

Foster families commended for unfailing love during epidemic (with photos)

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has held the Foster Families Service Award Presentation Ceremony 2022 through a video to commend 398 foster families for their selfless commitment to foster care services. The video of the ceremony is available on the SWD's YouTube channel from today (May 8).

The theme of the ceremony this year was "Unfailing Love of Foster Families under the Epidemic". In his pre-recorded speech, the Director of Social Welfare, Mr Gordon Leung, commended the selfless devotion of the foster families not only for their continuous care for foster children under the epidemic, but also for their provision of a home to needy children that renders protection and shelter. He added that their assistance will provide room for the children's own families to handle their problems before they can eventually take care of their children and achieve family reunion.

Artists Anderson Junior and Sarah Song were invited to join the production of short videos to enrich the ceremony this year. The number of award-winning foster families has also hit a record high. Various long-service awards were presented to foster families that have been providing foster care services for more than five to more than 30 years. Among them, two have been serving for more than 30 years, while 11 families have been serving for more than 25 years. Special awards were also given to foster families with outstanding performance.

Mr and Mrs Chung, winners of the Long Service Gold Award, have been foster parents since 2006. The couple said that more time and effort is required in taking care of the foster children under the epidemic, but they feel warmth because of the close bonds built up with the children and the children's thoughtful responses. Mrs Chan has been serving as a foster parent for 15 years. With her tremendous love for foster children, she has also passed on the spirit of love by inspiring her friend, Mrs Ng, to join the foster care services. They have set up a WhatsApp group for foster parents so that they can show mutual support and exchange child care experiences.

The SWD's Central Foster Care Unit was established in 1982 to oversee and co-ordinate the provision of foster care services provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and this year marks the 40th anniversary of its establishment. This year is particularly memorable because it also marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. There are currently 11 NGOs providing foster care services. Foster care aims at providing substitute family care for children whose parents cannot provide proper care for them due to family problems. The children can therefore continue to enjoy family life until they can be reunited with their families or when other long-term welfare plans are

arranged for them.

As at the end of March this year, there were 954 registered foster families and 921 children receiving foster care services.

The video of the ceremony can be viewed at the SWD's YouTube channel at youtu.be/0DgAGXW5veQ.

