

EMBARGOED UNTIL FRIDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2016, 3.00PM

MEDIA RELEASE

Parents and preschoolers join hands for a united cause at the grand finale of “Start Small, Dream Big”

The Kidz Meadow Childcare Centres will be among the selected preschools participating at the grand finale of the “Start Small, Dream Big” (SSDB) initiative on Friday, 7 October 2016 from 9.00am to 3.00pm at the OCBC Square at Singapore Sports Hub (5 Stadium Drive).

The SSDB is a President’s Challenge initiative by the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) to encourage preschools to create platforms for children to give back to the community. The event is expected to draw a 9,000-strong crowd, comprising parents, teachers and children from a total of 316 participating centres. Gracing the event as Guest-of-Honour is President Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam.

Kidz Meadow Kindergarten and Childcare Centres have embraced the annual theme of “We Love, We Care, We Share” in their curriculum, as they journey on the SSDB initiative. With their small hands and BIG hearts, the preschoolers have inspired those from different walks of life and gained priceless experiences during this journey. Parents from the Parent Support Group (PSG) took some time off their busy schedules to contribute alongside their preschoolers.

Ainsah Bte Saaini, a parent from the PSG at Kidz Meadow Childcare @ Buangkok Crescent shared, “It has been a fulfilling experience to be part of the PSG and the SSDB journey. Besides fostering relationship with the teachers and parents, the community events have encouraged both my child and I to be more giving to others in the community. I believe my daughter, Dian Nabilah, has truly gained a valuable life lesson in this SSDB journey.”

One of their memorable SSDB journeys includes the surprise gifting on Mother's Day. Kidz Meadow children plucked up their courage to present handcrafted flowers to mothers whom they met in their neighbourhood. In emphasising the importance of parents as partners in education, the PSG had been forthcoming in their contributions to the various fund raising and communal activities with Bo Tien Day Activity Centre for the Elderly, Man Fut Tong Old Folks' Home, Pertapis Children's Home and other President's Challenge beneficiaries.

Carrying on the communal spirit, about 50 children and parents from Kidz Meadow Childcare Centres will be joining hands to set up a *Kampung*-themed photo booth at the event. They will create props for families to put on and will be capturing nostalgic family moments at the photo booth. Traditional keychains and photo frames that are handcrafted by children as young as two years old will be on sale, where proceeds will be channelled to the President's Challenge beneficiaries. Kidz Meadow children will be doing a dance performance to the tune, "That's how we do it", which aptly reflects their moments of reaching out to the community. Diodrama presentations will showcase the children's past works during the SSDB journey.

We invite members of the media to join us at the SSDB Finale on Friday 7 October 2016 at 9.00am at OCBC Square at Singapore Sports Hub (5 Stadium Drive). Kindly contact Mdm Liyah at 6346 8301 / 812 10167 or email liyah@merculearning.com to confirm your attendance.

About MERCU Learning Point

Set up in 1999, MERCU Learning Point is a private education company which is wholly owned by the Association of Muslim Professionals. It offers a comprehensive range of programmes and services for children aged 2 months to 12 years.

Its Early Childhood unit has one kindergarten and five childcare centres under Kidz Meadow brand. MERCU also runs twelve primary school-based student care centres. MERCU serves close to 2,500 children monthly both in private sectors and in government schools. MERCU prides itself in establishing a collaborative environment between parents and schools as we believe they are important catalysts in the development of the children. Programmes are robustly designed with the aim to maximise children's capabilities and propelling them to greater heights. Hence, *Starting Young, Aiming High*.

About “Start Small Dream Big”

The “Start Small Dream Big” Movement was initiated by the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) to encourage pre-schools to create authentic platforms for children to innovate, problem-solve and tap on their unique strengths to help others. It was first launched in 2015 as part of SG50 and the 15th anniversary of President’s Challenge. It aims to build an early childhood community that inculcates values in our children and encourages children to give back to society. This year, some 20,000 children in more than 300 pre-schools are participating in “Start Small Dream Big” through various community projects. More information on “Start Small Dream Big” can be found at <http://bit.ly/SSDB2016>.

About President’s Challenge

The President’s Challenge is an annual community outreach and fund-raising campaign for beneficiaries selected every year by the President’s Office. It is a call to all Singaporeans in doing their part to build a more caring and inclusive society.

Initiated by the late President S R Nathan in 2000, the Challenge represents the coming together of people from all walks of life, to help the less fortunate. In 2012, under the leadership of President Tony Tan Keng Yam, the Challenge was expanded to go beyond fund-raising, by including volunteerism and social entrepreneurship.

Funds raised through this year’s President’s Challenge campaign will be channelled to 58 beneficiary organisations across various sectors.

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