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PRESS RELEASE

Singapore Management University Students Adopt and Raise Funds for the baby Orang Utan

Undergraduates from the Singapore Management University (SMU) are adopting a new baby orang utan in a bid to increase awareness on the importance of conserving wildlife and endangered species. This is the first time local university students have embarked on such a project.

The adoptee? Hong Xing, the third and latest female baby orang utan born on 6 November 2000 to Hong Bao, the daughter of Zoo superstar and local tourism ambassador Ah Meng. The birth brings the total number of the orang utans at the Singapore Zoo to 28 - the highest number bred in captivity in the world.

Nineteen-year-old SMU student Mah Bijuan coined the name Hong Xing, which was selected from a list of names suggested by SMU students, faculty and staff. "I chose Hong Xing, taking "Hong" from her mum Hong Bao and adding "Xing" from the Chinese word for star," says a delighted Bijuan. "When people think of the lovely baby orang utans and Hong Bao, I hope they will think of Hong Xing and SMU too."

The SMU students will be adopting Hong Xing for an annual fee of S\$5000. The fee will be raised through a fundraising project, aptly named "Project Primate" under the community service internship module required for completion of the Bachelor of Business Management programme. Some of the fundraising ideas include organising a school carnival, a flea market, a charity performance and producing and selling t-shirts.

Nadir Ali Zafar, one of the students with "Project Primate" says: "The moment we were informed about this opportunity, we unanimously agreed to it. This is not your ordinary community service project. It is exciting. It is different. It shows caring, generous and supportive nature of SMU students. By undertaking this project, we are bringing with us our enthusiasm and passion to do our school and our community proud."

Zoo veterinarians have certified both Hong Bao and her baby healthy. Hong Bao is Ah Meng's fourth baby and is said to have the closest resemblance to the grand dame herself. Hong Bao herself was born on 11 February 1983 - the second day of the Lunar New Year that year. She was henceforth named 'Hong Bao' - as a red packet bestowed upon the Singapore Zoo - similar to how red packets are given as blessings during the festive season.

On Friday, 23 February 2001, 11am, the students of "Project Primate" will be presenting Hong Xing with a gift to officially mark her adoption. Members of the press are invited to the event at the Singapore Zoological Gardens.