

Award presentation ceremony commends foster families and calls for participation to bring love and care for foster children (with photos)

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, today (May 5) officiated at the Foster Families Service Award Presentation Ceremony 2024, in which 260 families were awarded for their care, devotion and exceptional contributions to foster children. With participation from about 700 foster parents and children, this joyful reunion serves to call on more people to join the service with a view to bringing love and care for more needy children.

The Award Presentation Ceremony, jointly organised by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and 11 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) subvented by the SWD for operating the foster care service, was themed "Amplifying Love through One-Plus-One" to promote the department's "one-plus-one" recruitment scheme for foster families.

Addressing the ceremony, Mr Sun called for support for the "one-plus-one" recruitment scheme and appealed to members of the public interested in serving needy children to submit applications together with their families and friends for taking care of the same foster child so that they can swiftly stand in for one another when any of them cannot assume the caring role due to temporary reasons. He said that such an approach not only promotes mutual support among peers and families, but also saves the need to arrange for a foster child to stay in an unfamiliar living environment.

Mr Sun said foster parents have made significant contributions to the protection of children's well-being. The Government has, since last month, substantially increased the incentive payment for foster families, with that for foster care service increasing from around \$5,000 to about \$11,000 per month, and that for emergency foster care service from around \$6,600 to about \$13,000 per month. Additional support will also be provided to foster families taking care of children with special learning or care needs. He hoped that these initiatives will impress upon foster families the support and appreciation for them in the community.

At the ceremony, Mr Sun and the Director of Social Welfare, Miss Charmaine Lee, presented long-service awards to 18 families which have been providing foster care service for more than 25 years. Close to 180 families which have been providing the service from five to 20 years were also awarded. Special awards were given to foster families with outstanding performances.

A video (youtu.be/QVsMWJYsd80?si=MyP4zfzqv8rUuC6F) was featured at the

ceremony to introduce how foster families can mutually support each other under the "one-plus-one" arrangement as they strive to provide a home for needy children that renders protection and shelter.

The SWD's Central Foster Care Unit was established in 1982 to oversee and co-ordinate the provision of foster care services provided by NGOs. Foster care aims at providing family-like care for children whose parents cannot provide proper care for them due to family problems. The children can therefore continue to enjoy family life until they can be reunited with their families or when other long-term welfare plans are arranged for them. Currently, there are about 980 registered foster families.

Members of the public who are interested in becoming foster parents may contact the SWD's Central Foster Care Unit at 2573 2282 during office hours.

