

## HELP EMPLOYEES ACHIEVE WORK-LIFE BALANCE THROUGH FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

In an increasingly competitive society where hard work is needed to keep up with the pacesetters, there will be a build-up of pressure to ably manage the dual responsibility of work and family. An employee's failure to cope with challenges in either sphere will bring assorted problems to not just his or her home, but to the workplace as well.

The good news is that you can help the employees in your workforce gain the necessary skills to maintain a harmonious balance between work and family. Through the Family Life Ambassador (FLA) programme, tips on marriage preparation or enrichment, parenting and family life can now be made accessible at the workplace. Administered by the Ministry of Community, Youth and Sports (MCYS), the FLA programme was developed primarily to impart family life skills, especially to working adults, in the midst of their busy schedules.

To be an FLA, employers need only sign an application and fulfill 12 hours of Family Life Education a year for staff. MCYS will continually render support to employers to help them fulfill their roles as FLAs.

As an FLA, you can engage Family Life Educators to hold talks at your workplace, with a choice of Family Life topics that are most relevant to your employees' needs. Morning Star Community Services, for instance, is able to conduct its two-day Work-Love Harmony Workshop at your workplace. Alternatively, you can enroll your staff to attend the workshops at Morning Star Community Services, Sengkang Centre on 18 and 25 March 2006. These workshops are subsidised by the MCYS at a nominal rate.

Both workshops are ideal for working mothers who desire a better harmony in

their work and other commitments. Through these workshops, participants will learn to identify and prioritise their various roles and responsibilities. They will learn how best to work towards a fulfilling and healthy marriage in the midst of their multiple responsibilities.

Mrs Juliana Choo, the key trainer, is a Family Life Educator and has been a counsellor at Morning Star Community Services for the past six years. As a working mother with five children aged six to 15 years, she will share with participants practical tips on caring for oneself and loved ones, while at the same time fulfilling one's responsibilities at the workplace.

**"THEY WILL LEARN HOW BEST TO WORK TOWARDS A FULFILLING AND HEALTHY MARRIAGE IN THE MIDST OF THEIR MULTIPLE RESPONSIBILITIES."**

She said: "Although parents are aware that striking a work-life harmony not only helps to enrich a child's life but also that of the entire family, many find it extremely difficult to achieve this harmony. Participants at the two-day Work-Love Harmony Workshop will explore ways to deal with the 'no time, no choice' mentality, and work towards improving balance and harmony in their lives."

Morning Star Community Services is a Singapore registered voluntary welfare organisation (VWO) and a full member of the National Council of Social Service. Formed in 1999 as a community service project, it provides individual and family counselling, family life education, student care service, learning support programmes and school social work. It specialises in

preventive and developmental programmes to help families, parents, couples, children and youths cope with pressures faced by families.

Notably, Morning Star Community Services has developed Mission NOVA, a learning support programme dedicated to meet the needs of primary school-going children who are not coping well with the school system. These are children who have developed learning difficulties due to situations at home (e.g. divorce and death), inappropriate methods (e.g. use of threats and shame) or the pace of their development growth. As a result, they cope by being irreverent, posing behavioural problems to their peers, teachers and parents. Some cope by withdrawing into their own world to nurse their battled self-esteem. They are discouraged, unmotivated and may be perceived as lazy, naughty or daydreamers.

Companies which are keen to contribute towards this cause can adopt this programme to provide funding for Morning Star Community Services to further this service to benefit more underachieving children. The VWO welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with companies, groups or individuals.

Mr Christian Choo, Executive Director of Morning Star Community Services said: "It is possible that the public may overlook smaller non-profit organisations like us. The advantage of collaborating with us is that even small efforts or donations will help us to further our work. Because we are small, we work very closely with our supporters to strike a win-win situation."

For further information on Morning Star Community Services and the Work-Love Harmony Workshop, please visit [www.morningstar.org.sg](http://www.morningstar.org.sg). For those who are keen to donate or organise a community service project for your company to raise funds for Morning Star Community Services, please contact our Centre Manager at the Sengkang Centre at 6315 8812 ☎