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**SPEECH BY DR FRANCIS YEOH,  
AT THE LAUNCH OF SAMH'S CREATIVE MINDSET HUB  
ON 1 DECEMBER 2018**

Your Excellency, Madam Halimah Yacob, President of the Republic of Singapore and Patron of the Singapore Association for Mental Health,

Mr Baey Yam Keng, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth

Mr Alex Newbigging, Chariman of MINDSET Care Limited

Ms Chang Hwee Nee, Chief Executive Officer of National Heritage Board

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning and welcome to the official opening of Creative MINDSET Hub by the Singapore Association for Mental Health (SAMH).

We are delighted that you are here to join us for this momentous occasion today. We are especially grateful to our guest-of-honour Madam Halimah Yacob, an ever-passionate mental health advocate and a steady supporter of SAMH, for making time to grace this milestone of our Association.

The Arts play a key role in developing our identity as a person and in helping us understand the world around us. It is a medium that enables us as individuals to express and create – a skill that is central to our humanity since early history. Today, the Arts continue to be important to society. Not only does it enable self-expression, the Arts also allow us to create connections with other humans in our understanding and appreciation of the world. It is no surprise then, that Art is intertwined with our mental well-being, given how deeply it resonates with our identity, emotions and our minds.

SAMH has come a long way since our inception as a small volunteer run association in 1968, helping people recovering from mental illness re-integrate into society. Apart from the more common rehabilitation services, we started experimenting with art as therapy about a decade ago. Over the years, we have taken steps to strengthen our Creative Services offering to create a supportive environment conducive to the recovery of persons with mental health conditions. We wanted to create an environment where there are positive avenues for individuals to express themselves through the arts.

In the decade since SAMH's introduction of art as a form of therapy to persons-in-recovery, our Creative Services programme has promoted art therapy and art as therapy as a mode of expression and community integration in various community spaces across Singapore. Our work has

expanded from Creative Hub, our first community arts-based centre at the Goodman Arts campus into the current 2 programmes - Creative MINDSET in 2015 (previously located in Jurong) and Creative SAY! in 2017, located in Marsiling. Today, we are proud to open Creative MINDSET Hub, which evolved from the work at the previous Goodman and Jurong sites.

Having served more than **3,800** clients in our creative services programmes over the past 7 years, we have seen the ways in which the use of art promotes mental well-being and makes a difference for individuals with mental health conditions. In addition to giving an avenue for expression, art therapy enables individuals to use their imagination to create new worlds as well as illustrate new interpretations of the world around them.

Consider the experience of Ms X, one of SAMH's clients. She recently shared with us: *"I started attending individual art therapy because I struggled with the meaning of my life and over time, developed an eating problem. When it comes to art therapy, it isn't about the aesthetic value of my artwork but about allowing the art making process to speak to me. Creating art gives me space to slow down whenever I feel that life is moving too quickly.*

*My decision to take up art therapy affirmed my decision to be in control of my life through confronting difficult issues. It has helped me feel more grounded and realise that I am not journeying alone."*

Indeed, we see many of these instances about the healing properties of art, and the power of creative art for our clients.

Creative MINDSET Hub is housed within the vibrant environment of Our Tampines Hub, and integrated into the ecosystem of public service agencies here. As a community mental health organisation, we are proud to be a part of the Singapore Government's initiative to enhance service accessibility and promote community spirit, by bringing multiple service providers under one roof.

As SAMH moves into our 51<sup>st</sup> year of operation, we recognise that we have a role, not just to help persons with mental health issues but also as a champion for mental wellness to the wider community in Singapore. We hope to contribute towards the strengthening of our national social fabric through various avenues and initiatives to cultivate mental wellness and mental resilience for everyone. In fact, that's what our vision statement says – 'Mental wellness for all!'

Naturally, this requires close collaboration among various community agencies in Singapore. We are happy to be in the same space as

agencies like People's Association, North East Community Development Council, Housing Development Board, Workforce Singapore, Ministry of Social and Family Development and ActiveSG at Our Tampines Hub. We hope that through Creative MINDSET Hub, SAMH can demonstrate the ways in which the arts can promote mental health and engage communities to come together to form meaningful partnerships with positive impact for our people.

On behalf of SAMH, I would like to thank our partners - People's Association, Tampines GRC Community Arts and Culture Clubs, National Heritage Board and National Arts Council for working with us to raise mental health awareness through a celebration of the arts. We hope that you enjoy the programme of art activities that we have collectively put together for this occasion.

The opening of Creative MINDSET Hub brings a new impetus to our efforts in creative art therapy and art as therapy. We hope that this new centre will inspire a greater appreciation of the arts in the community and cultivate a positive environment for mental wellness.

Thank you for gracing us with your presence and do have an enjoyable art appreciating afternoon.