



OPENING ADDRESS

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MINISTER OF WOMEN, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

IN CONJUNCTION WITH

FOFM FAMILY WITH A MISSION CAMP

PALM GARDEN HOTEL, PUTRAJAYA

[Salutations]

1. Good morning and welcome to Focus on the Family's inaugural "Family with a Mission" camp. It is a great pleasure for me today to be invited to this program by Focus on the Family Malaysia (FOFM), a non-profit organization established in 1997 which has a clear vision to strengthen families.
2. Recognizing that family is the basic functional unit of society, FOFM promotes an enriched and thriving family life for all by providing relevant, reliable and reproducible educational and training programs, resource materials and family support services.
3. To achieve these family-strengthening goals, FOFM partners with government agencies such as the National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN), professional counsellors and educators, corporations, resource agencies as well as family support and civil society organizations.
4. Thank you FOFM for your continuous supports and collaboration towards strengthening the families as the core of communities. I am happy to mention that, in the 11th Malaysia Plan (2016-2020) the government committed that the well being of *rakyat* is of utmost importance. Progress is meaningless without peace and happiness. Toward this end, I am sure many initiatives on

empowering the community to enhance inclusiveness by addressing the needs of the community, including family will be undertaken towards creating productive and prosperous society.

5. Over the past 18 years, FOFM as an NGO has reached out to over 5.6 million individuals through family talks, youth, parenting and marriage programs as well as one-to-one counseling. They also have an active reach through online platforms and social media reaching out to more than 2 million people annually.
6. Today, FOFM has collaborated with the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development and LPPKN in organizing this “Family with a Mission Camp” in conjunction with the National Family Month in November. The Ministry and LPPKN will launch the National Family Month on 7 November 2015 in City One Megamall, Kuching, Sarawak. Various family events and activities will be held on the day itself as well as throughout the month nationwide to celebrate National Family Month. We hope that more and more involvement of government agencies, corporate bodies, NGOs and community based organisations will implement programs to strengthen family connectivity and relationships.

Parents and children,

7. It is with great pleasure that I would like to highlight, some of the key marriage campaigns and events which FOFM partners with

the National Population and Family Development Board include “I Do! Married for love. Married for life.” and “Date Night,” which was designed to strengthen and enrich marriages in Malaysia by providing the avenue for couples to take time out to date one another.

8. Additionally, FOFM offers pre-marital education courses that equip couples with the skills to build a strong and healthy marriage and family life, and provides relationship assessment tools to help pre-married or married couples evaluate their current relationship. They also use the premarital program developed by the National Population and Family Development Board called “Smart Start.”
9. FOFM has also organized several bonding programs for fathers and mothers to connect with their sons and daughters in a unique setting. These programs are specially designed to strengthen parent-child relationships. Their bonding programs include “Father and Son Adventure Camp”, “Mother and Daughter Connection”, “Father and Daughter Banquet”, and “Mother and Son Connection”. FOFM also conducts parenting workshops and talks to equip parents with practical knowledge on how to raise and nurture their children.
10. One of FOFM’s key programs is called “No Apologies,” a character-based abstinence program. No Apologies has touched over 75,600 lives in school, with 91% of these youth pledging

abstinence to living a life with no regrets. A new program called “Sticky Notes and Push Pins” was designed in 2014 as a value-based workshop that helps college and university students envision the future, pin down essentials of love, dating and marriage, and equip them to make healthy decisions towards relationships for life.

11. Furthermore, FOFM also provides family support services through one-to-one counseling via face-to-face, email, letter and telephone at no charge to those in need. As of September 2015, FOFM has accommodated over 500 counseling sessions on marriage, parenting and other family-related issues. To help everyone that comes to their door, FOFM also offers referral services connecting clients to relevant and reliable professional support.
12. Today, FOFM is hosting its first family event involving both parents and children called “Family with a Mission Camp.” The objectives of the camp are manifold.
13. The goal of the program is to enable families to better cope families with modern living in this rapid industrialization and globalization, FOFM aims to empower families with personal and relational skills that sustain the closeness and intimacy among family members. Hence, one of the objectives of “Family with a Mission” is to help families thrive and not just survive. Parents will learn how to create a caring and loving home environment, which would inspire their children to discover who they are and

prepare them to face life's challenges with a positive outlook.

14. Secondly, "Family with a Mission" aims to bring families together for a time of understanding, communicating and affirming one another. The best investment any parent can make for their children is to spend time with the family without distractions. The activities lined up would require parents and children to understand each other, communicate effectively, be creative and work as a team.
15. Thirdly, with the ample space provided at Palm Garden Hotel, families are provided an avenue for fun and bonding through games and activities. Families have the opportunity to participate in the camp's planned family bonding activities, such as a family treasure hunt and "family costume design" or make use of the "free and easy" session to bond. Parents can take the opportunity to relax by the pool side while your children are playing in the pool, or better still, choose to join the children in the pool for a family fun time!
16. Last but not least, the highlight of the camp is for families to form their own "Family Mission Statement." Each family will design an art piece containing their unique family goals, hopes and dreams, which hopefully, will unite and strengthen the family. It is also envisioned that this simple yet meaningful art piece would remind them of their family creed and become a legacy to be passed down to the younger generation.

17. At the end of the camp, we hope families will be inspired to thrive, and not just “survive!”
18. Thank you and I wish all of you a wonderful experience at this camp and enjoy your family time. Let’s celebrate National Family Month with the message “I Love My Family!”.