

Madam Indraneel Nadisen

In brief:

Mdm Indraneel is optimistic and wishes nothing but the best for her foster children's future. "I hope they all have a bright future, with good jobs in good companies. Some must even be happily married by now, so I hope they have good families too."

Speaking from her years of experience, Mdm Indraneel says that one of her favourite things is having a lively and bustling home with the sound of children's laughter. "The house becomes a lot livelier and happier with children in it. That is what I really miss about fostering," she says.



Madam Indraneel Nadisen with her husband, Mr Ambrose Anthony Dorai



The fostering veteran

Since her retirement from fostering service two years ago, Madam Indranee Nadisen's home has become a lot less noisy. Having devoted 32 years of her life to nurturing young foster children, Mdm Indranee says she now misses the sound of children's laughter as they play under her watchful eye.

Mdm Indranee became a foster parent in 1976 and has looked after 43 children, mostly newborns who would leave before they turned two. However, surgery to her shoulder and knee had forced Mdm Indranee into retirement as she could no longer carry children.

But Mdm Indranee's contributions towards fostering have not come to a complete halt as her apartment is still home to Ms Agnes T*, a 24-year-old whom Mdm Indranee has fostered since she was a baby.

At the age of 18, Agnes was given the option of returning to live with her relatives but she chose to live with Mdm Indranee due to the strong emotional bonds forged. For Agnes, growing up in Mdm Indranee's home has given her a different perspective compared to her peers.

"My mom (Mdm Indranee) may be biologically Chinese but she's very Indian at heart. So, you see things from a different cultural point of view."

Furthermore, knowing her background as a foster child has given Agnes the determination and desire to excel in all aspects of her life, a drive which has led her to do well in school.

Looking back at her years of caring for foster children, Mdm Indranee says she has been very lucky to have a large brood of well-behaved children under her care. Unlike some children, Mdm Indranee says she has never had any trouble taking the foster children out shopping with her.

"While other children will pull at items from the shelves at a supermarket, I tell my foster children not to touch the items if they want to follow me

shopping. They can ask me if they want anything on the shelf and I may take it for them," she says. "And they will listen to me."

Mdm Indranee also instills this discipline in her daily schedule. Giving an insight into her daily routine, Mdm Indranee says her family members usually convene around the breakfast table at 8 am in the morning. Lunch is at 12.30 in the afternoon, followed by a nap time.

"We have dinner at 6.30 pm after which the children can watch television. By 9 pm, the children know that they have to go into the room and sleep," she says.

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Would Mdm Indranee recommend fostering to other people? The answer is a 'yes' as Mdm Indranee says her life has been a lot richer and happier as a result of fostering.

In her opinion, there are a few key ingredients which foster parents require to be a good carer. Not only must foster parents have a great deal of patience and love for the foster children, they must also have the co-operation and support of their families as well. "Otherwise, it would be very difficult to take care of the children," she adds.

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* - name has been changed



Memento

Inspired by lacy crocheted tablecloths in the homes of family friends, Agnes T*, the 24-year-old former foster daughter of Madam Indranee, started to pick up crocheting and knitting through classes at community centres. After months of practice, Agnes presented Mdm Indranee with a crocheted shawl of her very own.

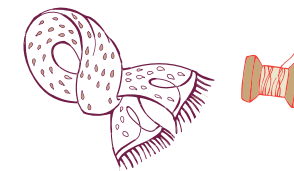
When Agnes was asked as to what inspired the gift, she replied: "I had bought a book on crocheting, and since Mom (Mdm Indranee) liked one of the designs, I thought, 'Why not make her a shawl?'"

A simple gesture such as this hand-made gift has brought much joy to Mdm Indranee, although she admits that she does not have many occasions to wear the shawl.

* - name has been changed



Madam Indranee receiving the MCYS Lifetime Volunteer Award from Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports, on 17 Nov 2009.





Note:

Sunday afternoons are usually a large family affair for Madam Indranees, as it is a time when all her children and grandchildren would congregate at her house for lunch to feast on her home-cooked chilli chicken meal.

According to Mdm Indranees, this dish was a favourite with her foster children and is now so popular among her grandchildren that one of her grandsons refuses to eat it if it is cooked by anyone other than her. "If my maid cooks the chilli chicken, my grandson can tell the difference! He will say, 'This is not cooked by grandma'."



Chilli Chicken With Tomatoes

Ingredients:

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|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Tomato Paste | 1 chicken |
| 4 tomatoes (400g) | 2 tablespoons turmeric powder |
| 10 shallots (200g) | 2 tablespoons chilli powder |
| | 1 teaspoon salt |
| Ginger Paste | 1 tablespoon oil |
| 1 ½ ginger(200g) | ½ teaspoon fennel |
| 1 big onion (100g) | 1 onion (100g), sliced |
| | 1 cinnamon stick |
| | 10 curry leaves |
| | 2 cups water |

- STEP 01** Blend 4 tomatoes and the shallots to create a tomato paste.
- STEP 02** Blend 1 ½ ginger and 1 big onion to create a ginger paste.
- STEP 03** Cut the chicken into pieces. Add in 1 tablespoon of turmeric powder, 1 tablespoon of chilli powder, the ginger paste and 1 teaspoon of salt. Marinate for 10 minutes.
- STEP 04** Bake the chicken until half cooked.
- STEP 05** Add cooking oil into the frying pan. Add ½ teaspoon of fennel, 1 sliced big onion, 1 cinnamon stick and 10 curry leaves. Stir fry for about 5 seconds.
- STEP 06** Add 1 tablespoon of turmeric powder and 1 tablespoon of chilli powder. Stir fry for 5 minutes.
- STEP 07** Add the half-cooked chicken and 2 cups of water. Add the tomato paste.
- STEP 08** Cook thoroughly for 10-15 minutes.

