders step forward to share their expertise and lead the profession in the discourse of the special areas they spent time in.

### **Connect with me and my Team**

As I reflect on my tenure at SASW, I want to celebrate with all members and would like to wish all social workers and their loved ones a Happy and Healthy New Year ahead. Do volunteer and be a Friend of SASW or be a SASW member if you are eligible. Be Proud of your profession and association, not just your organisation, Be Professional and I wish that you will stay connected with us and contribute your reflections, learning and expertise. Do nominate yourself or a



colleague who can be resource persons to be our voice, trainer, mentor and gather like-minded people to deepen friendship and knowledge with the fraternity and the Singapore Community.

I welcome your feedback, thoughts and responses to my message  
(email: [president@sasw.org.sg](mailto:president@sasw.org.sg) or [chey\\_may\\_long@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:chey_may_long@nuhs.edu.sg))

For now, I look forward to meeting you and colleagues at the World Social Work Day on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chey May". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Long Chey May (Ms)  
President  
Singapore Association of Social Workers