

SPEECH BY MS GRACE FU, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, AT THE FAIRFIELD METHODIST SECONDARY SCHOOL 120TH FOUNDER'S DAY CUM GRADUATION SERVICE, ON FRIDAY, 1 AUGUST 2008, AT 7.00PM

Mrs Joni Ong, Chairperson, Fairfield Methodist School Board of Management

Mrs Diana Chee, Chairperson, Fairfield Methodist Schools Alumni Association

Mr Victor Owyong, Principal, Fairfield Methodist Secondary School

Parents, Teachers,

Students,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening.

1. I am delighted to be part of your 120th Founder's Day celebrations. Not many schools in Singapore share the distinction of having such a long history dating back to before Singapore's independence.

2. On this joyous occasion, allow me to help you to reflect on your rich heritage and legacy, the remarkable journey that you have taken and finally to take stock of where the school is now.

Fairfield's Heritage and Mission

3. At the heart of Fairfield's mission has been the belief that Fairfield should serve the needs of the community and provide an excellent education for all, regardless of background. When Miss Sophia Blackmore, Fairfield's Founder,

arrived in Singapore in 1888, she saw the need to provide girls with an education. Going against the norm of the day that education was the exclusive right of boys, she went door to door to recruit girls from the Peranakan community in Telok Ayer. Her perseverance bore fruit, and a school was started with eight nonya girls.

4. From those humble beginnings, Fairfield moved to Dover Road in 1983 and started to take in boys, expanding into Fairfield Methodist Primary School and Fairfield Methodist Secondary School (FMSS). Today, the Fairfield schools have a combined population of more than 3,000 pupils and nearly 200 teachers, divided almost equally between primary and secondary schools.

5. Fairfield has always sought to produce students who are life-long learners and leaders who serve their community. One of Fairfield's legacies is the many good women and men it has developed for the Education Service, including Mrs Kam Kum Wone, a former MOE director, Dr Ang Wai Hoong who founded the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and was a Director in MOE, and Mrs Stella Tan your Superintendent. Fairfield has also produced many school principals and vice-principals, including your very own VP, Miss Wong Bick Guan.

6. Another noteworthy Fairfield alumna is Mr Wee Tat Chuen, from the second batch of boys accepted in 1984. After his graduation, he returned to teach in FMSS and became Head of Department for Pastoral Care. Tat Chuen has been appointed Principal-Designate of Assumption Pathway School, where he will be championing the welfare of at-risk students.

Fairfield's Journey and its Partners

7. Throughout her journey, Fairfield has benefited from the support of generous and loyal partners - The Methodist Church of Singapore, the Board of Management and other partner institutions like the Polytechnics and the National Institute of Education.

8. Other loyal supporters of Fairfield today include the Alumni and the parents in the Partners-In-Education (PIE) group. The Alumni has kept the school spirit alive by organizing activities to rally Fairsians together, as well as been active in raising funds for their Alma Mater. The parents in the PIE run the T-Zone (Teenage Zone), support the school in the Self-Discovery Programme and Befrienders Programme, and lend their support in numerous school events.

Fairfield's Current Achievements

9. I wish to congratulate the school on receiving Reaffirmation of her Autonomous Status, and attaining numerous awards that affirm her as a provider of quality holistic education: the Singapore Quality Class, the School Distinction Award, the Best Practice Award (Teaching and Learning), the Outstanding Development Award (Character Development), and the Sustained Achievement Awards for Academic Value-Addedness, Uniformed Groups and Sports.

10. An example of a student who embodies Fairfield's holistic approach is Miss Joy Sim Shi En, a leader of influence with a servant's heart. Graduating in 2007 as

Head Councillor, she held a leadership position and rank of Staff Sergeant in her Co-Curricular Activity, The Girls' Brigade, and represented the school in her second CCA, Track and Field. She has scored 8 distinctions for the 10 GCE O Level subjects that she sat for in 2007, and tonight she is the proud recipient of the Sophia Blackmore Leadership Award. Congratulations and well done, Joy!

Conclusion

11. As you celebrate 120 years as an institution, reflect on your successes and cherish the strong support of alumni, parents and other stakeholders. Keep the flag and the spirit of Fairfield flying high – the spirit of excellence and achievement under girded by a sense of mission and an attitude of service to bless others. Congratulations again on your 120th Founder's Day Celebration!

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