

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Dedicated arts fund for young people celebrates
10 years of transforming lives**

SINGAPORE, 7 May 2015 – More than 7,000 children and youth from financially-disadvantaged families, have benefited from fully-sponsored arts training programme in Music, Dance, Theatre and Visual Arts by The Business Times Budding Artists Fund (BT BAF) since its inception on 11 May 2005.

Building their portfolios through their training, beneficiaries of BT BAF have gone on to hone their talents in arts institutions like Lasalle College and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, and pursue diploma courses such as Arts Business Management at polytechnics.

Today, BT BAF supports more than 500 budding artists pursuing arts training at The Little Arts Academy (LAA) and 10 Square @ Orchard Central (10 Square). Designed to support multidisciplinary arts training and fully-equipped with a theatre-auditorium, gallery and music studios, both LAA and 10 Square are fully-supported by BT BAF.

Adopted by The Business Times in 2005, editor of BT and chairman of BT BAF, Mr Alvin Tay, shared: “The Business Times Budding Artists Fund was initiated to give children, whose families do not have the financial means to send them for arts classes, the opportunity to experience what dance, music, acting and visual arts are about. It grew to become a platform that grooms talents and nurtures young leaders.”

Development of Arts programmes & training space

BT BAF’s initial outreach began with conducting ad-hoc workshops like visual arts and drama workshops, organising magic shows and inviting children to watch theatre

performances. In its early years, the Fund partnered with children voluntary welfare organisations and family service centres. In 2008, the first arts training centre dedicated to children, LAA, was set up to provide a more systematic and structured arts training programme for the beneficiaries.

In 2012, the Fund extended its funding to include youth aged 13 to 19. This was partly to extend the training for some of the beneficiaries who had outgrown the children's programme. A youth division was formally formed that year with more than 50 youths pursuing the Arts Incubation Programme, a programme which focuses on equipping budding youth-artists with advanced arts technical skills and arts management skills.

The second permanent arts training ground dedicated to the youth division was opened in November 2014 by Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Social and Family Development & Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, Ms Low Yen Ling. Originally a car park space and a gift by Far East Organization, 10 Square's intent is to provide young people with the opportunity and support they need to achieve their artistic potential.

Director for Arts & Community Development and Centre Director for both LAA and 10 Square, Ms Aminah Hussien, shared: "The arts programmes and space offered by The Little Arts Academy and 10 Square have gained traction and recognition from both sponsors and partners. Schools and voluntary welfare organisations like Beyond Social Services, Fei Yue and self-help groups like Mendaki and the Chinese Development Assistance Council are keen to enrol their beneficiaries who have the potential to excel in the Arts with us."

LAA began offering its Arts Exposure Programme on weekdays to six primary schools in 2012. The weekday programme, sponsored by BNP Paribas, saw more than 100 primary school pupils pursuing arts training at LAA.

Beyond Arts Training

Besides pursuing technical skills, beneficiaries of BT BAF have been given many performing opportunities including overseas performances in Japan and Malaysia. The children and youth visual artists have also been commissioned by corporate companies like Fullerton Healthcare and Marina Bay Sands.

Recent achievements and highlights include a performance at the ChildAid 2014 concert by a group of Latin Ballroom dancers from LAA, a performance with Jessie J at the SingJazz Festival by the youth division's singing group, 75% distinctions and merits for the Trinity and Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music examinations. Most recently, one of its youth-artists' artwork has been selected for print on the limited edition OWL Coffee Pack.

"It is not just about the arts technical skills that we impart to the beneficiaries, but it is also values like commitment, discipline and leadership qualities that we can instill in them through the arts. We have seen children grow from being shy to confident young individuals, and troubled youth taking on leadership roles and leading their peers. These are transformations which are made possible through The Business Times Budding Artists Fund," continued Ms Aminah.

New Direction

The Fund that began with the simple belief; that no child should be denied the opportunity to pursue the arts regardless of their personal circumstances, now aims to transform young minds by instilling in them a sense of entrepreneurial spirit that would convert their creative potential into a viable career for a financially-secured future.

One of the earliest founders of BT BAF and chief executive officer of The RICE Company Limited, Mr Colin Goh, shared: "We want to continue to open new doors of opportunities for young people from financially-disadvantaged backgrounds but we have to ensure that they are future ready."

“The Business Times Budding Artists Fund has groomed talents over the past 10 years. Moving forward, we want to nurture young creative entrepreneurs. These are emerging artists whose creativity is not limited to just their artistic talents but on how they can convert it into new business opportunities.”

For Media Queries and RSVP:

Yasminbee Sheikh (Ms)

Integrated Communications

The RICE Company Limited

T: +65 9880 0104

E: yasminbee@therice.sg

#END#

The RICE COMPANY LIMITED

Think Social.

The RICE Company Limited is a non-profit organisation that harvests the potential of the arts and culture for the development of human lives and connecting communities locally and around the world. The RICE Company Limited was incorporated on 26th of March 2014 and is a registered charity with an IPC.

The Business Times Budding Artists Fund

Supporting Young Ambitions

Initiated in 2004 and adopted by The Business Times in 2005, The Business Times Budding Artists Fund (BT BAF) originated from a conviction that no child with strong interest and potential in the arts should be denied the opportunity to develop his or her talents due to a lack of financial resources. Since 2005, BT BAF has reached out to more than 13,000 financially-disadvantaged children between the ages of 5 and 19 years through a variety of programmes including a structured arts training programme, arts camps, workshops, and signature events. BT BAF is managed by The RICE Company Limited.

For more information, visit www.baf.sg.

10square@ Orchard Central (10sq)

Limitless

Originally a car park, 10sq, an arts training centre for young people, combines traditional arts spaces with modern-day arts technology that will define tomorrow's creative arts industries. 10sq's space and programmes are designed as a catalyst for young people to initiate new creative ideas and be inspired to reach beyond their limits. .

10 Square is also home to youth budding artists, majority of whom are beneficiaries of The Business Times Budding Artists Fund, pursuing an arts training programme in Dance, Theatre, Visual Arts and Music. 10 Square is managed by The RICE Company Limited.

For more information, visit <http://therice.sg/reach/10sq/>.

The Little Arts Academy

The Little Arts Academy, managed by The RICE Company Limited, offers a systematic and multidisciplinary arts training for children and youth aged 6 to 12. The well-equipped academy provides a creative and innovative learning environment for children and youth keen to pursue both Performing and Visual Arts.

The academy's emphasis is on giving children the freedom to create original works, providing opportunities to perform, imparting arts technical skills and character development through the arts. With a curriculum that focuses on exploration and experimentation for children and a learner- centered one for youths, the academy strives to be a leading arts training ground for young people regardless of their personal circumstances.

The Little Arts Academy first opened its door on 18 November 2008.

For more information, visit www.thelittleartsacademy.com.