

Mr. Teo Ser Luck, Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry

Founding President, Mr. Russell Miller

Past Presidents of SOE

Honourees, Sponsors, Donors, Partners

My Fellow Board of Governors

Distinguished Guests

Ladies & Gentlemen

A very good evening to one and all.

Thank you for taking time off your busy schedule to be here today to attend the SOE Awards Dinner 2013.

SOE's mission is to honour home-grown entrepreneurs and to inspire budding entrepreneurs among the students and youths.

SOE's unique Student Interviewer Programme offers tertiary students the opportunity to conduct one-to-one interview sessions with successful entrepreneurs. During such sessions, students will have a better understanding of the challenges and setbacks faced by the entrepreneurs, as well as the determination and perseverance to succeed especially in today's market where labour is tight and rentals are high. This is indeed a challenging time for all SMEs. We hope that such personal sharing sessions on how to overcome these problems will inspire our student interviewers upon graduation and to take a course in work atypical from their peers.

To our 33 honourees, my heartiest congratulations to each and every one of you.

In addition, I would also like to congratulate the winner of the SOE-Nexia TS Entrepreneur of the Year Award, Mr. Ong Tze Boon, Group Executive Chairman of ONG&ONG Group.

For all the events that SOE carries out, we are supported by a very generous group of sponsors and donors who help to fund our community outreach programmes.

I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to the following :-

Our key supporters:

Nexia TS Pte Ltd - For supporting our SOE-Nexia TS Entrepreneur of the Year Award

Charles & Keith (Singapore) Pte Ltd - For their contribution to the Charles & Keith Partner Student Award

Our major donors who are in the hall of fame known as "The Friends of SOE".

I will also like to extend my personal appreciation to our Guest-of-Honour,

Mr. Teo Ser Luck, Minister of State, Ministry of Trade & Industry for gracing our awards dinner, as well as my SOE Board of Governors for their tireless contribution and support to make all of SOE's programme a successful and meaningful one.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention a special person, my Chairman of tonight's awards dinner, Sa'at, who has unselfishly forked out time and effort in helping SOE in so many ways. He has time and time again, mobilised his team, partners, suppliers and friends to contribute what they can to serve the cause of SOE.

I would like to wrap up my speech this evening with a story as every company exists because of a dream and there is a story to be told.

The Colonel dropout of school at the age of 12. During his prime, he tried his hands on several industries ranging from insurance to law and was continuously shot down again and again. And at the age of 65, when many would think of giving up and retiring, he followed his passion and perfected his recipe, and wanted to sell chicken in a cardboard box. The Colonel knew that his calling was in the restaurant business. Within a few years, he had 600 franchisees and today he has more than 18,000 franchisees in 120 countries. This is one of the most successful stories in the fast food industry, even beating McDonald's at that time. You do not see a chicken in the KFC logo but rather a man in a white suit and goatee.

It is not about the 11 secret ingredients of herbs and spices but the special ingredient, The Colonel Sanders. Today, you are seated with this special ingredient at your table, the man or woman who had a dream to pave their entrepreneurial journeys. They started somewhere and are getting somewhere too.

Since its inception 11 years ago, Spirit of Enterprise has always reached for greater heights and bigger possibilities, focusing on getting our message to more people. We encourage all honourees to build your brand and leave a legacy behind. As you can see on the cover of these special magazines on your table, we at SOE have recognized your achievements.

Tonight is your night.

Tonight, let us celebrate.

Cheers.

Thank you