

**Welcome Address by Ms Long Chey May,
President of Singapore Association of Social Workers
at the President's Tea Reception for Social Workers and
Award Presentation Ceremony for Outstanding Social Worker Award
and Promising Social Worker Award 2018
16 November 2018**



Good afternoon, distinguished guests, colleagues and friends.

Remembering Our Roots: A Recipe For The Future

Today, we celebrate the 19th year of the Outstanding Social Worker Award, and the 10th year of the Promising Social Worker Award. We would like to express our deepest appreciation to President Madam Halimah Yacob for welcoming us to the Istana this afternoon. More importantly, we are grateful for the President's continued support to the social work profession and to Social Workers in Singapore. Thank you, Mdm. President.

Every year, this Award Ceremony recognises the exceptional work of social workers, who have set excellent standards in their contributions to the social service, healthcare and community sectors in Singapore. It is the highest honour and recognition given to social workers. The winners today are exemplary social workers who have gone beyond the call of duty. Their work has impressed and touched the Selection Panel as we read through the nominations and got to know them during the interviews.

Social work in Singapore has been in existence for close to 70 years. We have come a long way, and we will continue to uphold the core values of social work, pledging to enhance family and social conditions through working with both micro and macro systems and structural changes. Many frameworks have been reviewed and fine-tuned to bring us to the next frontier of social work. SASW has recently published the 3rd edition of our Code of Professional Ethics as we saw a need to guide our colleagues in meeting new challenges in today's practice. We have also established a new vision and mission statement to stay relevant and to engage our members

and the fraternity. A new Disability Chapter has also been launched and practitioners can expect the formation of more interest groups like the SASW crisis response team, and various communities of practice, which includes Palliative network, renal SW, Practice researchers Matchmakers. SASW also embarked on a cross sector project, rallying a group of academics, practitioners who are keen to look at supervision of supervision. To nurture a next generation of competent and passionate social workers, we need a pool of quality supervisors who practice with a head and heart, weaving science and art in their supervision. This cross sector project, supervision of supervision scheme will raise the standards of supervision and benefit the clients we serve. I, as President of SASW, am very proud of these positive, progressive change that will equip us with the capabilities to meet future challenges.

Appreciation for the Community

The SASW Executive Committee and I are heartened by the continued support for social workers and the work that we do. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Social and Family Development for the kind sponsorship of Professional and Leadership Development Training valued at \$30,000 and \$14,000 for each OSWA and PSWA winner, on top of the \$1,000 cash award. Thank you very much for the support, Minister Desmond Lee.

I would like to thank our other long-term partner, ExxonMobil Asia Pacific Pte Limited, which has provided solid support for each OSWA and PSWA winner with a personal development grant of \$10,000 and \$8,000 respectively. Thank you very much Ms Geraldine Chin, Director ExxonMobil Asia Pacific Pte Ltd for your support all these 19 years.

Mobilizing Advocates for our Mission

Last year, I reviewed the list of past winners and wondered what life was like for them, after receiving their awards and how we can reach out to them and tap on their wisdom and experience. I am proud to share that with the help of my team from the SASW EXCO, we managed to gather five fine role models who are past winners to serve as mentors in a Mentoring Programme for young social workers. I want to acknowledge and thank Ms Julia Lee, OSWA winner in 2014, Ms Yogeswari Munisamy, OSWA winner in 2013, Ms Ng Tzer Wee, OSWA winner in 2011, Ms Sylvia Mun, OSWA winner in 2010, and Mr Mohamed Fareez Mohamed Fahmy, PSWA winner in 2011, who have agreed to avail themselves amidst their busy schedule to groom our future leaders. This evening, we will launch this mentoring programme and Social Workers can go to our SASW website to apply to benefit from our pool of

mentors. We hope to see these mentees grow and be presented here as future PSWA winners who have benefited from the tutelage of our past winners. Receiving this award is not an end goal, but rather a stepping stone to serve as a leader and role model for all social workers. This award bestows significant impact and responsibility on winners. SASW will continue to engage more of our experienced social work veterans, and seek their contribution in various initiatives to ensure that their wisdom and knowledge will be imparted to the next generation.

Our Winners

Before we proceed to reveal the winners of this year's award, I would like to introduce the members of the Selection Panel. They have worked hard together to review the nominations and shortlist the award winners. The panel is chaired by Associate Professor Esther Goh, Head of Social Work Department from the National University of Singapore. Members are Ms Nancy Ng, Director (Professional Practice Development), Professional and Corporate Development Group, Office of Director of Social Welfare, Ministry of Social and Family Development, Mr. Chan Whee Peng, Director Service Planning and Service Standards from the National Council of Social Service; Mr Alvin Foo from ExxonMobil Asia Pacific Private Limited; as well as our past year's OSWA winner Dr Vincent Ng, CEO, AMKFSC Community Services.

This year, we have a very special group of award winners who deserve commendation for their exemplary work and influence in various settings serving different client groups. Alongside our stellar individual who won the Outstanding Social Worker Award, three young social workers will be taking home the Promising Social Worker Award. You will hear more about the award winners in a few moments. They excel in different fields carrying with them that same professionalism, commitment and passion. Their work raises the bar of social work, and I hope you would be inspired by their commitment, dedication and tenacity.

My heartiest congratulations to all winners! Thank you, for touching the minds and hearts of not just the selection panel, but also for making a difference to the community and the social work fraternity. As one of you have articulated it so well, winning this award comes with a heavy responsibility. I welcome you to share and accept both the burden and joy of this award and look forward to your continuous commitment and contribution in the years ahead. I will personally engage and pay attention to all winners and veteran Social Workers moving forward. May I now invite the emcee to present the Award recipients and read their citations. Thank you.

Delivered on: 16 November 2018 (Transcript of the speech, exactly as it was delivered)