



PRESS RELEASE

Inaugural LIFE fund empowers low income families

Pre-schoolers get aid to study as PPIS and Lien Foundation spur self help and teach responsible parenting among needy families

Continual professional development for teachers and refurbishment of PPIS Bukit Batok Centre part of holistic effort to boost early childhood education

29 March 2008, Singapore

1. The Lien Foundation and PPIS (Persatuan Pemudi Islam Singapura, Singapore's only Malay/Muslim women's organisation), unveiled a new initiative to help low income families and boost pre-school education. The "LIFE" or Low Income Families Empowerment Fund was created to provide a better level playing field for needy pre-schoolers from PPIS' Early Childhood Education Centres. The S\$686,000 fund from the Lien Foundation will be given over four years. 50 recipients will be awarded the fund each year. The Fund will cover the recipient's school fees, field trips and other basic essentials. Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, the Minister for Community Development, Youth & Sports, gave away the inaugural LIFE awards at PPIS Bukit Batok Centre today.

Building resilient and self reliant families

2. "Low income families are saddled with multiple challenges." said Lien Foundation's Programme Director, Mr. Lee Poh Wah. "There is no quick fix. That is why our focus is not just financial aid. We want to tackle systemic problems at

various levels, like inertia or the low value attached to pre-school education, lack of parenting skills and vulnerability to unemployment.” To qualify for the fund, parents-in-need have to be employable and they also have to attend parenting classes. PPIS will teach them how to motivate and reinforce their children’s learning at home. This encourages them to be more involved in their child’s education and be self-reliant. They are also expected to pay a minimal S\$5 monthly school fee.

3. The LIFE Fund leverages the CDA (Child Development Account) or Baby Bonus Scheme. The families in need who could not top up the account before can now do so through the contribution by the LIFE fund. Therefore, these recipients can get to enjoy the matching government grant, doubling the money they receive. (See annex for more on the LIFE fund)

Holistic effort to advance early childhood education

- Quality training for teachers

4. The Foundation brought PPIS together with its Christian counterpart, the Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) for joint training sessions and exchange programmes in its efforts to help improve the quality of early childhood teaching. The aim is to equip the teachers well, so that they can educate and nurture the children in PPIS and YWCA to their fullest potential. Last year, over 100 teachers from PPIS and YWCA attended a special seminar together. About \$180,000 from the Foundation has been set aside for the two organisations’ teachers’ training in the next four years. The modules featured will include teaching methodologies, classroom and behavioural management. The exchange has also extended to the children. About 100 children from the two organisations have exchanged festive visits and cultural knowledge since then. For example, they visited four old folks’ homes together during Ramadan.

- Physical upgrade of facilities

5. The Foundation's and PPIS' multi-pronged approach to spur early education include the physical upgrade of PPIS Bukit Batok Centre. As pioneers of learning through play, PPIS mooted the idea of a road safety park and special water feature to create a conducive physical learning environment for the children. In addition, highlights of the makeover include lively wall murals, an improved playground, and a charming garden for the children and a special parents' room.

6. This was a dream come true for the children, parents, teachers and staff at PPIS Bukit Batok Centre. In addition to the \$300,000 amount from Lien Foundation and other kind sponsors, 100 parents also chipped into the refurbishment fund. Mr Kamsadi Dahalan, a parent supporter said, "PPIS' tradition of excellence and emphasis on learning through play has endured till today. My two elder teenage children benefited greatly from their education at PPIS, and now my five year old is enjoying some of the best pre-school facilities in Singapore."

Double celebration for PPIS

7. This year marks the 25th Anniversary of the PPIS' Early Childhood Education division. Ms Fatimah Azimullah, President of PPIS said, "As one of the pioneers of early childhood education in Singapore, we are all very excited about our 25th 'birthday'. Since 1983, PPIS has provided quality care and education for the children. We are currently in the process of getting in touch with our alumni students, many of whom are successful adults today, for an alumni tea session in conjunction with Teachers' Day later this year."

8. It is double celebrations for PPIS this year, as it will also celebrate its 55th Anniversary on 4 July 2008.

- Ends -

About PPIS**www.ppis-ywma.com**

Persatuan Pemuda Islam Singapura (PPIS) is a non-profit Muslim women's association founded in 1952. The association's vision is to empower Malay/Muslim women with the leadership skills, knowledge and support to make a positive impact on their families and society.

PPIS has three divisions in its fold, namely, Corporate, Social Services and Early Childhood Education. Over the years, PPIS has extended its services beyond educating and nurturing housewives or single parents, particularly those with lower socio-economic backgrounds. To meet the rising needs of the Malay Muslim community for quality early childhood education (ECE), PPIS has expanded its ECE division, established since 1983, to include four childcare centres, a kindergarten centre and two student care centres.

Going forward, PPIS will continue to develop initiatives to make a difference in the lives of Malay/Muslim women and their families.

About Lien Foundation**www.lienfoundation.org**

The Lien Foundation was founded by Dr. Lien Ying Chow, an eminent business leader, banker and hotelier. His influence extended beyond the private sector and Singapore, as a community leader, diplomat and philanthropist.

Today the Lien Foundation continues Dr Lien Ying Chow's legacy of good work in helping the needy and deprived in our society. The Foundation drives institutional capacity building to address crucial community needs, and empowers individuals to reach their full potential. It is pioneering new ground for organized philanthropy in Singapore by convening strategic partnerships and catalyzing action on social and environmental challenges.

Besides championing excellence in eldercare, the Foundation also seeks to enhance educational opportunities for the disadvantaged and the development of nascent fields of studies; and promoting environmental sustainability in water and sanitation.

Media Contacts***For PPIS:***

Ms Leona Lo
Principal Consultant, Talk Sense
Tel: 6425 1053
Email: leona@talksense.biz

For Lien Foundation

Ms Genevieve Kuek
Qeren Communications
Tel: 97633110
Email: gen@qeren.biz

LIEN FOUNDATION – PPIS

THE LOW INCOME FAMILIES EMPOWERMENT (LIFE) FUND

About the Fund

The LIFE Fund from the Lien Foundation assists needy pre-schoolers studying in the Early Childhood Division of the PPIS (Young Muslim Women’s Association). It aims to build self-reliant and resilient families in the low income group.

The S\$686,000 fund will be awarded to 50 recipients each year, for over a period of four years. Recipients of the fund receive financial aid to cover their school fees, field trips and other basic essentials for a year. This will be about S\$1500 yearly for a child in kindergarten, and about S\$3900 yearly for a child in childcare.

The LIFE Fund leverages upon the Child Development Account in the government’s Baby Bonus Scheme. By placing the financial aid granted to each child into this account, the Fund helps him/her top it up, so as to also receive the government’s matching amount.

At launch, 41 children were granted aid from the LIFE Fund.

Eligibility

- Children whose family income per capita is S\$350 or less
- At least one of the child’s family member is employed or seeking employment
- The child is in the care of guardians due to divorce or his/her parents are in prison or rehabilitation

Conditions attached to the fund

- Parents of the children receiving aid are required to attend at least eight out of ten Parent Education Programmers (PEP) conducted by PPIS in a year
- Recipients of the fund must register at least 85% school attendance rate annually
- They also have to pay a minimal S\$5 fee each month

How it works

The Fund is structured not only to give financial aid, but to also help needy families meet life’s challenges.

The mandatory parenting sessions equip the recipients’ fathers and mothers with essential parenting skills. In addition, PPIS also teaches them how to motivate and reinforce their children’s learning at home.

The LIFE Fund also requires the recipient’s parents to sign an undertaking so as to foster greater personal commitment to their child’s education.