

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY CARRIE TAN  
AT THE PAP WOMEN'S WING CONFERENCE 2022**

**Good afternoon Comrades,  
Colleagues,  
WW Chairperson Mrs Josephine Teo,  
DPM Lawrence Wong,**

Thank you for gracing us with your presence today, and giving your support to women's development in Singapore, and to the many groups and organizations present today that are helping to share the load of care with women.

For those of you who have been here since 12pm and listened to the pitches and the panel discussion, I hope you found them useful and informative. I hope you were inspired by the passion and efforts by ordinary Singaporeans amongst us who are taking action in their own ways to champion care for our fellowmen and fellow women.

As many of you know, I used to be a social entrepreneur before I entered politics.

When I founded Daughters Of Tomorrow in 2014, I remember the first year, we had 1.5 people. Me and a part-timer Mel who helped me with outreach and simple coordination from her wheelchair, working from home. That year, we ran our first confidence-building and employment bridging program for women in rental blocks at Tanjong Pagar Family Service Centre. We

impacted 8 women that year. Found 4 of them jobs. It took a lot of effort, and the support of many others to eventually grow and scale our work. 6 years on and by the time I left in 2020, we had more than 200 Befrienders, and were working with several hundred women a year, referred to us by various family service centres and SSOs.

The road to growing and scaling impact as a non-profit or social enterprise is often a long one fraught with challenges. Start-up non-profits and social service groups typically have very little funds because few people know about them and what they do. They have to rely a lot on volunteers, people who believe in the same cause giving their time and effort to do the work that they can't afford to pay someone to do.

But at the same time, there is tremendous beauty in that too. Because when the calls for support and volunteers go out, it's an opportunity for people to answer to, to be of service to someone else. Through volunteering, individuals get to learn more about the often invisible details of others' lives, and develop understanding and empathy for some very complex social issues that are difficult to solve. Through volunteering, we grow our horizons and ourselves, and we participate in generating a bigger humanity that gives us a sense of meaning that we are part of something bigger than ourselves.

Because of my experience as the founder of a charity that faced its challenges, as well as witnessed the many positive things that happened when people stepped up to care for another, when the opportunity came for me to be Organizing Chair for the WW Conference this year, I saw a perfect chance to combine the 3 things that I cared greatly about – helping social

service organizations grow, encouraging more volunteerism amongst Singaporeans, and helping women with their caregiving and parenting load!

With Singapore's rising challenges as an aging society, and families get smaller, the work of care has become more stressful. Women more so than men are still the ones taking the brunt of care work. We need to find ways to lighten the load for women, have more hands on deck, so we can distribute care in more sustainable manners.

Every challenge in life can be an opportunity, and I see that as we face the challenges ahead for our society together, that there are opportunities too for us to create something beautiful and meaningful together.

The work of care is one that requires patience and heart. It's the last mile human touch that makes a world of difference to someone who finds themselves overwhelmed, vulnerable and alone. Despite the many services and portals that the government has rolled out to provide resources and help, often we find that we still need someone who can guide us to navigate these resources. A reassuring voice, someone journeying with us makes all the difference.

And so, with Chairperson Mrs Josephine Teo's support, we made this year's conference a special one to create a public exhibition for community-building. We took the opportunity to bring people together, and to showcase the good work of ground-up groups that can benefit more citizens if they are enabled to grow.

We want to encourage all our activists, who have always been active in the community, to lend their support to new and innovative projects, and to contribute to causes that can help lighten the load for families.

To the exhibitors who are in the room with us today, thank you for doing what you do and being with us today to share about your work and the inspiring stories of making a difference.

I hope today's conference and exhibition leaves everyone equipped with new resources, services and knowledge so that we can all be empowered to care better for one another, with less effort.

I entered politics when the call came, because I saw it as a way to build an even stronger and bigger community beyond one charity that can care for and serve Singaporeans. Hence I'm truly thankful for this opportunity to shape this year's conference. Thank you, Min Jo, for the opportunity and the guidance to make this happen. I would like to thank the HQ team, Dora, Meijun, Sarah, Sharon, Katrine, Badriah, as well as fellow activists Renita and Kim Underhill, for their dedication, hard work and support the past months in making this event happen, taking care of every little detail.

And to all comrades, by being here today, you are also helping us to fulfil our dream, a dream that we hope you share. The vision of a Singapore in which our community care is so strong, that every Singaporean knows that they can reach out anytime, and that someone will be there for them. With your pledges and sign-ups to the charities and causes that you care about, you are helping to expand and grow our circles of care together. Let's make Care

accessible and affordable to all through being active volunteers, and active connectors.

Thank you and I look forward to serving and caring together with all of you for many years more! Let's take action together, in true PAP spirit, and show that PAP Cares!