

PRESS RELEASE

New Programme to Enhance Employability of Youths Through Skills-based Workshops

SINGAPORE, 19 JULY 2017 – TOUCH Youth, a division of TOUCH Community Services, together with the Institute of Education (ITE) College East, today organised an open house at a youth development centre, A.p.t.i.t.u.d.e or **Aspiring People Transformed InTo Uniquely Dynamic Exceptions**.

The open house featured seven Interest Groups (IG) of an expanded skills-based engagement initiative, titled the ASPIRE programme that is hosted at the A.p.t.i.t.u.d.e center. The seven IGs included Barista, Adventure Facilitation, Adventure Sports, Outdoor Events Management, Wedding Planning, Culinary Arts and Photography. The programme seeks to develop students' interests and passions into skills with market demand that will provide career options to improve the youth's employability in different industries.

Through mentorship and guidance from TOUCH's youth coaches and vocational training by professional coaches from leading brands in various industries, the students are able to gain a clearer idea of how their interests align with different career possibilities, and the skills and credentials required to enter and advance into various career paths. As part of the programme, participants can also go on learning journeys which are visits to workplaces to deepen their understanding and increase their exposure to different work environments and industries. They will also be given the opportunity to experience success by undergoing training and participating in various competitions. In addition, students are encouraged to actively contribute to society by engaging in community service projects using the skills they have picked up through the various IGs.

The ASPIRE programme is funded by the Citi Foundation since August 2016 as part of its recent global expansion of the Pathways to Progress (P2P) initiative. In an effort to reduce youth unemployment in key cities around the world, Citi Foundation has responded with its largest philanthropic commitment of \$100 million over the next three years on P2P. It seeks to enhance the career-readiness of 500,000 young people by building their skills and broadening their experience through exposure to different career opportunities, internships, leadership training and entrepreneurship workshops. The expansion also includes a commitment to have 10,000 Citi employees volunteer to serve as mentors, coaches and role models to young people.

A recent research study conducted by a research team led by Associate Professor Albert Teo from the NUS Business School also found that the ASPIRE programme has benefitted participants in terms of skills and part-time employability. Participants from four of the IGs, namely Wedding Planning, Adventure Facilitation, Outdoor Events Management, and Photography, had a part-time employment rate of more than 50%. In addition, the programme also yielded a commendable Social Return on Investment (SROI) ratio of 2.14, where for every \$1 of investment, there is \$2.14 of social value generated from the model. SROI is a method for measuring and communicating a broad concept of value that incorporates social, environmental and economic impacts.

The open house was attended by Guest-of-Honour, Assoc Prof Dr Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education; Dr Yek Tiew Ming, Principal of ITE College East; James Tan, Chief Executive Officer of TOUCH Community Services and Melvyn Low, Head of Treasury and Trade Solutions, Citi ASEAN and Singapore. As part of the event, there was also a sharing session by the participants in how they have been positively impacted by the programme, and in turn, encouraged their peers to explore the various activities and IGs offered by the programme.

“The programmes and Interest Groups at A.p.t.i.t.u.d.e have enabled the students of ITE College East to develop their interests and passions into skill sets that are relevant to today’s workforce and economy. I’m heartened to see our graduates who have been impacted by A.p.t.i.t.u.d.e maximising their potential and becoming a valuable contributor to society.” said Dr Yek Tiew Ming, Principal of ITE College East.

Amol Gupte, Head of ASEAN and Citi Country Officer for Singapore, said, “As part of our global Pathways to Progress initiative to enhance the career-readiness of youths around the world, we are pleased to partner TOUCH Youth in Singapore and leverage on their extensive experience and track record in youth work to launch the ASPIRE programme at ITE College East. By engaging the students in interest-based workshops, we believe that they will be able to hone their passions into relevant skill sets for a better future. We also hope that our initiative will help them become more engaged in school which may lead to better academic performance and higher completion rate of their vocational education.”

“We are thrilled to see the positive impact that A.p.t.i.t.u.d.e has made to the lives and employability of the students of ITE College East. Through a robust mentoring programme, we believe that the 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 James Tan, Chief Executive Officer of TOUCH Community Services.

The A.p.t.i.t.u.d.e centre was launched in 2015 with four IGs. To date, it has engaged 7,778 students and completed 18 runs of IG programmes.

For media enquiries and attendance, please contact:

Samantha Wong

Senior Executive, Corporate Communications

DID: 6431 0440

HP: 8128 7511

Email: samantha.wong@touch.org.sg

About TOUCH Youth

TOUCH Youth, a division of TOUCH Community Services, recognises the numerous challenges facing today’s youths, and aims 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) and TOUCH Leadership and Mentoring (TL&M).

One of its key achievements includes the pioneering role of its cyber wellness education in schools through TCW, reaching out to 360 schools and more than 1.6 million youths, parents, educators and counsellors. Our youth work also includes Service-Learning initiatives and adventure programmes in schools by TL&M. Besides school programmes, TL&M also has a student activities centre – A.p.t.i.t.u.d.e – at the Institute of Education (ITE) College East. This is a collaboration with ITE College East that aims to impact the lives of students through interest group activities and vocational skills certification and competitions

that will intentionally develop their passions and hobbies into strengths and skills with high market demand.

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, youth-at-risk, needy families, people with special and healthcare needs, and the frail elderly. Through its integrated network of services, 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 28,000 clients and 156,000 service users.

About The Institute of Technical Education

The Institute of Technical Education (ITE) is a post-secondary education institution established in 1992 under the Ministry of Education. As a principal provider of career and technical education, and a key developer of national occupational skills certification and standards, ITE's Mission is to create opportunities for students and adult learners to acquire skills, knowledge and values for employability and lifelong learning. ITE's Vision is to be A Trailblazer in Career and Technical Education. Our Values are Integrity, Teamwork, Excellence and Care. ITE comprises the ITE Headquarters and three ITE Colleges - College Central, College East and College West. For more information, please visit our website at www.ite.edu.sg.

About Citi

Citi, the leading global bank, has approximately 200 million customer accounts and does business in more than 160 countries and jurisdictions. Citi provides consumers, corporations, governments and institutions with a broad range of financial products and services, including consumer banking and credit, corporate and investment banking, securities brokerage, transaction services, and wealth management.

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About Citi Foundation

The Citi Foundation works to promote economic progress and improve the lives of people in low-income communities around the world. We invest in efforts that increase financial inclusion, catalyze job opportunities for youth, and reimagine approaches to building economically vibrant cities. The Citi Foundation's "More than Philanthropy" approach leverages the enormous expertise of Citi and its people to fulfill our mission and drive thought leadership and innovation. For more information, visit www.citifoundation.com.

About Pathways to Progress

The Pathways to Progress initiative is led by a Citi Foundation investment of \$100 million to connect 500,000 young people to training and jobs over the next three years. This is the largest philanthropic commitment in the Citi Foundation's history. Pathways launched in 2014, with a \$50 million effort that helped more than 100,000 young people across ten cities become career-ready through first jobs, internships, and leadership and entrepreneurship training. The expansion also includes a commitment to have 10,000 Citi employees volunteer to serve as mentors, coaches and role models to young people and support their career progress.