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EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME FOR GIRLS GRADUATION CEREMONY 2017

Wednesday, 30 August 2017 – The Empowerment Programme for Girls (EPG) held their annual graduation ceremony earlier this evening. About 60 members, graduates and their parents were present to celebrate the occasion. The event held at *SCAPE celebrated the 23 young girls who graduated from the programme upon the completion of their GCE ‘N’ and/or ‘O’ levels examinations last year. It also marked the culmination of activities for the EPG in 2016 including the formation of EPG Alumni and sub-committees which we formed to further develop the quality of the programme. The event was graced by Mdm Rahayu Mahzam, Advisory for the EPG Advisory Committee and Member of Parliament for Jurong GRC.

Since its introduction in 2008, EPG has reached out to more than 1,800 students. The programme was introduced to motivate and inspire these young girls through their interactions with a team of women professionals as well as through participation in developmental activities. It is hoped that with this exposure and experiences, the girls will aspire to do well and thus be committed to complete at least the first 10 years of education and proceed to post-secondary institutions.

This year, one particular graduate had shown her dedication to reach the highest potential through active participation in EPG as well as school activities. Nur Fateha Salim, 17, was awarded the Outstanding EPG Graduate. A member since 2004, Fateha was active in the various activities and was also dedicated to volunteering for community projects. Beyond

EPG, Fateha was also involved in her school's co-courricular activities by being the President of the Malay Dance club.



Fateha (centre), receiving her plaque for Most Outstanding Graduate presented by Mdm Rahayu Mahzam. She is joined by her parents.

With a love for interacting with people and passion in the tourism industry, Fateha is currently pursuing her course of choice, Travel and Tourism at ITE College West. She attributed her achievements thus far to the programme. "EPG has made me gain confidence as I was able to make new friends. I was generally an introvert but EPG has changed me. I want to see the change in the other girls too." In wanting to help other young girls develop themselves, Fateha continues to be involved in EPG by being part of an EPG sub-committee as an alumna. She continues to champion girls empowerment and is currently working with the members to raise awareness on issues such as depression.

This evening's event also acknowledged and appreciated the contributions of the EPG alumni and women professionals who have provided support. Women Professionals such as Izza Atiqa, a podiatrist, serves as a source of inspiration for girls to aspire for a bright future in their careers. Sharing insights on her profession and her invaluable experiences about various career paths, Ms Izza is a mentor to these girls. "What I find most meaningful about

EPG is how it creates a safe space for girls to open up about their concerns and gain insights from both mentors and their peers. As a woman professional mentor, I have learnt a lot from the girls myself, and deeply believe that this platform will empower them to grow to their highest potential." Izza, along with 16 Women Professionals, were present to also share insights on the different career industries.



Ms Izza (red headscarf), sharing her insights with the attendees during a panel segment

In her speech, Mdm Rahayu acknowledged and thanked the EPG Alumni and the women professionals for their commitment. Mdm Rahayu also gave some encouraging remarks to the graduating batch. She said they need to be willing to work hard, keep abreast of developments around them and keep improving to be better versions of themselves.



EPG Graduates, posing with their certificates with EPG Advisor, Mdm Rahayu Mahzam (dressed in blue) and CEO MENDAKI, Mdm Rahayu Buang (dressed in yellow)