



# Marina Bay Sands funds Sign Language interpretation service for Deaf Community in Singapore

*Integrated resort contributes S\$144,000 to fund service set up by the Singapore Association for the Deaf*

**Singapore (18 February 2013)** – As part of Marina Bay Sands' Corporate Social Responsibility programme, Sands for Singapore, the integrated resort is contributing S\$144,000 to one of its designated charities, the Singapore Association for the Deaf (SADeaf), to empower the Deaf Community in Singapore.

This funding will go towards providing the Deaf with equal access to information via sign language interpretation services offered by the association. This is the largest single donation received by SADeaf to date for this purpose.

Currently, registered deaf members of SADeaf are entitled to limited free sign language interpretation services through the association's Deaf Access Services (DAS) Interpretation Section, whereas non-members are charged at S\$30 for three hours. Previously, due to SADeaf's lack of funding and resource constraints, members were limited to only 20 requests per year with a maximum of four hours per session.

With the funding, SADeaf will be able to reach out to additional individuals and promote awareness of this sign language interpretation service. With an estimated hearing-impaired population of 500,000 in Singapore, the donation will enable many more individuals who require communication support to better function in their daily activities.

Dr Christopher Low Wong Kein, President of SADeaf, said, "SADeaf aims to provide accessibility for the Deaf through sign interpretation in various settings. For instance, the service will greatly benefit a deaf student attending an institute of higher learning with no communication support. SADeaf hopes to bring about awareness to the tertiary institutions that long-term policy and budget are important for deaf students to gain access to information. The generous support from Marina Bay Sands will provide a head start towards this goal and will allow SADeaf to boost its resources to support this critical service for the Deaf Community."

Marina Bay Sands' support has enabled SADeaf to almost double its current pool of sign language interpreters, by adding two more interpreters to the existing three. With additional staff and resources, SADeaf will also roll out proactive outreach programmes to various stakeholders to encourage the use of communication support service. This service will enable the Deaf to receive first-hand information to make informed decisions, empowering them to fully participate in their daily activities and lead independent lives.

Mr. George Tanasijevich, President and Chief Executive Officer of Marina Bay Sands, said, "Marina Bay Sands is pleased to present this donation to SADeaf in support of its Sign Language interpretation service. Sands for Singapore is committed to provide for the population in meaningful ways, to reach out and empower those who are less privileged, and to use our unique resources to make a positive difference in the lives of Singaporeans. We welcome the opportunity to continue our support of SADeaf's outreach to 500,000 deaf and hearing-impaired people in the local community."

Along with additional financial support in 2012, Marina Bay Sands hosted students from SADeaf and Mountbatten Vocational School, an affiliate school of SADeaf, on an eco-tour of the integrated resort to learn more about its green initiatives and sustainability practices. In October 2012, Marina Bay Sands Team Member volunteers also participated in SADeaf's inaugural Walk and Fly with Me Day, a fund-raising carnival held at Marina Barrage.

Leading up to the carnival, Marina Bay Sands invited teachers from SADeaf to conduct sign language workshops for Team Members and active volunteers of Sands for Singapore. This meaningful exchange of culture and knowledge enabled basic communication between Team Members and members from SADeaf, allowing them to interact with one another.

Besides SADeaf, Marina Bay Sands has also enabled other Singapore charities and organisations to help communities in need. This contribution to SADeaf comes on the back of the integrated resort's most recent S\$150,000 donation to Metta School in October 2012 to fund its hospitality training facilities, benefiting some 91 students. Metta School caters to academic needs of children with learning disabilities and is also a designated charity of Marina Bay Sands.

SADeaf also provides other areas of support to the Deaf Community. These include hearing care, financial assistance, counselling, case management, sign language classes, tuition and enrichment programmes.

To date, SADeaf receives an average of over 80 requests for interpretation services every month from more than 65 deaf individuals.

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#### **About Marina Bay Sands Pte Ltd**

Marina Bay Sands is the leading business, leisure and entertainment destination in Asia. It features large and flexible convention and exhibition facilities, 2,560 hotel rooms and suites, the rooftop Sands SkyPark, the best shopping mall in Asia, world-class celebrity chef restaurants and an outdoor event plaza. Its two theatres showcase a range of leading entertainment performances including world-renowned Broadway shows. Completing the line-up of attractions is ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands, which plays host to permanent and marquee exhibitions. For more information, please visit [www.marinabaysands.com](http://www.marinabaysands.com)

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#### **About the Singapore Association for the Deaf (SADeaf)**

The Singapore Association for the Deaf (SADeaf) is a member of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS). It is supported by the Tote Board, Community Chest of Singapore and the Singapore Pools (Private) Limited. Some of its programmes and services are co-funded by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF).

Founded in 1955, the mission of SADeaf is to assist the Deaf to achieve a better quality of life and to enable them to integrate and contribute to society. Services provided by SADeaf include sign language interpretation, hearing care, financial assistance, counselling, case management, sign language classes, tuition and enrichment programmes. As at 31 January 2013, SADeaf has a total of 5,113 registered deaf clients.

## FAQs

### **Marina Bay Sands contributes to SADeaf's Sign Language Interpretation Service**

**1. How will the donation by Marina Bay Sands help SADeaf?**

Currently, SADeaf provides free sign language interpretation to over 300 registered members of the association. However this is limited to only 20 requests per year, with a maximum of 4 hours per session.

With the donation from Marina Bay Sands, SADeaf will now be able to provide this service not only to registered members, but also to the larger Deaf Community in Singapore, an estimated population of approximately 500,000.

**2. What is the role of Marina Bay Sands?**

Marina Bay Sands has chosen SADeaf as one of its designated charities in 2012. As one of SADeaf's Ambassadors, Marina Bay Sands has been actively involved in supporting the association's efforts for the past year. This includes volunteering at SADeaf's fundraising events, as well as hosting students from the association's affiliated schools - Singapore School for the Deaf and Mountbatten Vocational School to educational visits at the integrated resort.

**3. What are the other outreach programmes SADeaf will utilize the funds for?**

Besides empowering SADeaf to provide limited free service to its beneficiaries, the funding from Marina Bay Sands will further enable SADeaf to boost its resources for this programme, through the recruitment of two additional sign language interpreters.

The additional manpower resource will enable SADeaf to plan and develop outreach programmes to various stakeholders, namely their deaf clients, hearing public and volunteer interpreters on:

- "Awareness on Communication Support Service for the Deaf"
- "What is Sign Language Interpreting?"
- "How to work with a Sign Language Interpreter?"
- "How to request for an interpretation service?"

**4. What is the difference between a deaf client and a deaf member?**

A deaf client is a person with hearing loss who has registered with SADeaf to enjoy its services, such as hearing care and counselling. Registration is free of charge. However, clients are still required to pay an annual fee of S\$15 to become a member to enjoy limited free interpretation service.

Membership is open to both hearing and deaf persons who support the cause of SADeaf. Registration is an annual fee of S\$15. Members enjoy discounts for some programmes and services.