

News Release

UOB announces the UOB Ability Hub at the Enabling Village

Sets up Singapore's first auditorium equipped to help the hearing impaired

Singapore, 20 November 2015 – United Overseas Bank Ltd (UOB) today announced the set up of a centre designed for people with special needs, named the UOB Ability Hub. The UOB Ability Hub will be housed at the Enabling Village which provides on-the-job training, information services and job support for people with disabilities.

Set up in partnership with the Community Chest and SG Enable Ltd, The UOB Ability Hub will include the UOB Auditorium and two seminar rooms. The UOB Auditorium will be the first of its kind in Singapore equipped with hearing loop technology to improve the clarity of sound for the hearing impaired. The technology greatly reduces background noise, reverberation and other acoustic distortions thereby enabling the hearing impaired to hear better.

The UOB Auditorium, which will be able to host 200 people, is also designed to make access easy for those with disabilities. It will have portable ramps, space reserved for wheelchairs and steps fitted with LED lights to illuminate the surrounding area so that those who have difficulty seeing will be able to find their seats easily. With the touch of a button, the seats can also be retracted to transform the auditorium into a multi-purpose hall.

Ms Gan Ai Im, Head of Group Brand, UOB, said that the UOB Ability Hub symbolises the Bank's long-term commitment to help drive economic growth in Singapore and the region and to continue to make a positive and meaningful difference to the communities in which it operates.

She said, "Just as UOB has nurtured and supported the growth of businesses and the financial ambitions of individuals over the past eight decades, we want to help shape the business landscape towards the inclusion of people with special needs.

"The UOB Ability Hub is a natural extension of our interest in our communities. For instance, we have colleagues with autism who are particularly strong in focus and attention to detail, qualities that enable them to perform well in operational roles at the UOB Scan Hub. It benefits both the individuals and the business.

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"With the UOB Ability Hub, we have a broader objective. It is a facility that will bring together like-minded companies, interested parties and individuals with special abilities for the regular exchange of knowledge and ideas, opening up new possibilities for the future. At UOB, we believe in identifying and nurturing the talents of those with special needs and ensuring they are employed in a sustainable way, thereby generating social and economic benefits for all."

Ms Ku Geok Boon, Chief Executive Officer, SG Enable, said, "Our vision for the Enabling Village is to be a part of the culture change to build a more inclusive society. The Enabling Village will provide opportunities for people to explore inclusive facilities and services and how we can model these to the rest of Singapore. UOB is a valued partner who shares the vision of the Enabling Village with SG Enable and Community Chest.

"We see the UOB Ability Hub as a good foundation where we open up more possibilities for like-minded corporates to come together and co-develop programmes for persons with disabilities. In our partnership with UOB, we look forward to engaging more employers and multiplying our efforts to support greater inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workplace and the community."

Ms Ng Ling Ling, Managing Director, Community Chest, added that "The successful set up of the UOB Ability Hub will catalyse more people, private and public sector collaborations that can yield better collective impact for people with special needs. We are encouraged that UOB is the torchbearer to galvanise a wider business community to provide more opportunities for people with special needs through supporting this new centre."

UOB Scan Hub to train candidates at the Enabling Village

In collaboration with the Autism Resource Centre's Employability and Employment Centre (E2C), UOB will also be setting up a training facility at the Enabling Village for potential employees of the UOB Scan Hub - the Bank's operations centre for the checking, digitisation and archiving of documents.

People with autism represent about 30 per cent of the employees at the UOB Scan Hub. In consultation with E2C, UOB has redesigned work processes, developed structured training programmes and modified its office environment to enable people with autism to work at UOB Scan Hub. The change has seen employee turnover decrease and overall work productivity increase.

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UOB was recognised for its inclusive employment initiative in UOB Scan Hub when it was given the May Day Model Partnership Award earlier this year.

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About United Overseas Bank

United Overseas Bank Limited (UOB) is a leading bank in Asia with a global network of more than 500 offices in 19 countries and territories in Asia Pacific, Western Europe and North America. Since its incorporation in 1935, UOB has grown organically and through a series of strategic acquisitions. UOB is rated among the world's top banks: Aa1 by Moody's and AA- by Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings respectively.

In Asia, UOB operates through its head office in Singapore and banking subsidiaries in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, as well as branches and representative offices.

UOB plays an active role in the community, focusing on art, children and education. It has, over more than three decades, held the longest-running art competition in Singapore, the UOB Painting of the Year, which has since been extended across Southeast Asia. In recognition of its contributions to the arts, UOB was conferred the Singapore National Arts Council's Distinguished Patron of the Arts Award for the eleventh consecutive year in 2015. UOB also encourages its employees across the region to be involved in its regular volunteer activities. This includes the annual UOB Heartbeat Run which is held in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

About SG Enable

Set up by Ministry of Social and Family Development in July 2013, SG Enable is an agency dedicated to enabling persons with disabilities and building an inclusive society. It seeks to provide comprehensive support to persons with disabilities across different life stages. For more information, please visit www.sgenable.sg.

About Community Chest

For over 30 years, Community Chest has been engaging the community to support people in need through fund-raising and volunteering. Community Chest supports more than 80 charities in Singapore, allowing them to focus on caring for the less fortunate. As Community Chest's fund-raising and operating costs are covered mainly by Tote Board and Singapore Pools, every dollar donated will help:

- Children with special needs to reach potential
- Adults with disabilities to integrate into society
- Relationships of families in difficulty to stay strong
- Elderly to age graciously in the community

To make a difference, visit comchest.sg.

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Appendix:

Information on the Enabling Village

1. The Enabling Village is an integrated community space developed by SG Enable as part of the nation's efforts towards building an inclusive society.
2. When fully operational in Dec 2015, the site will serve as a community space for persons with disabilities and their caregivers. In addition, the Enabling Village will make it easier for persons with disabilities and caregivers to find the right information and resources, and access suitable services in a more coordinated and integrated way.
3. Spanning about 30,000 square metres, the site will be retrofitted to encourage greater integration and inclusion of persons with disabilities and the larger community. It is designed around three core principles:
 - a. Integrated Service: A one-stop gateway for information and referral services for persons with disabilities and their caregivers, as well as employment services for persons with disabilities and employers.
 - b. Inclusive Infrastructure: A showcase of how universal design, infocomm technology and assistive technology can enable persons with disabilities to lead fulfilling lives.
 - c. 3P Partnership: A space where different partners from the People, Private and Public sectors come together and leverage one another's resources and expertise to build an inclusive environment.
4. The Enabling Village will be a space where SG Enable connects persons with disabilities with the wider opportunities in society and the community.