

MEDIA RELEASE

Children Turn Judges in Mandarin Story Telling Competition

-- 华语 COOL Campaign Invites English-speaking Parents To Take Up The Challenge

26 January 2007, Singapore – Targeting English-speaking Chinese Singaporeans, the Speak Mandarin Campaign together with Eduplus Language Centre are organising an innovative Mandarin Storytelling competition on 11 March, where parents are the contestants and children are the judges.

The *Daddy and Mummy Storytelling Competition* is open to all Singapore Citizens or Permanent Residents who are parents or guardians of a child. Children aged 4 to 12 years old will vote for their favourite Story Teller at the event, where their votes will make up 40 per cent of the final score with the professional judges determining the remaining 60 per cent.

Held in conjunction with the Speak Mandarin Campaign, the *Daddy and Mummy Storytelling Competition* will be held on Sunday, 11 March from 2 pm to 4 pm, at the Woodlands Regional Library. To prepare the contestants for the Competition, the organisers are offering free training classes on Friday, 23 February and Friday, 2 March. Registration for the Competition closes on 7 February. The public can also take away Mandarin storytelling pointers at a free Workshop to be held on Saturday, 3 February 2007, from 2pm to 4pm at the Woodlands Regional Library.

The workshop and training classes will cover storytelling techniques including how to select a story, how to create a picturesque scene through the use of body language, words and facial expression, and presentation skills to capture the audience.

Kenneth Tan, Chairman of the Promote Mandarin Council, said, "Storytelling is one of the most vivid and interesting ways of using and learning a language. And in this competition, the tables will be turned, so to speak, with children judging their parents' performance. We believe this will not only provide learning and enjoyment

opportunities but also a great bonding experience for families. Parents often want to help their kids with Mandarin and want to know more ways of doing so. This competition should motivate them to learn more about their Chinese heritage so they can impart it to their young ones."

Registration Details

The *Daddy and Mummy Storytelling Competition* is open for registration until Wednesday, 7 February 2007. To register, please call Ms Ma at 6265 8858 / 6265 6636, or visit the website www.storyisland.com.sg.

Participants can either participate as an individual or form a team of two. The duration of the story telling is between 5 to 12 minutes. Participants are to provide their own materials required for the competition such as music, costume and other props.

"Storytelling need not be restricted to bedtime, and it is an opportunity for parents and their children to forge a stronger bond. Through storytelling, parents can also learn to use idioms and metaphors to make their stories more colourful and interesting," said Chang Mei Hsiang, Principal, Eduplus Education Centre.

"The experience was rewarding, although I was nervous on stage. It's my first competition after Primary School. The challenge for me was to select the type of story that will be of interest to the children and learn to be more expressive in Mandarin. It was lots of fun and laughter when I worked with my children on my storytelling. During the preparation, their interest in using the language grew as well," said Jasmine Chan, 38 years old, mother of 2 children and last year's finalist.

Please visit www.mandarin.org.sg for more details and regular updates the Speak Mandarin Campaign.

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About Speak Mandarin Campaign

Now into its 27th year, the Speak Mandarin Campaign was first launched in 1979 by then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, with the main objective of encouraging Chinese Singaporeans to speak Mandarin as a common language, instead of using dialects. This proved to be very successful, and since the 1990s, the campaign shifted its focus towards encouraging professionals and young people to learn and speak Mandarin.

Apart from promoting Mandarin as an avenue to understanding one's roots and Chinese culture, the campaign also highlights the importance of Mandarin for economic and business competitiveness. A lifestyle-oriented approach – with the tagline '华语 COOL' – is being used to reach out and engage more English speaking Chinese Singaporeans, particularly those in the 'post-65 generation', to speak and use Mandarin in their daily lives. Please visit www.mandarin.org.sg for more information.