

**For Immediate Release**

**[Press Release] Celebrating Fathers 2021 To Honour 21st Century Dads Juggling Multiple Roles**

The main graphic for the event, featuring the word "Celebrating" in a bold, black, sans-serif font, and "Fathers" in a large, blue, cursive script font. A thick, yellow, curved line sweeps across the bottom of the graphic.

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**Singapore, 11 June 2021** - Being a dad is tough work -- that's why we're celebrating it! This year, **Celebrating Fathers 2021** is heralding Father's Day with a line up of virtual and live events to celebrate the many roles fathers play and encourage fathers to bond with their families. Celebrating Fathers 2021, which runs from 29 May to 11 July 2021, is jointly organised by Centre for Fathering, MUMs for Life, DADs for Life, Families for Life and Mediacorp, in support of the Made For Families initiative.

First launched in 2016, the annual Celebrating Fathers campaign is a nation-wide initiative that aims to recognise the efforts and contributions of Singapore's Dads. Highlighting the "Roles of a Father" during this COVID-19 season, the 6th iteration of this campaign was created to recognise and encourage dads who are taking up multiple roles for their families. Instead of playing traditionally patriarchal roles in the household as provider and protector, 21st century fathers are now doubling up on their roles as their children's playmates, comforters, cheerleaders, counsellors and coaches.

“As the pandemic drags on, fathers have been taking on new responsibilities at home and have been given the opportunity to become more involved with their children and family through helping with their children’s home-based learning and supporting their wives,” says Mr Bryan Tan, CEO, Centre for Fathering, DADs for Life and MUMs for Life. “When both new and experienced dads see the great impact they are making at home - it will do much to encourage them to soldier on - improving upon and continuing in their efforts towards being the best fathers they can and want to be.”

### **An Exciting Lineup of Father’s Day Activities**

The Celebrating Fathers 2021 campaign kicked off on 29 May 2021, with the virtual **Dads@School Forum 2021**. Guest of Honour **Second Minister for Education, Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman** attended the livestream event, which took a deep dive into the importance of play as bonding between father and child - studies have shown that children with fathers who are actively engaged in play tend to experience better cognitive performance and fewer behavioural difficulties as opposed to children with distant and disengaged fathers.

“Many fathers tend to focus on certain roles such as the provider and protector. However, they may overlook roles such as being their children’s playmate,” says Dr Maliki. “Through play, you can connect with them and build strong bonds, as you are letting them know you are there for them and you enjoy being with them. As fathers, we may not be as good as our children in the game, and we can learn from them instead of always thinking that they learn from us.”

Apart from the Dads@School Forum, there will also be a mixture of online and offline activities over the span of these 2 months, for families to spend quality time together. Visit the last remaining Kampong village in Buangkok, Singapore with the Let’s Go Tour, make personalised gifts for mom or dad in a guided art programme, or create a simple game on Scratch to learn simple coding techniques.

And as a show of appreciation for dads, the first 2,000 families to register on the Celebrating Fathers 2021 website will also receive an exclusive Celebrating Fathers Family Pack which consists of father-child bonding activities such as an inflatable ball design contest which fathers can design together with their children and submit to win prizes. Special food and retail deals will also be offered to fathers and families who are spending time bonding over the June holidays.

### **Celebrating A New Fatherhood**

This Father’s Day, Celebrating Fathers 2021 is also celebrating three unconventional dads who, against all odds, have put in the work to become better fathers for their children. That includes fathers like **Bruce Mathieu**, a repeat drug offender and gang member who spent the prime of his life in and out of prison, **Mohamed Jamaluddin Abdullah**, whose ability to emotionally



connect with his children was affected by his lonely childhood as an adopted son, and **Anand Lal**, father of a child with special needs.

“Mediacorp is once again proud to work with our partners to shine the spotlight on fathers through Celebrating Fathers 2021,” says Mr Parminder Singh, Chief Commercial and Digital Officer, Mediacorp. “These are indeed unprecedented times for everyone, and strengthening family bonds is more important now than ever before. By tapping on our creative talents and resources, we hope to rally communities to show our appreciation for the dads among us as we salute them for the many roles they play in our daily lives,”

“I have fond memories of my children’s growing up years – the first time they walked on their own, achievements in school and play, and even when their hearts broke. I am grateful that I could be there for them as a father. In this new normal, I believe fathers have an even more important role to play. I encourage all dads to take up this mantle and be that unyielding source of strength and support for their families. Family goes beyond the people living under the same roof, so let’s also show our appreciation to all fatherly figures who have been brave for us. This Father’s Day, let us appreciate the active roles that dads play – a loving father, a caring husband, a protective brother, a kind uncle, a thoughtful son and so on,” said Mr Ishak Ismail, Chairman of Families for Life Council.

**For profiles on Bruce Mathieu, Mohamed Jamaluddin Abdullah, and Anand Lal, please refer to Annex A. For more quotes by Second Minister for Education, Dr Maliki Osman, please refer to Annex B. For profiles on CFF and its partners, please refer to Annex C.**

**For more information on Celebrating Fathers 2021, please visit [www.celebratingfathers.sg](http://www.celebratingfathers.sg).**

**For Celebrating Fathers 2021 events, please go to <https://www.celebratingfathers.sg/event.html>**

**For Celebrating Fathers 2021 special deals, please go to <https://www.celebratingfathers.sg/promotions.html>**

**Everyone plays a part in building a Singapore that is Made For Families. For more information on the Made For Families initiative, and more family-friendly activities, visit [www.madeforfamilies.gov.sg](http://www.madeforfamilies.gov.sg).**

**For the recorded livestream video of Dads@School Forum 2021, please click [here](#). For media assets, please refer to the media kit linked [here](#).**

**Please note that physical events will only take place after 13 June, depending on the status of Covid-19 restrictions.**

**-End-**

**For media enquiries, please contact**

Basia Chow

Consultant, Elliot & Co.

HP: +65 9687 9050

Email: [basia@elliottcommunications.com](mailto:basia@elliottcommunications.com)

**Annex A**

**About Bruce Mathieu, father of a 12-year-old daughter**

A repeat drug offender and gang member, Bruce spent the prime of his life in and out of prison. And by his fifth prison sentence, Bruce had become a husband and father.

The turning point came when Bruce's daughter came by to celebrate her fourth birthday with him. Her birthday wish was simple – to receive a hug from dad – but it was impossible with the glass partition separating them both. The sight of her bursting into tears broke his heart, and convinced him to abandon his destructive habits once and for all so that he could be reunited with his family for good.

Bruce and his daughter were finally able to have their long-awaited hug when Centre for Fathering facilitated a father-child bonding session in prison. That faint memory remains sweet for Bruce. "What I remember most was the precious two hours I got to spend with my daughter. For two hours I got to hold her and carry her."

Determined to restore happiness to his beloved family, Bruce walked away from his drug addiction, destructive habits, and social circle - and never looked back. "Time and tide waits for no man. Once a father has missed that growing up period with their child, it's lost forever. The only thing we can do is stop repeating the same mistakes over and over, so that we can do our best to raise and nurture our child."

Making the most of every moment, Bruce is now an active volunteer, barista and brand ambassador for social enterprise Blessed Collective, "My wish is that all children can have a happy childhood, and for fathers to understand and deliver on the important role they play in their child's life."

**About Mohamed Jamaluddin Abdullah, father of 5 children**

Mohamed Jamaluddin Abdullah's experience as a neglected foster child did not prepare him well for the challenges of fatherhood. In his growing up years, Jamal experienced a lonely childhood lacking in love and trust where his adoptive parents favoured their two biological children who were born after they adopted him.

These experiences led him to enact the same type of parenting style on his family. After beating his son in an effort to discipline his child, Jamal realised the consequences of his actions when his son tearfully asked his father if his death would finally satisfy him.

Remorseful, heartbroken and determined to mend his ways, Jamal's decision to attend Centre For Fathering's ICAN Fathering programme represented a turning point in his life. Jamal learnt critical parenting skills, and re-learned constructive ways of displaying affection and communicating empathetically, to become a nurturing presence in his family's life.

Today, Jamal's efforts to become a more effective father has contributed to a rich and loving home life. Jamal now serves as an active parent volunteer in his children's primary school, so that he can "give not only to [his own] child, but also to other children."

### **About Anand Lal, father of a fourteen year old son**

Father to a fourteen year old son with intellectual disabilities, apraxia and dyspraxia. Anand Lal is a swim coach, adult training facilitator and gamification consultant who has overcome the challenges of bringing up a child with special needs to champion the cause of making Singapore a more inclusive society.

Despite minor development delays in the early months, Anand and his wife did not discover their son's condition until he was 18 months old and had to be hospitalised for high fever. The revelation was devastating for Anand and his wife who realised that their lives would be drastically changed and whose hopes and dreams for their son were dashed.

Having a child with special needs meant a bigger financial burden on the family. With support from his mother-in-law, Anand and his wife worked as hard as they could in growing their careers while balancing the needs of their son who needed constant care and attended multiple therapy sessions.

Five years ago, Anand realized that his son who was in his pre-teens needed more of a father's attention. Having reached the peak of his career, Anand quit his full-time job and took up a part time role as a financial consultant to spend more time with his son, taking him on adventure trips and indulging in swimming, his favourite activity. Being able to give his undivided attention and seeing his previously uncommunicative son develop the ability to express his likes and dislikes have been one of the greatest joys for Anand.



The biggest challenges in raising a child with special needs is helping the child assimilate into society and the constant worry of what will happen to the child when the parents are no longer around, says Anand. As such, Anand has been helping to build awareness of the needs of these children as well as a more inclusive society by volunteering with Special DADs for Life - a father group under Centre for Fathering and DADs for Life which seeks to support fathers of children with special needs. He is also a CaringSG CAREBuddy leader. Anand and his wife have another 16 month old boy.

## **Annex B**

### **Quote by Second Minister for Education, Dr Maliki Osman**

“A father’s involvement in the lives of his children is important. We have seen enough research both in the west and in Singapore that attests to the positive outcomes of a father’s involvement in children development.

As they are growing up, being present for their key milestones is really very critical - sickness, emergencies, soccer matches, performances - all these are important for our kids. As a father, I make sure I attend every one of them. I encourage my children to share their feelings with me, their worries, their concerns. I don’t discourage them from crying if they want to, this means they are not afraid to share their innermost thoughts and feelings with me.

Fathers play many roles in their children’s lives such as provider, protector, playmate, comforter, cheerleader, counsellor and coach. Many fathers tend to focus on certain roles such as the provider and protector. However, they may overlook roles such as being their children’s playmate. Through play, you can connect with them and build strong bonds, as you are letting them know you are there for them and you enjoy being with them. As fathers, we may not be as good as our children in the game, and we can learn from them instead of always thinking that they learn from us. As fathers, it does not mean we only play with sons. We can play with our daughters too, even if it means playing “masak masak”, dolls or kitchenettes. It shows the daughter, and son too, that taking care of cooking is a father’s equal responsibility

As fathers, what we want to do is to journey with our children through the ups and downs. It gives our children a sense that they are important in our lives. And we want to go beyond education and studies to connect with them. We must be prepared to take every opportunity to help our children learn through life.

It is very encouraging for me to see educators, parent support group leaders, father groups leaders and interested parents at the DADs@School Forum. This goes to show the extent to which parents and schools believe in a father’s involvement in their children’s journey.”

## **Annex C**

### **About Centre for Fathering, DADs for Life and MUMs for Life**

Centre for Fathering (CFF) is a non-profit organisation founded in 2000 to promote active and involved fathering and address issues caused by fatherlessness in Singapore. The organisation aims to turn the hearts of children towards their fathers by empowering more fathers to be better role models and an enduring inspiration to their children.

Since 2015, CFF has been the driving force behind Singapore's nationwide fathering movement - DADs for Life which seeks to inspire and mobilise fathers to become more involved with and a good influence to their children... for life. Under the DADs for Life umbrella are initiatives such as Back to School with DAD, Eat With Your Family Day and Celebrating Fathers – to encourage fathers to spend time with their families and create a culture that promotes active fathering. MUMs for Life is a ground-up movement to celebrate a mum's unique identity as a woman, daughter, wife & mother, whose key partner is DADs for Life because we believe that mums and dads play irreplaceable and complementary roles in parenting together.

#### CFF is Made For Families

CFF is proud to be part of the ecosystem supporting families in Singapore, and identify ourselves as an organisation that is Made For Families. Made For Families represents the different ways – big and small – in which Singapore supports families. Companies, organisations and community groups can adopt the brand mark to identify themselves as promoting the value of family in our society. Together, we can build a Singapore that is Made For Families, by laying a foundation of support, from family-friendly spaces and workplaces, products and services, and family-bonding activities. Visit [www.madeforfamilies.gov.sg](http://www.madeforfamilies.gov.sg) for more information.

### **About Families for Life (FFL)**

FFL's vision is to inculcate a "Families for Life" mindset and value among Singaporeans, by building strong and resilient families, as that makes for stronger communities and better individual well-being. A people-sector Council comprising 15 volunteers from the people and private sectors, the FFL Council is chaired by Mr Ishak Ismail, Regional Director (Asia) of BAE Systems Hägglunds AB.

The FFL Movement brings together and rallies like-minded groups of individuals, families and organisations to build and strengthen family bonds through large-scale events, national celebrations and online campaigns. Visit [familiesforlife.sg](http://familiesforlife.sg) for tips, resources and interesting activities you can enjoy with your family.