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MEDIA RELEASE

NO INDIVIDUAL LEFT BEHIND
-Republic Polytechnic and Sunlove-Marsiling Neighbourhood Link teams up to help the poor, the elderly and the mentally infirm

The poor, the elderly and the mentally infirm are groups within our society that are often neglected. In an effort to ensure that no individuals are left behind, Republic Polytechnic (RP) students are adopting two blocks of 1-room flats in Marsiling, which is under the care of Sunlove-Marsiling Neighbourhood Link (Sunlove-Marsiling NL) set up by Sunlove Home in February 2006.

Sunlove-Marsiling NL aims to address the needs and provide residential care to the elderly, the intellectually disabled and the poor living in the 1-room flats in the Marsiling area. Some 60 students from RP will provide support and help to look after the basic and social needs of over 800 families living in Block 3 and 4 in Marsiling from 29 July 2006 to the end of July 2007.

“At RP, we encourage our students to develop their social and moral dimension as much as their academic potential,” said Professor Low Teck Seng, Principal and Chief Executive Officer of Republic Polytechnic.

“This project is the brainchild of students from the Service Learning Club and the Gaming Interest Group, guided by the facilitators at RP. The objective of Service Learning is to incorporate experiential learning with community service. By working with the residents of the blocks, the students have to look at the issues which these people face and come up with solutions to help them. In this way, they get to apply the critical thinking and problem solving skills they learn in class to real life situations.”

“RP also believes that such projects must be sustainable. As such, we plan to work with Sunlove-Marsiling NL over the next 12 months to help enrich the lives of these residents.”

The programme will be launched today by Mr Hawazi Daipi, Member of Parliament of Sembawang GRC and the
Guest of Honour for the event.

As part of the programme, RP students will set up a computer laboratory at the Sunlove-Marsiling NL and teach residents how to use them - giving them a new set of skills to keep up with changing times and to interact with the wider community. For the last few months, RP students and staff have been collecting old computers for upgrading to be installed at the computer laboratories. Lessons will be conducted free of charge twice a month. This initiative allows the IT students to apply their knowledge and skills and support a good cause at the same time.

90 percent of residents in the blocks are senior citizens and many are recovering from a mental illness, so social interaction and support are vital to their well-being. The RP students will introduce social activities for the residents to enrich their lives. To kick off the social programme, RP students will be putting on a concert and a mass dance at the launch. Ongoing social outings and events will also be organized for the residents.

As most of the residents belong to the low income group, the project also aims to alleviate their poverty by providing necessities such as food, clothing and medication. New bed linen will be distributed to residents at the event.

“We need all the help and support we can get to give these over 800 families the opportunity to have a better quality of life,” said the spokesman of Sunlove-Marsiling Neighbourhood Link. “These 60 exemplary RP students have developed an excellent platform to reach out to these residents. To make the programme even more successful, we need the public’s support in donating food, funds, medication and even sponsor social outings for the residents.”

For enquiry on how you can help, contact Sunlove-Marsiling Neighbourhood Link at 6367 6615.

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About Republic Polytechnic

Republic Polytechnic is the first educational institution in Singapore to fully adopt the Problem-Based Learning approach. It is a progressive polytechnic with five schools offering 19 diploma courses. This includes courses in Engineering, Information and Communications Technology, Applied Science and Technology for the Arts and Sports, Health and Leisure.

Republic Polytechnic is committed to nurturing innovation and entrepreneurial learning in an environment that develops problem-solving skills and a lifelong learning attitude. Its holistic, broad-based curriculum, covering culture, enterprise development, and personal development prepares students for an active, meaningful role in society.

Republic Polytechnic’s quest for excellence is recognised through various national and international accreditations such as People Developer Standard, ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001, Singapore Quality Class and the Family Friendly Employer Award. For more information, visit [www.rp.sg](http://www.rp.sg).

About Sunlove Home-Marsiling Neighbourhood Link

Sunlove-Marsiling Neighbourhood Link (NL) at Blk 3 Marsiling Road opened on 18 February 2006. This NL is a project up by Sunlove Abode for Intellectually Infirmed Ltd (commonly known as Sunlove Home), an organization registered under the Charities Act.

In conjunction with the broad outlines of a neighbourhood link, our objectives at this NL are to:

- be a base for recreational activities and support services catering especially to the elderly and vulnerable families in the area.
- develop and foster the spirit of volunteerism and to engage residents to be active participants.
- act as an outreach centre, where persons requiring assistance will be referred to the appropriate authorities or social agencies, and
- encourage and promote inter-generational interaction.

Block 3, where this Neighbourhood Link is located, together with Block 4 Marsiling Road comprises a total of 868 households, all of them 1-room units. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Link is well positioned to address the correct target group and perform a functional role.

As at June 2006, we have 402 registered residents of whom about 90% are the elderly. The registrants also include former IMH patients and some on welfare assistance.

To encourage socializing, visitors to the centre enjoy free coffee/tea, biscuits and bread. They can watch television, read the daily newspapers or play games like checkers, Chinese chess or carom.

Currently, organized activities at this centre include:

- Weekly free clinic services every Tuesday
- Physiotheraphy sessions every Thursday
- Karaoke sessions every Wednesday
- Exercises every Saturday
- Lunch every Saturday
Outing to places of interest when possible
Monthly birthday celebrations
Celebrations of major festivals.

In addition the NL is working closely with the local Residents’ Committee, the Marsiling Youth Executive Committee and the schools in the area. The involvement of the schools, through their Community Involvement Programme, will help to create awareness among students on the needs of the elderly and the less privileged members of our society.

Republic Polytechnic has committed their participation in the programmes at the NL and the NL looks forward to this partnership in meeting our objectives.

Together, with the support from the grassroots organisations, schools, institutions and the relevant agencies and organisations, Sunlove-Marsiling Neighbourhood Link will be an effective platform in building a caring and inclusive society.