

**EMBARGOED TILL 25 AUGUST 2016, 9AM**

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**Balaji Sadasivan Study Award expands to cover new local direct degrees to attract more to be trained as healthcare professionals in the growing Community Care sector**

*The new four-year degree programmes in physiotherapy and occupational therapy are offered by the Singapore Institute of Technology*

Over 100 awardees received their awards from five Community Care scholarships and study awards from Senior Minister of State for Health Dr Amy Khor at the Intermediate and Long-Term Care (ILTC) Manpower Development Awards 2016 ceremony held this morning at the Lifelong Learning Institute.

2. Among them was 19-year-old Miss Chan Mei Fei, an aspiring physiotherapist. She is the first awardee to benefit from the expansion of the Balaji Sadasivan Study Award to cover the Singapore Institute of Technology's (SIT) new four-year direct degree programmes – the Bachelor of Science (Honours) degrees in Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy. The first intake of about 160 students will commence classes in September 2016.

3. “Many of our Community Care clients require long-term rehabilitation to help them regain physical mobility and the ability to live independently. The expansion of the Balaji Sadasivan Study Award to cover SIT's new physiotherapy and occupational therapy degrees will help to attract more young, fresh and skilled professionals from this field to join the Community Care sector. It will also enhance

the standards and quality of care provided to their clients,” said Agency for Integrated Care’s (AIC) Chief Executive Officer Dr Jason Cheah.

4. Prior to SIT’s new programmes, aspiring physiotherapists and occupational therapists pursuing a degree locally would need to first complete their Diplomas in Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy offered by Nanyang Polytechnic. They can then apply for a one-year degree programme offered locally by Trinity College Dublin, SIT’s overseas university partner.

5. The Balaji Sadasivan Study Award, administered by AIC, is funded by the Balaji Sadasivan Endowment managed by Temasek Cares. The award supports students aspiring to careers as Nurses and Allied Health professionals in the Community Care sector. Other eligible courses supported under this award include NITEC in Nursing and diplomas in nursing, physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

6. Successful degree students will have their course and other compulsory fees funded by the study award. They would then be bonded to a Community Care employer of their choice upon completing their degree. In Miss Chan’s case, she will join Peacehaven Nursing Home as their physiotherapist in 2020 when she graduates.

7. Miss Chan discovered the pull of the Community Care sector coincidentally. She initially wanted to be a sports physiotherapist, but this changed as a result of her hospital attachments. “The physiotherapists I was attached to mainly cared for seniors. It was eye-opening to see the appreciation and smiles on the seniors’ faces, witness the bonds formed between the patients and the physiotherapists, and experience the simple joy of giving encouragement. My desire to serve seniors and to give back to the community grew. I am convinced that the Community Care sector is where I want to be. Being a dancer, I know that the ability to move cannot be taken for granted. When I become a full-fledged physiotherapist, I will do all I can to help my elderly clients regain their ability to move and perform their daily living activities,” said Miss Chan.

8. As a sunrise industry, the Community Care sector offers meaningful careers for those with the ‘heart’ to help our seniors live and age well at home, in the

community. Study awards and scholarships, such as those administered by AIC, support Community Care organisations to attract, retain and develop their staff who are at the frontline of providing care.

9. The awardees are recipients of five Community Care study awards and scholarships, namely the Balaji Sadasivan Study Award, ILTC – Upgrading Programme, Social & Health Manpower Development Programme – ILTC, Community Care – GP Partnership Training Award and the Mid-Term Scholarship for Social Workers. As of 2016, they have benefitted more than 600 allied health professionals, nurses, social workers, students and administrators who are now serving throughout the sector, from community hospitals to eldercare centres. This is the fourth year the annual awards ceremony has been organised.

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### **About the Agency for Integrated Care**

The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) seeks to create a vibrant Care Community enabling people to live well and age gracefully. AIC coordinates and facilitates efforts in care integration to achieve the best care outcomes for our clients. We do this by empowering them with health and social care information and arranging for their care when they are discharged from hospitals. We enable stakeholders to raise the quality of care, and also enhance collaboration by working with health and social care providers to increase services to support the ageing population. Our work in the community brings care services and information closer to those in need. For more information, please visit [www.aic.sg](http://www.aic.sg).