

# INFORM

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## A Tribute To Our Foreign Domestic Workers



**1,600** FDWs came together on 2 December 2012 to celebrate the 3rd Foreign Domestic Workers' (FDW) Day at the Singapore Polytechnic Convention Centre.

Organised by the Foreign Domestic Workers Association for Skills Training (FAST), in collaboration with the Association of Employment Agencies Singapore [AEA(S)], the event paid tribute to FDWs for their contributions to families in Singapore. Guest-of-Honour, Mr Hawazi Daipi, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Manpower and Education, said,

"Those of you who are employers of domestic helpers will agree with me that they play an important role in the lives of our households... in many ways, they are not only helpers, but also members of our extended families."

Many exciting activities were lined up, including ethnic dances, songs and skits presented by talented FDWs and exhibitions by welfare and voluntary organisations. The event highlight was an impromptu Gangnam-style dance by FDWs from various countries!

Some FDWs invited their employers. Among them was 50-year old Mdm Lee, who said, "I wanted to join in the fun. I think this is a very good initiative by the organisers."

Another highlight was the 'Foreign Domestic Worker of the Year' and 'Foreign Domestic Worker Employer of the Year' Awards. Mr Seah Seng Choon, President of FAST, noted that during the home visits conducted by judges from FAST and AEA(S), they were impressed and touched by the genuine concern shown and harmonious relationships between FDWs and their employers. **See what the award winners had to say on Page 2.**

To all FDWs in Singapore, thank you for your valuable contributions to the families here. We hope you will continue to build strong and enduring bonds with your employers.

# 'FDW of the Year' and 'Employer of the Year' Awards – Building a Harmonious Employer-FDW Relationship



Mdm Johns (with her FDW Ms Kamalamma Anithakumari), Employer of the Year 2012



Ms Faustina Mey-ang Basali, Foreign Domestic Worker of the Year 2012

'FDW of the Year' Award winner, Ms Faustina Mey-ang Basali, was pleasantly surprised with her win. Having stayed with her employer for the past 29 years, she has witnessed how her employer's children matured into adulthood and is touched to be treated as a member of the family. She said, "My employer and I are about the same age, so we think alike. Also, we trust each other after being together for so many years. We are like family already."

'Employer of the Year' Award winner, Mdm Sheila Johns, was nominated by her FDW, Ms Kamalamma Anithakumari. Employed by Mdm Johns in 2007, Ms Anithakumari developed such a close bond with her employer that Mdm Johns accompanied Ms Anithakumari on three trips home to India to help her settle various personal matters. Ms Anithakumari said, "Mdm Johns treats me very well. My diabetic aunt needed a fridge to keep her insulin jabs but had no money, so Mdm Johns bought one for her. She also pays for my computer and English courses."

## Mandatory Weekly Rest Day – DOES IT APPLY TO YOU?

### 'Only If Your Work Permit is Issued or Renewed from 1 January 2013'

- This new requirement is **applicable** to you only if your work permit is issued or renewed from 1 January 2013.



- You and your employer can mutually agree on which day of the week your rest day should fall on. It does not have to be on a Sunday.



- You are only allowed to perform domestic chores for your employer at the residential address stated in your work permit. It is an offence to illegally work for someone other than your employer, regardless of whether the work is done on your rest day or not.





# SCHEDULE OF SUBSIDISED COURSES



## COOKING CLASS FOR FOREIGN DOMESTIC WORKERS

FDWs will learn a series of culinary skills in this workshop to better prepare them in their work.

Please register directly with the CC prior to the course date (limit to 20-25 participants per class on a first-come-first-served basis).

For online registration, please visit People's Association's website at [www.one.pa.gov.sg](http://www.one.pa.gov.sg).

LOCATION	COURSE DURATION	COURSE FEE
<b>Bukit Timah CC</b> 20 Toh Yi Drive S(596569) Tel: 64662912	1 session (1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month) 3 hrs 10:00am – 1:00 pm	\$5
<b>Geylang Serai CC</b> 99 Haig Road, S(438748) Tel: 67472919	1 session (2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month) 3 hrs 9:30am – 12:30 pm	\$5 / \$7 (for PAssion /Non PAssion card member)
<b>Kampong Ubi CC</b> 10 Jalan Ubi, S(409075) Tel: 67423564	1 session (3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month) 3 hrs 10:00am – 1:00pm	\$5
<b>Geylang Serai CC</b> 99 Haig Road, S(438748) Tel: 67472919	1 session (4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month) 3 hrs 10:00am – 1:00pm	\$5 / \$7 (for PAssion /Non PAssion card member)



## ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSE

FDWs who wish to brush up on their day-to-day conversation with their English-speaking employers can register for this course.

Please call to register directly with the training provider.

LOCATION	COURSE DURATION	COURSE FEE
<b>SSA Consulting Group Pte Ltd</b> 5 Jalan Masjid #01-04 Kembangan Court S(418924) Tel: 68422282	Module 1 – 4 4 sessions per module on Sundays 4 hrs per session (Total: 16 hrs per module)	\$37.55 per module

## Hub for FDWs to unwind

Where do you usually hang out on your rest day? Have you heard that there will soon be a place for FDWs to come together, hang out with their friends and pick up new skills at the same time?

The Foreign Domestic Workers Association for Skills Training (FAST) and Grace Management & Consultancy Services (GMCS) will offer subsidised training courses and activities such as movie screenings, picnics, flea markets and even concerts for FDWs.

Watch this space for updates on the new hub and when it will be ready!

## WORKING PART-TIME ON REST DAYS IS AGAINST THE LAW



Many of you may be tempted to moonlight on your rest day, i.e. take up another job to earn extra money. However, please remember that working part-time on your rest day is a violation of the Work Permit conditions and you can be fined and even jailed.

This was the case for Filipino FDW Mary Grace Sobrejuanite Daclangin. Mary was given a day off every Sunday by her official employer. However, instead of resting on her rest days, Mary decided to earn more money by cleaning the flat of a Chinese man for a fee. Mary was eventually fined S\$3,000 for performing work for persons who were not her employer between November 2009 and April 2012. She was sent home after that.

As a FDW in Singapore, you can only work for your employer and at the address stated in your work permit card. Working for other employers is wrong, even if it is on your rest day. If you engage in such activities, you will be caught, and will not be allowed to work in Singapore.

### As a FDW, you are bound by the work permit conditions below:

- You can only work for the employer and address stated in your work permit card.
- You must **not** work at your employer's business or other houses, or work in another job (full-time or part-time), for example, waitress, sales assistant, etc.
- You must **not** set up your own business, for example, sew clothes to sell, sell handicrafts, etc.
- If your employer asks you to do something illegal or illegally deploy you, you must firmly say "No". If in doubt, call your employment agency or MOM at 1800 339 5505.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

KEEP THE NUMBERS BELOW FOR HELP OR EMERGENCIES



MOM Foreign Domestic Worker (FDW) Helpline  
1800-339 5505

This hotline is for FDWs seeking assistance and advice on well-being, salary and other employment-related matters

### OTHER EMERGENCY LINES

Ambulance / Fire 995

Police 999

### EMBASSIES AND HIGH COMMISSIONS

Bangladesh 6255 0075

India 6737 6777 / 6238 2538

Indonesia 6737 7422 / 9295 3964

Myanmar 6735 1672

Philippines 6737 3977

Sri Lanka 6254 4595

Thailand 6737 2475 / 8421 0105

### OTHER HELPLINES

ACMI Hotline 6280 5424

Association of Employment Agencies (Singapore) 6836 2618

Humanitarian Organisation for Migration Economics (HOME) Hotline 6341 5525 / 1800 797 7977

Samaritans of Singapore (SOS) Toll-Free Hotline 1800 221 4444

Transient Workers Count Too 1800 888 1515

## READERS QUIZ

Read INFORM and be one of our **80 lucky winners** to walk away with a **SingTel DataTalk\$22 Top-up Card!**



20 winners will be selected each month from May to August 2013.

**CLOSING DATE: 31 AUGUST 2013.**

Only FDWs are eligible to participate. Winners will be contacted via phone. Verification of identity will be through the mobile number and Work Permit number.

### QUESTION:

A FDW is only allowed to perform domestic chores for her employer at the residential address stated in her work permit. True or False?

To participate, SMS your answer to 9667 7111 in the below format:

E.g. If your answer is "True", key "St True" and SMS to 9667 7111.

This quiz is sponsored by SingTel. DataTalk\$22 gives you more surfing and overseas calling at lower rates. Available at 7-Eleven, Cheers and all other SingTel Prepaid retailers islandwide.



## UPDATES

# A GRATEFUL NOTE

Indonesian FDW Ika Sugiyanti wrote to INFORM last December to express her gratitude towards her employer, Mdm Lim Lan Eng. The INFORM team decided to pay Ika a visit to have a chat with her. Ika was all smiles when we met her at her employer's residence. We found out what makes a happy FDW like Ika.



### Q. What made you write to INFORM?

**A.** I feel very happy working for Mdm Lim and her family. Although I have been here only for 8 months, I don't feel homesick at all! Ma'am and her family do not see me as a domestic helper. I share my problems with Ma'am. I eat at the same table as them. We are like one big happy family!

### Q. What do you like most about working for Mdm Lim?

**A.** Ma'am is very understanding. Whenever I'm busy doing a chore, she will work alongside with me so that I can manage better. Ma'am knows I miss my daughter so she printed my daughter's photographs so I can see her every day. Sir often asks me if I want to call home to chat with my family too. I joke with Ma'am's family a lot, so there is never a dull moment.

### Q. How did you adjust to working in Singapore?

**A.** This is my second time in Singapore so I don't find it difficult to adjust to living and working here. I am used to working in homes in high-rise buildings too. Though I talk to Ma'am and her family in basic English, Madam also teaches me some simple Chinese phrases.

### Q. What advice would you give to other FDWs who are finding it hard to adjust to work in another country?

**A.** Be happy! This is very important. Even if your workload is heavy, if you keep a happy mind, you will feel light at heart. This is what keeps me going.



## SPEAK UP!

A huge Thank You to all who sent us your inspiring letters! The INFORM team is always happy to hear from you. Let's take a look at what some of our readers have to say...

"I just want to say thank you for the free newsletter (INFORM) as it helps me a lot, especially during my adjustment stage in the first three months of stay here. The articles and tips are very useful in helping me do my work safely and properly."  
- Cherilyn Vaje Villanvera (Philippines)

[INFORM Team: Thank you Cherilyn! We are glad you like the newsletter! Remember, stay safe!]

"I have been reading INFORM lately and I'm glad that I learnt a lot through this newsletter. Now I am starting to save for my future. My goal is to set up a small provision shop when I am back in Indonesia to sustain the future of my family."  
- Kirri Indah Yani (Indonesia)

[INFORM Team: Hi Kirri Indah, we are glad you found the articles useful. Look out for more courses which you can attend in this issue.]

We are also happy to receive two lovely pieces of handicrafts from FDW Santi Susilawati. She said,

"Every article in INFORM is an enlightening read for us FDWs in Singapore. INFORM is packed with articles that share good advice and stories. It is educational and FDWs are able to gain more knowledge and make friends with other FDWs of different nationalities. It has helped us to be more professional in our work and other areas. Thank you for the hard work in providing us with the interesting articles, INFORM team and MOM!" - Santi Susilawati (Indonesia)

[INFORM Team: Dear Santi, thank you very much for the lovely handicrafts! We love them. We appreciate your feedback and hope you will enjoy this issue of INFORM!]



We welcome you to continue writing in to us to share your experience or what you wish to see featured in future issues of INFORM. Send your letters to: Media, Promotions & Education Branch, Foreign Manpower Management Division, Ministry of Manpower Services Centre, 1500 Bendemeer Road #02-01, Singapore 339946.

The INFORM Team will select the 10 best contributors to win an exclusive gift pack!