



## Media Release

### **Marriage Central Sets Up First Resource Point for Soon-to-Wed and Married Couples**

- *Partnership with National Library Board underscores commitment from the community to strengthen marriages in Singapore*

**Singapore, 8 December 2009** – Soon-to-wed and married couples can now walk into a public library and pick up tips and information on how to strengthen their marriages. Marriage Central and the National Library Board signed a Memorandum of Understanding today to set up resource points in three regional libraries by 2012. These points will serve as friendly and convenient resource hubs for soon-to-wed and married couples to pick up marriage-related resources or sign up for marriage preparation and enrichment programmes.

The first Marriage Central Resource Point, located at the Jurong Regional Library, will open by 9 December 2009. Besides providing easy access to marriage-related resources, the resource points will have Marriage Central staff on hand to answer any queries couples may have, help them sign up for marriage education programmes, and make referrals to marriage counsellors.

#### **Meeting the Needs of Married Couples**

The setting up of these resource points is timely to meet the needs of married couples. A survey of more than 600 married Singaporeans conducted by Marriage Central in April showed that married Singaporeans are interested in marriage education programmes. About 3 in 5 (61%) respondents indicated that they would like to see more marriage-related programmes or activities to

help couples strengthen their marriages. Over 90% of respondents agreed that marriage should never be dissolved, and almost all (97%) saw the importance of commitment and effort in creating a satisfying marriage.

“Through the resource points, Marriage Central hopes to raise awareness of marriage resources; encourage more couples to attend marriage education programmes; and provide a neutral environment for married couples facing issues to seek help early. We also hope that couples of all ages and at different life stages will find the resource points conducive to learning how they can prepare for and sustain a healthy marriage.” said Ms Anita Fam, Chairperson of Marriage Central.

National Library Board’s Chief Executive, Dr N Varaprasad said, “National Library Board is proud to be part of the national efforts to strengthen marriages. Our public libraries are shared social learning spaces for the community to make use of and we hope that the convenient locations of our regional libraries will provide couples with easy access to the wide range of Marriage Central resources to help them achieve stronger, healthier and happier relationships.”

### **Complementing Virtual Resource Point**

The resource points are part of Marriage Central’s overall strategy to equip couples with relevant knowledge and skills to nurture and strengthen their marriage. They complement Marriage Central’s on-line efforts to reach out to couples through its website ([marriagecentral.sg](http://marriagecentral.sg)), electronic newsletters and Facebook Fan Page. Since it was set up in March this year, Marriage Central’s website has been receiving a steady stream of more than 3,000 unique visitors per month. The virtual Marriage Central provides couples with essential tips to strengthen their marriages. A panel of experts consisting of marriage counselor, financial expert and medical doctor also provides online advice to couples who write in with questions about marriage and relationship. Marriage Central’s Facebook Fan Page has also started to build up a fan

base since it was set up 2 months ago. The fans include some well-known marriage educators from the US, such as Elizabeth Doherty, co-author of the book "Take Back Your Wedding", and Michele Weiner-Davis who is also well-known as The Divorce Buster.

Mr Lim Soon Hock, Chairman of the National Family Council said, "A strong marriage is the foundation of a strong family. Although marriages in Singapore are on the whole still healthy, the Council feels that more should be done to champion the case for strong marriages. Marriage Central aims to make marriage programmes and resources easily accessible to married couples and those preparing to tie the knot, through its virtual and physical resource points."

### **Community Partnership**

Ms Fam said that Marriage Central's efforts are focused on meeting the needs of couples, especially those in their first ten years of marriage, "Divorce statistics show that more than half of divorces occur in the first nine years of marriage. We want to work with our community partners to help couples build a strong foundation for their marriage and support them as they go through the various milestones in their married life. It is a sustained process and we hope that couples will find value in what Marriage Central has to offer."

Marriage educators welcome the initiatives by Marriage Central to create a buzz about marriage wellness and provide easy access to marriage resources. Mrs Theresa Bung, a senior therapist at Family Life Society and currently on Marriage Central panel of experts shared, "Marriage Central's initiatives have been helpful in reaching out to couples. The website and the resource points provide a "one-stop place" for marriage programmes for the public. When couples visit the website and the resource point, they will be able to choose whichever program they think best meets their needs. For marriage educators, they are like a "marketing co-operative", creating economies of scale in the marketing of marriage education. Instead of having

marriage educators trying to market their individual programs, which is expensive and time-consuming, we can now channel our efforts to develop and conduct marriage education programmes.”

For more information, please visit [www.marriagecentral.sg](http://www.marriagecentral.sg)

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