

Interview with Mayor Dr. Teo on CDC

Our adviser and clan member, Dr Teo Ho Ping was appointed as Mayor for Northwest CDC last year. All members of the Association are very excited about it. We specially requested for an interview with Mayor Teo and are pleased to present the interview as follows.

Q: Dr Teo, congratulations to you on your appointment as Mayor of Northwest CDC. We are grateful that you have accepted the interview, as many of us do not quite understand how a CDC work.

Mayor: Thanks, I shall do my best to explain.

Q: Actually the concept of CDC was not totally new. I remember we used to have two Mayors in two CDCs. One was Dr Eugenic Yap and the other was Mrs. Yu-Foo Yee Shouou. But at that time, it did not make many waves and most people did not take much notice of it, thinking it does not affect them and it has little to do with their lives. Most people also do not live in the CDCs that come under these two Mayors. But now we have five CDCs and all of us one way or another come under one CDC. It is therefore very important for us to understand what CDC is all about. Can you please enlighten us on what CDC is and what is the difference between a CDC and a town council? Further, we have the Members of Parliament in each constituency; we also have the Citizens' Consultative Committees(CCCs), Management Committees(CCMCs) and Residents Committees(CRCs), why do we still need CDC? In what way can CDC plan to achieve more?



Mayor: PM Goh mooted the idea of CDCs in 1996 to create opportunities of the more successful and able Singaporeans to help the less able by serving the neighborhoods where they live, work and grow up. The CDC's primary role is community bonding-to encourage the strengthening of community bonds, nurture civic-minuteness and responsibility.

Unlike CCCs and RCs, the CDCs have the task of furthering social objectives through activities and programs on a district-level (encompassing divisions and zones). CCCs handle social matters relating to their respective divisions and the RCs handle social matters relating to their respective zones. One thing commonly shared by the CDCs, CCCs and RCs is that all of them come under the umbrella of People's Association.

Town Councils(TCs) handle the maintenance of common property within the HDB estates. They are responsible for the physical improvements of their respective towns.

Although the focus and day-to-day responsibility of each organization differs, the CDCs do not work independently either. For better outreach and effectiveness, the CDCs do work closely with the CCCs, RCs and various other organizations like the TCs to bring about a better social environment for residents.

Q: There are about 12million people in London, 20million in New York and they all have one Mayor each. Our population is 4 million, why do we need as many as 5 mayors?

Mayor: Well, that comparison is just simply based on numbers. The profile, nature and needs of people are different everywhere around the world and a governing concept that may work well in one country may not work just as well in another. Our traditions, way of life and methods of communication and relating to one another are different. Naturally, different methods of governing and policies suitable for the needs of the given population are needed. Mayor of different countries have different scope of work and responsibilities. As such, it is not possible to compare them like to like.

Q: How do you envisage CDC can help the lives of people in Singapore? What are the objectives of a CDC? What are the help services and outreached activities in your CDC?

Mayor: Our focus is the social development of the community and we have 3 key directions mapped out for North West CDC over the next 5 year - i.e. Helping the Community (to reach out to the needy), Bonding the Community (to promote social cohesion) and Connecting the Community (to provide more accessible services). Our help services and outreach activities are as follows:

Helping the Community

- Public Assistance Schemes(long-term)
- Short-term Financial Assistance
- Food Rations and Food Vouchers
- Job-Matching Service(job Connect & Career Development)
- Financial Assistance for Needy Students Bonding the Community
- CDC's 8 Signature Projects
(i.e. North West CDC Arts Best 2002, Big Walk, Mass Swim, Pronating Conference, First Aid Teammate, Art Exhibition, 'Use IT in your Life' and CDC Road Shows)
- Racial Harmony Programmes
- Good Neighbors Month
- IT Programmes (e.g. refurbished PCs for the needy programme named as 'U Can Own IT' and the National IT Literacy Programmes)
- Volunteer Movement (CDC Volunteers, e-Ambassador Programme. Community Befriends Programme)



Connecting the Community

- Partnership with Voluntary Welfare Organizations, Grossularites Organizations, Schools, Project Partners and the TCs.
- Community Centres/Clubs
- Cohesion Magazines (quarterly) & CDC publications
e.g. map cum directory of services