

# MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



AMP celebrated a significant milestone this year. Our Institution of a Public Character (IPC) status was renewed for another four years, acknowledging our commitment to our standards of governance. This means that donors can continue enjoying 2.5 times tax relief for their contributions towards our programmes and services until 2018. Even though we had faced a setback earlier this financial year, when our funding from the Malay/Muslim Community Development Fund was reduced, I am heartened to note that many have acknowledged our efforts in the community by stepping forward and contributing towards our cause. We have not had to cut back on any of our programmes or services, and we have discovered ways to work more efficiently by offering the same level of quality service without incurring additional costs. This is testament to the passion and dedication that AMP and its staff have towards serving the community and ensuring that our clients continue to benefit from our programmes and services.

A key service by AMP that has brought about significant benefit to its clients is the debt advisory service rendered by our Debt Advisory Centre (DAC). As a result of the advice and support received from the DAC, 83% of DAC's clients have been able to either pay off their debts in full or successfully negotiate a more manageable debt repayment plan. The kinship formed between the DAC clients through the weekly support group sessions has also resulted in two beneficial programmes targeted at the clients and their children. The Achievers and Enablers programmes were started by a former DAC client who wanted to ensure that the children of these clients are not negatively affected by the financial problems faced by their parents. Both programmes are run by clients-turned-volunteers and overseen by AMP. The Achievers programme aims to equip students with personal and academic competencies that are fundamental in achieving consistent academic success and developing effective behaviours, habits and values. At the same time, the Enablers programme is open to the adults to equip them with personal and technical competencies for their personal development and to enhance their capabilities at home and the workplace.

DAC has also shifted its focus towards the education component of its range of services. It recently cemented a partnership with Citi-SMU to jointly conduct a 6-month financial literacy programme targeted at youths aged 12 to 18. This was in response to data gathered from the clientele of DAC, which showed that almost a quarter (24%) of its clients are aged 20 to 35. Of this, the majority of them (70%) are saddled with debts because of poor financial management and their lifestyle choices. The data also show that these clients have an average debt of \$23,000 per person. These figures highlight the urgent need for financial literacy skills to be imparted at a young age, which is the driving force behind this programme.

The community has also benefited from recent changes that we have made to the AMP Education Bursary. In implementing the recommendation by the Education Panel of the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Convention of Singapore Muslim Professionals, that is, having *"graduates in every family"*, AMP has expanded the criteria for the AMP Education Bursary to enable more students to benefit from it. Previously limited to full-time students from local polytechnics and universities, the AMP Education Bursary is now also open to both full-time and part-time students from private institutions. It is our hope to remove as many barriers that may be preventing our students from fulfilling their academic aspirations, so that no one is limited by their financial circumstances.

AMP believes that education is the cornerstone of success. It is one of the key ways for the community to propel itself towards greater progress. This was the sentiment shared by a group of community activists who saw a lack of lawyers and doctors within the community. Anecdotal evidence showed that the stiff competition faced in the law and medical faculties in local universities, as well as the prohibitive school fees, were the top two reasons why not many from the community chose to study to become lawyers and doctors. Together with AMP, the group of activists introduced the Singapore Muslim Education Fund (SMEF) that is aimed at providing financial assistance to students who are studying law and medicine in overseas universities. Administered by AMP, SMEF has received 23 applications for assistance under the Fund since it was launched in November last year.

The collaborative effort between AMP and the community exemplified in the cases of the Achievers and Enablers Programme and SMEF are but two examples.

AMP strongly believes in the value of partnerships with its stakeholders as a way to achieve its mission, vision and aspiration for the community. AMP has carefully cultivated relationships with its partners and donors over the years with only one aim in mind – to benefit the community. It is my hope that these partnerships will continue to serve the community well and much benefit can be derived from it. I also hope that support for our efforts in the community will grow from strength to strength to fuel our spirits in advancing the interests of the community. It is this shared interest and drive that will ensure that our community excels and achieves greater successes.

---

**MOHD ANUAR YUSOP**

*Executive Director*

*AMP*