

# Speech by Minister Grace Fu at the Jubilee Baby Gift Focus Group Session

A very good evening to all of you.

I am happy to join you today at this focus group session on The Jubilee Baby Gift. I understand that the facilitators have let you in on our nation's little birthday surprise for all Singaporean babies born next year.

## **Celebration of newborns, our future**

2015 marks Singapore's 50th year of independence. We have come a long way, working hard and overcoming many odds together, regardless of race, language or religion, to make Singapore what it is today. Next year, we will celebrate our journey together as Singaporeans, where we can gather strength and inspiration from our past to shape a collective future with hope and confidence. It is indeed a significant milestone for all of us, as a nation and a people.

Throughout our journey, families have played important roles. We found comfort and support in our families during the uncertainty of Singapore's early years and shared with them the joys of our achievements as we progressed as a nation. It is also with our families that we feel a sense of home.

As we celebrate Singapore's past and honour the contributions of our Pioneer Generation, we also set our sights on the future. In celebrating Singapore's 50th birthday, we want to also celebrate the birth of every Singaporean baby in 2015. Children are our hope for the future and our Golden Jubilee babies symbolise our hopes and aspirations for the Singapore of tomorrow.

## **The Jubilee Baby Gift – An SG50 Community Initiative**

Following Minister Heng Swee Keat's call for ideas for the SG50 celebration next year, the team at the National Population and Talent Division (NPTD) met up with our stakeholders and groups of Singaporeans to seek their views on how we could celebrate the birth of our Golden Jubilee babies. A majority of those we spoke to were particularly enthusiastic about giving a small but meaningful gift from this generation to the next, to celebrate Singaporean babies born in 2015.

Taking on board their views, the NPTD decided to lead this community initiative for all Singaporeans to be involved in putting together this meaningful gift for Jubilee newborns.

From now till mid-May, there will be various platforms where Singaporeans can share their ideas and select the items that they would like to see included in The Jubilee Baby Gift. We would like to have as many Singaporeans as possible to be involved. We have also appointed an Advisory Panel, comprising people-sector and community representatives to help us curate the suggestions received and advise on the suitability of the items and design of The Jubilee Baby Gift. Our Advisory Panel is here with us today. Let me introduce them to you:

- Ms Anita Fam, who serves on the council of Families for Life, will chair the Panel;
- Mrs Joni Ong is the President of I Love Children;
- Ms Toh Hwee Tin is the Director of NTUC's Family Development Unit and U Family Community;
- Dr Jazlan Joosoph, an obstetrician and gynaecologist at Raffles Hospital; and
- Mr Jim Lim, the founder of the REAL Academy, a relationship consultancy firm for families.

Together with our partners and our Advisory Panel, we welcome all Singaporeans, including members of our Pioneer Generation, to contribute their ideas in the next few weeks. Their contributions will add to the richness of heritage, balancing with new and creative ideas to be reflected in the Gift. Taken together, the ideas contributed by Singaporeans will shape The Jubilee Baby Gift into a uniquely-Singaporean keepsake filled with practical yet symbolic items for our Golden Jubilee babies.

## **Conclusion**

The family has always been, and will continue to be, the cornerstone of our Singaporean society. Values and traditions are passed down from one generation to the next through family ties and kinship. It is in the family that we have a link to our past. It is also in the family that we build a bridge to our future through our children and grandchildren. And collectively, these strong family linkages make for an even stronger and cohesive society as we prepare ourselves for the next 50 years together as a nation.

I would like to thank all of you for taking the time to come down tonight to share your suggestions on The Jubilee Baby Gift. I hope that many more Singaporeans will get into the spirit of gift-giving and participate in this community initiative, either online or at the various feedback booths around Singapore. I am really excited to listen to your group discussions tonight and look forward to see what the final Jubilee Baby Gift will be like.