

SWD holds fun day for foster families to show appreciation for foster parents (with photos)

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (November 4) held the Fun Day for Foster Parents and Foster Children at Ocean Park and invited around 400 foster parents and children from 100 families to spend an enjoyable weekend at the theme park to express appreciation to foster parents. Stories on foster families were also shared at the kick-off ceremony of the event to appeal to more people to sign up as foster parents.

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, officiated at the kick-off ceremony. The Director of Social Welfare, Miss Charmaine Lee, also joined the ceremony with representatives from 11 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) subvented by the SWD for operating foster care service.

Addressing the ceremony, Mr Sun said that the Government has all along attached great importance to foster care service and is eager to encourage more people to serve as foster parents so that children who cannot be adequately taken care of by their own families due to different reasons can live in a homelike environment. "The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address" has announced that the Government will substantially increase the incentive payment for foster families starting from next April. Additional support will also be provided to foster families taking care of children with special learning or care needs, including arranging early assessment and appropriate professional rehabilitation therapy and training.

Mr Sun said that the SWD has, apart from stepping up publicity efforts in promoting foster care service this year, launched a "one-plus-one" recruitment programme to encourage persons interested in joining foster care service to pair up with their family and friends when signing up for the service so that they can take care of the same foster child and support each other. Mr Sun appealed to foster parents to actively introduce foster care service to their families and friends to motivate more people to serve as foster parents.

Participants watched a video (youtu.be/mWm6asNx0UU) about foster care service during the ceremony. The video featured two foster families who shared their background of joining the service as well as their memorable experience and feelings. A few foster children also took the opportunity to express their appreciation to their foster parents.

The SWD co-ordinates and liaises with 11 NGOs to provide foster care service. Currently, there are about 950 foster homes. The SWD holds fun days for foster families every year to show appreciation to foster parents. The Fun Day for Foster Parents and Foster Children at Ocean Park today also echoes the "Happy Hong Kong" Campaign, where Ocean Park admission

tickets and meal coupons were distributed to the participating foster families.

Members of the public who are interested in becoming foster parents may contact the SWD's Central Foster Care Unit at 2573 2282 during office hours.

