

TOUCH and ITE launch new centre to develop interests and equip students with high market demand skills

Students will receive tutelage from industry professionals to prepare them for different industries.

SINGAPORE, 5 JUNE 2015 – TOUCH Youth, a division of TOUCH Community Services, together with the Institute of Education (ITE) College East, today launched a youth development centre - ***A.p.t.i.t.u.d.e*** or ***Aspiring People Transformed InTo Uniquely Dynamic Exceptions***, to develop students' passion and hobbies into strengths and skills with high market demand that will provide alternative career options to improve the youth's employability in different industries. The centre opening was officiated by **Minister of State for Education & Communications and Information, Ms Sim Ann**.

Funded by the Lee Foundation for the first three years, *A.p.t.i.t.u.d.e* started its first interest group on darts training in April this year. Collaborating with DartsLive, students in the interest group will undergo training in throwing darts with the potential to become future dart instructors. Other interest groups in the pipeline include a wedding planner training course covering event décor, floristry and food management by established wedding planner *Spellbound Weddings*; and an outdoor events management training course conducted by *WOW Experience*.

Students will be coached by professionally trained coaches with relevant industry experience. Each course will comprise a four-to-six week exploratory workshop, followed by a two-to-four month training programme. Suitable and committed students will also be given internship or contract opportunities. In addition, students will also be selected to work under the apprenticeship of an industry professional and undergo a customised programme to develop a mastery of skills to help them stay relevant and increase their employability. They will also be trained and given opportunities to take part in competitions or undergo certification. Students will also be encouraged to actively contribute to society by engaging in community service projects using the skills they have picked up through the various interest groups.

"We are very excited to have the opportunity to partner ITE in creating this unique platform to hone the interests and passions of students into viable skill-sets that will enhance their readiness to face the skills-based future of the Singapore economy. Through a robust mentoring programme, coaches at *A.p.t.i.t.u.d.e* will also support student's overall development in building resilience and character as they prepare to enter the workforce," said Mr Eugene Seow, Executive Director of TOUCH Community Services.

"*A.p.t.i.t.u.d.e*'s model of developing students' interests and passion into strengths and relevant skill sets is in line with the government's SkillsFuture movement where every Singaporean, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to build on their strengths and develop skills to maximise their potential and become a contributor to society. This concept undergirds ITE's industry-relevant approach to education", said Dr Yek Tiew Ming, Principal of ITE College East.

Covering the size of a five-room HDB flat, *A.p.t.i.t.u.d.e* has the potential of reaching out to some 8,000 students, aged between 17 and 19 in the ITE College East campus. The centre expects some 1,200 students or 15% of the student population to benefit from its programmes for three years.

“I am looking forward to having a professional coach guide me as I play darts in school. This is not like any other sports which I play during my free time. I can look forward to having my skills certified and taking part in competitions and who knows maybe one day if I like this hobby so much, I may think of working in this field”, said 18-year-old Tan Xue Boon, a second year Computer and Networking Engineering student.

Moving forward, plans are underway to run workshops that are relevant to the needs of the respective interest groups. In addition to the coaching by TOUCH Youth mentors and skills training by industry coaches, students can look forward to attending workshops on facilitation skills, public speaking and communication skills conducted by TOUCH.

Since 2001, TOUCH Community Services through TOUCH Youth has been partnering ITE in various community projects including fielding 500 motivators at each year’s National Day Parade to engage spectators and create a celebratory atmosphere for parade-goers. In May 2015, TOUCH Leadership & Mentoring coaches were involved in running teambuilding activities for some 540 Year One students or 29 classes at ITE College East.

For media enquiries and attendance, please contact:

Priscilla Toh

Assistant Manager, Corporate Communications

DID : 6317 9268

HP : 9694 2364

Email : priscilla.toh@touch.org.sg

Chua Shu Ting

Executive, Corporate Communications

DID : 6317 9284

HP : 9790 1853

Email : shuting.chua@touch.org.sg

About TOUCH Youth

TOUCH Youth, a division of TOUCH Community Services, recognises the numerous challenges facing today’s youths, and aim to equip them with essential skills and qualities needed for them to lead a balanced and healthy lifestyle. TOUCH Youth comprises TOUCH Cyber Wellness (TCW), TOUCH Leadership and Mentoring (TL&M) and TOUCH Youth Learning Centre. One of its key achievements includes the pioneering role of its cyber wellness education in schools through TCW, reaching out to more than 340 schools and some 1.25 million youths. Our youth work also includes Service-Learning initiatives and adventure programmes in schools by TL&M.

About TOUCH Community Services

TOUCH Community Services is a not-for-profit charitable organisation, dedicated to meeting the needs of children from low-income or single-parent families, youths at risk, needy families, people with special and healthcare needs, and the frail elderly. Through its network of 17 services, as well as an international arm, TOUCH is committed to serving people of all ages, races, religions and backgrounds. Each year, its programmes and services meet the needs of more than 29,000 clients and 155,000 service users. TOUCH’s vision is to see families strengthened and communities transformed by planting and building institutions of values in and through a network of integrated community services.