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Dads and Kids Learn Through Play at Speak Good English Carnival 2011

10 September 2011 -The Speak Good English Carnival 2011 which took place on 10 and 11 September at Jurong Regional Library, was filled with fun activities for dads and kids to learn more about each other and the language.

The carnival highlighted the important role that adults play in ensuring that children develop the habit of speaking good English.

There were plenty of opportunities for father and child bonding. Some participated in activities and workshops, while others took in the performances.

On hand to launch the carnival was Mr Lawrence Wong, Minister of State for the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Defence. Speaking as Guest of Honour, Mr Wong related his own experiences with spoken English.



Understanding the Need

Mr Wong shared with the audience that he had a problem with communicating in English as a University student in the United States.

While his writing skills were good enough for the coursework, he felt handicapped when trying to speak English. Often, people could not understand him. He also took a long time to form sentences as he needed to think through what he wanted to say, and to find the words to express himself before he could finally verbalise his views.

Mr Wong emphasised that in order to nurture in children the ability speak good English, dads need to speak good English. This is because children tend to mimic their parents. And, in picking up good spoken English, children can be in an advantageous position when communicating with non-Singaporeans.

Focus on Fun Learning

Various partners of the Speak Good English Movement (SGEM) took part in the carnival by setting up stations and booths in the library. And, Dads for Life (DFL) was there, giving out the Knowing Me, Knowing You card game and colourful balloons spotting the DFL logo.



SGEM partners at the carnival launch.



Balloons were a crowd pleaser, especially for the kids.



Dad Srinivasan with Adarsh, sharing a laugh as they played the Knowing Me, Knowing You card game.



Lok Hwa, wife Jo, and son Jack pose in front of the DFL's card game station.

More importantly, dads and kids got the chance to play a customised version of the card game. This involved a father and child picking a question from the card. Thereafter, each would wait for his or her turn to ask and answer the question.

Among those playing the card game were Srinivasan and son, Adarsh, who visit the library every week together. Srinivasan said that he felt it was important to let his children get a feel of how important it is to read.

Adarsh, who enjoys reading with his dad, asked to borrow a book on prehistoric creatures. "Reading a book about dinosaurs will let me talk to my friends at school about it (dinosaurs)," Adarsh said.

Leong Lok Hwa, his wife Jo Tan, and their son Jack were also there at the Knowing Me, Knowing You card game station. As a family, they enjoy going outdoors, especially for hikes in nature parks. Coming to the carnival, Lok Hwa and Jo were grateful for the chance to engage Jack in a different way.

An Interactive Way to Learn

Dads and kids also got to try out Moo-O, a software for creating digital storybooks. They took to the computer stations to film themselves and read scripted lines as expressively as they could. The software, then superimposed their faces and voices on animated characters in a story.



A young participant doing her best at reading every word well. What is a carnival without a mascot, even if it was the mascot for saving.



The team from Eyepowergames (in blue) shows



L-R: Raj, Nathan and Thiru going through the paces of

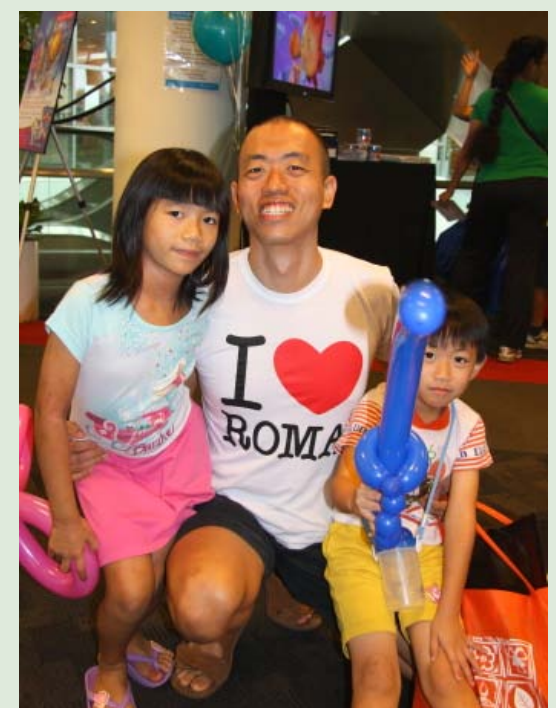
participants how to use Moo-O to create a digital storybook.

producing their own digital storybook.

Raj, Thiru and Nathan were among those who enjoyed using the software. Raj proudly watched as his two sons took turns to play the characters in their digital stories. Raj said, "Our family activities are usually restricted to swimming and playing soccer. To see my sons being able to put the story together like this was very impressive." He pledged to encourage his children to keep practicing good spoken English.



This kid was a little too young to do a question and answer session with daddy.



We love speaking good English!

When it comes to speaking good English, dads in Singapore can be great role models to their children. And, they will continue to receive support through efforts such as this carnival -made possible by SGEM and its partners.

About the Author: The Dads for Life Resource Team comprises local content writers and experts, including psychologists, counsellors, educators and social service professionals, dedicated to developing useful resources for dads.

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