

message

MY PARENTS MIGRATED FROM CHINA and I never knew my grandparents who had already passed away at the time I was born, and I have no memory of them except for the stories my parents told me about them. My grandparents remain distant and unknown to me. I cannot even put a face to them as my parents did not have any photos of them to share with us. I often wonder – if they were to know me, what would they say to me, and what would I say to them – because, talk to them I would like to.

We are odd human beings. We take too much for granted. We do not always say what we want to say. Too often we fail to appreciate what we have until we have lost it. Too often we fail to express our appreciation and thoughts to those we hold dear, thinking that that can wait. But that should not be. Sometimes we just need to act - and put on record our thoughts on how our lives have been impacted on by these significant others. This project aims to do just that: to record the appreciation, wisdom, joy, nostalgia, regret etc that our grandparents have evoked in us.

In 2007, National Library Board (NLB) initiated the project *Letters From Grandma and Grandpa*. This year's project, a collection of thoughts and feelings from grandchildren to their grandparents and entitled *To My Grandpa/Grandma* is a follow-up on that, and, similarly, aims to foster inter-generational bonding. This year the project has gone into partnership with the schools in Singapore and we are extremely encouraged by the response we have received.



We received more than 1000 entries for the contest. This number is indicative of the number of students who have a desire to write to their grandparents and to share their feelings with them. Unfortunately, we were able to shortlist only about 40 entries from each category (Juniors, Teens and Adults) for publication in three separate publications and would like to commend all the writers including those whose entries were not selected for publication, for their effort and to encourage them to continue writing.

The *To My Grandpa/Grandma* project is special in so many ways. It encourages students to write, not for a school assignment or for an event, but to just write from their hearts to their grandparents, sharing with them their feelings and their lives, and bringing them into their school environment.

Grandparents are our living history. They complement our parents in providing us with the support and love that only grandparents can give, and very often, are the special someone the grandchildren can look up to and understand the world from.

To My Grandpa/Grandma represents communication between the generations. It may be the first time that a grandchild has ever thought of writing a letter to his/her grandparents. It may be the letter that a grandchild who is close to his/her grandparents had always thought of writing, but never got round to doing. Whatever the feelings and thoughts are, expressed in these words from the grandchild, they will bring not just the grandparents and grandchildren closer to each other, but also the parents to their children, when they see the hopes and dreams, feelings and sharing expressed between the grandparents and grandchildren.

It is my hope that these selected and published writings will endure and will act as an inspiration to all grandchildren and grandparents. Perhaps there are readers out there who have things they want to say to their grandparents but cannot find the right words. Who knows, maybe you will find in these books an entry that you would like to read out to your grandparents?

I would like to thank all those who sent in their entries to this project and to encourage them to continue the practice of writing to their grandparents. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to all those who served on the selection committee to decide on the selected entries – by no means an easy task as there were so many good entries to choose from.

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