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MEDIA RELEASE

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REJUVENATED YISHUN POND PROVIDES NEW COMMUNITY SPACES FOR RESIDENTS AND PATIENTS

Singapore – Over the past year, Alexandra Health, Housing & Development Board (HDB), National Parks Board (NParks) and national water agency PUB have been working together to breathe a new lease of life into Yishun Pond, transforming Yishun Pond and its surroundings into a waterfront health-promoting park.

2 The driving philosophy behind the transformation of Yishun Pond is the idea of placemaking, which encourages the creation of public spaces to promote active lifestyles and well being as well as foster a sense of community. It is also part of the Active, Beautiful, Clean Waters (ABC Waters) programme which aims to transform Singapore's water bodies and create new spaces for recreation and community bonding, turning Singapore into a City of Gardens and Water. With this makeover, Yishun Pond has been transformed into a multi-generational, health-promoting park. Residents in the vicinity and patients at the adjacent Khoo Teck Puat Hospital (KTPH) will be able to use the place for exercise, recreation, interaction and recuperation. The project, which began in September 2010, focused on enhancing accessibility, improving water quality, creating new green spaces and encouraging active lifestyles in the community.

Seamless Connectivity for Yishun Residents

3 Yishun Town was one of the three pilot Towns selected for rejuvenation under HDB's Remaking Our Heartland (ROH) initiative in 2007. The key strategies for rejuvenating Yishun are to transform the town centre into a vibrant hub, offer more housing options, create more opportunities for residents to enjoy the great outdoors, preserve history and improve accessibility to Yishun. As part of HDB's ROH initiative, a striking three-storey lookout tower marks the highlight of its plans to revitalize Yishun Town. Named The Spiral @ Yishun, this iconic landmark inspired by the metamorphosis of a butterfly's life cycle, offers expansive views of the Pond and the neighbourhood. The Spiral @ Yishun is connected to Yishun Park via an 84-metre overhead bridge, which enables users to move easily between

these spaces for recreational and community activities. Upgraded footpaths and walkways from KTPH's perimeter to the Yishun MRT station and the bus interchange will also improve pedestrian accessibility for Yishun residents.

4 "The completion of the Yishun Pond forms an important milestone of HDB's Remaking our Heartland initiative to upgrade and transform Yishun Town Centre into a vibrant hub as well as provide residents with more housing and recreation opportunities. We will continue to roll out programmes to revitalize Yishun and create a better living environment for residents and the community," said Dr Cheong Koon Hean, Chief Executive Officer, HDB.

Improving Water Quality

5 Marshlands and floating wetlands have also been created along the water edge and in the pond, transforming it from a previously utilitarian rainwater collection point to a scenic water body under the ABC Waters programme. With their cleansing properties, the plants in the marshlands and floating wetlands absorb pollutants, helping to improve the quality of water in the pond. They also create a natural habitat for wildlife and birds, enhancing the biodiversity of the area.

6 Mr Chew Men Leong, Acting Chief Executive, PUB, said, "Yishun Pond is one of Singapore's stormwater collection ponds, collecting rainwater from Yishun New Town for our water supply. We hope that as people enjoy the rejuvenated Yishun Pond, they also realise that the pond is one of the sources of our water supply, and do their part to keep the pond and our environment clean."

Creating New Green Spaces

7 To provide a unique garden experience for park users, flower trails have been planted along the perimeters of Yishun Pond. The scenic garden trail features indigenous flowering species that create visual interest for residents transiting between their homes and the town centre. A native forested area with indigenous species of canopy trees provides shade for garden users, while a natural dry stream bed with natural boulders, river stones and water edge planting adds to the natural ambience, enhancing the multi-dimensional garden experience.

8 Mr Poon Hong Yuen, CEO of NParks, said, "Yishun Pond will be a unique addition to the wide variety of parks in our City in a Garden. I am sure that Yishun Pond, and the nearby Yishun Park, will become a green haven for biodiversity and the community. I am also glad to learn that staff from Khoo Teck Puat Hospital have joined NParks' Joint Performance Assessment Scheme. The scheme will allow them to be directly involved in assessing the maintenance standards of the pond, and help instil a greater sense of community involvement and ownership among hospital staff."

Encouraging active lifestyles

9 A barrier-free lakeside promenade extends seamlessly from the central courtyard of KTPH to the rejuvenated Yishun Pond. This new community space allows residents to converge for health-promoting activities such as Qigong and Taichi by the waterfront. It also features fitness corners with walking and jogging paths to promote active lifestyles in the community. Recreational and social activities can also be organised to foster closer interactions and bonding amongst Yishun residents. The redevelopment of Yishun Pond and its surroundings is a natural extension of KTPH's healing environment, complementing the lush greenery of the hospital.

10 Mr Liak Teng Lit, CEO of Alexandra Health, said, "We are fortunate that the hospital is located next to the pond. It offers a wonderful opportunity for us to spread our health-promoting messages to encourage Yishun residents and our patients to take charge of their own health by staying active and keeping fit. We also hope to engage the community to be our partners in health and wellness promotion so that we can build a healthier population here in the north."

Unveiling the brand new Yishun Pond

11 To mark the reopening of the rejuvenated Yishun Pond, a large-scale community event was organised. The event was graced by Mr Khaw Boon Wan, Minister for National Development and Adviser to Sembawang GRC. Grassroots leaders, residents, students and nature lovers came together as a show of community ownership and engagement, as they participated in activities such as community tree planting, brisk walking and cycling. Prior to this, on 28 October 2011, more than 300 students also took part in a mass clean-up exercise within 2km of Yishun Pond. Organised in collaboration with Waterways Watch Society, the students learnt about the importance of keeping the environment clean by not littering as they collected more than 100 kg of rubbish.