

SP Group gives \$1.1m to help kids from needy families

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Utilities company SP Group has donated \$1.1 million to KidStart, which helps children up to six years old from low-income families get a good start in life.

The money will go towards two new programmes – KidStart Sea Adventures Play and KidStart Stories – and benefit 3,000 children and their families this year.

KidStart Sea Adventures Play was launched at the Aliwal Arts Centre yesterday to support the Year of Celebrating SG Families, a campaign by the Ministry of Social and Family Development to celebrate the importance of families.

KidStart Stories, which will be introduced in October, encourages



Minister of State for Social and Family Development Sun Xueling (second from left) at the presentation of utilities company SP Group's donation to KidStart yesterday. With her are (from left) SP Group chief executive Stanley Huang, Community Chest vice-chairman Chew Sutat and KidStart chief executive Rahayu Buang. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

parents to spend time with their children and inculcate good reading habits. Bookshelves, storybooks and reading guides will be provided to the families.

At the launch of KidStart Sea Adventures Play, Minister of State for Social and Family Development Sun Xueling urged parents to engage in more family bonding activities with their children.

She said: "Our Government is committed to building a fairer and more inclusive society. We want to ensure that our children have a good start in life because that is a key enabler to achieving that outcome."

During the event, theatre company How Drama performed an interactive play adapted from *My Caring Friends At Sea*, a book by

KidStart early childhood consultant Puspavalli Namasivayam.

The play, about a shark that makes friends with other sea creatures, teaches children to care for others and the importance of community.

In addition to the donation, SP will continue to provide learning resources and tools such as tablets and Internet access to the children,

as well as financial support to address urgent essential needs.

Last year, the company donated \$1 million to KidStart, benefiting more than 2,000 children.

Chinese tutor Moey Choy Yin, 73, who was watching the play with her grandchildren, Evan Lim, six, and Eunice Lim, 12, said in Mandarin that Evan enjoyed the show.

She said that as her family members speak mainly Mandarin at home, KidStart's English tuition classes have helped her grandson build a stronger foundation in the language.

Madam Moey said she is also grateful for the fresh fruits and vegetables, storybooks and toys delivered to their home under KidStart's initiative. These have helped to alleviate the family of eight's financial burden.

KidStart chief executive Rahayu Buang said support from companies such as SP helps parents to have more bandwidth to focus on their children instead of worrying about bread-and-butter issues.

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