

**PRINCIPAL'S SPEECH FOR
10TH SCHOOL EXCELLENCE AWARD CEREMONY (18 NOV 2011, FRIDAY)**

Our Guest-of-Honour, Mr Liang Eng Hwa, Adviser to Zhenghua GROs

Mr Chng Kheng Chye, Chairman, School Advisory Committee

Mr Chai Chon Fah, BBM(L), Chairman, Zhenghua CCC

Mr Harpal Singh, Founding Principal, West Spring Secondary

Mrs Betty Chow, Principal-Designate, West Spring Secondary

Mdm Geogina Ong, Chairsperson, Parents' Support Group

Mr Muhd Haaziq, Chairman, West Spring Alumni

Distinguished Guests, Parents, Ladies and Gentlemen

Welcome to West Spring Secondary School's 10th School Excellence Award Ceremony. Today, we are once again very privileged and honoured to be graced by Mr Liang Eng Hwa, honourable member of parliament for Holland Bukit Timah GRC and adviser to Zhenghua GROs. We are gathered here to recognize our pupils' many achievements and honour the contributions of our many stakeholders who help shape West Spring as she stands today and impacted the lives of the West Spring Family.

As I stand on this familiar stage to deliver my Principal's report for the last time, I am consumed by many emotions. It is always a tremendous joy to celebrate the school's many good achievements but at the same time, it saddens me as today brings me one step closer to saying goodbye to everyone who has grown to be my family away from home. In the coming year, there are several changes to the school leadership. Besides myself, our first Vice-Principal, Mrs Michelle Liau will also be leaving to assume principal-ship of Delta Senior School. Please join me to congratulate Mrs Liau for her new appointment with effect from 15 December. With Mrs Michelle Liau and my departure, we will be handing over our leadership batons to Mrs Betty Chow, Principal-Designate as well as Mr Bambang Purnama Putra Shakni, Vice Principal-Designate with effect on 15 December. Let us extend a very warm and special welcome to both Mrs Chow and Mr Bambang, who is not able to join us tonight.

2011 has been a colourful year for West Spring on all fronts. The year has passed like a great

feast with different dishes to entertain, enrich and fulfill our lives. It is with great satisfaction that I present to you highlights of the 2011 School Report.

Strategic Thrust 1: Academic Excellence

The year opened with the stellar academic achievements of the class of 2010. For the second time in West Spring's short history, we were emplaced on MOE's Academic Achievement table for the Express stream, ranking us amongst the top 35% of all secondary schools in Singapore! This is a resounding achievement as 82.2% of the secondary 4Express and 5Normal Academic pupils scored at least 5 O Level passes above the national average of 81.2% with the express cohort producing 93.9% of pupils with at least 5 credits amongst which 88.3% qualified for pre-university education and 99.5% qualifying for polytechnic education. Congratulations, class of 2010!

These achievements are the fruits of our teachers' hardwork, care and commitment. Many of whom go the extra mile to help realize the potential of our pupils and bring them one step closer to their goal. A big thank you to all our teachers! I hope the current batch of pupils will be inspired by their seniors and aim to achieve even better results in the years to come.

Strategic Thrust 2: Values Inculcation and Character Development

Garnishing the good academic results were the many excellent achievements from our various CCA groups. Since attaining the MOE Niche Award (Air Pistol) in 2010, our shooters have gone from strength to strength. In 2011, our shooters made up waves on the national and international scene signaling their commitment to shooting excellence.

The winning harvest started at the 15th National Inter-School Shooting Championships 2011. Our 'B' Boys and 'C' Girls Air Pistol Teams emerged as National Champions while our 'B' Girls and 'C' Boys teams garnered the 1st-runners up National title. All in all, West Spring has won 10 National Championship titles in the last 5 years, a rare feat for a 11-year old school.

In May, our shooters representing the National Youth Team competed at the Australian Arafura Games, attaining 2 Team Gold Awards and 2 Individual Silver Awards. For their stellar

achievements, the shooters alone received a total of **24** Colours Awards at National and Zonal levels:

- 2 pupils (Teh Xiu Yi and Paul Ang) received **National** Colours Awards for Individuals;
- 6 pupils (the 2 National awardees together with Benjamin Lum, Sean Chua, Ray Ang and Tan Xing Rou) received **Zone** Colours Awards for Individuals; and another
- 16 pupils received **Zone** Colours Awards for Team Achievements in Shooting.

I am glad to note that for the first time in West Spring's history, one of our student, Benjamin Lum, secured a place in the top premier JC – Raffles Junior College. Well done, Benjamin!

Additionally, their efforts in sustaining the shooting achievements nationally and internationally gave West Spring the Sustained Achievement Award in Sports for the 2nd time at MOE's WorkPlan Seminar in 2011! In fact, with this year's achievements, we are guaranteed of our 3rd Sustained Achievement Award in 2012.

Our successes were made possible by our fatherly and committed coach, Mr Abdul Rahim. He guides, coaches and mentors our shooters in so many ways, often going the extra mile for them. Special mentions also to the teachers in-charge (Mr Kelvin Poon, Mr Kok Yeong Haur, Ms Ong Shi Chi, Ms Pamela Chen and Ms Ng Z-Ting) who spent many hours even on weekends, accompanying pupils to competitions and giving them moral support. You have made the difference!

Other sporting achievements

Our other CCA groups have done West Spring proud too. Our Volleyball 'B' division Boys team was placed 4th in the West Zone Volleyball Inter-school Championship, retaining their top four positioning from 2009. Our Netball Captain, Wong Pei Ying was received the Zonal Colours Award for individuals and was drafted into the Under-17 National Team for her outstanding play at this year's West Zone Inter-School Championships. Pei Ying has also secured a place in Anglo Chinese Junior College under the Direction JC admission.

UG Achievements

Our uniformed groups have also maintained the high standards they have set for themselves.

For the second year, both our National Cadet Corp and National Police Cadet Corp UGs were awarded the Gold Award for the Best Unit Competition. Additionally, our newest UGs the National Civil Defence Cadet Corp attained its first bronze award and Girl Guides achieving the Puan Nor Aishah Bronze Award 2010. 2011's results will be announced only in early 2012 and I am confident that they will be able to sustain their efforts.

Aesthetics

This has been an excellent year for our Singapore Youth Festival performing groups. Congratulations to our Chinese Dancers for achieving the Gold with Honours Award, our Guzheng Ensemble for sustaining their Gold award, our Malay Dance Club and Drama Club for clinching their 1st Gold award and our Guitar Club for achieving the Bronze award. These achievements together with their 2009 SYF results will lead the school to its 1st Sustained Achievement Award (Aesthetics) in 2012. Your commitment to aesthetic excellence has brought great honour to West Spring.

National Education and Character Education efforts:

2011 marks the beginning of a new phase in Singapore's education efforts. Quoting our new Education Minister, Mr Heng Swee Keat, "We want to make our education system even more student-centric, and sharpen our focus in holistic education – centred on values and character development." At West Spring, we believe that character building efforts are the key ingredients to creating a strong foundation for our next generation and should continue to be the focus of our evolving education landscape.

At this juncture, I am pleased to announce that we have successfully attained re-validation of the Character Development and National Education Awards as testimony to our strong focus on Character and Citizenship Education.

These two awards would not have been possible without the strong and holistic pupil-centred programmes aligned to C2015 competencies that are driven by passionate teachers. Signature programmes such as Harmony@Senja and NE Learning Journeys help to nurture concerned and active citizenry through engagement and experiential learning. The NE Lectures renamed

Character and Citizenship Education Lectures in alignment with MOE continue to engage our upper secondary pupils with key national issues through critical thinking and dialogue. This year, we were honoured to have Minister of State (for Trade and Industry) Mr Teo Ser Luck as the guest speaker.

Authentic learning continues to be the focus of West Spring's character education. With the tradition of level camps and overseas trips, we hope to provide our pupils with opportunities in service learning and learn to be global citizens with a heart to serve beyond Singapore. In the process, they too learn life-skills such as team work and working with adults, fostering greater self-confidence and curiosity with the global community. We hope that they will become life-long learners, always thirsting for knowledge to nourish their lives and lives of others.

Strategic Thrust 3: Staff Achievements

Just as food is meant to nourish the body, development helps to strengthen the person. At West Spring, our staff's development is just as important. We developed a comprehensive strategic plan with key people developer processes in place, allowing us to be re-certified by the School Appraisal Branch and Spring Singapore for the People Developer Standard Award (2011-2016).

Processes alone do not signal professional growth. Leadership amongst the staff is also important as many middle managers are key drivers of school initiatives, curriculum innovation and teacher-driven inquiry. Thus, we are committed to identifying and developing suitable officers for future school leadership positions. Indeed in 2011, we have a bumper crop of officers who have attained promotions to key appointments.

Congratulations to our HOD/Pupil Development and Discipline, Mr Adrian Tan who will be promoted to Vice-Principal in June 2012.

Congratulations also goes out to Mr Fauroni, our Level Head/I&E who was promoted to Head of Department/I&E in June this year alongside 4 officers who were appointed SH/LH. Come 1st January 2012, another 5 officers will be officially appointed SH/LH. As we congratulate the new appointees and wish them well in their new journey, I am certain West Spring will only scale greater heights with this dynamic team of leaders.

Strategic Thrust 4: Organisational Excellence

This has been a hectic year. Besides the CD, NE and PDS awards, we also underwent the External Safety Validation and most importantly the major School External Validation conducted by the School Appraisal Branch.

On all fronts, feedback from external validators has been positive. We were commended on our comprehensive safety system during the Safety Validation. For external validation, I am pleased to share that West Spring moved up 3 performance bands since the last validation in 2005. Key achievements highlighted included the emphasis on holistic development of pupils, strong support from key partners as well as an inclusive and consultative leadership that continually builds trust with staff. We were indeed heartened and encouraged by their feedback. Looking forward, we will certainly not rest on our laurels but continue to build on the foundation set by our predecessors and move the school to higher planes. As we move into the next phase, our Principal-Designate Mrs Chow, myself and the Management Team have already started planning and I am confident West Spring is in good hands.

Preparing a feast is never easy, especially a delicious and nourishing one. Good chefs are needed. All the achievements you have heard are the hardwork of good people driving them. At West Spring, we are indeed blessed with staff members who are committed to delivering the best. 7 Outstanding Contribution Awards will be given out tonight, comprising 4 Team Awards & 3 Individual Awards. The 4 Team Awards go to:

- Mother Tongue Department
- Shooting CCA
- Aesthetics groups, comprising Chinese Dance, Malay Dance, English Drama & Guzheng
- Uniformed Groups – National Cadet Corp and National Police Cadet Corp

There is a Chinese saying, “创业难, 守业更难” – it is hard to achieve great results much more to sustain them. Yet, each of these teams has consistently produced excellent results and maintains their high standards.

The 3 Individual Awards for the 2011 Outstanding Contribution Award go to:

- Ms Doris Chong (HOD/Mother Tongue Department)
- Mr Seah Hock Sing (Allied Educator for Teaching & Learning)
- Mrs Joy Ong (Administrative Manager)

Each of the three awardees has made great contributions that help West Spring develop into the wonderful organization she stand as today, inspiring others to do the same.

Congratulations to the OCA winners and keep up the good work!

Special Thanks and Acknowledgements

It is always too short to savour all the delights of a feast and beautiful experiences are often fleeting. My six years in West Spring has unequivocally been amazing. It has been an exciting, emotional and enriching with all of you at West Spring. I am comforted by the support and patience given to me, allowing me to chart and witness the growth of the school.

To my staff, thank you for your dedication to the pupils and school especially the pioneers who have stayed with us for a decade and more. You are the chefs who made the difference. Please join me in applauding the outstanding staff of West Spring Secondary.

To our partners in education, you provided us with the best ingredients to produce the best. Without your strong support many of our programmes would not have come to fruition.

Our School Advisory Committee, your generosity and presence at numerous school functions has indeed made a vast difference to the school. In shooting, your resources allowed us to overcome many constraints and challenges, producing shooters who bring glory to our nation. Tonight, we honour your contributions. Mr David Poh, Mr Ong Chee Kiam and Mr Steven Tay who served in the SAC for 10 years will be receiving their 2nd West Spring's Long Service Award. At this point, I am pleased to introduce Mr Yao Ying Feng, the newest member of the SAC. Let us welcome Mr Yao to the West Spring Family.

To add to today's celebratory note, I would like to announce that our newly appointed SAC Treasurer, Mdm Serena Chen Huai Dan has presented the school with an extremely generous donation. It is with heartfelt gratitude, on behalf of our staff, current and future pupils, I would like

to thank Mdm Serena Chen for her extremely generous donation of \$500,000.00 to West Spring! Since joining the SAC, Mdm Chen has sponsored the annual Teacher's Day celebrations and been actively involved in school events. Mdm Chen has often expressed her concerns for needy pupils in West Spring and wants to ensure their welfare is well taken care of. She also hopes that a plan to improve the school further to bring greater benefits to the pupils will be implemented. These plans are currently in discussion with our Principal-Designate Mrs Chow overseeing how the funds can be used to better the school.

To our Parents Support Group, we cherish your partnership in making the lives and education of your children a better one. I sincerely hope to see more parents coming forward to join the PSG to continue and strengthen our initiatives for your children. To Chairperson, Mdm Georgina Ong and your group of enthusiastic parents who have contributed much time and effort to the school, we sincerely thank you. Mdm Geogina Ong, Mdm Susan Chong, Mdm Chong Yee Ming and Mdm Alice Wong will also be receiving the "Partners" Award tonight.

To our grassroots leaders of ZHCCC, Zhenghua-Senja RC and Bukit Panjang NPC, I would like to express my gratitude for your close collaboration and support for the past 6 years. Our Grassroots Adviser to Zhenghua Division, Mr Liang Eng Hwa has never turned down our requests to grace major school events despite his very busy schedule. Zhenghua CCC Chairman, Mr Chai Chon Fah BBM(L), has been our strong partner for all our community outreach programmes, providing sponsorship for many partnership events as well as availing himself throughout the year to share with MOE on our close collaborations over the years. To Mr Liang and Mr Chai, thank you for your support. For their efforts, Zhenghua CCC will also be receiving a special Partners' Award tonight.

I would also like to thank Mr David Poh, former Chairperson of the SAC. As Chairman, his presence is strongly felt by staff and pupils of the school. It is with his support that the Scholarship and Bursary Programme for Primary 6 pupils was launched in 2006. Amidst his busy schedules, he led the SAC in supporting all major school events and attending every NE Lecture Series since 2006. Mr David Poh, please accept my special thanks for your great leadership in SAC for the past 8 years! To his successor, Mr Chng Kheng Chye, West Spring continues to look

forward to your support and leadership as the new Chairperson of the SAC. Mr Chng is a very humble businessman who quietly donates to the school every year without fail. With his generous donations, no child has been left behind in West Spring. Your contributions have been equally valued and cherished by us.

Last but not least, I would like to thank our Vice-Principal, Mrs Michelle Liau, who is no stranger to all of us. In the past 6 years, she has weathered many trials and tribulations with me. The excellent administrative support and ideas she provided has been instrumental in bringing about many achievements and improvements. I could not ask for a more wonderful working partner whose strong belief in our common vision was a key driving force motivating many of us. I am certain that many of you will miss her laughter, smiles and enthusiasm. Mrs Liau, thank you for going through “thick and thin” with me. You will be greatly missed by the staff and pupils of West Spring. We wish you all the very best in your leadership journey ahead.

To all young ladies and gentlemen present tonight, I hope the “West Spring Way” will take root in your hearts. As you journey on remember “You want to, You can and You will be the Best that you can be. What your mind can CONCEIVE and BELIEVE, you can ACHIEVE, and the change begins with you.” To all parents, thank you for believing in us, I hope we have nourished and fill their lives with adequate nutrients as you encourage them to seize every learning opportunity and grow into “Ladies and Gentlemen of distinction with strength of character, passion for learning and a zeal to serve society” – our West Spring Mission.

As the Chinese says, “天下无不散之宴席”, all feasts, celebrations and journeys have to come to an end. Before I take my leave from this stage for the last time, I would like to once again thank each and everyone of you who have made a difference in my life and allowed me to make a difference in this school. None of the achievements listed tonight would have been true without your belief. I wish West Spring all the best in the years to come under Mrs Betty Chow as well as Mr Andrew Lim and Mr Bambang and hope you will have more feasts to rejoice in. Let the tonight’s celebrations begin!