



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Singapore, 1 September 2018 – “Giving back to the community is inherent in our firm’s culture”, says Managing Director of Duane Morris & Selvam LLP (“DMS”), Arfat Selvam. “Our lawyers and support staff volunteer and support many good causes throughout the year. Helping others not only benefits the recipients but also the givers, who can work together as a team outside the workplace.” As part of the firm’s giving journey, DMS has literally gone on a volunteering journey as part of its annual firm trip. Usually the firm trip is a holiday to reward employees for their hard work during the year but this year, it was a little different.

DMS staff travelled to a village near Kampong Speu, called the Zero-Carbon Resettlement Village. It is a resettlement project of Hope Villages, a Singapore based organization whose mission is to support the poor in Cambodia. From a mine-infested scrubland, the site has now been cleared and occupied by more than 100 families drawn from the landless and poor in all parts of Cambodia. Mrs. Selvam herself is one of the founders of Hope Villages and together with a dedicated team from various fields, helped to build the community with facilities such as homes, clean water, waste management and a community centre and mosque.

The DMS firm trip was from 31 August to 2 September and involved 37 staff members and their families. They brought donations of clothing, toys, stationery and household items, which they distributed to the families. The visitors also spent half a day with families and children playing football and undertaking activities such as henna painting, making rainbow looms and sharing lunch with the school children. DMS volunteers also visited the farms and the homes of the villagers.

In addition to the donations of items, the firm collected SGD \$10,000 to invest in the further improvement of the village. The money will go towards the building of more homes and a new playground for the more than 100 children living there. Every year more concrete homes are built to replace the wooden shacks originally built by the families. Each family is also given a plot of land to farm and a well for clean water. Hope Villages has transformed the lives of the people living there and created a real sense of community and hope. The children are learning English and the adults are taught farming and other activities for sustainable living. DMS is proud to support Hope Villages and had an enriching experience. “It is so heartwarming to see the children’s cheers when we arrived and to see them wearing the clothing I donated the previous year”, said one of the volunteers.

Duane Morris & Selvam is one of a growing number of Singapore law firms which are going beyond the usual pro bono legal services to actual in person volunteering for other causes. The firm has seen the benefit of integrating rewarding their staff with a trip and strengthening the culture for corporate social responsibility. The firm trip to Cambodia was a great opportunity for

our staff to see the results of their donations and hard work over the years. “We have all supported the Hope Villages for a few years but now we have seen the results for ourselves. It was a great experience,” said one of the lawyers after the trip.

If you would like to find out more about Hope Villages, please go to their website at www.hopevillages.org
