



## **Cheque Presentation Ceremony & Performance at Sutton Park School 7 July 2005**

### ***Speech by CLF Vice Patron John Graham***

Dr Judith Pickens and students of Sutton Park School,

I am privileged as one of the Foundation's Vice Patrons to represent the Chinese Language Foundation at this special assembly. Thank you for your welcome and congratulations to the students of Sutton Park School on your entertainment for us.

Sutton Park has led the way in establishing a Chinese language programme in New Zealand schools since the 1990s - five other Auckland schools are now teaching a Chinese language programme and the Foundation supports and encourages all of them also in their work.

The Foundation is developing strong links with the Ministry of Education and we receive encouraging and strong support from senior Chinese representatives at government level in Wellington in our desire to promote the teaching of the Chinese language throughout New Zealand schools.

I am aware of the very strong emphasis Sutton Park Schools places on language teaching as I believe you teach Spanish and French as well as Chinese.

I am a firm believer in the value of learning one or more foreign language. During this week alone I have had to meet two important Frenchmen who are visiting this country representing the French Rugby Union. Both are fluent English speakers, as are those I have met from Germany recently. I speak only English and a little Maori and I studied Latin at school and university. In a global sense, today the world is a much smaller place owing to ease of travel and ease of communication. New Zealanders simply have to be more literate in more languages than English.

As a Pacific nation, clearly China is now the major power in our part of the world. Our government is in constant contact with the Chinese government over trade and education. Chinese immigration to this country has increased markedly over the last decade. It is logical that we should take very seriously the need to learn the Chinese language - only through doing so can we properly foster the cultural ties with China and understand the richness of that culture and history.

To introduce a new language such as Chinese into New Zealand schools takes time and patience - time to develop teaching resources, to train teachers and to convince the Ministry of Education and Government of the importance of our case for Chinese language teaching.

That is why Sutton Park School is so important. You have committed your school to the teaching of Chinese and you are extending the programme down into Year 6 this year. Because Ministry of Education funds do not adequately support the teaching of Chinese at your school the Foundation is pleased to be able to do so. The grant will help to pay for the teaching in Year 6, particularly by assisting with needed resources.

We are proud of the steps taken by this school to persevere and advance the learning of Chinese - we are keen to encourage other schools to follow your example.

The Chinese Language Foundation will continue to work hard with those in authority in New Zealand education to convince them of the immense value of learning the Chinese language for all New Zealanders.

To Dr Pickens and your school, thank you and congratulations on what you have achieved and what you are continuing to do.

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*Encouraging and Enabling New Zealanders to Learn Chinese*

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