

ZAOBAO 21st April 2022 (Translated)

Gathered together regardless of ethnicity and creed, Sembawang residents breakfast together to enhance religious understanding

During the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, 70 residents from different races and religious beliefs gathered at sunset to break fast. They learnt about relevant religious etiquette and enjoyed iftar meals together. Through a personal experience, this enhanced their understanding of different ethnic groups.

The interfaith event was held at the clubhouse of Blossom Seeds, a non-profit organisation, in Canberra, Sembawang, yesterday evening.

This time, Blossom Seeds cooperated with Masjid Petempatan Melayu Sembawang, and invited Muslim religious teachers to explain iftar and related religious etiquette to the residents before the fast break.

Ms Ong Siew Chin, CEO of Blossom Seeds, said in an interview that Blossom Seeds has always been active in promoting racial harmony and promoting cultural exchanges. Before the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic, celebrations were often held in conjunction with festivals of various ethnic groups. Cultural workshops were also organized, such as inviting Malay and Indian residents to take calligraphy classes and so on.

She said that the Iftar meal after sunset is an important religious ritual for Muslim compatriots. Blossom Seeds can provide a platform for residents of all ethnic groups to communicate, which is of special significance.

In 2019, the team held a similar cross-ethnic and religious iftar event. Now that the Covid-19 prevention measures have been relaxed, the event can be resumed on a larger scale. "This event has attracted strong participation from residents, and we hope to continue to hold it every year."

Mdm Jarnail Kaur, 74, who lives in Canberra, goes to Blossom Seeds Active Aging Centre almost three days a week to exercise, where he does tai chi or yoga with nearby residents.

Talking about the feeling of participating in the iftar event, Janel couldn't hide his excitement. "When I lived in Kampong in the past, families of different ethnic

groups lived together, and the good-neighborly friendship was very deep. This event reminded me of those days."

Mdm Fang Shuli (66), who is also a retiree, deliberately wore a sarong to attend the event. She hopes that the organizer will add more segments in the future, such as teaching residents to learn traditional Malay crafts.

A group of residents then shared their iftar meal at a restaurant. Member of the Sembawang GRC and Minister of Health Ong Ye Kung also appeared to interact with everyone.

On the other hand, SingPost held its annual iftar event yesterday evening. Minister of Communications and Information and Second Minister of Home Affairs, Yeo Liming, was invited to break the fast with about 100 Muslim staff of SingPost.