

Tie-ups Let Firms Do Good Work

- ComCare Connection scheme helps match-make corporate entities with non-profit groups – 15 July 2006

THE staff of CapitaLand have been swapping office wear for casual threads and heading to the Canossaville Children's Home to spend time with girls from troubled families.

This they did over part of the three days' leave the company granted them - specifically to do voluntary work. This group of executives threaded beads to make necklaces and trinkets, which they will help sell at Plaza Singapura on July 30 to raise funds for the home.

CapitaLand and Canossaville were brought together by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports and the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) under the three-month-old ComCare Connection programme, which aims to match-make corporate entities wanting to launch social programmes with non-profit groups.

This kind of mutually enriching tie-up was the very focus of the two-day National Volunteerism and Philanthropy Conference, which ended yesterday.

A WIN-WIN FOR BOTH:

**“ Business thrived where society also thrived,
Good businesses are also businesses that do good”**

- Ms Claire Chiang, President, Singapore Compact for CSR

The conference itself was possible because of such a partnership - between the Singapore Compact for Corporate Social Responsibility and the NVPC. Singapore Compact president Claire Chiang called it 'doing good, even as companies seek to do well'.

She said that corporate social responsibility was 'not simply about philanthropy, public relations or giving money' - it was about making a change and an improvement for the larger community.

Saying that business thrived where society also thrived, she added that 'good businesses are also businesses that do good'.

The managing director of property developer City Developments Ltd (CDL), Mr Kwek Leng Joo , speaking at the conference, described corporate giving as 'highly rewarding'.

More than just cheque giving, the art of giving meant passion for the cause and finding creative ways to create sustained impact, said Mr Kwek, who shared tips on how corporate groups and non-profit ones could engage each other.

At CDL, the social causes selected are championed, not just by the management and staff, but also by other stakeholders such as home-buyers and contractors.

CDL staff give up their private time to plan weekend programmes for beneficiaries. Even the tenants of the property bigwig are roped in to raise funds for charity or to support eco-friendly best practices.

NVPC chief executive officer Tan Chee Koon is heartened by corporate groups 'going beyond giving money to sharing their skills or time'.

She said: 'It means there is skills transfer, where those more savvy in areas like marketing, organising or presentation techniques share their expertise with those with less.'