

More employers pledge support for family life

The Families for Life Council's initiative – My Family Weekend 2018 – saw a record number of more than 250 employers adopting family-friendly workplace options on Aug 31

A hearty breakfast with the family, followed by a fun day out at the museum. Sounds like a weekend outing with the family? In fact, this was Biz Square's Family Day programme on Aug 31, as part of My Family Weekend (MFW) 2018.

A small to medium-sized enterprise (SME) with less than 50 staff, Biz Square was one of the over 160 private companies that pledged their support for MFW this year.

More than two-thirds of the participation from the private sector came from SMEs – a five-fold increase from last year.

A total of 253 employers participated in the initiative this year.

MFW was initiated by the Families for Life (FFL) Council and is in its second consecutive year. Participating employers pledged their support by adopting family-friendly workplace options such

as flexi-work arrangements, or organising family events such as "Bring Your Family to Work Day" (BYFTWD). This is in support of working parents who would otherwise need to make child care arrangements since schools and childcare centres are closed for the Teachers' Day holiday on Aug 31.

But what is in it for the employers? Mr Ching Wei Hong, Chairman of the FFL Council, said being family-friendly benefits both employees and employers. He explained: "Employers play an important role in promoting family life. By establishing family-friendly practices, companies not only help relieve the burden of worry



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Left: Minister for Social and Family Development, Mr Desmond Lee, and Families for Life Council members joined families for a chalk doodling activity at Circular Road, which was closed for an afternoon of festivities for MFW Fun Day on Sept 2.

on their employees, but also boost their morale and productivity at work. This, in turn, benefits the organisation."

Putting the fun into work

Elsewhere in the Central Business District area, City Development Limited (CDL) Senior Marketing and Communications Manager Ms April Chiang's eight-year-old daughter "went to work" with her mother.

"She enjoys seeing where I work, who I work with and what I do," said the mother of two.

CDL celebrated MFW 2018 with its annual BYFTWD, which allows employees to spend quality time with their children by participating in fun activities at the workplace together. They also let staff off earlier to celebrate "Eat With Your Family Day".

At City Gas, balancing work and personal life is fundamental to happy, healthy employees. The company also organised a BYFTWD on Aug 31, an event it has been running annually for the past 10 years.

Vice-president (HR & Logistics) Mr Abdul Hamid said: "We observe that happy employees delight customers. This not only improves our company's image, but also improves employee performance and results in higher levels of employee retention."

Learning from others

While some employers in Singapore have extensively adopted family-friendly initiatives at the workplace, others are still exploring ways to take the first step. To support these employers, the FFL Council organised an employer seminar in collaboration with the Embassy of Sweden on

Aug 23. Organisations gained insights from the sharing sessions by leading Swedish companies on their best family-friendly practices, as well as resources and support available to implement such initiatives in the workplace.

Ms Nurul Amira, human resource officer from V.Ships Asia Group, a supporting SME, said: "The seminar gave me new insights on how we can refresh our HR strategies to strengthen talent retention and support our employees' family life through family-friendly practices."

Everyone has a part to play

Apart from the strong support from employers, families also joined in the activities lined up throughout the Aug 31 to Sept 2 weekend. Community partners organised over 20 events islandwide, such as storytelling and craft activities at museums, a charity run, a concert in the park and a Families for Life Picnic at Singapore Botanic Gardens.

To conclude the weekend, MFW Fun Day was held at Circular Road as a finale event. The roads were closed to make way for exciting activities such as chalk doodling and puppet-making workshops. More than 1,200 families, including employees and families from OCBC Bank, UOB and Johnson & Johnson, also turned up for the events.

Minister of State for Social and Family Development, Mr Sam Tan, said: "Let's not limit our support for families to just this weekend. Whether we are employers or employees, we should all make the conscious effort to spend quality time with our families and encourage others to do the same."



City Gas, one of over 250 employers that pledged their support for My Family Weekend 2018, organised a Bring Your Family to Work Day for their staff and their families.

To find out more about My Family Weekend 2018, visit www.familiesforlife.sg or scan the QR code below.



"By establishing family-friendly practices, companies not only help relieve the burden of worry on their employees, but also boost their morale and productivity at work."

– Mr Ching Wei Hong, Chairman, Families for Life Council



OCBC Bank held its Family Day event at OCBC Centre in support of My Family Weekend Fun Day on Sept 2, where close to 400 OCBC Bank employees and their families spent an afternoon bonding over activities, performances and food. PHOTOS: MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT, OCBC BANK, AND CITY GAS PTE LTD