

Press Release

Embargoed till 3.30pm, 10 July 2017

Mandarin for Everyone

10 July 2017 – The Speak Mandarin Campaign celebrated its 38th anniversary at the Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre today. Guests, including community stakeholders, participating schools, partners and supporters, were treated to a preview of upcoming initiatives and a programme showcase by campaign partners. Over 350 guests attended the event.

With the introduction of the tagline “Mandarin gets better with use” in 2014, the Campaign has since been working relentlessly on generating awareness, producing programmes and providing language tips and resources, creating immersive environments for the use of Mandarin. These efforts are also strongly supported by partners, so Singaporeans can enjoy many opportunities to experience Mandarin as a relevant, fun and enjoyable language.

“A good grasp of Mandarin is key to helping us enrich our understanding and appreciation of the unique Singapore Chinese culture. This in turn helps to instil a stronger sense of national identity,” said Guest of Honour, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Ms Grace Fu.

“The Council has also created many platforms that enable community to participate in promoting Mandarin. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage our community partners, parents, teachers and members of the public to continue extending your support for the Speak Mandarin Campaign and promote the use of Mandarin in Singapore,” she adds.

This year, the Campaign’s adopts a thematic usage of “stories” in its programmes and initiatives, to inspire and encourage the learning and use of Mandarin.

In the upcoming Grand Finals of the Inaugural Speak Mandarin Campaign “My Story” Public Speaking Competition, the top 12 finalists will share their personal stories in this oratorical competition as they vie for the top prize.

This year, the fifth edition of the Speak Mandarin Campaign’s signature event, the Parent-Child Talent Competition encouraged parents and children to create their own stories based childhood memories. Reflecting on their participation, many parents appreciated the time

spent with their children and forged even stronger bonds during their competition journey, as their teams prepared their material and rehearsed their performances.

“Mandarin is highly relevant at home, at work, at school and at play, and the Campaign believes in promoting immersive environments to enrich the language user’s experience. We are especially heartened by the response from students, youths and parents in our Campaign’s initiatives and partners’ programmes, which also affirms their interest in our Mother Tongue,” said Mr Seow Choke Meng, Chairman of the Promote Mandarin Council.

Invited guests to today’s launch were also given an introduction to the Campaign’s partner programmes. An exhibition showcase was set-up and partners, such as The Theatre Practice, Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall, the Singapore Traditional Arts Centre, Ngee Ann Polytechnic and MaxToon, presented their initiatives to the Guest of Honour, Chinese community stakeholders and other attendees.

The Speak Mandarin Campaign values the support from community and partners, and will continue working with other key partners, such as the Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre, to promote the language and further inculcate the appreciation for Chinese culture and heritage among Singaporean Chinese.

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About the 讲华语运动 Speak Mandarin Campaign 2017

2017 marks the 38th anniversary of the Speak Mandarin Campaign. This nationwide campaign was first launched in 1979 by Founding Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew to unify language use within the Chinese community to improve communication and understanding. Over the years, the Campaign has shifted its focus to encouraging Singaporean Chinese to both embrace speaking Mandarin and enjoy an appreciation for Chinese language and culture.

For more information, visit www.mandarin.org.sg.

Follow us on our social media platforms:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/SpeakMandarinCampaign

YouTube: www.youtube.com/PromoteMandarin

Annex A

讲华语运动 **Speak Mandarin Campaign 2017 / 2018 – Upcoming Initiatives**

1. *Wan Qing CultureFest 2017* – 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. A nine-day festival in November that celebrates Singapore's Chinese heritage with a myriad of language and cultural programmes and activities.
2. *Speak Mandarin Campaign “My Story” Public Speaking Competition* 讲华语运动《我的故事》华语演讲比赛 – Inaugurated this year, the Competition is an island-wide oratorical competition targeted at teens between 13 to 18 year old, creating a platform for participants to share their own stories in a fun and creative way. The Competition is co-presented by the Promote Mandarin Council and Noon Talk Media.
3. *Speak Mandarin Campaign Parent-Child Talent Competition 2018* 讲华语运动亲子才艺比赛2018 – 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 competition was first launched in 2013.
4. *Story Challenge Roadshows* 《故事擂台》巡回演出 – A series dedicated to schools, presenting fun and interactive storytelling activities in Mandarin where students will be encouraged to flex their imagination in creating and delivering original stories spontaneously, with given topics and twistes.
5. *Music Showcase* 户外音乐会 – These music programmes co-presented with 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 common layman usage among Singaporean Chinese. The Campaign also produces 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. These constitute language resources produced by the Campaign and are widely sought after by students and members of the public.