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21 June 2007

## **NEWS RELEASE**

Editors / Programme Managers

### **HIGHEST NATIONAL HONOURS FOR YOUTH**

#### **SINGAPORE YOUTH AWARDS 2007**

Drive and passion in pursuits of excellence; traits shared by six individuals who will be receiving the nation's highest youth accolade from Deputy Prime Minister Professor S. Jayakumar, at the Presentation Ceremony of the Singapore Youth Awards (SYA) 2007 to be held on Sunday, 1 July 2007 at the Istana. The SYA honours youth whose distinction in their fields of endeavour and service to the community are inspirational.

2 The SYA 2007 will be awarded to the following individuals:

- (a) Arts and Culture
  - i) Mr Alvin Pang Khee Meng
  - ii) Ms Stefanie Sun
- (b) Community and Youth Services
  - iii) Ms Melissa Aratani Kwee
- (c) Entrepreneurship
  - iv) Mr Ivan Lee Chung Hwa
- (c) Science and Technology
  - v) Dr Yu Hao
- (d) Sports and Adventure
  - vi) Ms Valerie Teo Hui Ying

3 This year, the National Youth Achievement Award Gold Award Holders' Alumni (GAHA) will also be receiving the Medal of Commendation. GAHA won the SYA for Community and Youth Services (Team) in 2000. More information on this year's Award and Medal of Commendation recipients is at Annex A.

4 Launched in 1975, the SYA recognises the outstanding achievements and contributions by exemplary youth in Singapore, in five award categories:

- (a) Arts and Culture;
- (b) Community and Youth Services;
- (c) Entrepreneurship;
- (d) Science and Technology; and
- (e) Sports and Adventure.

5 A media briefing, followed by a Question-and-Answer session with this year's recipients Ms Melissa Kwee, Mr Ivan Lee, Ms Valerie Teo and GAHA, and the SYA Panel, will be held on **Wednesday, 27 June 2007, 10.00 am, at Level 1 \*Scape Youth Centre, 113 Somerset Road.**

6 You are cordially invited to the media briefing. We would appreciate it if you could confirm your attendance by **26 June 2007 (5pm)** to Ms Luxshmi at 6839 9122 (DID) or 9620 8414 (Hp).

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The news release is transmitted via telebox by the Corporate Communications Section of the National Youth Council. For further information, please contact:

Media Liaison

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**SINGAPORE YOUTH AWARDS 2007  
RECIPIENTS**

**AWARD**

Arts and Culture

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2. Ms Stefanie Sun pg. 3

Community and Youth Services

3. Ms Melissa Kwee pg. 4

Entrepreneurship

4. Mr Ivan Lee Chung Hwa pg. 5

Science and Technology

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**MEDAL OF COMMENDATION**

Community and Youth Services

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**SINGAPORE YOUTH AWARDS 2007  
ARTS AND CULTURE**

**MR ALVIN PANG KHEE MENG**

*“Go for it now. If there is no way forward, make a road. If there are no maps, draw a map. If there isn’t a bridge from here to there, build the bridge.”*

In recognition of his literary excellence and decade-long literary activism, Mr Alvin Pang received the National Arts Council’s “Young Artist of the Year (Literature) Award”, 2006. Active in the local literary scene since 1991, Alvin has won several distinguished awards, both local and international.

Amongst his many accolades as a writer and editor are: “Straits Times Top 10 Books of the Year” for “Testing the Silence”, “No Other City: The Ethos Anthology of Urban Poetry” and “City of Rain”; and the “Global Filipino Literary Award for Poetry” for “Love Gathers All”, a bilateral anthology. Many of his works, ranging from articles and reviews to poems and short stories, have been published in local and overseas publications. He is also a Fellow in Writing at the world-renowned Iowa International Writing Program.

Alvin is active in numerous initiatives in the literary and Arts field, such as being a co-initiator and advisor for the National Online Repository of the Arts, and helping to set up a literary press, Ethos Books. He also co-organised Singapore’s first international poetry festival, Wordfeast, in 2004.

As part of his efforts to publicise Singaporean writing worldwide, Alvin has led delegations to many overseas writers’ festivals, including the Edinburgh International Book Festival in 2003, and the Sydney Writer’s Festival in 2006.

To nurture and mentor emerging talents, Alvin has conducted creative workshops and seminars and contributed to many national Arts committees.

For his literary excellence and passion in promoting Singaporean literature and the Arts scene, Mr Alvin Pang Khee Meng is conferred the Singapore Youth Award 2007.

**SINGAPORE YOUTH AWARDS 2007  
ARTS AND CULTURE**

**MS STEFANIE SUN**

*“Excellence does not come by without passion.”*

Ms Stefanie Sun burst onto the Chinese music scene with her eponymous debut album in 2000. Garnering both critical acclaim and commercial success, it was the start of her meteoric rise to stardom.

With her best-selling records and awards from both the local and overseas music industry, Stefanie is one of Singapore’s most popular musical talents. She has performed in major concerts in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong and, of course, Singapore. Stefanie received the Most Popular Singer, Best Album and Most Outstanding Singer (Singapore) Award at the 2006 Global Chinese Music Awards. Her success in the Chinese music scene is an inspiration to Singaporeans, and Stefanie is regarded as a role model for aspiring singers. Indeed, Stefanie has sung the official theme songs at two National Day Parades - 2002 and 2003.

Besides attaining excellence in the music industry, Stefanie has also contributed towards the community. From 2004 to 2006, Stefanie made several humanitarian visits as Goodwill Ambassador to places such as Indonesia, India, Africa. She also regularly helps to raise funds for charity.

In recognition of her achievements and contributions to society, Stefanie received the “Nanyang Outstanding Young Alumni Award” in 2005 by her alma mater, Nanyang Technological University.

For her outstanding achievements in the music scene, and her contributions to the local and international community, Ms Stefanie Sun is conferred the Singapore Youth Award 2007.

**SINGAPORE YOUTH AWARDS 2007  
COMMUNITY AND YOUTH SERVICES**

**MS MELISSA KWEE**

*“What if every person gave 1% more time and effort each day to care for someone around them? 1% of kindness to a stranger, 1% more care towards a family member, 1% of your income for a day. I am quite sure we would have a positive revolution and witness a transformed world”*

Ms Melissa Kwee, Chairperson of Halogen Foundation Singapore, calls herself an “educator, activist and advocate”. As a young girl, Melissa always dreamt of promoting greater understanding between people and comfort those who were hurt.

The little girl grew up to be a strong advocate in her community, especially in the areas of youth development and leadership. After obtaining her Bachelor’s Degree in Social Anthropology at Harvard University, Melissa began pursuing her dream in earnest by taking up leadership positions in community organisations, and spearheading a series of youth leadership programmes.

One of Melissa’s earliest initiatives was Project Access, a leadership education programme for girls that sought to “broaden the realm of the possible”, which she founded in 1996. For five years, Melissa worked with local schools, community organisations and government institutions and created a network of Leadership Resource Partnerships across Singapore to serve as mentors and role models for youths.

From 2002 to 2006, as President of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Melissa initiated groundbreaking projects such as the Stop Demand for Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children Campaign and Financial Education for Migrant Women Workers.

In 2006, Melissa founded another programme, “Beautiful People”, to reach out to teenage girls who lacked strong social and family support by offering life-skill programmes and the opportunity to be mentored by Big Sisters.

Melissa regularly speaks at youth events and has addressed many public gatherings such as the BP-CISCO Corporate Social Responsibility Forum in 2002, the Harvard Project for Asian and International Relations in 2001 and the State of the World Forum in 1997.

For her dedication to the youth community, Ms Melissa Aratani Kwee is conferred the Singapore Youth Award 2007.

**SINGAPORE YOUTH AWARDS 2007  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

**MR IVAN LEE CHUNG HWA**

*“Many people think that entrepreneurship is about making lots of money, but the best part of entrepreneurship is to be able to create something that genuinely touches the lives of people.”*

The founder of a popular Thai food restaurant chain, Mr Ivan Lee epitomises the young entrepreneur: driven, resilient, ambitious.

At the age of 23, Ivan set up a mortgage broking and financial services firm with his friends while still an undergraduate. That venture was followed by a food and beverage firm set up in 2000. Although his F&B business closed after two years, it did not extinguish his entrepreneurial fire. Instead, he emerged from the experience to establish the first ThaiExpress restaurant in 2002.

Today, ThaiExpress appeals to the growing number of consumers who look not just for good Thai food but also authentic Thai ambience and service. It has proven to be a successful formula for establishing a distinctive brand in a fiercely-competitive industry.

In 2004, ThaiExpress achieved ‘Thailand’s Brand Award’ (a symbol of authentic Thai food) which is given by the Thai Government to top brands. This achievement was followed by the conferment of the Singapore Promising Brand Award in 2005. Under Ivan’s leadership, the company has expanded rapidly from just one restaurant in Holland Village to a chain of 19 local and 16 international outlets with a total annual turnover of \$30 million. With outlets in Indonesia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Australia and China, the locally successful company is gearing towards achieving global recognition.

Ivan’s belief in giving back to the community is demonstrated by his decision to employ senior workers, ex-convicts and providing employment opportunities to people with disabilities.

For his entrepreneurial spirit and contributions towards the community, Mr Ivan Lee is conferred the Singapore Youth Award 2007.

**SINGAPORE YOUTH AWARDS 2007  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**DR YU HAO**

*“Our determination and action to achieve higher levels of scientific excellence and to nurture the competent young talents are important for continuously positioning Singapore at the forefront of a fast changing world.”*

Dr Yu Hao's expertise in functional genomics and innovation in the genetic transformation system to speed up the production of hybrid orchids has earned him national and regional recognition in the plant field. In 2006 he was awarded the Young Scientist Award by the Singapore National Academy of Science

Even while a research student, Dr Yu stood out from his peers. He received the Gold Medal of International Society of Plant Molecular Biology for an outstanding PhD thesis. Dr Yu specialises in biotechnology research and among his areas of interest are the development of edible Hepatitis B vaccine from vegetables and the production of novel oil crops.

Dr Yu has co-authored two book chapters, 21 international refereed journals and five internationally refereed conference papers. His publications in premier journals have been widely cited and highlighted in international media and academic journals. In recognition of his scientific contributions, Dr Yu was invited to review and edit for more than eight international refereed journals and publications, and invited to speak at international conferences.

As a passionate educator, Dr Yu teaches biological sciences to students at the National University of Singapore. To date, Dr Yu has supervised 19 research students and three undergraduate students, out of which 10 have graduated. Dr Yu's dedication to teaching is also evident through his mentorship of students from Innova Junior College, Singapore Polytechnic and Raffles Girls' Secondary School on scientific projects.

For his scientific excellence and dedication to youths, Dr Yu Hao is conferred the Singapore Youth Award 2007.

**SINGAPORE YOUTH AWARDS 2007  
SPORTS AND ADVENTURE**

**MS VALERIE TEO HUI YING**

*“Do not be driven by the outcome, be driven by the process. We learn more from experience than from the win itself. Focus on what we can control, it makes winning a whole lot easier”*

Valerie Teo took up bowling seriously when she was just 12 years old. Two years later, she won a place in the national bowling team. Since then, Valerie has struck gold in numerous national and international bowling competitions. She was awarded the Singapore Schools’ Sports Council’s Sportsgirl of the Year in 1998 and 2003 and the Singapore National Olympic Council’s Sportsgirl of the Year in 2003.

In 2006, Singapore watched proudly as Valerie was crowned world champion in the 9<sup>th</sup> World Youth Tenpin Bowling Championships in Berlin, Germany. This was despite the fact that she had just recovered from a fungal infection on her right ring finger, forcing her to take a break from bowling for six months. In the same year, Valerie clinched Singapore’s first gold at the 15<sup>th</sup> Asian Games in the Women Doubles Event. The score broke the Games’ six-game series record set 12 years ago.

Valerie’s outstanding achievements are not limited to bowling alone. Pursuing her dream of becoming a doctor, she is now in her fourth year of studies in the National University of Singapore’s Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine. Her ability to juggle the rigours of high performance sport and the high demands of medical studies truly reflect her determination and strength of character.

In addition, Valerie still finds time to actively contribute to the community. She has been a volunteer with the Singapore Children’s Society and the Assisi Home. She was also involved in the National Kidney Foundation’s Children’s Pre-Cruise Activities and fund-raising by the Methodist Association. Valerie continues to inspire youths, being a featured athlete in the Team Singapore Asian Games MTV and Commemorative Booklet in 2006.

For her dedication and for being an inspirational role model, Ms Valerie Teo is conferred the Singapore Youth Award 2007.

**SINGAPORE YOUTH AWARDS 2007  
MEDAL OF COMMENDATION**

**NATIONAL YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT AWARD GOLD AWARD HOLDERS’  
ALUMNI**

*“With the right attitudes, people can harness their passions to contribute meaningfully to the community”*

The National Youth Achievement Award Gold Award Holders’ Alumni (GAHA) was conferred the Singapore Youth Award for Community and Youth Services in 2000 for inspiring its members to excel in giving back to the community. Since then, GAHA has continued to play an active role in the community and youth services, thereby living up to its credo of “Service Beyond Gold”.

GAHA recognises the importance of developing youth and offers a myriad of youth development opportunities, including regular leadership talks and international youth exchange programmes. GAHA has come up with new and innovative initiatives including the Young Photographers’ Network. More than 10,000 NYAA participants also successfully broke the existing record for the Longest Human Domino Chain, helping to raise \$100,000 for charity in the process. These novel methods of volunteerism reflect its innovative and extensive efforts in community outreach.

Internationally, GAHA has helped to raise Singapore's profile. GAHA regularly represents Singapore at various events at the regional and international levels. In 2006, the team hosted the United Nations Environment Programme TUNZA South East Asia Conference in Singapore, which brought together youth leaders from ASEAN to share and discuss environmental concerns. The team has also organised overseas youth community projects in ASEAN countries as well as Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India and China.

In 2006, GAHA received the prestigious Commonwealth Youth Award for its youth-elderly integration project “Bridging the Generation Gap”. The Award recognises outstanding achievements by young people who develop their communities through innovative and sustainable development projects.

For its achievements, as well as contributions to the community and youth development at significantly higher levels after being awarded the SYA, the National Youth Achievement Award Gold Award Holders’ Alumni is conferred the Medal of Commendation 2007.

**SINGAPORE YOUTH AWARD****新加坡杰出青年奖****INFORMATION ON THE SINGAPORE YOUTH AWARD PANEL 2006-07**

1. Name : Mr Tan Yam Pin, BBM  
 Chinese Characters : 陈炎斌  
 Appointment : Chairman  
 Singapore Youth Award Panel  
 Designation : Member  
 Public Service Commission
  
2. Name : Mr Lee Suan Hiang, PPA(P), PPA(E), PBS  
 Chinese Characters : 李瑞显  
 Appointment : Chairman  
 Arts and Culture Advisory Committee  
 (艺术与文化委员会)  
 Designation : Chief Executive Officer  
 National Arts Council
  
3. Name : Professor Leo Tan Wee Hin, PPA(E), PBM, BBM  
 Chinese Characters : 陈伟兴  
 Appointment : Chairman  
 Community and Youth Services Advisory Committee  
 (社区与青年服务委员会)  
 Designation : Professor, NSSE  
 National Institute of Education
  
4. Name : Professor Tan Teck Meng  
 Chinese Characters : 陈德明  
 Appointment : Chairman  
 Entrepreneurship Advisory Committee  
 (企业委员会)  
 Designation : Professor of Accounting  
 Singapore Management University

5. Name : Professor Chong Tow Chong  
Chinese Characters : 张道昌  
Appointment : Chairman  
Science and Technology Advisory Committee  
(科学与科技委员会)  
Designation : Executive Director  
Science & Engineering Research Council (SERC)  
Agency for Science, Technology & Research
6. Name : Mr Oon Jin Teik  
Chinese Characters : 温仁德  
Appointment : Chairman  
Sports and Adventure Advisory Committee  
(体育与探险委员会)  
Designation : Chief Executive Officer  
Singapore Sports Council
7. Name : Dr Francis Chong  
Chinese Characters : 莊福新  
Appointment : Secretary  
Singapore Youth Award Panel  
Designation : Director  
National Youth Council

**SINGAPORE YOUTH AWARDS 2007**  
**FACT SHEET ON THE RECIPIENTS**

**AWARD**

1. Name : Mr Alvin Pang Khee Meng  
Chinese Characters : 冯启明  
Age as of 1 January 2007 : 34  
Occupation : Editor and Writer
  
2. Name : Ms Stefanie Sun  
Chinese Characters : 孙燕姿  
Age as of 1 January 2007 : 28  
Occupation : Singer
  
3. Name : Ms Melissaa Kwee  
Chinese Characters : 郭美雯  
Age as of 1 January 2007 : 34  
Occupation : Chairperson  
Halogen Foundation, Singapore
  
4. Name : Mr Ivan Lee Chung Hwa  
Chinese Characters : 李俊华  
Age as of 1 January 2007 : 31  
Occupation : Chairman, CEO  
ThaiExpress
  
5. Name : Dr Yu Hao  
Chinese Characters : 俞皓  
Age as of 1 January 2007 : 34  
Occupation : Assistant Professor and Principal  
Investigator  
Department of Electrical and Computer  
Engineering  
National University of Singapore  
Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory

6. Name : Ms Valerie Teo Hui Ying  
Chinese Characters : 张慧莹  
Age as of 1 January 2007 : 21  
Occupation : 4<sup>th</sup> Year Medical Student  
National University of Singapore

#### **MEDAL OF COMMENDATION**

1. Name : National Youth Achievement Award  
Gold Award Holders' Alumni (GAHA)  
Chinese Characters : 全国青年成就奖金牌者协会  
Team Representatives : Dr Ong Kian Ping  
王建彬  
Chairman  
  
Ms Lee Hui Mien  
李伟铭  
Deputy Chairman  
  
Ms Ong Ying Shya  
王映霞  
Secretary  
  
Mr Cliff Koh Zhixing  
Executive Committee Member
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