

Promoting Well-being & Integration of People With Special Needs

Media Release

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First sports co-operative to promote the well-being and integration of people with special needs through mainstream sports

Singapore, 24 October 2014 – The first sports co-operative to help people with special needs to stay active and social has been established. Runninghour Co-operative Limited (Runninghour Co-op), which started in April 2009 as an inclusive running club by a group of running enthusiasts, has leaped into the next lap as a registered co-operative, the only regulated form of social enterprise.

As a co-operative, Runninghour Co-op will continue on its social mission to promote integration of people with special needs through sports while ensuring its sustainability with a viable business model. It plans to organise race events at a nation-wide level to further promote its social purpose and impact more people with special needs by providing more opportunities to participate and engage in healthy competition in a variety of activities.

Moving towards a sustainable mode of operations

According to Mr John See Toh, Chairman of Runninghour Co-op, “Runninghour has been helping the mildly intellectually challenged, physically challenged and visually challenged integrate, form new bonds and enhance their social network through sports over the last five years. It is more than just a running club. It is a place where aspirations are formed and friendships are nurtured. Evolving into a co-operative was the next step to ensure sustainability, while it continues to rebuild confidence, self-reliance of our special and ordinary members.”

The setup of Singapore’s first sports co-operative also drew support from the Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF), the apex body overseeing the Singapore co-operative movement. Ms Dolly Goh, Chief Executive Officer of SNCF, said: “Co-operatives are formed by members for members to empower them to be self-reliant. This ‘coming together’ of like-minded individuals to meet common needs resonates even stronger when the special needs community and their buddies come together to help one another and themselves. We are delighted that Runninghour has chosen the co-operative business model to take the organisation forward for a wider outreach and greater sustainability.”

As a new co-operative, Runninghour Co-op can benefit from initiatives under SNCF including the Central Co-operative Fund (CCF) Grant for New Co-operatives. The CCF Grant for New Co-operatives aims to help new co-operatives kick-start their business with financial boosters for initial set-up costs and operating expense such as professional management and marketing communications costs.

Official launch of Runninghour Co-op on 25 October 2014

To celebrate the establishment as a co-operative, Runninghour Co-op will be holding a launch event on 25 October 2014. Over 200 participants from various running groups such as TeamFatbird and Morning Greeters will be involved.

Besides a running guide workshop to teach volunteers how to guide those with special needs, there will be a series of running activities including a mass run led by Guest-of-Honour, Mr Hugh Lim, Deputy Secretary (Community, Youth and Sports), Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, and many special guests including Mr Chan Tee Seng, SNCF Chairman, Ms Dolly Goh, CEO, SNCF. There will be a special unified sports run at Bishan Stadium. Together, 60 special runners and 100 ordinary runners will complete fifty rounds around the 400m track to commemorate SG50.

Runninghour Race Run will be the first nation-wide inclusive race event

Runninghour Co-op will organise its first nation-wide race themed "Run So Others Can" in the first quarter of 2015 to promote its cause. Scheduled on 22 March 2015, Runninghour Road Run will be the first nation-wide inclusive race event. The co-operative hopes to attract over 5,000 participants, involving both visually challenged, intellectually challenged and physically challenged runners and the general public.

Mr Seetoh added, "This is not a charity fund raising event. This is a co-operative where members, comprising of special needs people, are both stakeholders and organisers of their events. It is a display of self-reliance and empowerment to do good and to do well."

For registration updates on Runninghour Road Run, go to www.Runninghour2015.com

Runninghour Co-op is an SNCF-affiliated co-operative. Please refer to the fact sheet on Runninghour Co-operative for more details.

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For media enquiries, please contact:

Lee Ling Ling

Ninemer Public Relations P L

E: leelingling@ninemer.com

M: 9647-8917

About Singapore National Co-operative Federation

The Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) is the apex body of Singapore's Co-operative Movement, and secretariat of the Central Co-operative Fund (CCF). Formed in 1980 with the aim of championing Singapore's co-operative movement, the apex body represents 99% of co-operative members in Singapore through its 67 affiliated co-operatives. Today, the Movement boasts a base of more than 1 million members. SNCF aims to promote and develop co-operatives as sustainable enterprises that address social and economic needs through the co-operative principle of self and mutual help, so as to foster a more resilient society. SNCF is a member of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) and the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU). It enjoys co-operative relationship with the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and other international and regional bodies. For more information on SNCF and the Singapore Co-op movement, visit www.sncf.org.sg.