Community Forum 2018:
Here Comes Everybody, and All Can Contribute!

Tuesday, 19 June 2018
Auditorium, Shaw Foundation Alumni House

WHAT IS A STRONG COMMUNITY? HOW DO YOU CREATE SPACES FOR COMMUNITY?

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Mr Gerard Ee
Executive Director
Beyond Social Services

What is a Strong Community?

How do we create spaces for community?

BEYOND
social services

What is community?

A **way** of belonging

A **place** we call our own

An **experience** of connectedness and contentment

A **posture** of caring → giving and receiving support

A **possibility** that starts with the ownership of these questions:

What do we want to create together that would make a difference?

What can we create together that we cannot create alone?

"The essential challenge is to transform the isolation and self-interest within our communities into connectedness and caring for the whole."
— Peter Block

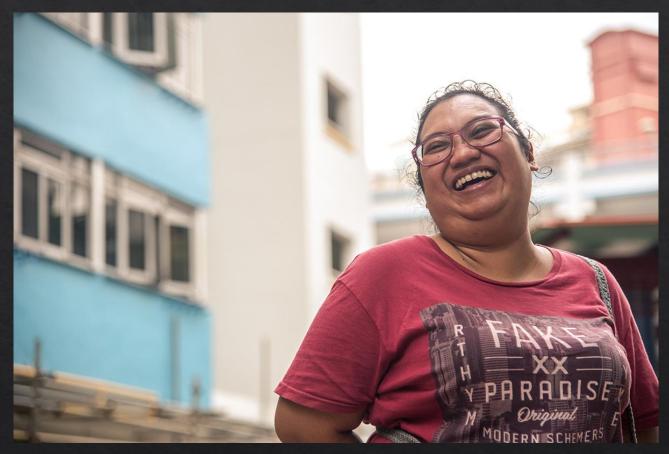The three properties of a strong community

1. Nurture associational life / relationships

2. Offer hospitality, welcome strangers

Hospitality is the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. – Henri Nouwen

3. Focus on gifts & strengths

How do we create space for community to thrive?

➢ Be invested in people, not projects / programmes

➢ Discover and participate in people's processes, rather than ask people to participate in organizational processes

➢ Focus available energies – *what is here, now, is enough*

➢ Shift our conversations from the problems/deficits of communities to the possibilities, abundance and wisdom that is alive within communities

➢ Shift from a narrative of independence to a narrative of interdependence

➢ Shift our identity from consumer to citizen
  ➢ *From the unequal relations of "expert-client" to fellow members of a community who are co-creating a shared future.*

Capacities emerging from a strong community

Kindness
Generosity
Cooperation
Forgiveness
Acceptance of fallibility
Mystery

Thank you!

Q&A

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