**www.thehappinesseffect.com**

**Press release**

**Happiness Epidemic to infect 1 million people in the next 100 days.**

**SINGAPORE, 13 March 2013 –** A global movement to spread The Happiness Effect (THE) launches on 20 March 2013, with the target of infecting 1 million people worldwide in 100 days from 20 March to 27 June 2013. This movement is initiated in conjunction with the International Day of Happiness declared by the United Nations.

THE movement is about starting ripples of happiness that change the world, a day at a time. It is possibly the world’s first social movement to crowdsource happiness - THE crowdsources ideas and actions to spread happiness, as well as Happiness Angels who positively impact people around them.

Over 100 days, the world is invited to take 1 action a day to make someone happy, and to share their acts of happiness through videos, photos, tweets, and stories. The actions are selected from a free Happiness Manifesto or public suggestions. Happiness Angels are also nominated and voted by the public, to recognize the joy, happiness and positive contributions that they make to others.

This movement is aptly kicked off in Singapore, the country with the world’s highest GDP per capita[[1]](#endnote-1), one of the longest work hours[[2]](#endnote-2), yet reportedly the most emotionless society in the world.

Are Singaporeans really unhappy? The tiny red dot was rated the happiest in the region by a United Nations study in 2012. In the same year, Singapore was ranked the most emotionless society in the world by a Gallup survey. The findings suggest that Singaporeans may be satisfied with their lives as a whole – possibly a function of having a roof over their heads, jobs, physical health and enough money to live on – but feel less day-to-day happiness due to the stress of urban living. Ms Lisa Choo, a senior clinical psychologist at KTPH, said that ‘It could be that we are not in the habit of thinking about happiness. We don’t make enough effort to adopt a more positive attitude in life, regardless of our life circumstances. But simply adopting a different perspective can vastly change our overall view of life and its circumstances.’

The movement is a not-for-profit, personal initiative by Skool of Happiness founder Ms Angela Lam, who gave up her high-flying corporate career after more than 10 years, to pursue her dreams and passions in bettering lives. ‘I’m grateful for a wonderful education and career, but after years of seeking top results, scholarships, and climbing the corporate ladder, I knew that something was missing. There had to be more to life’. Angela’s skool aims to help people unlock their personal potential and live fulfilled lives. ‘The biggest changes for me actually came from an accumulation of small shifts in perceptions and habits - being grateful for the people and things I used to take for granted, seeing the good in myself and people around me, and being true to myself and my passions. THE movement is about focusing on these small things in life that matter. It’s our way of positively impacting as many people as possible,’ she said.

Said Mr Lawrence Wong, Singapore’s Acting Minister for Culture, Community and Youth and  
Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Communications and Information, ‘Happiness lies in our hands. Alone, we can do little, but together, there is little we cannot do.’

This movement is inspired by earlier studies which suggest that happiness is infectious and can spread like a virus. Harvard social scientist Dr. Nicholas Christakis and his political-science colleague James Fowler at the University of California at San Diego reported that emotions can pass among a network of people up to three degrees of separation away. This means that your joy may be determined by how cheerful your friends' friends' friends are, even if some of the people in this chain are total strangers to you.

Beneath the fun and engagement, THE movement also seeks to address two important social issues. First, in today’s information age and hyper-connected world, there is rising concern that our increased technology connectivity has reduced emotional connectivity. THE movement seeks to turn the tables by using social media as a platform for emotional connection. Second, there is rising debate on how to motivate and engage the Generation Y, our future leaders. THE movement targets the internet generation (including Gen Y) and provides a platform and outlet for them to express themselves and share what makes them happy. Focusing on gratitude, positive thinking, and happiness is also an important way to bond with our children and inculcate what is truly important in life.

‘We are surrounded by doom and gloom and bombarded by advertisements and marketing every day. Often, people just want to truly connect, feel good and be real. THE movement creates a platform for people to pool their ideas, actions and positive emotions, and connect with others in a meaningful way’, said Ms Angela Lam.

This initiative is also timely amidst rising attention on the importance of happiness and well-being in today’s societies. The World Health Organization noted in its bulletin in 2011 that more governments than ever are measuring health and happiness as well as gross domestic product. British Prime Minister David Cameron said in 2006 that “It’s time we admitted that there’s more to life than money and it’s time we focused not just on GDP but on GWB – general well-being”. In fact, one of the world’s happiest countries, Bhutan, has adopted formal principles of gross happiness index (GNH) to focus on the spiritual, physical, social and environmental health of its citizens and natural environment.

In 2012, the United Nations also released its first-ever [World Happiness Study](http://www.earth.columbia.edu/sitefiles/file/Sachs%20Writing/2012/World%20Happiness%20Report.pdf), and adopted 20 March 2013 as the International Day of Happiness, as ‘a forward looking way of focusing on the value of happiness as a universal goal and aspiration on the lives of all’*.*

Said Dalai Lama XIV, ‘Happiness is not something ready-made. It comes from your own actions’. THE movement connects and inspires people to take small but concrete steps that will creative massive cumulative effect globally.

Is happiness the next big phenomena? Will THE movement shed light on new ways to spread happiness? Here’s how you can participate and be a part of the movement:

1. ‘Like’ and share the website and Facebook page at [www.thehappinesseffect.com](http://www.thehappinesseffect.com) and [www.facebook.com/thehappinesseffect](http://www.facebook.com/thehappinesseffect).
2. Follow the movement on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/thehappinessef1](http://www.twitter.com/thehappinessef1).
3. Download the free Happiness Manifesto at <http://thehappinesseffect.com/book-videos>, and offer your suggested ideas on actions that the world can take together to spread happiness.
4. Tune in daily from 20 March 2013, do the selected happiness actions and upload your pictures, videos, ideas and comments on THE Facebook page or twitter. Start your tweets with the #TheHappinessEffect.

For more information, please visit **www.thehappinesseffect.com.**

**END www.thehappinesseffect.com**

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**THE MOVEMENT AND FOUNDERS**

The Happiness Effect (THE) movement is a 100 day movement from 20 March to 27 June 2013. Over 100 days, THE unites the world in 1 action each day, focused at making someone happy. Actions are selected from the free Happiness Manifesto and public suggestions. Happiness Angels are also nominated and voted by you, to recognize the joy, happiness and positive contributions that they make to others.

THE aims touch 1 million people worldwide over 100 days and inspire positive action.

Here’s how you can participate and be a part of the movement:

1.  ‘Like’ and share the website and Facebook page at [www.thehappinesseffect.com](http://www.thehappinesseffect.com/) and [www.facebook.com/thehappinesseffect](http://www.facebook.com/thehappinesseffect).

2.  Follow the movement on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/thehappinessef1](http://www.twitter.com/thehappinessef1).

3.  Download the free Happiness Manifesto at <http://thehappinesseffect.com/book-videos>, and offer your suggested ideas on actions that the world can take together to spread happiness.

4.  Tune in daily from 20 March 2013 to 27 June 2013, do the selected happiness actions and upload your pictures, videos, ideas and comments on THE Facebook or twitter pages.  Start your tweets with the #TheHappinessEffect.

THE movement is a not-for-profit movement started as a personal initiative by Ms Angela Lam, Chief Happiness Officer of Skool of Happiness and several social entrepreneurs in Singapore. Skool of Happiness™ (SoH) betters lives by helping individuals to unlock their personal potential and live successful and fulfilled lives. SoH was founded by Ms Angela Lam. Angela started out with a high-flying corporate career in aviation, tourism and the hospitality industries.  After more than 10 years in the corporate world, she gave up her title of Vice President with a multinational corporation to pursue her dreams and passions in bettering lives. Angela is known for her positive energy, bubbly nature, and “can-do” attitude.  She loves music, dance, books, nature, and an occasional burst of spontaneity and madness.

For more information, please visit www.skoolofhappiness.com.

**PHOTOS**

The following photos and captions may be used for visuals. The photos can be downloaded at this link: http://www.mynewsdesk.com/sg/pressroom/the-happiness-effect

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| http://sphotos-a.ak.fbcdn.net/hphotos-ak-snc7/320159_10151217114027673_818671777_n.jpg | Singaporeans touching typhoon-hit villages in the Philippines with small gifts but big hearts. |
| http://sphotos-h.ak.fbcdn.net/hphotos-ak-prn1/21778_10151504053467673_1303630187_n.jpg | Simple personal connections and great company can make the day for old folks. Sharing and giving at a charity event, *Project 100 Smiles*. |
| 372342A0-6315-4720-B65D-189482282C5A | Ms Angela Lam, founder of *The Happiness Effect* movement, sharing her passions and vision. |

1. In The Wealth Report 2012, a global study on property and wealth compiled by Knight Frank and Citi Private Bank, Singapore was listed as the world's most affluent with a GDP per capita of US$56,532 (S$70,450) in 2010. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. # In 2010, Singapore was reported by the International Labor Organization (ILO) in the group's Global Wages Report for 2008-09, as the top of 13 economies for the hours put into work. This surpassed even the notoriously hardworking Japanese and Taiwanese. In 2012, Hudson report for Asia reported that Singapore had a high percentage of employees working long hours with 64% of respondents across all sectors working 50 hours week, 19% of respondents putting in more than 60 hours, and 37% of Singaporean respondents reporting an increase in working hours over the last two years. Robert Half reported in 2011 that 69% of Singapore employees continued to tune into work when they are out of the office or on holiday, higher than the regional average of 66%.

   [↑](#endnote-ref-2)