

Media Release
Embargoed till 2.30pm, 9 July 2016

Mandarin for Life

9 July 2016 – The Speak Mandarin Campaign 2016 was launched at the National Gallery Singapore today. Invited guests were given a preview of upcoming initiatives which include Story Challenge 《故事擂台》 roadshows, a language and cultural festival, music showcases, a Public Forum featuring respected academic - Professor Yu Dan (于丹) from Beijing Normal University, and more programmes.

In his speech as Guest of Honour, Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security Mr Teo Chee Hean, emphasised the role that parents can play to help their children build a foundation in Mandarin from young.

“Most young parents today have some foundation in two languages, and are better equipped linguistically to help their children learn and use Mandarin. Building a foundation in the language from young is important because it will allow you to build up proficiency to the level that you choose, later in life,” said Mr Teo in his keynote address.

All upcoming public programmes and activities have been specially curated and produced by the Promote Mandarin Council, for families, students and working adults. They are designed to offer fun, enjoyment and self-help resources for fruitful learning experiences in Mandarin.

These activities demonstrate the Campaign’s approach and intent to reach and engage each group of target audience, in ways that cater to their lifestyle, interests and needs. (For details on the Campaign’s programmes for 2016 / 2017, please refer to Annex A.)

The Speak Mandarin Campaign also hopes the community will appreciate Mandarin as a conduit to the Chinese culture and heritage.

“The preservation and promotion of the Mandarin language and Chinese culture is integral to our understanding and appreciation of the depth and beauty of our Chinese heritage,” said Mr Seow Choke Meng, Chairman of the Promote Mandarin Council.

“We are excited to share that the Speak Mandarin Campaign will be collaborating with the Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall 晚晴园 – 孙中山南洋纪念馆 this year to present *Wan*

Qing CultureFest in November. Through an exciting line-up of programmes and activities, this unique language and cultural festival will bring our rich culture to life.”

Minister for Culture, Community and Youth, Ms Grace Fu, who was also present at the Official Launch, shared the importance of encouraging greater appreciation for the language and culture.

“In Singapore, our multi-racial culture is built on the strengths of the culture and heritage of our racial groups. Our Mother Tongue of Mandarin connects us to our heritage and culture for the Chinese community. It is an important means of passing on our values and traditions to our younger generation. That is why we have continued to place emphasis on the use and learning of Mandarin over the years,” said Minister Fu. “I hope that the younger generation will continue to love and appreciate the Mandarin language. We should be proud that we are bilingual, and leverage our languages to create a culturally vibrant Singapore.”

The Campaign also enjoys a successful partnership with CHIJ St Nicholas Girls’ School (Primary) and has since presented four successful editions of the Speak Mandarin Campaign Parent Child Talent Competition 讲华语运动亲子才艺比赛. Together with PCF Sparkletots, a first time partner for the 2016 edition, the Speak Mandarin Campaign and both key partners will continue to organise the fifth Parent-Child Talent Competition in 2017.

Through this Competition, the Campaign demonstrates a commitment to celebrating the roles parents play in creating fun and rewarding experiences for their children at home. It hopes to inspire even more parents to play active roles in their children’s language learning journeys.

The Speak Mandarin Campaign values the support from community and partners as it aspires to create a greater environment, where Mandarin is constantly used. It hopes to welcome more organisations to grow reach and influence, and to jointly promote Mandarin and the Chinese culture.

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About the 《讲华语运动》 Speak Mandarin Campaign 2016 / 2017

This year marks the 37th anniversary of this nationwide campaign that was first launched in 1979 by then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. The objective at that time was to encourage Singaporean Chinese to use more Mandarin and less dialects. Over the years, the Campaign has shifted its focus to encourage Singaporean Chinese to both learn and speak more Mandarin and inculcate an appreciation for the Chinese culture, heritage and language.

For more information, visit www.mandarin.org.sg.
Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SpeakMandarinCampaign

Annex A

讲华语运动 **Speak Mandarin Campaign 2016 / 2017 – Upcoming Initiatives**

1. *Language and culture festival* – co-presented by the Promote Mandarin Council 推广华语理事会 with Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall 晚晴园 – 孙中山南洋纪念馆. This nine-day CultureFest in November will celebrate Singapore's Chinese heritage with a myriad of language and cultural programmes and activities.
2. *Public Forum 讲座* – Professor Yu Dan (于丹) will conduct a public talk on 24 September 2016, to inspire educators and parents to create positive learning experiences for students and the younger generation. She will share her unique interpretations of Chinese characters beyond etymology to the cultural significance behind a character's strokes and writing, as this will further ignite participants' interest in Mandarin.
3. *Speak Mandarin Campaign Parent-Child Talent Competition 2017 讲华语运动亲子才艺比赛 2017* – An annual nationwide competition that provides parents with the opportunity to learn and use the language, present engaging performances and bond with their children in this journey. The Campaign will continue working with CHIJ St Nicholas Girls' School (Primary) and PCF Sparkletots to organise the fifth Parent-Child Talent Competition in 2017. The Campaign looks forward to having more parents leverage this platform to create fun learning experiences for their children at home.
4. *Story Challenge Roadshows 《故事擂台》巡回演出* – A series dedicated to schools, presenting fun and interactive storytelling activities where school students will be encouraged to exercise their creativity in creating and delivering original stories spontaneously, with given topics and twist. This highly interactive activity will travel to schools and public spaces starting August to engage students in flexing their imagination to create original stories in Mandarin.
5. *Music Showcase 户外音乐会* – These music programmes co-presented by MediaCorp Radio YES933 are presented at various restaurants and music pubs in Singapore, reaching a specific segment of young working professionals and tertiary students. This platform also engages talented up and coming Singaporean singer-songwriters as they share stories of inspiration, speaking about the use of Mandarin in their music, creative compositions, and everyday life.
6. *Language tips* – Produced by the Speak Mandarin Campaign, these language tips share how Mandarin can be better used, and also shed light on mistakes made when using the language. The Campaign also churns other interesting facts and trivia in Mandarin and all these tips are presented in the form of radio capsules, posts shared on social media, and comic strips printed within notebooks. Over 140,000 copies the notebooks have already been distributed to the public this year. These constitute language resources produced by the campaign and are widely sought after by schools and members of the public.