

KUNG HEI FAT CHOY

Chinese New Year celebrations often last up to 15 days. During this time, popular phrases are 'Kung Hei Fat Choy' meaning having a great fortune, while 'Kung Hall Sun Hei' implies happy New Year.



ANIMAL MAGIC

Each of the 12 years in the Chinese zodiac calendar is named after an animal. Chinese myths say that the animal ruling the year in which a person is born will tremendously influence his or her behaviour and traits.

LUCKY MONEY

Married couples give red envelopes with lucky money to their children instead of presents.



Celebrate the Year of the Tiger at Chatswood Mall this Saturday.

year of the tiger

For Chinese New Year, Chatswood Mall will be alive with dragons, dancers and kung fu fighters as it celebrates the Year of the Tiger with more activities and events than you can poke a chopstick at.

Starting the celebrations on Saturday will be the 14th annual Chinese New Year Festival, featuring folk dancers and musicians, kung fu demonstrations by the Yau Kung Mun Chinese Martial Arts Academy, Chinese opera singers and more than 30 stalls featuring Chinese food, arts and crafts. There will be a spectacular lion and dragon dance at 11.30am to encourage peace and harmony in the coming year.

The celebrations will continue into the rest of February with a

lucky slogan writing workshop (see left) and Chinese dragon puppet-making classes for children aged up to 12 years, plus Year of the Tiger storytelling sessions for preschoolers at Chatswood, Artarmon and Castle Cove libraries.

People born under the Year of the Tiger are renowned for having go-ahead personalities and love to be the centre of attention.

They embrace challenges and often very driven to achieve, making them natural leaders and sometimes difficult to resist.

The Chinese New Festival is free and runs from 10am to 5pm. For more information, phone Willoughby Council on 9777 1029 or visit willoughby.nsw.gov.au.

QUESTION OF THE WEEK:

WHAT'S THE MOST ROMANTIC THING YOU'VE DONE FOR SOMEONE ELSE?

To enter the competition, send your answer to the question of the week along with your name and contact details to northside@couriernews.com.au

AND YOU COULD WIN...

Pilot Pen Valentine's Day Prize Packs

Everyone knows a handwritten Valentine's Day note is more special than an email or text message, so to help you get back to basics and be a little more romantic, Pilot Pens is giving away all the ingredients for a good old-fashioned love letter. Each Valentine's Day Prize Pack features Pilot's Frixion Ball range of erasable pens, a beautiful writing set, notecards, love heart envelope seals and a copy of the romantic DVD *The Notebook*. NORTHSIDE has seven of the prize packs to give away. To enter, simply answer the



Q&A

Dawna Leung

Founder Mandarin Stars
The Dougherty Centre, 7 Victor St, Chatswood
P: 8437 2498
E: info@mandarinstars.com.au
W: www.mandarinstars.com.au

What is Mandarin Stars? Mandarin Stars is Australia's largest immersion-based Mandarin education program for children one to five. Since October 2009, we have also been offering new classes to children aged five to 12 years. Our programs are specifically designed for non-native learners and many of our children start speaking Mandarin after their first lesson. We run classes in Chatswood and also across multiple venues in Sydney.

Why Mandarin? There are a lot of reasons why Australian parents want their children to learn Mandarin. Firstly, in just five years, the number of people learning Mandarin worldwide has soared to 30 million. I think while many parents don't know exactly how many people are learning the language, they can see for themselves how being monolingual in the future could inhibit their child's opportunities. We also have parents enrol their children with us because their children have asked to learn Mandarin because other children at their preschool speak it.

What is your background? I set up Mandarin Stars back in May 2008 as a parent wanting my own children to learn Mandarin. As mum to two Australian Chinese boys who don't speak Mandarin natively, I wanted my kids to learn it as early as possible, so when Leo was just two and Quon was a month old, I began looking for some fun classes or structured playgroups for them to attend, where they could be immersed in the language and to start developing an affinity for it. At the time, there was a limited number of programs and the focus was not really suitable for non-native learners. So, equipped with more than eight years of experience in researching, writing, and producing conference programs, I decided to transfer my skills to producing a well-researched Mandarin program for children.

Do I need to be of Mandarin-speaking background to attend? Most of our students are non-native learners and are from a range of backgrounds including Russian, Greek, French, Italian, German, Dutch, Anglo Australian, Chinese (usually second or third generation who don't speak Mandarin), Hong Kong Chinese and Turkish. Because our program is specifically developed for non-native learners, neither children nor parents need to be Mandarin-speaking to attend. We are also about to trial offering free Mandarin lessons for parents of our five to 12-year-olds, with the idea that this will give parents the chance to learn Mandarin too and to practice with their children at home!

