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No 8, Burn Road, #04-01 Trivex, Singapore 369977

T: 6636 7880 F: 6636 7881 M: 91154856
E: enquiry@adcom2u.com www.adcom2u.com

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TOKYO DESIGN TECHNOLOGY CENTER
1-24-6, Shibuya, Shibuya-ku 150-0002 Tokyo
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SINGAPORE — Needy secondary students living in the Central Singapore district now have a new Get-to-School Transport Grant to help them with their school transport needs.

Over the next three years, up to 300 students will receive S\$360 each to subsidise their transport costs under the scheme. The grant, launched by the Central Singapore Community Development Council and Maybank Singapore, is worth S\$100,800.

The first 65 beneficiaries received their grants yesterday. Recipient Lawrence Soh said: "It will help us by saving time walking to the school and (enable) us to (reach) school faster. In our school, we have the rule that, if we are late three times, we have to go for detention for two hours."

This is an example where "people stretch out and give a leg up to those who need a little bit more support", said Minister of State for Transport and Finance Josephine Teo, guest-of-honour at the launch yesterday.

She also told reporters she was not surprised by the mixed reactions to Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam's comment that Singaporeans earning S\$1,000 could own a home.

She noted people may not be aware that, with Housing and Development Board grants, the loan amount is about S\$40,000, which works out to a S\$100 to S\$200 monthly instalment over 20 to 30 years. With grant support, a regular job and CPF contributions, lower-income earners can own a home, she said. **S RAMESH**

Social network of private aviators taking off

SINGAPORE — Be it for a humanitarian mission or just a holiday, more people in Singapore are flying on private planes to their destinations, typically in Asia, from Singapore's Seletar Airport.

But most of these jet-setters do not own a plane — just a paid membership with WingsOverAsia.

WingsOverAsia, a social network of private aviators, has seen membership grow to over 1,000 since it was established two years ago.

The organisation has a scheme where those without planes can get the opportunity to fly another member's plane for as low as S\$480 per hour. It also offers flying tours.

The organisation handles all the administrative work and logistics involved when flying across borders. It has three planes and looks after 16 other planes owned by its members based in Singapore. "WingsOverAsia in many ways is about lowering the barriers to having the private pilot experience. We are trying to make it easier for you to fly, we are trying to make it cheaper for you to fly," said chief financial officer Joseph Gotuaco.

The organisation recently held its annual networking dinner with aviators around the region, for the first time in Singapore.

HETTY MUSFIRAH