

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
21 February 2019

**WORLD'S FIRST HAPPINESS FILM FESTIVAL FROM 20-24 MARCH**  
**TO RAISE AWARENESS ON HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING**



Happiness Initiative is excited to announce the world's first Happiness Film Festival, to raise greater awareness on happiness and well-being through films and post-screening dialogues. Through this festival, they want to encourage thought-provoking conversations and experiences with various speakers and audiences.

The festival will happen from **20 – 24 March at The Projector, \*SCAPE and Aliwal Arts Centre**. It will open on 20 March, in conjunction with the UN's International Day of Happiness.

Co-Founder of Happiness Initiative, Simon Leow, shared: "Based on the World Happiness Report, Singapore is only ranked 34<sup>th</sup>, despite being more developed. There is much we can do to improve people's well-being. Happiness Initiative is a social enterprise that focuses on promoting well-being and happiness. We wanted to use more engaging mediums to create more thought-provoking discussions, which led us to this journey of organizing this film festival."

This event is organized with the support of the National Youth Council and Our Singapore Fund.

**SIX INTERNATIONAL FEATURES - EACH COVERING DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF HAPPINESS**

The inaugural edition of the festival will have 6 feature films from 4 countries – USA, Japan, Taiwan and Denmark. Each film explores an aspect of well-being, and each screening will be followed by a post-screening dialogue with a panel of speakers who are knowledgeable in that domain.

Opening the festival is *A BRAVE HEART: THE LIZZIE VALASQUEZ STORY*, a documentary about the Lizzie Velásquez who overcame cyber-bullying to become a well-known motivational speaker. The post-screening dialogue will explore themes of resilience and kindness. The film will be co-presented by the Singapore

Committee for UN Women. The speakers for the post-screening dialogue include representatives from Singapore Kindness Movement and Twitter.

Sherman Ho, the co-founder of Happiness Initiative, shared, “A BRAVE HEART: THE LIZZIE VALASQUEZ STORY was a film that resonated with me deeply when I first saw it, and I have always wanted to screen it in Singapore. There is so much we can learn about being resilient and kind from her story. Each film in the festival explores different themes that are very relevant in Singapore’s context today, and the dialogue session helps audiences to explore new perspectives on these topics.”



The festival also explores what it means to be happy from the perspective of other countries. FINDING HYGGE explores the idea of *Hygge*, a Danish concept which recently exploded in popularity around the world. The film will be co-presented by AirBnb, and there will also be a representative from the Embassy of Denmark to share about concept of *Hygge*.

More information about the films and speakers can be found in Annex B.

**HAPPINESS EXPERIENCES**

There will also be a number of ancillary events happening before and during the film festival. Happiness Initiative, together with \*SCAPE, will host their fifth edition of Screwed Up Moments, where they pull together speakers to share about their failures in life, focusing on these two message: it’s okay to fail and it’s okay to try again.

There will also be two Happiness 101 experiences, where Happiness Initiative will share more about the science and misconceptions of happiness, and the journey to discover meaning and purpose in life.

More information about the Happiness Film Festival Experiences can be found in Annex C & D.

**Press Contact**

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**Public Enquiries**

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**Press Kit**

<http://bit.ly/HFFMediaKit>

**Social Links**

Website: <http://happinessinitiative.sg>  
 FB: <http://fb.com/happinessinitiative.sg>  
 Instagram:  
<http://instagram.com/happinessinitiative.sg>

**ANNEX A – HAPPINESS FILM FESTIVAL SCHEDULE / TICKETING INFORMATION**

Date/ Time	Venue	Programme	Theme
14 March (Thu) 7PM - 9PM	*SCAPE	<i>Screwed Up Moments #5 (with Short Film Screening)</i> <b>THE SHINING STAR OF LOSERS EVERYWHERE</b>	Fear of Failure
16 March (Sat) 7PM - 10PM	*SCAPE	<i>Screening</i> <b>HUMAN</b>	Embracing Humanity
20 March (Wed) 6.30PM - 10PM	The Projector	<b>Co-Presented by Singapore Committee for UN Women</b> <i>Opening Film: Reception + Screening + Q&amp;A</i> <b>A BRAVE HEART: THE LIZZIE VELASQUEZ STORY</b>	Resilience & Kindness
21 March (Thu) 7.30PM - 10PM	The Projector	<b>Co-Presented by Japan Creative Centre</b> <i>Screening + Q&amp;A</i> <b>SURVIVAL FAMILY サバイバルファミリー</b>	Family & Technology
22 March (Fri) 7.30PM - 10PM	The Projector	<b>Co-Presented by Airbnb</b> <i>Screening + Q&amp;A</i> <b>FINDING HYGGE</b>	Contentment & Optimism
23 March (Sat) 11AM – 1PM	Aliwal Arts Centre	<i>Experiential Journey</i> <b>HAPPINESS 101</b>	Happiness & Well-Being
23 March (Sat) 2PM - 4.30PM	The Projector	<i>Screening + Q&amp;A</i> <b>THE WORK</b>	Ego & Pain
23 March (Sat) 7.30PM - 10PM	The Projector	<b>Co-Presented by The School of Positive Psychology</b> <i>Screening + Q&amp;A</i> <b>ON HAPPINESS ROAD 幸福路上</b>	Meaning & Purpose
24 March (Sun) 11AM – 1PM	Aliwal Arts Centre	<i>Experiential Journey</i> <b>MEANING &amp; PURPOSE</b>	Meaning & Purpose
24 March (Sun) 2PM - 4.30PM	The Projector	<i>Screening + Q&amp;A</i> <b>MINIMALISM</b>	Non-Attachment & Letting Go

**TICKETING INFORMATION**

\$15 : General Public

\$12 : Early Bird Tickets (Limited stocks available until 28 Feb)

\$12 : Singapore Film Society Members

**Ticketing Link:**
<http://bit.ly/HappinessFilmFestival>
**LOCATIONS**
**The Projector**

 6001 Beach Road,  
Golden Mile Tower (NOT COMPLEX!) #05-00  
Singapore 199589

**Aliwal Arts Centre**

 28 Aliwal Street  
Singapore 199918

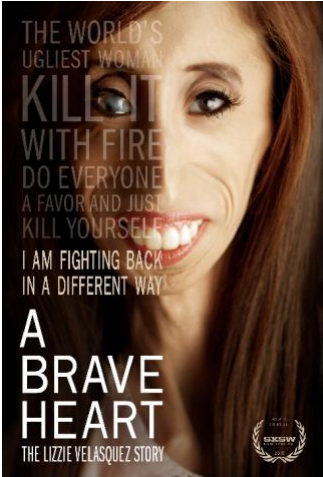
**\*SCAPE Gallery**

 2 Orchard Link, #05-01  
Singapore 237978

**\*SCAPE Hubquarters**

 2 Orchard Link, #04-01  
Singapore 237978

**ANNEX B – ABOUT THE FILMS**

	<p><b>A BRAVE HEART: THE LIZZIE VELASQUEZ STORY</b></p>
	<p>Born with a rare syndrome that prevents her from gaining weight, Elizabeth "Lizzie" Velasquez was first bullied as a child in school for looking different and, later online, as a teenager when she discovered a YouTube video labeling her "The World's Ugliest Woman."</p>
	<p>The film chronicles unheard stories and details of Lizzie's physical and emotional journey up to her multi-million viewed TEDx talk, and follows her pursuit from a motivational speaker to Capitol Hill as she lobbies for the first federal anti-bullying bill.</p>
	<p>Year: 2015        Genre: Documentary        Director: Sara Hirsh Bordo        Country: USA        Runtime: 78 mins        Language: English        Subtitles: None        Rating: TBC</p>
	<p><b>Post-Screening Dialogue</b></p>
	<p>In the online realm, things can escalate fast and get blown out of proportion. The post-screening dialogue will explore the themes of resilience and kindness in a space that we often have little control over.</p>
	<p><b>Sherman Ho (Moderator)</b>        Co-Founder        Happiness Initiative</p>
	<p><b>Jun Chu</b>        Head of Public Policy, Greater China        Twitter Inc</p>
	<p><b>Dr William Wan</b>        General Secretary        Singapore Kindness Movement</p>



## **SURVIVAL FAMILY サバイバルファミリー**

Residing in Tokyo, the Suzuki family is a dysfunctional family, where everyone is self-centred and absorbed in their own lives.

One morning, they wake and find out that all the electricity is off. They decide to go to work and school, but the trains and cars are also out of commission. Entire weeks pass, the situation remains unchanged, and their food supplies begin to dwindle.

With no option left, they head to Kagoshima on bicycles, but the journey brings trying times they tackle to make it through.

Year: 2017

Genre: Comedy, Drama

Director: Shinobu Yaguchi

Country: Japan

Runtime: 117 mins

Language: Japanese with English Subtitles

Rating: PG

### **Post-Screening Dialogue**

With the Internet, we are experiencing unprecedented connectivity. Yet, there seems to be a paradox - the more connected we are; the more disconnected we become, especially with people that matter. The post-screening dialogue explores this paradox.

### **Simon Leow (Moderator)**

Co-Founder

Happiness Initiative

### **Dawn Sim**

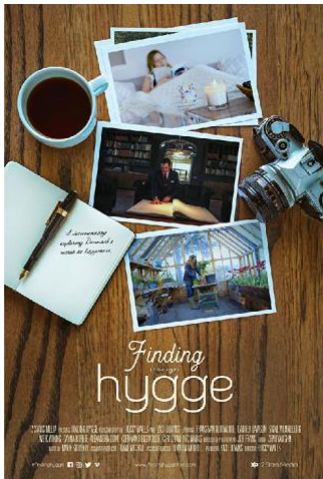
Founder

The Open Center

### **Sulynn Chong**

Founder

Asian Center for Applied Positive Psychology



## FINDING HYGGE

Hygge, the Danish art of creating joy and coziness in life's everyday moments, has exploded in popularity amidst growing division and distrust around the world. But finding hygge in one's own life can be more complicated than it seems. This globe-trotting film presents a surprising, funny, and often philosophical collection of characters who share the meaning of hygge and how to find happiness.

Year: 2018

Genre: Documentary

Director: Rocky Walls

Country: Denmark

Runtime: 90mins

Language: English

Rating: PG-13 (Some Coarse Language 些许粗俗语言)

### Post-Screening Dialogue

Denmark has been ranked top three in happiness since the first issue of the World Happiness Report in 2012. The post-screening dialogue explores Hygge - an idea that is so central to what it means to be happy in Denmark. The dialogue also explores if the idea of Hygge can be applicable to our Singapore context.

### Simon Leow (Moderator)

Co-Founder

Happiness Initiative

### Claire Ong

Associate Faculty Member

(Socio-Emotional Learning and Positive Psychology)

Singapore University of Social Sciences

### Magnus Højberg Mernild

Head of Communications & Public Diplomacy

Royal Danish Embassy in Singapore



## THE WORK

Set inside a single room in Folsom Prison, THE WORK follows three men from the outside as they participate in a four-day group therapy retreat with level-four convicts. Over the four days, each man in the room takes his turn at delving deep into his past. The raw and revealing process that the incarcerated men undertake exceeds the expectations of the free men, ripping them out of their comfort zones and forcing them to see themselves and the prisoners in unexpected ways.

THE WORK offers a powerful and rare look past the cinder block walls, steel doors and the dehumanising tropes in our culture to reveal a movement of change and redemption that transcends what we think of as rehabilitation.

Year: 2017

Genre: Documentary

Director: Jairus McLeary

Country: USA

Runtime: 87 mins

Language: English

Rating: TBC

### Post-Screening Dialogue

Many of us accumulate baggage in ourselves as we proceed on in life. The post-screening dialogue explores how inmates could be free while those outside the bars could be imprisoned. It looks at the transformation process when one can transcend our personal baggage.

### Sulynn Chong (Moderator)

Founder

Asian Center for Applied Positive Psychology

### Ada Wong

Clinical Supervisor

### Bek Wuay

Researcher

Former Counsellor at Singapore Prisons Service



**ON HAPPINESS ROAD 幸福路上**

Chi grew up on Happiness Road in Taiwan but has always been living in awe of the USA. Everything she knew about the country excited her; the chocolate, the cartoons. Chi was taught that the only way to earn happiness is to study hard so she could move to the USA. Chi took this to heart and eventually her dreams became reality when she got the opportunity to move to the USA, where she met her husband and settled down.

However, Chi’s dream move didn’t turn out the way she hoped it would. She became lost in her seemingly happy life. On a trip home for her grandmother’s funeral, Chi stumbles into classmates and friends from years gone by. She begins to feel nostalgic about her childhood and starts to question her own supposed happiness.

As Chi starts to redefine her own happiness with a trip down memory lane, she begins to contemplate the meaning of ‘life’ and ‘home’.

Year: 2017  
Genre: Animation  
Director: Sung Hsin-Yin 宋欣颖  
Country: Taiwan  
Runtime: 109 mins  
Language: Mandarin, Hokkien with English and Chinese Subtitles  
Rating: PG

**Post-Screening Dialogue**

Are there moments in our life that we don’t know why we are doing what we are doing? The post-screening dialogue explores something close to the hearts of many people - what is our meaning and purpose in life?

**Simon Leow (Moderator)**

Co-Founder  
Happiness Initiative

**Mark Baildon**

Head of Humanities & Social Studies Education  
National Institute of Education

**Shaen Yeo**

Founder  
Positive Education

**Stephen Lew**

Founder and Executive Director  
*The School of Positive Psychology*



## MINIMALISM: A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT THE IMPORTANT THINGS

How might your life be better with less?

MINIMALISM: A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT THE IMPORTANT THINGS examines the many flavors of minimalism by taking the audience inside the lives of minimalists from all walks of life—families, entrepreneurs, architects, artists, journalists, scientists, and even a former

Wall Street broker—all of whom are striving to live a meaningful life with less.



Year: 2016

Genre: Documentary

Director: Matt D'Avella

Country: USA

Runtime: 78 mins

Language: English

Rating: TBC

### Post-Screening Dialogue

Can we find happiness in things and possessions? This post-screening dialogue explores the idea that letting go of things and possessions may be one of the ways that makes us happier.

### Veronica Chua (Moderator)

Co-Founder

Positive Education Lab

### Joan Veronica Chong

Founder

Minimalism in Singapore

### Heng Siok Tian

Educator

**ANNEX C – ABOUT THE EXPERIENCES**

**HAPPINESS 101: AN INTRODUCTION**



What exactly is Happiness? Is it an elusive idea, or is it something that you can choose to experience?

Join us for in this two hour experience where we will share a short introduction of the science and research behind happiness.

What we will cover:

1. Why is Happiness always short-lived?
2. Misconceptions about Happiness
3. Choices we can make to be happier

**HAPPINESS 101: MEANING & PURPOSE**



Why is it some of us hate our jobs and dread going to work, while others brim with passion and excitement about the work that they do? Why is it that some can find such meaning and purpose in their jobs, while some don't?

If you have been caught in a race not knowing where you are going, this experience may shed some light on how to develop a greater sense of meaning and



purpose in life.

Join us for in this two hour experience where we will share a introduction of the current science and research behind meaning and purpose.

What we will cover:

1. What is meaning and purpose?
2. Where does our purpose come from?
3. What can we do to find purpose?

**ANNEX D – PRELUDE EXPERIENCES**

	<p><b>SCREWED UP MOMENTS #5</b></p> <p>Many talks focus on success stories. But often, each success story is accompanied by many more untold stories of failures.</p> <p>These series of talks will focus on those stories, where people come forward to share about their biggest screw-ups and failures, and how they overcame it.</p> <p>It's okay to fail, and it's important to keep trying.</p> <p>In conjunction with the Happiness Film Festival, we will be screening a short film during the event – THE SHINING STAR OF LOSERS EVERYWHERE.</p> <p>The film is about Haru Urara, a racehorse with a pink Hello Kitty mask and a career-long losing streak. Haru Urara became a ray of hope for the people of Japan in 2003, when Japan was plunged into economic darkness.</p>
	<p><b>HUMAN</b></p> <p>What is it that makes us human? Is it that we love, that we fight? That we laugh? Cry? Our curiosity? The quest for discovery?</p> <p>Driven by these questions, filmmaker and artist Yann Arthus-Bertrand spent three years collecting real-life stories from 2,000 women and men in 60 countries. Working with a dedicated team of translators, journalists and cameramen, Yann captures deeply personal and emotional accounts of topics that unite us all; struggles with poverty, war, homophobia, and the future of our planet mixed with moments of love and happiness.</p> <p>HUMAN is a politically engaged work which allows us to embrace the human condition and to reflect on the meaning of our existence.</p> <p>Year: 2015 Genre: Documentary Director: Yann Arthus-Bertrand Country: France Runtime: 188 mins Language: Various Subtitles: English Rating: M18 (Some Mature Content 内容只宜十八岁及以上)</p>

## **ANNEX E – ABOUT HAPPINESS INITIATIVE**

Happiness Initiative is a social enterprise registered under raiSE Singapore. We strive to promote happiness and well-being in Singapore through our T.G.I.F. Experiences.

### **Travel**

Our Travel experiences seek to help you to reconnect with yourself – your sense of meaning and purpose.

### **Games**

Our Game experiences seeks to help you to learn about positive psychology ideas in a fun and engaging way.

### **Introspection**

Our Introspective experiences seeks to help you to understand the psychology of self and to live out the best versions of yourself.

### **Film**

Our Film experiences seeks to help you to explore and discuss ideas on happiness and well-being through movies.

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There are cultures that invest time and resources in their own wellbeing.

Happiness Initiative is born out of a culture that is quite different. In Singapore, often, happiness and wellbeing can wait. Progress and financial achievements take precedence.

When we neglect our happiness and wellbeing for too long, it comes at a price. Once we get into the downward spiral, it is not easy to get out.

Progress and financial achievements don't have to come at a price of our happiness and wellbeing. They can coexist.

Happiness Initiative is about helping people discover the choices they can make.