

Family Life Champions get families to cook, bake and bond

By GWENDOLYN NG

GRASSROOTS leader Daisy Koh hit upon the idea of starting a cooking class for families after her two sons reminisced about their late grandfather's signature kambing (mutton) soup.

Thus was the Grandma's Recipe cooking club – where grandparents take turns to teach their recipes to participating families – born in Yio Chu Kang Community Club last July.

Madam Koh, 55, said: “My family bonds over meals. So, I thought, why not get the older generation to share their recipes with their younger ones before they get lost?”

Madam Koh is among 30 Family Life Champions (FLC) who will be honoured for their outstanding efforts in promoting family life at the annual FLC Awards on Saturday.

Singapore has 84 such champions – grassroots leaders appointed in 2005 by the People's Association (PA).

The programmes initiated by the FLCs – from baby shows to



SWEET TREAT: (From left) Madam Serisetyowaty Abd Ghafar, mother Saleha Abdul Rahim and son Syed Umar Yaakub bake together at Rivervale Community Centre. (PHOTO: JAMIE KOH)

football-match screenings – reached 18,717 individuals this year, up from 4,012 in 2005.

For the coming year, the FLCs will focus on programmes for grandparents and newlyweds.

Ms Joan Pereira, PA's director for family life and active ageing, explained that, with the population here ageing rapidly, there is a need to ramp up activities for seniors.

For a start, PA aims to increase the number of activities for grandparents next year by 50 per cent, up from the 52 such events organised this year.

Also on this year's agenda: Increasing the number of interest groups for grandparents from the current five to 14.

One such group is The Baker's Heart, which promotes inter-generational ties via monthly baking sessions at the Rivervale Community Centre kitchen.

Among the 20 members are Rivervale resident Serisetyowaty Abd Ghafar, 37, her eight-year-old son, and her 62-year-old mother, who lives in Yishun.

Mixing batter, kneading dough and sampling pastries together has helped the family bond, Madam Serisetyowaty said.

She said: “Previously, my son

never had the chance to cook with his grandma. After the sessions, we are now closer.”

This year, the FLCs will also work on integrating newlyweds into the community.

For example, Mr Wilson Lim, 44, an FLC from Punggol East who has solemnised 360 marriages, intends to hold wakeboarding sessions after some couples expressed an interest in sea sports.

Ms Pereira acknowledged that it would be a challenge to get the couples involved, as they have work and family commitments, but remained optimistic.

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