

WELCOME SPEECH BY DR JOHN KEUNG, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY AT *SEE THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY*, A BCA UNIVERSAL DESIGN FUND-RAISING DINNER HELD ON THURSDAY, 30 JULY 2015 AT 6.30PM, HOTEL RE! @ PEARL'S HILL

Mr Desmond Lee

Minister of State for National Development

Friends, partners, ladies and gentlemen,

1. A very good evening, and welcome to “*See the World Differently*”. This is BCA’s inaugural fund-raising dinner for charity held in conjunction with the Singapore Universal Design Week 2015.

2. Before I begin, I would like to thank our industry partners who have purchased tables to the dinner tonight and donated generously for a good cause. We have originally targeted to raise \$50,000 for the President’s Challenge, to commemorate Singapore’s 50th birthday this year.

I am pleased to share that we managed to exceed our target, and raised \$55,000 instead! I am very heartened by the positive reception and support from our partners and stakeholders in the industry.

Inclusivity Begins with You and Me

3. We need to improve our buildings and public spaces to be accessible to people of different ages and abilities. Having an inclusive society allows everyone to live, work and play with ease and dignity. It is also increasingly important as our population is ageing rapidly. By 2030, merely 15 years later, about 900,000 of us will be above the age of 65 years old. That will mean that for every five residents, one will be a senior; as compared to about one in nine today¹. Our infrastructure and buildings must be future-ready to facilitate movement for our seniors, so that they can continue living an active lifestyle and contribute meaningfully to our community.

¹ As at end-2014, there were 11.2% senior residents (aged 65 years and over) [Source: DOS]

4. BCA has been engaging the industry to promote the creation of an inclusive built environment in Singapore by incorporating accessibility and Universal Design (UD) features in our buildings and infrastructure. These include, first, the UD Mark scheme which recognises developments for adopting user-centric design, operations and maintenance; and second, UD courses and seminars to improve the industry's understanding and application of UD principles in buildings.

5. On the public engagement front, BCA launched the InclUDed Movement in 2013 to create greater awareness of and appreciation for UD among the public. We have since collaborated with various stakeholders to roll out many outreach and educational programmes for different target audiences. Some of these include *"My UD World"* Inter-Primary School Art Competition, the BCA Short Film Competition as well as a series of animation videos to help convey the importance and benefits of UD to younger audiences.

6. Through such a multi-prong approach, we are beginning to see real results in terms of the awareness and adoption of UD.

Singapore Universal Design Week

7. To push the UD envelope and raise more industry and public awareness in UD, we launched the inaugural Singapore Universal Design Week last year. The annual event is an opportunity for us to take stock of our achievements, review our future challenges, and facilitate discussions on how much more we can do to overcome these challenges.

8. This year, we invited policy makers, academics and building professionals to come together to discuss policies and implementation plans, and share best practices based on the theme – “*Shaping An Age-Friendly Built Environment*”. There have been many exciting programmes and activities for the industry and the public.

See the World Differently

9. A key activity organised during this year's Singapore Universal Design Week is tonight's Fund-raising Dinner. This evening's dinner offers a unique experience for us to have a meal in complete darkness, as the name aptly suggests. I hope that after this experience, we can better understand what it means to live without sight. More importantly, I hope that we will all *see our world differently*, rethink our prejudices and stereotypes, have greater empathy and better appreciate the importance of UD in our built environment.

10. As we are all key decision makers, influencers and thought leaders in how our built environment is shaped, hopefully, this will motivate you to take UD as the starting point in design for all your projects. This is indeed our way of making an inclusive society possible.

Conclusion

11. I would like to thank our partners, Addiction Advertising, PICO Art and Uearthed Productions for their pro bono contributions² in making this dinner a success. I would also like to thank our Guest-of-Honour, Minister of State Mr Desmond Lee, for gracing this occasion and supporting this meaningful cause.

12. And now, it is time for us to sit back and enjoy this novel dining experience. I wish you all a pleasant evening ahead.
Thank you.

-- END OF SPEECH --

² **Addiction Advertising** developed event branding and designed all collaterals for the event, including e-invite, stage backdrop, mock cheque and the Event Programme Booklet for industry guests.

PICO Art sponsored the production of all hard sets i.e. stage backdrop and signages, landscaping and construction of the light lock tunnel that is required for the event,

Uearthed Productions provided photo booth services for the event.