

INFORM

ISSUE 17 / May 2015

A Ministry of Manpower (MOM) publication specially for foreign domestic workers in Singapore



Celebrating MUTUAL RESPECT and CARE

Foreign Domestic Workers (FDW) celebrated the 5th FDW Day on 30 November 2014.

About 5,000 FDWs attended the event organised by the Foreign Domestic Worker Association for Social Support and Training (FAST), paying tribute to all FDWs for their contributions made to families in Singapore.

FDWs at the event enjoyed the wide array of activities specially planned for them, along with performances by Indonesian celebrities Trio Macan. A highlight of the event was the

announcement of the “FDW of the Year” and “Employer of the Year” award winners. These awards honour both FDWs and employers, who show mutual care and respect towards each other.

Guest-of-Honour, Senior Minister of State for Health and Manpower, Dr Amy Khor stressed the importance of mutual appreciation between employers and employees as these would help build strong working relationships.



► Read on, as the “FDW of the Year” and “Employer of the Year” award winners share tips on how to cultivate better working relationships in the home.

A Winning Combination for Employer-FDW Relationships



**FDW of the Year Award Winner,
Ms Chona Bandejas**

Filipino FDW, Ms Chona Bandejas emerged the winner of the 'FDW of the Year' Award. The award came as a sweet surprise for the 47 year old, who had dedicated 22 years to the Che family, and cared for Mr Che's late father who lived a fulfilling life up to the age of 106! She recalled that while it took some getting used to at first, adapting to her new work environment while being so far away from home, was made easier through the support and understanding shown by her employer. Ms Chona has this advice for fellow FDWs:

Be patient, hardworking and work towards building mutual trust with your employers.



**Employer of the Year Award Winner,
Mdm Tey Ah Neo**

The 'Employer of the Year' Award went to Mdm Tey and her husband, Mr Tey Ah Neo, who showed exemplary care and support for their FDW, Ms Rodalina Saguid Dalauidao. The couple provided financial support to Ms Rodalina's three children during their university education, firmly believing that it would improve the lives of Ms Rodalina's children, who would then be better positioned to care for their mother. The couple encouraged fellow employers and their FDWs to always be accommodating towards each other.

THE FOLLOWING COURSES ARE OFFERED BY GRACE MANAGEMENT & CONSULTANCY SERVICES (GMC)



BABY CARE TRAINING

Programme Session 1

- Handling a newborn
- Umbilical cord care
- Bathing basics
- Diapering do's and don'ts
- Dressing and undressing

Programme Session 2

- Carrying techniques
- Sleeping positions
- Crying and how to handle it
- Feeding and burping
- Personal hygiene
- General safety

FEES

Sessions 1 & 2
Class based: S\$54 per FDW (min. 5 to start)
Home based: S\$180

DURATION

Class based: 6 hours
Home based: 4 hours

WHERE

Venue (class based)
 10 Raeburn Park Blk C #02-33 Singapore 088702
Tel: 6299 4333 **Email:** gracemgt@gmcs.com.sg

Have you ever wondered how other FDWs spend their rest days in Singapore? The INFORM team finds out:



Chilling Out!
 - The FDW Way



"Usually I go to the school (The Archdiocesan Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants & Itinerant People, ACMI)."

- Ms Alma (Philippines) has been working in Singapore for three years

"Attend tuition and classes to learn something new. While in Singapore, we love the opportunity to be able to learn as much as we can."

- Ms Wigi Imawati Rahayu (Indonesia) has been in Singapore for eight years



"I go to the school (Filodep) to learn sewing, hairstyling and baking. My friends and I frequently visit the Botanic Gardens and attend church together, and we love the Burmese food at City Hall!"

- Ms Thin Thin (Myanmar)

Know Your Work Permit Regulations & Guidelines



Ask Your Employer for Permission Before Inviting Your Friends

It is a Sunday and it is your rest day. Instead of hanging out with your friends, you decide to invite them to your employer's house since your employer's family is not around. However, this is not right. If you invite friends to your employer's house, seek your employer's permission first.

Anyone who enters the house without your employer's permission is considered a trespasser. Trespassing is an offence in Singapore.



Your friends cannot enter your employer's house without your employer's permission.



Getting pregnant while working in Singapore can get you into trouble

In November 2013, Indonesian FDW Ms Musliyati secretly gave birth in her employer's home. In her desperation to hide the new-born from her employer, Ms Musliyati wrapped the baby in a blanket

and placed it in a plastic bag before burying it in the backyard. It was only later that the Police found the buried baby with the help of a police dog. For her actions, Ms Musliyati was jailed for three months.

SPEAK UP

Do you have something you would like to share with us, or with your fellow FDWs? We welcome you to write in to us. Or write to tell us what you want to see 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.**

Ms Mya Sadar Win (Myanmar)

On behalf of FDWs, I thank INFORM for giving us an opportunity to express our feelings. I would like to share the following with other FDWs:

"In life one faces problems and troubles;
These are part and parcel of our lives;
Because of these we become more mature;
Improve our lives;
So do not fear, face them with courage."

INFORM Team – Thank you Mya for your sharing. It is indeed inspiring!

Ms Siti Hajariyah (Indonesia)

I am happy and proud to be able to work in beautiful Singapore. Thank you INFORM, for providing us with useful information. I would also like to take this opportunity to share an advice with all my friends:

Don't let a chance slip by while you are here. Besides earning a living, you should also seek knowledge and skills by attending courses to improve yourself. We will not live in a foreign country forever. Remember: "As high as the crane may fly, it will surely return to its own nest".

INFORM Team – Hi Siti, you have shared a very meaningful advice. We hope you will continue to read INFORM and attend the courses featured.

Ms Karunanithi Buvanewari (India)

This is the first time I am working in Singapore. When I first arrived at the airport, I was confused and fearful. But the officer at the counter said "smile, please" and gave me some sweets. This made me feel very welcomed and I look forward to my new life in Singapore. I also wish to pick up many new skills while in Singapore.

INFORM Team – Hi Buvanewari, we are glad you are looking forward to your work in Singapore. We wish you all the best.

Ms Jane O Mordido (Philippines)

I was inspired after I read the last issue of INFORM. I can relate to the stories of fellow FDWs. I know being an FDW is not easy. We miss our family but we need to work overseas to secure a better life for them. All we need to do now is to be strong and never ever lose hope. This is the key to our success in life.

INFORM Team – Hi Jane, we are happy that our articles in INFORM had inspired you. We hope you will enjoy this issue.

Emi Lestari - A True Inspiration for Fellow FDWs



► **Ms Emi Lestari, from Jogjakarta, Indonesia, has been working in Singapore as an FDW for 12 years.**

Several years ago at an FDW Day event, Emi's interest in money management was triggered by a talk given by a student from Aidha. (Since 2006, Aidha

provides training programmes in money management, computer literacy, leadership and entrepreneurial skills that enables many of their students to set up their own businesses and make productive investments in their home countries, providing more sustainable options for themselves, their families and their communities).

Emi then joined Aidha and enrolled in a two-year course (module 1 - Finance and Technology and module 2 - Entrepreneurship and Business Management). While studying at Aidha, Emi submitted a 3-in-1 business plan which outlined the setting up of a one-stop service which brings together a boutique, a dress-making training centre for dressmaking and a wedding parlour. This plan helped Emi win second place among

the 110 Aidha graduates.

Emi graduated in 2014 and hopes to launch this project in her home country. Emi gained much financial knowledge and learned a great deal about herself. Emi said, "I can see the results. I have become more disciplined in my spending and have learnt how to manage my salary." She plans on starting the business phase-by-phase, and once established, hopes to volunteer her time to teach at dress-making courses.

Emi now encourages her son and parents to save and invest for the future. She advises fellow FDWs to create their own success stories by putting their heart into achieving their goals. Emi is a true inspiration and her hard work and determination are to be commended.

Yu War Chit - A FDW's Story

► **Ms Yu War Chit (Myanmar) who has been working with her current employer for close to two years.**

Like many other FDWs, she needed time adjusting to working and living in Singapore. The INFORM team spoke with her to find out how she managed to overcome her initial fears to enjoy a good working relationship with her employer today.

What was it like working in Singapore for the first time?

When I first came to Singapore in 2011, I had a difficult time adjusting. I was sad and cried quite often. It was my first time in a foreign country and I did not know whether the family could accept me. However, I now know that it takes time to learn and know one another.

How do you feel about working for your current employer?

My current employer is the second family I am working for in Singapore. I take care of an elderly man who suffers from stroke. I treat them like my own family even to the point of calling them "May May" (for Mummy or Ma'am) and "Phay Phay" (for Daddy or Sir). They treat me like their daughter and we joke around a lot. They taught me basic English and Malay, and even to cook Indian and Malay dishes. When I cook for the family now, they tell me it is delicious!



How do you usually spend your rest days?

Rest days are important for me to take a break from work. I usually visit the Myanmar Buddhist Temple in Toa Payoh or the Kallang Buddhist Temple to pray. For leisure, I shop at Peninsula Plaza and go for walks at Gardens by The Bay, Sentosa, Singapore Botanic Gardens and East Coast Park. I have made friends here in Singapore and we like hanging out together.

What advice do you have for other FDWs working in Singapore?

Language barriers can be a common problem for FDWs, so make an effort to learn basic English. If it is your first time working here, it is natural to feel a little sad or uneasy but in time, it will go away. If you do not understand how to carry out your work, ask nicely and learn properly when they show you how to do the work.

Often think about your family back home because we are here to work and provide for them. And while you remit money back home to your family, don't forget to keep some to reward yourself during your rest days!



USEFUL CONTACTS

KEEP THE NUMBERS BELOW FOR HELP OR EMERGENCIES

MOM FOREIGN DOMESTIC WORKER (FDW) HELPLINE



MINISTRY OF
MANPOWER

1800 339 5505

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

OTHER EMERGENCIES

☒ Ambulance/Fire 995 🚓 Police 999

OTHER HELPLINES



ACMI Hotline
6280 5424



Samaritans of
Singapore (SOS)
1800 221 4444
(24 hours)



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



Association of
Employment
Agencies
(Singapore)
6836 2618



Foreign Domestic Worker Association for Social
Support and Training (FAST) Toll-Free Hotline
1800 339 4357 (24 hours)

EMBASSIES AND HIGH COMMISSIONS

	Bangladesh	6255 0075
	India	6737 6777
	Indonesia	6 737 7422 / 9295 3964
	Myanmar	6735 1672
	Philippines	6737 3977
	Sri Lanka	6254 4595
	Thailand	6737 2475 / 8421 0105