

**Opening Remarks by Deputy Prime Minister, Coordinating Minister for
Economic Policies and Adviser to East Coast GRC Grassroots Organisations
Heng Swee Keat,
at Siglap Community Club Grand Opening on 6 August 2022**

My fellow Grassroots Advisers
Grassroots Leaders, Community Partners, Donors,
Ladies and gentlemen,

My fellow grassroots advisers and I are delighted to join you for the grand opening of the brand new Siglap CC. The mood today is especially celebratory, as we are also having the Siglap National Day Dinner.

Building Siglap CC Together

This beautiful new CC is the culmination of years of hard work by Maliki and Team Siglap. The team started conceptualising this new CC in 2015. When they started, no one expected the curveball of a global pandemic. Despite the setbacks, including construction delays, the team persevered. Today we see the fruits of their hard work.

From the very beginning, Maliki and the Siglap team had a strong vision to involve the community in building this new Community Centre. To decide on the facilities to be built, grassroots leaders surveyed about 700 households in Siglap division. Maliki, being a former academic, made sure that the survey was carried out rigorously with sound research methods!

I just toured the new CC. It has a wide range of facilities that cater to varied interests. The team has paid great attention to the details and specifications of these facilities. The multipurpose hall, for example, houses three badminton courts. The flooring is fitted with full rubber floor mat supported on an 80mm wooden base to cushion the impact of the game and reduce injuries. The basketball court is four times the usual volume and fully covered, making play possible in all-weather condition. Another unique feature of the CC is the rooftop AstroTurf soccer pitch – the pitch has been the

delight of many enthusiasts since the CC's soft opening in April this year. There is also a 24-hour gym operated by Anytime Fitness and even a supermarket in the CC. Siglap CC will also be the first CC in the East to house a bowling alley. Maliki met all the school principals in the neighbourhood and encouraged them to offer bowling as a CCA and to use Siglap CC as their training ground.

The list goes on, but you see how much effort has gone into the design of these facilities and ensuring that they are put to good use.

Apart from giving ideas, it is heartening that the community also contributed resources to build the new CC. In 2017, Maliki and his grassroots leaders organised a fundraising dinner, raising close to 3 million dollars. During the dinner, which was graced by PM Lee, Maliki did five performances to thank the donors. I understand this remains an iconic moment with Siglap residents to this day!

The fundraising did not end with the dinner. Siglap division also organised a Brick Art fundraising effort. For just \$2, residents could buy two brick pieces which would go towards forming the beautiful brick art piece which we unveiled just now. Well-done! This has allowed residents, regardless of their income level, to be a part of building the new CC.

Community Spirit

This spirit of the community is what makes our CCs truly special, beyond just the beautiful facilities. People of my generation would remember the simple single-storey zinc-and-wood buildings in the early years, which are nothing like the beautiful CCs that we see today. But while the facilities have evolved, the key role of the CCs has remained constant – a valuable common space for our multicultural, multireligious and multiracial communities, to bond and forge ties.

It is also this spirit of community that we hope to harness, in building a caring, green, and vibrant East Coast.

Let me say a few words about this. CCs are important nodes from which we can radiate care and support for the community. The rejuvenation of our CCs gives renewed impetus for us to do even more for our residents. For example, Siglap CC is doing its part to build a caring East Coast, by planning to cook for the needy every weekend using their culinary and baking studios, using vegetables grown in the community gardens in Siglap.

We are also building a greener East Coast through our East Coast Sustainability and Green Plan, which includes additional community gardens, tree planting, and other efforts. One of the CC's three link bridges connects the CC to the roof top garden of the neighbouring multistorey carpark. By the way, I was struck by the theme of tonight's Grand Opening – a Garden of Butterflies. What a beautiful vision for what a green East Coast could be!

We are also building a vibrant East Coast together, with this new CC being the latest addition.

In addition to Siglap CC, we also reopened Fengshan CC recently. There is also the ongoing East Coast Vibrant Community Footprints, which brings together companies, institutions, and communities to improve the lives and lived experience of residents in East Coast. And in the months ahead, there will be many more exciting activities and opportunities to get involved in building a caring, green, and vibrant East Coast.

Conclusion

Let me conclude by thanking everyone involved in making the CC what it is today – from our volunteers to residents and donors. This CC would not be what it is without you and your contributions. I hope that you will continue to use this CC to meet friends and neighbours, to help to those in need and to contribute to the building of a better Singapore. My fellow grassroots leaders and I are delighted to officially open Siglap CC. Congratulations once again to Maliki and Team Siglap! To all of you here with us tonight, let me wish you a happy National Day in advance! Thank you for joining us.