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A HEART FOR ART

A CREATIVE COMMUNITY PROJECT FEATURING CELEBRITY EDMUND CHEN WAS A REAL DRAW!

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Art With HEART

TOP LEFT:
Artists from ECTV,
a media platform
for entertainment
professionals
TOP RIGHT:
DPM Teo and residents
colouring the artwork

You can have art in your life, no matter how old you are. That was the message at the core of **Project Community Heart**, an initiative by the Pasir Ris West Constituency Office that featured the artwork of celebrity Edmund Chen

Text by NIRMALA SIVANATHAN

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hen Edmund Chen was growing up, art was seen as a waste of time or something only an elite few could afford to dabble in. Children like him were told to concentrate on more practical subjects that would bring them further in life.

"Art was not appreciated very much then," the actor, singer and host recalls. "But things are different now. And initiatives like Project Community Heart make art even more accessible. It shows people that everyone has their own capability and capacity for art."

The inaugural event was initiated by the Pasir Ris West Community Arts & Culture Committee and the Pasir

Ris Elias Community Club's Youth Executive Committee. Its aims are to bring art into the heartland and to reach out to underprivileged youth and residents through art.

Held at Pasir Ris Elias Community Club on 10 November 2012, the event was attended by Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) Teo Chee Hean as well as Edmund, actor Robin Leong, beauty queen Genecia Luo and singer-songwriter Jiu Jian Kenn. DPM Teo is Coordinating Minister for National Security, Minister for Home Affairs, and the Member of Parliament for Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC.

400 residents from the district, grassroots leaders and underprivileged youth as well as 200 Nanyang Polytechnic students also attended the event, where they bonded with the celebrities over a shared art session.



Helping out with Project Community Heart was very special to me... initiatives like this help people gain inspiration through art and bonds the community together. It is important to promote art because art helps us express ourselves and to feel fulfilled."

Robin Leong
Actor & Martial Arts Guru



They were tasked with colouring in artwork created by Edmund, who is also an accomplished artist. The pieces featured characters from his children's books and focused on themes such as community service, family values and integrity. The finished pieces will be mounted and displayed at selected HDB blocks in Pasir Ris West. 🌱

In Pasir Ris West, one of the GROs — Pasir Ris Atlantis RC — has been inspired by the Passion Arts event to form an arts interest group as a spin-off. Through this, RC Chairman Mr Goh Soon Pheng and his CM See Chye hopes to encourage residents to continue their interest through arts and craft. If you are interested in starting such a group, contact ask@northeast.org.sg

A REAL DRAW

"When I was a boy, I was given a small box of colour pencils. That was my first encounter with art, and it opened the door to me to a whole new world. I started to draw everything I saw," recalls Edmund Chen, 50.

"That's why I was so honoured to be invited to be a part of Project Community Heart. It was an opportunity for me to share my passion with the community and underprivileged youth."

Edmund — who wears many hats as an actor, host, singer, director and producer — was invited to work on his first book 15 years ago.

"My son was young then and I thought it was a great way for me to share my values with my children," says the father of two. His son Yixi, is now 21, and his daughter Yixin, 12.

Since then, Edmund has gone on to publish several books. His latest publications, *The Otters to the Rescue* and *The Maskee Bear*, were Kinokuniya's Top International Bestsellers in May 2012. He was also recently voted by the Readers of the National Critics' Choice as the Best New Children's Author Of the Year in South East Asia.

Edmund has also worked with SingPost, designing for them a series of stamps. His most recent series featured the panda as the central character.

