



## ***MEDIA RELEASE***

### **Internship programme for at-risk youth inspires interest in early childhood**

**Singapore, August 2019** – EtonHouse Community Fund, an independent charity with IPC status, and the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) partnered recently to launch an internship programme for at-risk youth in 4 of the EtonHouse international school and pre-school campuses islandwide. The initiative was in alignment with the charity's initiative to make a positive impact on the lives of children and youth.

It started out as a pilot project for young adults who expressed an interest in the early years' profession. The interns recommended by MSF were attached to the schools for 3 months in various roles such as in administration and as assistants in classrooms. The preparation for the programme began 2 months prior to the launch with MSF meeting up with the school leadership teams to share more about the background of the interns and the expectations and outcomes of this programme for each individual. The objective was eventually for them to find gainful employment by providing them the opportunity to engage in a working environment of their interest.

Providing youth with employment opportunities was one of MSF's initiatives to help them stay meaningfully engaged. The internship programme is an excellent opportunity for the EtonHouse Community Fund to do its part in enabling the youth to gain work opportunities in a safe and positive environment.

The programme had a 50% success rate. The successful interns not only went on to pursue a career in early childhood but this opportunity also enabled them to build self-confidence and expand their worldview. The programme will resume again in September this year and will be delivered on an ongoing basis.

Natalie Loh, Principal of the EtonHouse campus at 215 Upper Bukit Timah who mentored one of the interns said in her reflection "We are grateful for the experience to be a part of this programme and work with Sharon (not her real name). The most fulfilling part was seeing how much this opportunity has impacted her and how it has shaped her thinking and philosophy on early childhood education. Her shared perspectives on the importance of positive interactions with children and newfound ideas on how to enhance experiences with children using creative materials have shown how much of a life-long learner she is!"

Says Mrs. Ng Gim Choo, Director EtonHouse Community Fund "We welcome initiatives such as this where through a partnership with MSF, we were able to reach out to young people who need support to

change the circumstances in their lives. We are also deeply invested in providing a high-quality education programme for the children in our care and welcome talent across a diverse spectrum of skill sets to work with us. It has been our honour and privilege to work on this programme. Through such efforts, we hope to make a difference to our community and help our youth find meaning and purpose in life.”

“Sharon (not her real name) developed greater self-confidence after her stint at EtonHouse and now wants to pursue higher education in early childhood. This is because she was inspired by the dedication and passion of Ms Natalie Loh, the Principal as well as fellow teachers. Partners like EtonHouse are crucial in helping our youth realise their talents, discover hope and be supported through their rehabilitative journey.” Ms Zoe Tee, MSF caseworker.

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#### About the EtonHouse Community Fund

The EtonHouse Community Fund Limited (ECF) is a Registered Charity Approved by the Commissioner of Charities in Singapore and is an Institution of Public Character (IPC). It was founded in 2015 on the Group's strong belief in the importance of education and that every child regardless of his or her background should have access to good quality education.

The ECF has over the years championed causes that have benefitted children and youth in unfortunate circumstances. Working together with the Early Childhood Development Agency, the EtonHouse Community Fund has helped to provide resources for 7 KidSTART playgroup sites for low-income families with 8 more sites in the pipeline to be rolled out in 2019. In August 2018, the EtonHouse Community Fund also launched a Play Library for the underprivileged children to promote healthy child development and maintain strong parent-child bonding through play.

The ECF ‘box of joy’ initiative that has completed 3 successful years has reached out to more than 4500 children in Singapore. It has also reached out to 164 children through their baby bonus account to further their education. For more details on the ECF, visit

<https://www.etonhouse.com.sg/communityfund/>