

IFFD International Advocacy Workshop 2023, Paris 4-6 September.

# Intergenerational Solidarity: the case of Singapore



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# Netflix Documentary 'Live to 100' Names Singapore the World's Sixth Blue Zone

By  Anay Mridul — Published on Sep 1, 2023 — Last updated Aug 31, 2023

4 Mins Read

Author and explorer Dan Buettner, **co-founder** of the Blue Zones certification, has announced a sixth addition to the list, Singapore, in the new Netflix documentary, Live to 100. Blue zones are regions where people live longer than average, and Buettner calls Singapore an "engineered blue zone" representing healthy longevity.



<https://www.greenqueen.com.hk/netflix-documentary-live-to-100-singapore-world-sixth-blue-zone-dan-buettner/>

# Population 65 years and older in Singapore (2010-2030)

Singapore as one of the fastest aging country in the world

	2010	2020	2030
Age 65 and older	458, 000	858, 000	1,394,000
Proportion	9.0	15.5	24.1
Medium age	37.6	43.1	47.7
Dependency ratio (Old)	12	22	38

Source: Singapore DOS (2010) and UN data (<http://daya/un/org>)

**Life expectancy**  
**Female: 85.2**  
**Male: 80.7**

**2026: Super-aged society**

**2030: 1 in 4 age 65 and over**

# Advancing a positive gerontology approach

**Aging as Problem** → **Successful Aging**  
(1999 IMC)



## Successful Aging Framework (2006)

3 pillars:

**Security** (financial security, employability)

**Health** (affordable, holistic healthcare and eldercare)

**Participation** (promote active aging)

**ACTION PLAN FOR  
SUCCESSFUL  
AGING 2015**



1982: National Committee on the Problems of the Aged

# Many Helping Hands approach Family as first line of support

“The starting point, however, must be **individual** responsibility to plan and prepare for old age. The **family is the first line of care**. The **community is the second line of support** to enable families in their care-giving role. The role of the **State** is to provide a framework that enables the individual, the family and the community to play their part.” (IMC Report, 1999)



# ACTION PLAN FOR SUCCESSFUL AGING (2015)

*S\$3b budget to build a National for All Ages  
-Collective efforts of government, community, business,  
academics, citizens  
More than 70 initiatives in 12 areas*

**This is what a successfully ageing Singapore will be like:**



## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AGES**

Singapore will be a place where everyone, including seniors, can continually learn, grow and achieve their fullest potential.



## **KAMPONG FOR ALL AGES**

Singapore will be a caring and inclusive society that respects and embraces seniors as an integral part of our cohesive community.



## **CITY FOR ALL AGES**

Singapore will be distinctive globally not just for its economic success, but also as a model for successful ageing.

# Key themes (2015):

- Opportunities for All Ages – Longevity is Opportunity (employment, lifelong learning, volunteering, health programs)
- Kampong for All Ages – Cohesive Home with Intergenerational Harmony (community befriending, co-location of aged and childcare services)
- City for All Ages – Live Well and Age Confidently in Place (aged care, active aging, hubs, transport, research) – S\$200 million to fund research

At the community level, seniors have thrived within a

## “Kampong for All Ages”



Over 33,000 students participated in learning programmes with seniors, encouraging inter-generational bonding.

15 dementia-friendly communities established in neighbourhoods such as Yishun, Bedok and Toa Payoh East.



13 senior care centres co-located with childcare centres to provide common spaces for interactions between seniors and children.



# Refreshed Action Plan for Successful Aging 2023

CHAPTER 2 Refreshing the Action Plan with Singaporeans

2023 Action Plan for Successful Ageing

## CHAPTER 2

# Refreshing the Action Plan with Singaporeans

As ageing is a journey that each Singaporean will embark on, the Ministerial Committee on Ageing wanted the refreshed Action Plan to be co-created by Singaporeans for Singaporeans. Through our engagements, we heard about the worries and aspirations people had toward ageing, and found some key areas that Singaporeans believe are fundamental to successful ageing.





# KEY THEMES: 3 'C's



## CARE

Empower seniors to take charge of their physical and mental well-being through preventive health, active ageing programmes and care services.



## CONTRIBUTION

Enable seniors to continue contributing their knowledge and expertise by enhancing the learning, volunteerism and employment landscapes.



## CONNECTEDNESS

Support seniors to age in the community within an inclusive built environment and digital landscape, while staying connected to society and their loved ones.



# CONTRIBUTION: Employment, Volunteering, Lifelong Learning

**“Whenever I need advice, Cheow Kwang will be there to the rescue.”**

Edwin Lim  
Lifeguard,  
Sports SG



Quek Cheow Kwang, 65  
Lifeguard

Tap into a wealth of experience

With years of experience and know-how, older workers are assets to any employer. They have the relevant skills and still continue to contribute at work. Time has also brought them qualities like patience, judgement and perseverance, making them more reliable and good mentors to their colleagues. Many companies have benefited from employing older workers because they didn't allow age to be a barrier. You too can be one of them. Employ a wealth of experience today.

An initiative by  
THE TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE ON  
EMPLOYABILITY OF  
OLDER WORKERS  
www.age-mgt.sg

FEATURE STORY

## Finding Joy in Giving Back

Retirement may mean different things to different people, but for 66-year-old Millie Tan, retirement will be her playground.



Millie's passion spills over to even spending her own time to craft props to sustain the attention of her audiences. "I thought, maybe I should do origami? Because the child in me wants to have fun too!" She decided to knit a red hen as a prop in her storytelling session on "The Little Red Hen". It took her two weeks, but as she says, "when you are enthusiastic, you can do new and exciting things!"

Volunteering as a storyteller gives Millie a genuine sense of joy and purpose. She also appreciates the ability to connect with her audiences through her stories. Her advice to other seniors? "It's a joy to give back. You must be willing to plant the seed so that future generations can enjoy the shade of the tree."


Having been a regular storyteller at public libraries since 2015, Millie's introduction to storytelling was a serendipitous one. "I always liked to read literature, and I like children too, but I did not have the opportunity to pursue these in my career." In 2010, she undertook a diploma in counselling out of interest. One of her fellow learners

was a childcare teacher and storyteller. Her experience sparked Millie's interest to try out storytelling to children.

To hone her skills, Millie joined the Storyteller's Circle, an interest group under the Society for Reading and Literacy. She also joined the National Library Board as a volunteer storyteller, where she received training on how to read and tell stories to children.


FEATURE STORY

## Sharing Stories Across Generations



Children today are less fluent in their mother tongue than their grandparents, who also have many rich experiences and great stories to share.

This was an opportunity identified by a team from the Citizens' Panel on Contribution, which was organised in 2021 by the Ministry of Health for Singaporeans to find ways to enable seniors to continue contributing meaningfully at the workplace or in the community.



Over four weekends, the team comprising passionate participants from all walks of life, brainstormed and came up with "Stories from Our Seniors", a project to train seniors in professional storytelling. It hopes to help seniors share their experiences with children in their mother tongue, and improve the language proficiency of future generations while deepening inter-generational exchange and understanding at the same time. The team has since been working on implementing their idea.

**"The aim is to bridge the empathy gap between generations through such storytelling sessions," says Mr Syed Ali Ahmad Semait, a member of the team.**

He answered the call to participate in the Citizens' Panel during the height of the pandemic when he unexpectedly found free time from running his 60-year-old family business that publishes books. Another reason was because of his age.

"I'm on my way to becoming a senior citizen. I'm getting my CPF this year," says Mr Syed Ali. "I believe we should try to come up with things that we ourselves will probably need in the future."

Foster opportunities for Intergenerational volunteering

# CONNECTEDNESS

## Family, Community, Digital, Transport

### Nurturing Loving Families

*Building an inclusive society that celebrates seniors starts from strong foundations of familial bonds.*



**Families for Life** is a people-led movement that brings together like-minded individuals, families and organisations to champion and promote strong and resilient families, including the strengthening of inter-generational bonds. Key efforts include:

- ▶ **"Family and Me" Packages**, immersive games (Bunny Town Adventure) and fun activities (e.g. family card games, Family Songs, colouring pages) help children learn and express the family values of love, care and concern, commitment and respect towards their grandparents and other family members.

- ▶ **Celebrating Our Grands** campaign encourages children to show their appreciation for senior members of their families.

ENGAGE  
IN FAMILY  
FUN



Visit [www.familiesforlife.sg](http://www.familiesforlife.sg) for inter-generational bonding activities and events.

The **Positive Parenting Programme (Triple P)** equips parents and grandparents with techniques to promote their children's psychological, social and emotional competence. Comprising three seminars of two hours each, the programme is offered by 10 Parenting Support Providers across Singapore.

**Counselling and mediation support for ageing families** will be available at Strengthening Families Programme @ Family Service Centres (FAM@FSCs) across Singapore from 2023. The service will empower families to better manage the challenges of ageing or family relationships, such as caregiving stress, or transitioning into grandparenthood.

#### FEATURE STORY

### Building Bridges in the Family



To prioritise family, Albert and Alison designate every Sunday evening for family meals where they can share in the lives of their three adult children. The couple also models for their children what it means to love the older generation in the family. They share that when their children saw how they respected and loved their own parents, they too picked it up and understood what respect means more than from simply being told to do so.

**On building strong family relationships across generations, Alison says, "I think when we are truly present in our time together and when we listen, we can better empathise with one another."**

**W**hen it comes to passion and concern for the topic of family, we cannot miss out Albert and Alison Lim.

The couple is involved in family-focused, community-based organisations such as Center for Fathering, on top of their regular work responsibilities, and make sure to walk the talk in their own multigenerational family.

She continues, "If you're always like 'My generation used to...' then you're already building walls. It's important to continue to build bridges instead."

Now that the couple are grandparents themselves, Albert and Alison have found a new appreciation in spending time with their grandchild too. Albert's notion of successful ageing comes in hearing his granddaughter call out for him, to which he spritely responds "Here I am!"

# Forging Inter-generational Bonds

*Beyond the family, we must also increase opportunities for our seniors to deepen their relationships with other segments of society, especially youths, to foster mutual respect and understanding between generations.*



**Schools** discuss ageing-related themes in various subjects to encourage students to consider their role in building inclusive inter-generational communities and the importance of developing empathy and appreciation for seniors. Schools also offer opportunities for seniors and youth to interact, such as through seniors offering career guidance to students via the MySkillsFuture Portal for Partners website and students interacting with seniors as part of Values In Action.

The **mentoring programme** under RSVP Singapore, The Organisation of Senior Volunteers, features senior volunteers reaching out to at-risk primary school children to impart good values, life skills

and habits to the young beneficiaries, and concurrently providing seniors an avenue to actively contribute their life experiences. Over the past two years, RSVP Singapore has engaged close to 200 students from across 10 schools, with the support of 48 dedicated volunteers. The organisation also plans to reach out to more schools so that more students and seniors may benefit from the programme.

No matter our age, the common language of sport can unite and bring us together. SportSG will trial an **Active Silver Hub** model to offer opportunities for seniors and youths to interact more meaningfully through sports-related initiatives aimed at strengthening inter-generational bonds.

## FEATURE STORY

# Shaping Lives Through Mentorship

**O**nce a week, groups of seniors armed with storybooks and craft paper will make their way to various primary and secondary schools in Singapore. They are not visiting to pick up their grandkids, but to mentor groups of students. The volunteers plan the mentoring sessions with activities that build strong values and life skills, helping students to stay engaged and focused on their homework through art and craft activities and games.

“The earlier you reach out to children the better. If you improve their behaviour, their mind, it can change their life completely,” says Mr Bardin, who lived in Singapore for over 20 years and decided to retire here.



It is all part of the Mentoring Programme organised by RSVP Singapore, The Organisation of Senior Volunteers. The programme's volunteers come from diverse backgrounds, including Mr Jean-Michel Bardin, a former Chief Operations Officer in the banking sector. The 69-year-old joined the programme in 2019 to positively shape young minds and hearts.

With many hours spent together, the seniors and students naturally bond. Mdm Amidah, a 61-year-old homemaker who has been volunteering since 2015, recalls occasions where she is able to nurture the students' emotional strength and lend a listening ear. She is also an extra eye in helping teachers look out for early intervention situations.

The programme is hugely rewarding to volunteers too. “The children keep me walking around and keep my mind working. They will also hug me and tell me that they look forward to seeing me again. That makes me happy,” says Mdm Amidah brightly.

## Queenstown to be Singapore's first health district with senior-friendly design, community programmes



To encourage more residents to lead active lifestyles, greater emphasis will be placed in planning and designing the built environment.  
PHOTO: HOB



Michelle Ng  
Housing Correspondent

UPDATED OCT 20, 2021, 4:57 PM SGT



SINGAPORE - Singapore's first and oldest satellite town Queenstown will be carved out as a health district in a pilot programme to support residents to lead healthier and more productive lives.

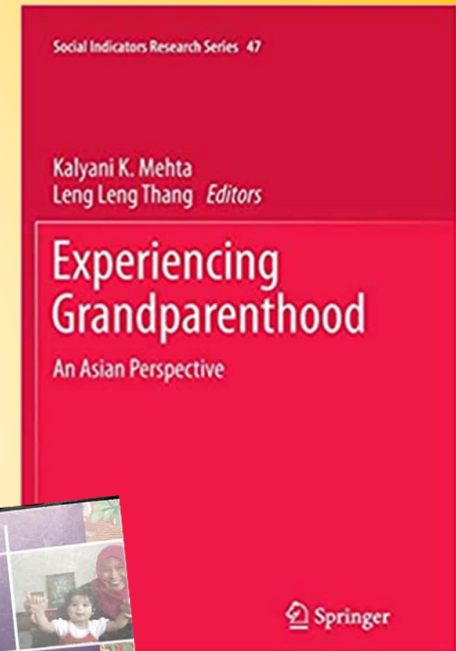
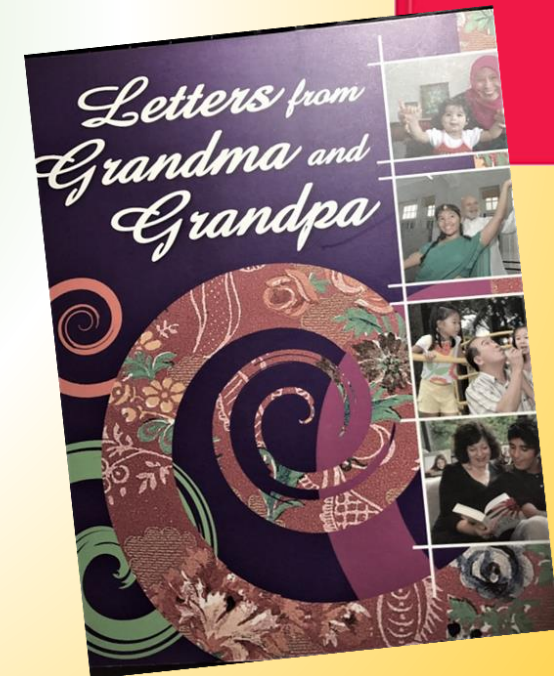
This will be done through more integrated planning and design of the estate and more community-driven programmes, said National Development Minister Desmond Lee on Wednesday (Oct 20).

- We need a whole-of-society, whole-of-government site to test interventions which:
  - Increase healthy longevity
  - Promote intergenerational bonding
  - Enable purposeful longevity
  - Support a community for all ages

# Fostering Intergenerational Bonding

## THE ROLE OF SENIORS AS GRANDPARENTS

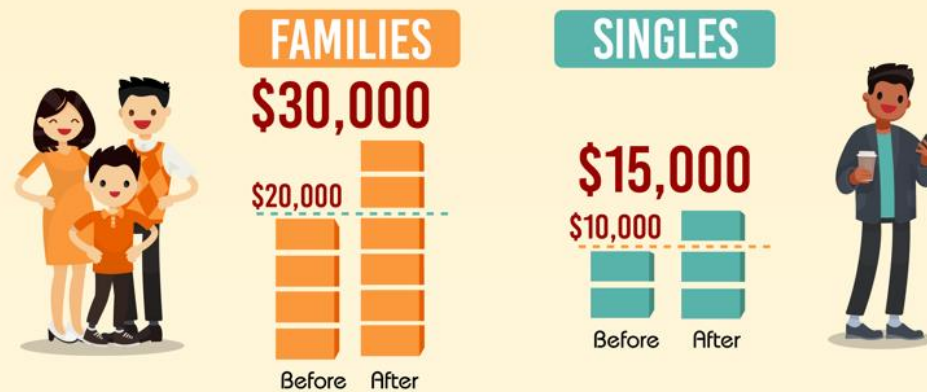
- About 30% of grandparents care for grandchildren
- Grandparents living in close proximity from the children has higher likelihood to provide support for their working children, and receiving support From the children
- Play the role of value transmission to the young



# Housing Policy – Proximity Housing Grant (PHG) *to promote close proximity and co-residence*



## Higher PHG for Extended Families to Live Together



## New PHG for Singles Living Near Parents

**FAMILIES**  
Families buying a resale flat to live near their parents or child will continue to receive a PHG of  
**\$20,000**

**NEW! SINGLES**  
Singles buying a resale flat to live near their parents will now receive a PHG of  
**\$10,000**



Larger 3Gen HDB flats for multi-generation families popular, with 8 in 10 units booked



# 3G Flats

to accommodate  
Multi-generational living



# STRENGTHENING TIES BETWEEN OLD-YOUNG, GRANDPARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN

- **2005: Taskforce on grandparenting and intergenerational bonding (Ministry of Community, Youth and Sports)**
- Funding for Intergenerational Programs
- Best Intergenerational Program Award
- Grandparent of the Year Award
- Establishment of Grandparents Day

GRAN Please note that this is an overdue event  
MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE

[All events](#) > [National Museum of Singapore](#) > [Grandparents' Day 2019 @ National Museum of Singapore](#)

[Tickets](#) [Address](#)



[Join us for a full day of family programmes as we celebrate Grandparents' Day!](#)

# 2006: National Family Week-celebrating 3 generations



**genfund**  
IN CELEBRATION OF  
NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK



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Make your family dream a reality  
in the Gen3 Fund Inter-School Competition 2005!  
Ten talented youth teams will be given up to \$4,000\* each  
in funding.

Come up with a great idea to help 3 generation families bond - not just  
your own but others as well. It can be a gaming competition or a movie marathon.  
We want to hear from you!

Log on to [www.dreamfactory.com.sg](http://www.dreamfactory.com.sg) for more information and register.  
Turn your dream into reality!

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FAMILY 365

ABOUT US

NEWS

USEFUL LINKS

POLLS

FAQ

MY SHARELIST (0)

PLAY  
as a Family

UNITE  
at an Event

DISCOVER  
an Article

CONNECT  
with a Contributor

CELEBRATE  
an Occasion



Featured

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Latest



### FAMILY ACTIVITIES IN JUL 2019

?Family Fun continues into July! Check out the family events and...

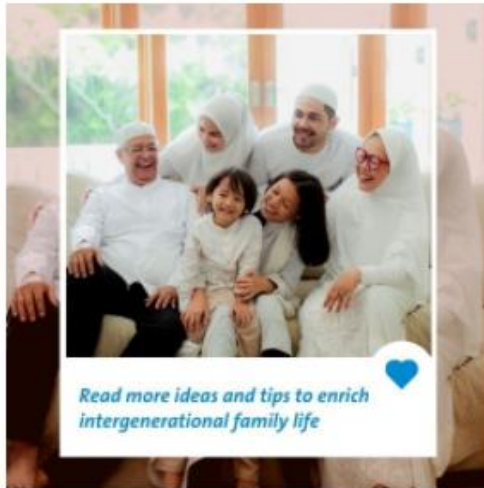


### MY FAMILY WEEKEND 2019

#ICHOOSFAMILYTIME  
**FAMILIES FOR LIFE**  
MY FAMILY WEEKEND  
06 SEP - 08 SEP 2019



### FAMILIES FOR LIFE NATIONAL DAY PICNIC MARINA BARRAGE



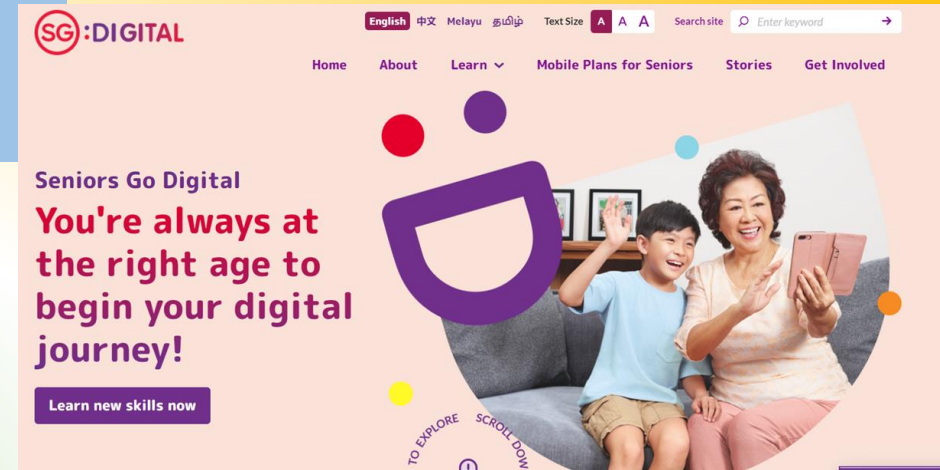
enrich the special bond with your grands and let them know how much they mean to you! Enjoy more heartwarming comic strips about the [precious moments of Family Time here](#) and share them with your loved ones!  
 CelebratingOurGrands #IChooseFamilyTime



# Intergenerational programs

- Childcare/kindergarten interacting with Seniors
- School students initiated IG programs (Value in Action program)
- Intergenerational Learning Program
- IT learning (youth teaching seniors)
- RSVP-Mentoring program in schools
- Shared sites

***IGP promote grandparents-grandchildren bonding: Young people became more interested in their own grandparents***



- NUS 2<sup>nd</sup> year Students from course (Biomedicine and Singapore society)
- Chose to design a multigenerational retirement town (O'town) – with business plan, promotion pamphlet, video (acting) = critical discussion of aging issues.

- Freshmen Seminar on **“Generations”** to teach about intergenerational approaches. Students organized activities to promote IG bonding.



# Kampong (village) Admiralty (2018)

## First public housing 'retirement village'



- B1 and B2: carpark
- B1: Supermarket (wheelchair accessible), Bank
- 1: Community plaza (covered atrium for exercises and events)
- 1: Pharmacy and Retail (Starbucks, café)
- 2: Hawker Centre (food court with 900 seats)
- 3 and 4: Medical Centre (Alexandra Health System)
- 6: Child care centre, Active aging hub, Day care centre, community park, playground and exercise station, link to apartments
- 7: Senior care centre (including dementia care)
- 8: Sky terrace (community garden)



### Related Story

**Bold creative planning can re-imagine the country, says PM Lee in National Day Message**

Every morning, the young parents drop off their kids at the childcare centre here, to be picked up by the grandparents later in the day. The old folks meet their friends for taiji or gardening at the community garden, or go for their regular check-ups at the medical centre. After school, the grandparents bring the kids to the hawker centre for some food, or to the playground to run around. If it is raining, the children can play in the sheltered community plaza, or take a nap upstairs in their grandparents' homes. In the evenings after work, the young parents can pick up fresh groceries from the FairPrice supermarket here to prepare dinner for the whole family.

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's 2018 National Day Message. <https://www.pmo.gov.sg/national-day-message-2018>



# Conclusion: *Changing demographics can result in strengthening families*

- New older cohorts: longevity, healthier, better educated
- Nurture and recognize seniors as social capital/resource (at work, community, family, eg Positive (grand)parenting program)
- Policy support on the family as intergenerational unit of support and care
- Policy support for close proximity or co-living
- Celebrate grandparents as integral part of the family (e.g. *Celebrate our Grands*, Grandparent of the Year Award)



<https://www.familiesforlife.sg/Pages/default.aspx>

**Date Your Grandparents**

Looking for an activity to do with your grandparents?

Look no further as Silver Arts 2018 offers a suite of programmes and activities for both of you! Breeze through an exhibition by seniors and artists, view creative artworks inspired by stories of their past and present, work on a craft activity together, or travel back to the yesteryears and enjoy performances by both seniors and the young, or sing-a-long to the rolling good times.

With more than 35 programmes in different languages and dialects, you are bound to find one that you, your parents and grandparents will enjoy. Make it the most wonderful outing you have together! Who knows, this might be the start of something more for you and your grandparents in their silver years.

*Thank you*



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