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PRESS RELEASE

ANG MO KIO-YIO CHU KANG TOWN COUNCIL EMBARKS ON VARIOUS NEW INITIATIVES FOR ITS PUBLIC TOILETS

- ***1st Market & Food Centre public toilet in the Central Singapore district to receive a 5-star award***
- ***It is the first Town Council to send staff and cleaners for “toilet training”***
- ***Upcoming Best Toilet Manager Award aims to reward and recognize diligent workers***

Singapore, 25 June 2009 – A series of initiatives undertaken by the Ang Mo Kio - Yio Chu Kang Town Council aimed at raising cleanliness standards of public toilets under its maintenance has shown impressive results – with its very first 5-star public toilet awarded by the Restroom Association of Singapore (RAS). This is also the first Market & Food Centre toilet in the Central Singapore district to be given the 5-star award.

MP for Ang Mo Kio GRC, Mr Inderjit Singh, will visit the award-winning public toilet at Blk 162 Ang Mo Kio Ave 4 during his tour of the Market and Food Centre on 4 July 2009. He will be there to receive the “Singapore OK” Award by the National Environment Agency for the Market and Food Centre.

To attain 5-star premium restroom grading, the toilet must have user-friendly and eco-friendly facilities in good working condition, reasonably dry floors, basic amenities such as handsoap, toilet paper etc, and be odour-free and litter-free, and provide customers with small delights such as floral decoration. The caretaker must be available to clean up during peak hours, and the cleaning schedules and contact numbers of the cleaning company must also be displayed prominently.

Said Mr Inderjit Singh, who is also the Chairman of Ang Mo Kio-Yio Chu Kang Town

Council, "It is heartening to see that even a public toilet can attain a 5-star grading. This speaks volumes about the effort and commitment of everyone involved, from the management to the cleaners and even more so the users. We should continue to maintain a high standard of cleanliness and hygiene so as to create a pleasant living environment for everyone."

Besides its sparkling clean floors and facilities, the 5-star toilet at Blk 162 Ang Mo Kio Ave 4 also boasts a very unique feature - its customer service feedback forms. Since end April, over 50 residents have expressed their appreciation of the toilet attendant's efforts by filling in these forms.

Quipped one of the residents, Mr Lincoln Lim, 25: "I have seen such forms in offices and restaurants, but this is the first time I have seen these at public toilets! This place is very well-maintained and the attendant is very friendly."

Another new initiative by the Town Council is to give due recognition to outstanding toilet attendants through its inaugural upcoming Best Toilet Manager Awards. This will be the first Award by a Town Council that is specifically dedicated to this group of toilet cleaners, who are mainly senior citizens residing in the estate. Nominees will be shortlisted from the pool of Customer Service Feedback Forms received from users of the public toilets themselves, as well as through assessment by Town Council and RAS staff.

To better equip its staff in assessing the cleanliness of the public toilets under its purview, the Ang Mo Kio-Yio Chu Kang Town Council is also the first Town Council to send its staff for training with RAS. All senior/property officers responsible for the maintenance of common areas (including public toilets) at market/hawker centres in the estate attended the Volunteer Eco-Assessor (VEA) course organised by RAS.

Said Ms Tan Puay Hoon, President of RAS, "Now that Ang Mo Kio-Yio Chu Kang Town Council has started the ball rolling, we hope the other Town Councils will actively join us in sending their staff for our professional training as well."

The toilet cleaners will also be encouraged to attend a training course with World Toilet College, specializing in toilet cleaning.

Mr Philip Theseira, Lead Trainer at World Toilet College, explained: "Many people tend to overlook this, but there is more to toilet-cleaning than meets the eye. Proper, effective training will significantly enhance the hygiene level of public toilets, particularly in the face of public health threats such as H1N1."

62-year old Lee Eng Chong, who is among the first batch of cleaners selected for the training, is enthusiastically looking forward to the course although he has been working as a cleaner for the last 5 years. "I'm proud of what I do for a living, and I'm always happy to learn some new and effective techniques to add value to my job," he said.

Said Mr Wan Chong Hock, CEO of Ang Mo Kio-Yio Chu Kang Town Council: "The Town Council intends to progressively work towards getting the remaining public toilets under our purview for RAS' assessment with the aim of achieving at least a 4-star rating."

"We are constantly exploring ways to improve and enhance our living environment – and the sprucing up of public toilets under our purview is one of the important avenues through which we can serve our residents better. We urge members of the public to use such toilets like their own, and we shall also contribute by maintaining these public toilets, just like our own."

For media enquiries, please contact:

Ms Michelle Lim
Public Relations Manager
Ang Mo Kio-Yio Chu Kang Town Council
Tel: 6552 9419
Mobile: 81861036
E-mail: michelle.lim@amk-ycktc.org.sg

Ms Susan Pereira
Office Manager
Restroom Association (Singapore)
Tel: 62979824
Email: susan@toilet.org.sg

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Entrance and interior of the 5-star public toilet at Blk 162 Ang Mo Kio Ave 4