

Press Release

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Speak Mandarin Campaign Celebrates 35th Anniversary

5 July 2014 – The Speak Mandarin Campaign launches its 35th annual campaign this year with the tagline – “Mandarin. It Gets Better with Use. Immerse yourself today.”

In the upcoming months, the Campaign and its partners will create opportunities for Singaporeans to immerse themselves in a Mandarin-speaking environment where they can learn, use and practise Mandarin comfortably.

Programmes and activities will reach out to families with young children, young working adults and bilingual Singaporeans. These cover a spectrum of lifestyle genres including food, music and games. They will demonstrate the relevance of Mandarin in everyday life, and show how the language can be applied in fun and enjoyable ways.

The line-up includes *Heritage Food Trails* with the Singapore Centre for Chinese Language Learning, *Local Originals* with Y.E.S. 93.3FM, as well as *Story Challenge* by The Theatre Practice at Platypus Kitchen.

The Campaign will also work with partners and stakeholders in the Chinese community to generate awareness of available opportunities and resources for improving Mandarin. This includes a calendar of events on the Campaign’s website that consolidates all Chinese language and culture programmes in Singapore.

Cultivating a Positive Mindset

Through its programmes and resources, the Campaign hopes to inspire Chinese Singaporeans to have a positive attitude towards Mandarin. In particular, parents can play a role in supporting and encouraging their children to learn Mandarin.

The Campaign is thus urging parents to take advantage of the various activities in place and explore the fun aspects of Mandarin with their children, in order to create an enjoyable and shared learning experience.

Engaging Proficient Speakers

The Campaign also recognises the importance of engaging proficient Mandarin speakers, who can be role models for those learning the language. With this in mind, the Campaign will engage competent speakers to be part of more outreach events to be held later this year.

These events will focus on encouraging Chinese Singaporeans to enjoy the Chinese language and culture, and will also bring proficient and non-proficient speakers together.

The Campaign is thus calling out to Chinese Singaporeans who are fluent in the language to be volunteers “behind the scenes”, or to otherwise participate in these events. More information will be released later in the year. Meanwhile, interested parties can write in to NHB_SpeakMandarin@nhb.gov.sg.

35 Years of Promoting Mandarin

In conjunction with the 35th Anniversary celebrations, the Speak Mandarin Campaign has launched a commemorative book, documenting the 35-year history of the Campaign. The book features interviews with Singaporeans from different walks of life sharing their experiences and well wishes for the Campaign.

Elaborating on the relevance of the Campaign, Mr Seow Choke Meng, Chairman of the Promote Mandarin Council said, “The Speak Mandarin Campaign’s objective is to cultivate an appreciation for the Chinese language and culture. The benefits of Mandarin are multi-faceted and more than just economic value. It connects us to our cultural roots and heritage, fostering pride and identity in this ever-changing world.”

The Commemorative Book is available for loan from the public libraries. Members of the public who wish to find out more about the Campaign can also visit the exhibition at the Central Public Library at National Library Building from now till 18 July.

About the Speak Mandarin Campaign 2014/2015

This year marks the 35th anniversary of this nationwide campaign that was first launched in 1979 by then-Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. At the time, the objective was to encourage Chinese Singaporeans to speak more Mandarin and less dialects. Over the years, the Campaign has shifted its focus to encourage Chinese Singaporeans to both learn and speak more Mandarin, and to inculcate an appreciation for Chinese culture, heritage and language.

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

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** Contactable May 2014 to April 2015*