MEDIA RELEASE

REPUBLIC POLYTECHNIC OPENS SINGAPORE’ FIRST SERVICE-LEARNING CENTRE

New $200,000 Tan Ean Kiam Service-Learning Resource Centre reinforces community service for national and overseas projects

Singapore, 25 April 2008 – Republic Polytechnic (RP) today announced the opening of the first centre in Singapore that’s dedicated specifically for service-learning.

Service-Learning is the combination of service and learning objectives, which aims at having the activity change both the recipient and the provider of the service. This is achieved through linking the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content.

The centre, named the Tan Ean Kiam Service-Learning Resource Centre (TEKSLRC) through a $200,000 grant given by the Tan Ean Kiam Foundation, aims to train about 2,800 students and volunteers to support up to fifteen local and eight overseas projects per year.

Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Education & Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts, RAdm (NS) Lui Tuck Yew graced the opening of the Service-Learning centre at RP’s campus in Woodlands.

TEKSLRC marks a new milestone for RP since it started the Service-Learning Programme in 2005 following the Asian Tsunami disaster. The Service-Learning Programme began as an effort for RP’s students to connect community service with dynamic learning and have them play a role in helping the underprivileged.

Since 2005, RP students have successfully implemented more than 50 Service-Learning projects such as the organising and nurturing of an organic garden for elderly citizens living in one-room flats in Marsiling, and in creating a bio-gas reactor that converted elephant dung into bio-gas as fuel for cooking for a rural community in Thailand. The success of this project has led the village to use the RP prototype to develop similar bio-gas reactors for other rural villages.

With TEKSLRC, RP will step up its focus on curricular-based service-learning projects, where students have the chance to apply what they have learnt in the classroom to solve real-world needs.

The learning centre will also increase the number of projects and beneficiaries in Singapore and Southeast Asia. A number of local and overseas partners have been identified, including Mun Fut Tong Nursing Home, Sun Love Marsiling Elderly Home, YMCA Project Bridge, Prolerng Khmer Centre (Cambodia) and Mirror Arts Group (Thailand). Each service learning project will have about 20 student participants.

Mr Wilson Ang, Deputy Director, Office of Student and Graduate Affairs, Republic Polytechnic, said, “This is a strategic development for RP as it enables us to reinforce our role as a hub for Service-Learning and to strengthen our linkages with the communities that need our assistance. Our priority is to equip our staff and students with the necessary skills and knowledge so that they can not only serve the community but also learn from the service experience so that social change can take place. We hope that this centre can be a model for other Service-Learning centres in the region.”
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About Republic Polytechnic

The first educational institution in Singapore to adopt the Problem-Based Learning approach for all its diploma programmes, Republic Polytechnic has six schools and one centre offering twenty nine diploma courses in Information & Communications Technology, Engineering, Applied Science, Technology for the Arts, Sports, Health & Leisure, Hotel and Hospitality, and Culture and Communication. Republic Polytechnic is committed to nurturing innovation and entrepreneurial learning in an environment that develops problem-solving process skills and a life-long learning attitude. Its holistic, broad-based curriculum, covering culture, enterprise development and cognitive processes, prepares students for an active and meaningful role in society. Republic Polytechnic strives for excellence by achieving various national and international accreditations, including People Developer Standards, ISO9001, ISO14001, OHSAS 18001, Singapore Quality Class, Singapore Innovation Class, and the Singapore Health Awards (Gold). For more information, visit http://www.rp.sg

About Tek Ean Kiam Foundation

Born in China’s Fukien province, the late Mr Tan Ean Kiam came to Singapore in 1899. Starting out as a labourer, Mr Tan went on to become a successful businessman and merchant. He was amongst the founding members of the Overseas Chinese Bank Corporation. Ever mindful of his role in society, Mr Tan contributed generously to many charities. He was a firm believer in education and had great passion to groom youths into leaders. The Tan Ean Kiam Foundation was set up in 1956 to relieve human suffering, aid the poor, provide assistance during times of natural calamities, foster education and support religious institutions.