

HOME | SCHOOL | COMMUNITY | PARTNERSHIPS | AT WORK



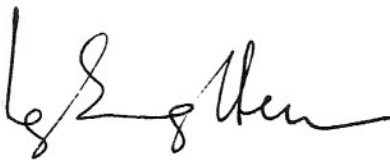
FOREWORD

NONE DISPUTE the importance of education in providing a firm foundation for a child to succeed in life. However, the educational experience would be incomplete if schools operated in isolation. To better prepare our young, to meet challenges in the new millennium, it is imperative that society as a whole plays a key role in educating its people.

Home, school and community partnerships are therefore relevant as they facilitate this interactive process. These partnerships also allow schools to leverage on valuable resources from different stakeholders in their quest to develop our students fully.

Creative Partnerships documents successful ideas for developing such beneficial collaborations. This particular collection aims to inspire schools through a variety of positive experiences in partnership efforts.

I commend these schools for their relentless efforts in developing and establishing successful partnerships with their stakeholders. I trust that all our schools and partners in education will find this publication a useful resource and will be able to use some of these ideas to complement their own experiences.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ng Eng Hen', written in a cursive style.

DR NG ENG HEN

GONGSHANG PRIMARY SCHOOL

"THE ULTIMATE GOAL IN EDUCATION IS TO SEE TO THE NEEDS OF THE CHILD. THIS CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED IF STAKEHOLDERS ARE FOCUSED ON A COMMON GOAL."

– MRS DAISIE YIP, PRINCIPAL

GONGSHANG PRIMARY SCHOOL has always been ahead of its time. Mr Lin Zeyang, the forward-thinking founding principal who is still affectionately referred to as the Father of Gongshang, started a vocational training programme for his students from as early as the 1920s. Such programmes were unheard of in those days. "We've always had a pioneering spirit," said Mrs Yip.

So it comes as no surprise that Gongshang is striving for the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) certification. Parents of Gongshang students have always participated actively in school activities for the benefit of the students. Mr Danny Ker, a parent volunteer, shared with the school his vision of transforming Gongshang into a world-class school. He suggested that the school work towards achieving ISO certification. Little did he know then that he would help the school make history as the first school in Singapore thus far to achieve ISO certification.

"The ISO is an internationally recognised quality management system. In Europe and the United States, there are world-class ISO-certified schools," explained Mr Ker. The ISO benchmark is used to ensure that there is a proper management and control system in organisations. It enhances the status of the school and builds confidence among its stakeholders. The management system creates flexibility to respond rapidly to changes in the school environment, generates effective use of its resources and is a compelling motivational force. ISO certification requires productivity and efficiency standards of all school activities to be maintained. The school was awarded the ISO 9002 certification in October 2001. "Being certified means our structure and system are in place, and this is only

possible because of the combined efforts of our parents, teachers and the community," added Mrs Yip.

The ISO has also led the way for the further development of the school. "The ISO is an endorsement that testifies to a high standard of quality. We are proud to receive such recognition and will now work towards attaining the Singapore Quality Class Award which is a national benchmark for business excellence," said a determined Mrs Yip.

SHARING IN THE JOYS OF EDUCATION

Gongshang has become well-known among Tampines residents for its commitment to quality education. However, the success of the school would not have been possible without the strong support of its Parent Support Group (PSG). The group was first formed in 1997 with eight parents and has since grown to 150 parents.

Both the school and PSG are committed to the development of students. The school management team and staff spend many weekends each year discussing issues, challenges and ideas to improve school life. The PSG supports school activities through active participation. They produce the school newsletter, join in various festivals and gatherings and help teachers to accompany students during school excursions.

WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND

An enthusiastic Mrs Liew still helps out at Gongshang although her son had already graduated from the school many years ago. When she emigrated from Hong Kong to Singapore several years ago, Mrs Liew was apprehensive about getting her son settled into a new school. Gongshang exceeded all her expectations. The warm reception from the teachers at Gongshang quickly eased the strains of being in a new environment. She attributed her son's academic excellence to the high standards of education at Gongshang. The grateful mother remains actively involved in the PSG to show her gratitude to the school and uses her experience to help new students adjust to the school.

Gongshang Primary also enjoys the support of two other groups, the School Advisory Committee (SAC) and the alumni. The PSG, SAC and alumni are imbued with a sense of shared responsibility for the development of students and shared accountability for their achievements. The support groups update one another on the progress of the programmes they have initiated and share resources for the benefit of students.

Gongshang wants to ensure that the pooled resources of the school and its stakeholders are easily accessible to any student who is in need. The school has set up the Sunshine Post which aims to provide students with an avenue for feedback. Students are encouraged to write in confidence to teachers on any pressing issue or personal problem. Feedback gathered from the Sunshine Post has revealed that stress among students is a common concern. As a result, a special talk was organised on 8 April 2002 to alert parents about the problem. A parent volunteer who is a professional counsellor gave the talk. She also conducted workshops on stress management for the teachers.

It is evident that successful collaboration with the PSG, SAC and alumni has played a big part in the school's journey "Towards Excellence in Total Education".

CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

- Collaboration with Keng Chew Lodge and Jamiyah Home to involve students in community work
- Collaboration with schools in Japan and Taiwan in the organisation of cultural exchange programmes

FUTURE PLANS

- To tap into the professional expertise of parents in creating The I-cubator, a space for innovations and creativity at work; and to craft the Gongshang Innovation Master Plan 2003
- To collaborate with the National Arts Council to promote greater family cohesiveness through its arts programme
- To involve grandparents in school activities

