



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Ren Ci Hospital Holds Its Senior Sports Day at Republic Polytechnic to Foster Intergenerational Engagement**

*The event will also witness the expansion of the partnership with Republic Polytechnic*

**Singapore, 30 August 2024** – Although Mr Goh Lye Soon (84) now requires a walking aid and suffers from various chronic issues such as hypertension, he’s lacing up his sports shoes and putting his game face on to participate in the second Ren Ci Senior Sports Day. Nearly 140 seniors from Ren Ci’s four senior care centres came together at Republic Polytechnic (RP) today to compete in various sports that have been adapted to their functional levels.

The inaugural Senior Sports Day took place in 2023 at Ren Ci Community Hospital’s multi-purpose hall to great success. This year’s event is bigger and better with RP coming on board to host. Thirty student volunteers from the Centre for Foundational Studies and the Diploma in Sports & Health will lead the seniors in their warm-up exercises, assist them as they move from station to station, and cheer them on during the games.

“The inspiration behind organising a sports day came about because we see, first hand, how our seniors are capable to doing activities that they never thought they would be able to do again, after we make adaptations for them,” shared Ms Priscilla Chng, Senior Occupational Therapist, Ren Ci Hospital and one of the main members of the organising committee. “Our seniors have various chronic illnesses, and we wanted to change their mindset and let them know that their conditions do not necessarily keep them from activities that they enjoy.”

The seniors will compete in adaptive volleyball, baton relay race, shot put, ball escape and table hockey this year, targeting not just physical strength, but also cognitive skills. For example, sports like volleyball help build upper limb strength and require players track the direction of the “ball” (which has been replaced with a balloon). In the baton relay race, participants will have to practice the sit-to-stand movement and immediately launch into their walk.

“I’m looking forward to the Sports Day. I won a bronze medal last year when I competed in cup stacking, so I hope I’ll win a gold medal for table hockey this year. We’ve all been training very hard!” said Mdm Tan Siew Eng (79), who is participating in the Senior Sports Day for the second time.

Of the five sports, four are brand new additions to keep the event fresh for participants. Only table hockey is making a repeat appearance due to its popularity among the seniors.

“We decided to make the Senior Sports Day an annual highlight of the Ren Ci calendar of events after our first successful event last year. By adding an element of competition and gamification, we incorporate rehabilitation indirectly through the games. We see our seniors motivated to practice and their enthusiasm has exceeded our expectations. The games brought both physical and psychosocial benefits and definitely a lot of joy to our seniors,” explained Dr Jamie Mervyn Lim, CEO, Ren Ci Hospital.

“Not only do the seniors look forward to training, it also dramatically improves their mood. Last year, we witnessed some seniors in such high spirits that they attempt to stand up from their wheelchairs



and made the effort to walk up the stairs to the stage to receive their medals. An elderly senior shared that she had never won a sports medal in her life and at this old age, she is now a medalist!”

### **Extending the Ren Ci – RP partnership**

On this occasion, Ren Ci Hospital and RP also renewed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two organisations for another five years. This extension will see both institutions exploring new avenues for partnership, including the co-development and delivery of courses, expanding volunteering opportunities, and providing job attachments for staff and students at Ren Ci Hospital.

“As Singapore navigates the challenges of an ageing population, our renewed partnership with Ren Ci Hospital reaffirms our shared commitment to nurturing the next generation of community care professionals and advancing healthcare education as passionate community builders. Together, we aim to equip our graduates with the essential skills needed to meet the growing demand for quality care in our healthcare system,” said Ms Jeanne Liew, Principal & CEO of Republic Polytechnic.

Since 2012, RP students have gained exposure to areas such as care coordination, community care, and clinical operations through their internships. They have also had the opportunity to engage with seniors as part of their learning. Both organisations hope that will encourage more youths to explore a meaningful career path in Singapore’s healthcare system.

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Photographs from the event are available. Ren Ci staff, seniors and RP student volunteers are also available for interviews.

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### **About Ren Ci Hospital**

Established since 1994, Ren Ci Hospital is one of the few charity healthcare institutions in Singapore to provide high quality and affordable medical, nursing and rehabilitative care services for the community, based on the principles of loving kindness and compassion. Ren Ci plays an integral role in supporting the healthcare needs of the elderly through adopting a holistic way of delivering person-centred care.

Today Ren Ci Hospital runs a community hospital, a chronic sick unit, three nursing homes, four Senior Care Centres and one Active Ageing Centre (Care). These facilities are spread throughout Singapore, at Ang Mo Kio, Bukit Batok, Novena and Woodlands.

Besides giving hope to the frail elderly by helping overcome their disabilities and teaching their families to care for them at home, Ren Ci also partners various community groups and social enterprises to give dignity back to the elderly.

### **About Republic Polytechnic:**

The first educational institution in Singapore to leverage the Problem-based Learning approach for all its diploma programmes, Republic Polytechnic (RP) has seven schools and two academic centres offering 35 full-time diplomas in Applied Science, Business, Engineering, Hospitality, Infocomm, Sports and Health, and Technology for the Arts, Media and Design.

RP is committed to nurturing professionals with strong problem-solving capabilities through an innovative and entrepreneurial learning environment, based on a holistic and industry relevant curriculum. RP's Academy for Continuing Education also offers a comprehensive suite of lifelong learning programmes to provide adult learners with skills upgrading opportunities.

For more information, visit <http://www.rp.edu.sg>.

## Annex – Participating in the adaptive sports



### Volleyball

Players are seated for their safety, and the ball is replaced with a balloon.



### Baton Relay

The baton is strapped either to the senior's arm or walking aid, and they must sit down before the next participant gets up for their segment of the race.



### Shot Put

The shot put ball has been replaced with a beanbag to make it manageable for the seniors.



### Ball Escape

Teams have to work together and coordinate their movements to let the balls "escape" through the hole in the centre.



### Table Hockey

Teammates work together to score goals and block their opponents' shots in this fast-paced game.

*All clients in these photographs have given their consent.*