

FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND PARENTING HUB FOR NEW AND IMMIGRANT PARENTS

MARKHAM - In an era of knowledge economy, people can google almost everything on the Internet. However, combing through so many sources can be confusing and tedious. Noticing a big gap of information for new and immigrant parents, a new not-for-profit parenting community hub is launched last weekend to fill these knowledge gaps with expert advice and practical resources, giving parents and parents-to-be much information under one platform.

The new hub ParentConnect™ is looking to serve the new and immigrant parents in Canada beginning its focus in York Region and Greater Toronto Area this year. New parents entering a new stage of life and immigrant parents being unfamiliar with the environment have many questions and challenges on parenting. According to the founder Loretta Lam, York Region has seen a tremendous population growth in recent years. Based on 2016 Census, more than 30 percent of York Region's 1.1 million population are immigrants. The number will certainly grow given by the fact that GTA is the most popular immigration destination of the country.

"Our mission is to promote positive parenting to help parents raise happy and healthy children," says Loretta Lam, Founder of ParentConnect™. "Based on our focus groups, we believe every parent can use a little help and resources from peers and experts. And our society can definitely benefit from a healthy and positive generation through positive parenting,"

To launch this initiative, ParentConnect™ has staged its first community event- the Parenting Expo 2017 to give a feel and look of what the parenting hub can offer parents. The event was held on October 21 &

22 at Markham Event Centre, 95 Duffield Road in Markham between 10 am and 6 pm. Admission is \$8 per person and free for children under 12. ParentConnect's member can be admitted free.

Parenting Expo 2017 features around 40 exhibitors from public and private sectors showcasing their services and products. The event also had a packed schedule of 20 expert talks and interactive knowledge sessions in English, Cantonese and Mandarin languages. Specialists in such areas as child psychology, mother and baby nutrition, children's health and wellness, home security and safety, car seat clinic and infant CPR, pre-school and after school programs, youth financial literacy, Chinese medicine, etc. will be giving handy advice to parents at the Expo.

One of the highlights was a symposium on nurturing the potential of children. Two families with teenage children shared their success stories on parenting. The girl of one family is a teenage entrepreneur who is running a successful shoes business. The boy of the other family is a hockey talent. His stick and skating skill videos have generated over 350K views on YouTube. They are examples of proven success when their parents embrace and nurture their potentials.

The new parenting hub has gathered support from the governments and the communities. Markham councillors including Regional Councillor Nirmala Armstrong, Councillors Don Hamilton and Alan Ho joined today's opening ceremony of the Parenting Expo. Also attending as guests of honour were Member of Parliament for Markham-Thornhill Mary Ng and Member of Parliament for Markham-Unionville Bob Saroya.