

SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER LEE HSIEN LOONG AT THE OPENING OF PEK KIO CC (ENGLISH), 27 JULY 2013

Mr Lui Tuck Yew

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Mr Arthur Lee

Chairman of Moulmein CCC

Mr Eric Lim

Chairman of Pek Kio CCMC

Residents and friends, a very good evening to all of you

Happy to have you all here with us this evening to celebrate the opening of the new Pek Kio CC and the 50th anniversary of Pek Kio CC, of the old CC.

Pek Kio is a Hokkien word for “white bridge”, and there used to be a white bridge in this neighbourhood. But I hope Pek Kio CC is not just a physical bridge but will also continue to serve as a bridge for all of us. A bridge, to the past, which reminds us what was here, what our previous generations did here, what our parents built here and what we have inherited and want to make here.

Pek Kio CC has always been a centre for community life - organising popular activities like bodybuilding, sepak takraw, volleyball. If you look at the Pek Kio CC 50th Anniversary book, you will find some of these old pictures down there, showing the groups and the activities they took part in. And they were not just playing sports, or community activities, but fostering the kampong spirit. But the old CC was too small so we had to move from the old CC site in Cambridge Road and to come to this new site and better building. I am happy that in moving, we have been able to

preserve the old memories, preserve the old records of what we had done. And we have some exhibition panels to show the old CC and record the history. We have the anniversary book which tells many stories of the residents and of what happened here.

Pek Kio CC is a bridge to the past but we also hope that it will be a bridge to the future. A future where the facilities are available whether they are talking about 200-seat performing theatre, the dance studios, the indoor sports hall or a future where we have new activities for example, cultural performances, dance classes and a future where we can share facilities between the CC and Farrer Park Primary School. This is a pilot project between MOE and the People's Association (PA) and is one of several new ideas which we have to share facilities; PA to share its facilities with others and the school to share its facilities with the community, and bring the schools and the community closer together.

But most important of all, Pek Kio CC should be a bridge to the community, to build community ties, to encourage residents and students to make full use of the facilities, come together here, enjoy, make friends, bond. And volunteer, organise activities, be your own centre, make things move in Pek Kio and so build a better Singapore together.

Working together like this, I think it is even more important now than it has ever been. We are living at a time now of very rapid change, many things happening in the world, sometimes we ask ourselves, what does it mean for us, in Singapore.

For the young, for the ambitious, for the people with skills or who are able to learn the skills, which I think most of us are, it is an exciting and invigorating time. There are many things which we can do, many opportunities to explore. But there will be some who will find it difficult to adjust, especially the older Singaporeans, perhaps also the lower-income Singaporeans. They will need help to overcome the challenges which we face, whether it is the cost-of-living, whether it is healthcare, whether it is widening income disparities. We need to focus on these people who need help and make sure that when we advance and move into the future, we all go together.

We can pool our resources to help them. The Government - strengthening our social safety nets, nationally, and reviewing policies to help the vulnerable groups more. The Community - rallying together to address social needs and reaching out to take the initiative to do things which the Government is not able to do. And the individual - still self-reliant, still working hard, still taking care of our own families and working together to build a better tomorrow.

So I would like to thank Mr Lui Tuck Yew and all of those involved in the CC project. You have worked hard to raise funds, organise activities and get the residents involved. Congratulations on making this a reality and make full use of it and make Pek Kio a good place to live in for many years to come. Thank you very much.