



ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2009

10TH Management Committee

Portfolio	Member	Elected / Appointed
President	Mrs Angeline Wee-Yew	Elected on 29 th Mar 2009
Vice President	Dr Lena Goh	Elected on 29 th Mar 2009
Secretary	Mdm Ivy Low	Elected on 29 th Mar 2009 with NO voting rights
Treasurer	Mdm Celine Low	Elected on 29 th Mar 2009
Counselling Coordinator	Mdm Elaine Yeoh	Elected on 29 th Mar 2009
Publications Editor	Mrs Ruth Li	Elected on 29 th Mar 2009
Librarian	Mdm Tan Joo Hymn	Elected on 29 th Mar 2009
Talks Coordinator	Mdm Elaine Chan	Elected on 29 th Mar 2009

Code of Governance for Charities and IPCs

According to the Code of Governance for Charities and IPCs, the committee has to do a Self-Evaluation checklist to see in which level of compliance the group is in.

The committee had submitted the Corporate Governance Evaluation on 13th March 2010 for the period 01/04/2009 to 31/3/2010.

All checklists submitted by IPCs will be published on the Charity Portal from 1st April 2010. Members can view the checklist at www.charities.gov.sg.

We wish to inform however, that as of 15th January 2010, BMSG no longer enjoys IPC status until such time as reviewed and decided upon by the Charities Commissioner. We will inform members at a later date of our status.

Membership

Membership count

There was an overall growth of 22% in members in 2009 as compared to 2008.

	2009	2008
Number who join as Associate members	52	37
Number who join as Full members	97	66

Total numbers who join in	149	103
Sign on as Life Members	3	0
Convert to Life Members	11	14
Life members	185	171
Total members	334	274

We continue to reach out to our members to support BMSG by converting to LIFE memberships and to encourage new mothers and mothers-to-be, in particular, to join as members in order to enjoy the benefits of membership.

Activities in 2009

17th Jan Newspaper Fundraiser

This was BMSG's first fund raising event through newspaper collection. We were glad to have the support of agents from PropNex and Hougang GRC. The event was flagged off by the MP of Aljunied-Hougang GRC Mr Yeo Guat Kwang. Total collection was \$600.

24th April The Greatest Charity Run

Organised by the Singapore Book of Records, BMSG was one of 29 beneficiaries who stood to gain from the participation of the general public. This was meant to help charities raise funds without the need to incur heavy costs or human resources. However, participation from members was poor and we managed to raise only \$150 from the event.

16th May Happy Breastfeeding Mothers' Day

In support of the commitment of mothers who give the best of what nature has endowed upon them for their offspring, we celebrated Happy Breastfeeding Mothers' Day at the Jurong Point Shopping Centre Atrium.

The event aimed to encourage mothers to continue breastfeeding upon going back to work after maternity leave and to encourage fathers to support their wives to breastfeed by taking over other parts of their children's childcare needs. A series of contests was held with this aim in mind, such as the **Diaper Changing Contest** for fathers.

Furthermore, all mothers who expressed their breast milk at work currently or in the past were invited to bring their breast pumps down for the event as part of "**Express Yourself, Mummy**". The purpose was to encourage support for a work-life balance and to let other mothers-to-be know that it is possible to express their breast milk at work.

There were also 3 talks namely – "How to help my child learn" by Little Neuro Tree; "Expression of Breastmilk" by Sister Kang of Mt Alvernia Hospital and "The Need for Cord Blood Donation" by Dr William Hwang of SGH sponsored by Singapore Cord Blood Bank. Our Guest-of-Honour, Mdm Ho Geok Choo, MP of West Coast GRC, shared her breastfeeding experience and highlighted the importance of breastfeeding even upon returning to work. Business was brisk for our three booths – POISE, Mums Fairy and our very own lactation consultation booth. Our counseling trainer and Asia's first lactation consultant, Mrs. Doris Fok, saw a steady stream of mothers wanting some information on how to breastfeed successfully.

For the first time ever in BMSG's history, we were able to air a 30-second TV Commercial during the week prior to the event on Channels 5 and U! Thanks to Mediacorp and NCSS.

We would like to thank these advertisers and sponsors for their generous contributions - Baby Slings & Carrier, Cheerful Mama, Funhouse Digital, Inspire Mum & Baby, J&E Baby and Mothercare (Medela), Kimberly Clark Singapore for Huggies and Poise, Little Neuro Tree, Lion Corporation for Kodomo, Moms R Us, Mothers En Vogue, Mums Fairy, Mustela, Nuk, Sasa, Suisse Programme, Singapore Cord Blood Bank, The Studio Loft and University Games. This event will not have been possible without the kind location sponsorship of Jurong Point Shopping Centre. Special thanks to our volunteers from Catholic High School and PropNex, members of the sub-committee

Breastfeeding Mothers' Support Group (Singapore)

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Registry of Society Number: 0150/1990

HEF Registration Number: 0048/G

(Alderline Wong, Juliet Chan, Lena Goh and Valerie Ng) and volunteers (Angeline Wee-Yew, Doris Fok, Elaine Chan, Fa'izah Ahmed, Kee Peck Yin and Yap Soon Lan).

27th Jun Building Bonds That Bind

Together with MacPherson CC And Family Life Champions of MacPherson CC, BMSG was able to reach out to young parents and expectant parents by promoting family bonding through breastfeeding. Our speaker was Mrs Doris Fok, a pioneering lactation consultant (1992), educator (1988) and researcher (independent in 1993 and at NUS and ISHRML 2007), technical consultant to WHO (2002), one of the founding members of the Breastfeeding Mothers' Support Group Singapore (1991) and a homemakers' support group (since 1985). Participants were also introduced to the concept of Elimination Control (EC) by Ms Lynette Chan who is a BMSG volunteer counselor. EC is the term coined for the natural way for babies to learn empty their bowels without use of diapers.

18th Jul Thief of Time

Members were given free tickets to watch the above play produced by the Voice and supported by MCYS and Council for Third Age. It was a great play, funny and educational. A total of 45 tickets were given to BMSG members and their families.

29th Aug "The Boy Who Cried Wolf"

This was a play by The Little Company. Members and their families enjoyed the play at The Singapore Repertory Theatre by Clark Quay. Members also got a chance to meet the cast for a photo session.

Counselling

BMSG organised two counsellors' training courses in March and June 2009, with a total of 12 counsellor-trainees having completed the six-week training. In 2009, BMSG received the help of 28 active volunteer counsellors and counsellor-trainees on the counseling helpline and e-counselling. In addition, we had a few additional counsellors who also volunteered on an ad-hoc basis. BMSG would like to thank Ms Sunitha Raman and Doris Fok for their time and resources in conducting the two trainings. There was to be a third training session in August to be conducted by Ms Yeo Soo Lan. However, due to the sad passing of her beloved husband, we cancelled the training.

BMSG noted that the number of new trainee-counsellors who complete the training each year had not been sufficient to replace the number of counsellors who "retire". Although the minimum requirement after completion of training is a one-year service on the helpline, we are very grateful for counsellors who continue to volunteer beyond that period. Importantly, BMSG hopes that the number of long-serving counsellors would increase as new trainee-counsellors and callers would certainly benefit from the support of experienced counsellors in the long run.

There was an unfortunate incident during the year that led to the removal of one volunteer counsellor. The BMSG helpline received caller feedback that a counselor had offered her services for a named price. The caller was concerned as she felt that BMSG's reputation of being a voluntary organisation might be affected as the counsellor did not address her concern but was seen as "selling" her products and services instead. From the information given by the caller, we were able to identify the counsellor.

BMSG volunteer trainer Doris, Vice-president Lena Goh and Counselling Coordinator Elaine Yeoh subsequently held a meeting with the counsellor in order to allow her a chance to offer her own account of the incident.

Doris highlighted at this meeting that such gesture to offer paid services over the BMSG helpline would be seen as infringement of the BMSG Code of Ethics as BMSG counselling services is currently only via helpline and email counseling, which are all offered free-of-charge. Hence, offering such visits over BMSG helpline & email counselling would be seen as an infringement as even qualified volunteer counsellors should not be promoting their own business services on the BMSG platform.

At a subsequent Exco meeting in Jan, the committee felt that it was important that BMSG counsellors adhere strictly to the Code of Ethics at all times. To this end, BMSG felt that there was little choice but to remove the said counselor. Whilst we appreciate the help from volunteer counsellors, BMSG should uphold its reputation as one of offering genuine support to callers without counsellors offering any products and services.

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Counselling Helpline Report

	2009	2008
Number of calls reported	557	1381
Number of Counsellors who submitted reports	10	16
Number of Active Counsellors as at December	28	36
Estimated number of calls	1179	3108
Average calls handled by a Counsellor	33	86

We note that the 2009 data are not accurate because some counsellors had not submitted reports and many were not consistent in submission either. We will endeavour to ensure that counsellors send in reports promptly in order that we may understand the pattern of calls and how best to help callers when training trainee-counsellors. We also understand the time limitation of our volunteers counsellors and are working towards an easier system of submission. *(Please see report on Plans for 2010 –Website)*

The ages of the babies of the callers are as follows:					
2009			2008		
No.	Callers	Category	Callers	Category	
1 st	162	Still totally breastfed babies < 6 weeks old	409	Still totally breastfed babies < 6 weeks old	
2 nd	126	Never fully breastfed their babies from birth	221	Never fully breastfed their babies from birth	
3 rd	87	Still totally breastfed babies 6 weeks – 3 months old	210	Still totally breastfed babies 6 weeks – 3 months old	

The top category of callers vary slightly for 2008 & 2009.

Most Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the Helpline are:					
No.	2009		2008		
1 st	EBM – Collection & Storage		Insufficient milk		
2 nd	Working schedule & expressing		EBM – Collection & Storage		
3 rd	Latching problem		Understanding demand and supply		
4 th	Insufficient milk		Latching problem		
5 th	Sufficient milk? General assurance		Sufficient milk? General assurance		
6 th	Understanding demand and supply		Supplementary feeds		
7 th	Engorgement and Frequent Feeding		Reduced supply		
8 th	Breast refusal/preference for bottle and Reduced Supply		Sore nipples		
9 th	Supplementary feeds		Engorgement		
10 th	Sleepy Baby		Breast refusal/preference for bottle		

As more mothers are working, we are seeing more mothers pumping at work. This is a good sign that more mothers are making the effort to continue breastfeeding even back at the work force. However, the flip side is that more mothers are reliant on pumping, some even right after birth when direct latching should be the main goal. Again, we wish to point out that the above data may not be accurate for 2009 as many counsellors did not submit their reports. We urge all counsellors to hand in their reports in a timely fashion in order that BMSG can continue to provide the appropriate training for our trainee-counsellors.

Email Counseling

Unlike phone counseling, emails to our counsellors were easier to track and we note a 52% jump in the number of email correspondences. This is a significant increase and highlights an important issue of finding the right counsellors to answer queries. Unfortunately, there is sometimes a backlog of emails as counsellors may not have time to log in. We will continue to appeal to our reserve and active counsellors to consider helping with email counseling.

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2008	28	32	32	65	53	76	77	99	71	72	86	80	771
2009	68	92	136	162	110	81	89	78	101	96	71	88	1172

Workshops

There was a significant increase in the number of participants in 2009 and we hope to reach out to even more expectant parents.

Workshop Participants

Series	2009				2008			
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Preparing to Breastfeed	30	19	42	39	20	22	29	21
Breastfeeding in the First Month	30	22	35	33	26	14	21	21
Managing Breastfeeding Difficulties	26	23	29	30	20	19	24	19
Intro to Semi-Solids	15	16	27	30	21	15	29	22
Total for Workshop Series	446				353			
No. of Back to Work (B2W) workshops	9				12			
No. of participants for workshops (B2W)	52				53			
Grand total no. of participants	498				406			

Speakers

We wish to thank the following Speakers for their continued and dedicated contribution to BMSG(S) :

1. Stella Au	2. Elaine Chan	3. Doris Fok
4. Barbara Hun	5. Joanna Peck	6. Michelle Png
7. Sunitha Raman	8. Angeline Wee-Yew	9. Yap Tian Sew

The committee had spotted some counsellors with public speaking capability and had managed to persuade them to become backup speakers for future BMSG workshops and possible speakers for external workshops. At the same time, we are hoping to help ease the workload of our counselor trainers by recruiting a suitable candidate to add to the pool.

For 2010, we had printed 100 posters publicizing our workshops for distribution to selected retail outlets and SingHealth and NHG group of polyclinics to reach out to more members of the public.

External Workshops

Increasingly, the BMSG has been more sought after to conduct workshops and talks outside of our quarterly workshops. This signals a very good opportunity to tap on other networks.

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28th February 2009

Mrs Angeline Wee-Yew conducted a short talk at BHG Bugis on “Benefits of Breastfeeding” to selected customers of BHG.

30th April to 4th May 2009

Mrs Angeline Wee-Yew gave 2 talks at the New Mom Exhibition 2009 held at the Singapore Expo. Both topics were primarily on the benefits of breast milk and breastfeeding and were titled “Best Start for Mummy and Baby” and “Baby’s First Food”.

27th June 2009

“Building Bonds that Bind” as mentioned above was a way to encourage families to build bonds through breastfeeding. This talk was delivered by Mrs Doris Fok, with a light lunch provided for participants.

23rd July 2009

Together with the Family Development Unit of NTUC, BMSG conducted a lunch time talk titled “Breastfeeding in Your Business Suit” about breastfeeding at work. It was conducted at the NTUC Centre on One Marina Boulevard and we had two breastfeeding members, Ms Leow Tang Lie and Ms Celine Low share about their breastfeeding experiences at work. The session got lively during the question-and-answer segment. Participants were also treated to a bento lunch.

15th August 2009

In another joint effort with NTUC, Ms Angeline Wee-Yew engaged participants in a talk about weaning at the My First Skool at Hougang Ave 4. The session lasted an hour as participants had various questions regarding introduction of solids.

29th August 2009 / 12th December 2009

Philips Avent Baby Council Seminar

In a tie-up with Philips Avent, BMSG together with a group of expert panelist members were invited to form the Philips Avent Baby Council to promote breastfeeding. The aim of the Council was to reach out to mothers-to-be in a timely fashion in order to extol the benefits of breastfeeding. The idea was first mooted in June 2009 by Philips Avent and after much consideration and consultation with several senior BMSG members, it was agreed that we would join hands with them with the understanding that we were not in any way advertising for, or endorsing, their products. The other Panel members included ABAS President and Vice-President, Drs Yong Tze Tein and Yvonne Ng as well as Lactation Consultant Ms Betty Lee. A breastfeeding mother was also invited to sit on the panel as a voice for mothers.

As part of their program, Philips Avent organized 2 seminars on 29th August and 12th December 2009 at the Philips Auditorium at Toa Payoh. Both seminars were fully booked at about 100 participants each and each speaker was given 20 minutes to touch on agreed-upon topics. BMSG’s topic was on “Support for the Breastfeeding Mum/Family”. Overall, the seminars garnered good reviews from the participants who had many questions for the Panel. Some participants ended up attending our workshops as well.

In addition, Philips Avent tied up with Motherhood magazine to run 3 advertorials in the months of October, November and December. The 3 advertorials were “Breast is Best – Preparing Yourself”, “No Old Wives’ Tales – Dispelling Breastfeeding Myths for New Mums” and “Breastfeeding @ Work”. In the advertorials, Panel members contributed to questions posed to us and Motherhood magazine fleshed it out for final print.

Library

Our library has not seen many borrowings as our books are no longer considered updated. Besides there are many more books available from the National Library, hence leading to a decrease of borrowers. At the same time, it has been hard for BMSG to follow up on members who do not return their books on time. The Exco will monitor the situation and decide on a plan of action later in the year.

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Publications

Breastfeeding Booklets

In 2009, we printed another 10,000 booklets, sponsored by Huggies and Poise. The booklets were distributed to the usual places like hospitals and clinics. We managed to rope in the SingHealth group of Polyclinics in late 2008 to help in the distribution of booklets and they had increased their order of booklets in 2009 due to good feedback from patients. This year, we had also obtained the interest of the NHG group of polyclinics to distribute the booklets in their clinics as well.

Keeping Abreast Newsletter

4 issues of **Keeping Abreast (KA)** were printed in 2009. Thanks to our new Publications Editor, Ruth Li, our President, Angeline Wee and Ms Noelle Tan, designer and ex-counselling coordinator, the latest KA had received many positive feedbacks on the improved look and content. We hope to keep members coming back by improving on the topics that we believe mothers might be interested to read about without replicating the work of the many parenting magazines in the market.

Practical Hints on Breastfeeding

We are sad to report that with lack of volunteer assistance, our revision of **Practical Hints on Breastfeeding** handbook is still not ready. However, we hope to finish it in 2011 and be able to obtain the funds necessary to publish the book. This handbook has been a source of help for many mothers, many of whom have also purchased additional copies for friends. We hope member and public will continue to support our **Practical Hints on Breastfeeding**.

Chinese Handbook – “Breastfeed With Confidence”

Published in August 2009, this is the culmination of Mrs Doris Fok’s research and writing that spanned more than a decade. Launched by Ms Ho Ching at WBW 2009, we have been selling the book on the website and have consigned books to a local book distributor who will help us source for retailers. We have also managed to sell some copies outright to a few retail merchants and will continue to look for more retailers who are keen to help us.

World Breastfeeding Week 2009

By Alderline Wong

WBW 2009 Chairperson

“Breastfeeding: A Vital Emergency Response. Are you ready?” was the global theme for World Breastfeeding Week 2009. The focus of the worldwide organizer, The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), focused on the crucial role of breastfeeding in emergency situations for infants. Whilst Singapore does not experience natural disasters, such as floods, earthquakes or cyclones, our emergency situation is the lack of adequate support for breastfeeding mothers.

With this theme, the WBW 2009 organising committee was quickly formed and in less than 50 days, the team put together a family fun-filled carnival at the HealthZone@Health Promotion Board. The day was chock-a-block full of events happening all over. There were talks on nutrition, fertility, bonding, managing newborns and most definitely, breastfeeding. Whether for the young or the more senior family members, there was something for everyone: bouncing castles, games and craft booths for the kids, treasure hunting for the dads and definitely shopping for the mothers.

Our publicity once again included one hundred 30-second TV commercials on Channel U and Channel 5 during the week prior to our 22nd Aug event, thanks again to Mediacorp and NCSS. Those who missed the TVC can still catch it on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyhQ4zwDwSM>. This TVC was in addition to the usual publicity on websites, online forums and flyers.

The event was graced by Ms. Ho Ching, executive director and CEO of Temasek Holdings Pte Ltd, the wife of our Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Hsien Long. The fifth most powerful woman in the world, as ranked by FORBES, was forthright as she shared some personal anecdotes about her own breastfeeding journey and how it was fraught with difficult moments. Notwithstanding her own bumpy journey, she was happy to hear that more women are

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breastfeeding today but more could be done to provide a conducive environment at the workplace for working mothers to continue to breastfeed after their maternity leave. She exhorted mothers to try to reach the “gold standard” for breastfeeding – exclusive breastfeeding for six months.

Ms. Ho also launched an inaugural Chinese-edition breastfeeding handbook, written by BMSG’s trainer, Mrs. Doris Fok as well as our support group in Yew Tee Community Club, BreastPal@Yew Tee.

There was massive press coverage for the event – seen on TV (Channel News Asia, Channel 5, Channel 8 and Channel U news segments), on newspapers (Straits Times, Lian He Zao Bao) and many websites (eg www.straitstimes.com/Breaking%2BNews/Singapore/Story/STIStory_420173.html, www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/specialreport/news/1000233_96/1/.html). It was also a discussion topic in online forums (eg <http://forums.vr-zone.com/newsroom/473595-news-ho-ching-shares-breastfeeding-story.html>).

SPECIAL THANKS

Our advertisers: Huggies, Poise, Baby Slings & Carrier, Mothers En Vogue, Johnson’s Baby, Maternal Love.
Our sponsors: Blue Egg, Brew, Cheeky Bon Bon, Funhouse, i-Genius, Inspire Mum & Baby, KidzLoft, Leapfrog, Mustela, PUB and Studio Loft.
Our supporters: ABAS for providing free lactation counseling
Health Promotion Board for their location and logistic support
Yew Tee Family Life Champion for tremendous support

Others

Singapore Flyer

Many members were able to enjoy Singapore’s new icon, Singapore Flyer at a special rate for charities with their families and friends in December 2009.

Flag Day on 2nd Dec (Wed)

The BMSG(S) held our first-ever Flag Day on Wednesday, 2nd December 2009. We started our planning way back in Jan 2009, when we had our first meeting with New Hope Community Services where they gave us valuable advice and assistance with regards to Flag day planning and execution. Our Flag Day committee comprised of Joo Hymn, Lena and Ivy.

In view of the economic downturn, we had rather poor responses to our call for donations to corporations and organisations. We then decided to appeal to our own BMSG(S) members and to our delight, many came forth with generous donations and offers of help. Heartfelt thanks to all of you!

We approached schools and uniformed groups to help shake tins. Students from the following schools volunteered: Broadrick Secondary School, Catholic High School, Commonwealth Secondary School, Hwa Chong Institution, Raffles Girls Secondary School, Raffles Institution, Marsiling Secondary School, Singapore Chinese Girls, Siglap Secondary School and Tanjong Katong Girls Secondary School. We thank them for their time and effort in helping us collect donations in different parts of Singapore, specifically around Pasir Ris (East), Outram (Central) and Choa Chu Kang (North). We issued tins to around 150 people in total, and we have collected a total of approximately \$10,000. Including donations from members and others, we managed to raise a total of @ \$42,000

Specials thanks to Lee Foundation, other organisations and individuals who had donated to the group. Thanks to AWARE sold the tins to us at a discount; Gardenia Bread who donated raisin buns and Public Utilities Board who donated New Water for our refreshment. In addition, a BIG thank you for those who contributed your time and effort in making our Flag Day a success. By going around shaking tins for us, we have collected a total of approximately \$10,000. Other form of donations came in as well and we collected a total approximately \$42,000.

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Media Coverage

Interest in breastfeeding last year was quite good.

1. Release of the AC Nielsen survey on 16th February.
2. Press coverage on breastfeeding in public places. BMSG was invited to comment and publicity photos taken for the article printed on 12th April in The Straits Times
3. My Paper article on “Breastfeeding Good for Mums Too” published on 11th May in response to a study done in USA that breastfeeding lowers heart disease risk. Our member Ms Louise Wong kindly agreed to be interviewed for this article.
4. “Singapore mums getting together to find support” was another article that appeared in the Straits Times on 9th May. Publicity photo of Mrs Angeline Wee-Yew was actually taken at the talk at the New Mom Exhibition.
5. World Breastfeeding Week 2009 gained much media coverage, largely due to the esteemed presence of Ms Ho Ching. The Straits Times, LianHe ZaoBao and Channel News Asia were all present. Whilst focus was on Ms Ho Ching for the former 2 media, Channel News Asia broadcast an interview with Mrs Angeline Wee-Yew.
6. One-week TVCs in May and August 2009 in conjunction with Happy Breastfeeding Mothers’ Day and WBW 2009.

Sale of Infant Food Ethics Committee Singapore (SIF ECS) Report

By Alderline Wong (BMSG(S) Reprehensive to SIF ECS) and extracted from the minutes of 3 Jul 2009 and 27 Jan 2010 meetings:

To protect breastfeeding, the Sale of Infant Foods Ethics Committee, Singapore (SIF ECS) was established in 1979. The Committee formulated and implemented the marketing code called the ‘Code of Ethics on the Sale of Infant Formula Products in Singapore’ in 1981. The Code has been revised several times and the Committee continues their work to safeguard breastfeeding and to ensure ethical practices amongst the infant food industry and the health professionals.

1. The Committee has proposed and passed in Jul 2009 meeting to meet twice a year. The main committee, including myself as BMSG representative, was present and there were 16 representatives from the 6 infant food (IF) industry
2. Members and IF representatives were reminded to adhere to the Code. Some reminders and recommendations include:
 - a. No comparison between breastmilk and infant formula on any marketing materials related to IF.
 - b. The standard important notice on breastfeeding must be including in all materials related to IF and materials related to Mother/ Baby clubs.
 - c. No sampling of IF and no offering of free IF to expecting and new mothers.
 - d. Ready-to-feed IF is intended for use by hospital within its ward. Giving such samples violates the Code.
 - e. “After 6 months” is the recommended age for follow-on formula or other types of IF.
 - f. No promotion of IF to babies less than 6 months even if the baby is already consuming infant formula.
 - g. Solicitation of information may include ““Estimated month of delivery” must be marked optional. Using solicited information to offer samples to expecting / new mothers violates the Code. Offering baby nutrition advice is not allowed.
 - h. Standard exclusion statement “Excludes all types of Infant formulas” for marketing materials to inform consumers that IF is excluded from promotions. Infant formula brand name should not be displayed on promotional materials.
3. The following were proposed and accepted:
 - a. Online update of the SIF ECS Code, to allow adding of clarifications and amendments.
 - i. A list of possibility penalties for the inclusion in the Code.
 - j. Reward system for IF companies without violations for a year
 - k. Guidelines on Point of Sales Materials (POSM) on retail shelves.

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4. Self-regulation of IF companies and enhancement of the complaint system was proposed and pending further discussion for implementation.

5. Report on patterns of violations

Year	2003-4	2004-5	2005-6	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9
No. of violations	34	20	26	36	43	46

6. All members of BMSG(S) are urged
- to be aware of the Code and to report violations to HPB_SIFECES@hpb.gov.sg and office@breastfeeding.org.sg so that breastfeeding is not undermined.
 - to use “after 6 months” rather than “at/ by 6months” for the starting of solids.

Association for Breastfeeding Advocacy Singapore (ABAS) Report

ABAS’s objectives “to create awareness on the importance of breastfeeding among the public and healthcare professionals” were cemented by the distribution of 4000 copies of DVD developed in 2008.

To reach out to more healthcare professionals, ABAS conducted 2 Continuing Medical Education (CME) at Yishun Polyclinic and Thomson Medical Centre. In addition, it also conducted 2 Continuing Nurses Education (CNE) workshops for various hospitals and at Jurong Polyclinic.

For the public, ABAS organized a Public Forum on 14th November on “Healthy Mothers and Babies” at KKH.

Ivy Low, Honorary Secretary, is currently our representative on the ABAS committee and will not stand for re-election in the upcoming election on 31st March 2009 AGM due to work and family commitments. Members who are interested in promoting breastfeeding can consider volunteering at ABAS. With ABAS, which is run by health professionals, focusing on reaching out to other medical professionals, BMSG can focus on reaching out to mothers. We look forward to working hand-in-hand with ABAS in raising the incidence and length of breastfeeding.

PLANS for 2010

Philips Avent Baby Council 2010

With the success of the 2 public seminars in 2009, Philips Avent has decided to continue working with the Council by holding another seminar in May, as the first for 2010. There will likely be more through the year and we look forward to sharing with more mothers about breastfeeding. Through Philips Avent, BMSG can also reach a wider audience more effectively.

NTUC Family Unit

BMSG representatives, Mrs Angeline Wee-Yew and Dr Lena Goh have met up with NTUC Family Unit representatives in January 2010 and they have expressed interest in working together with BMSG to help promote breastfeeding amongst their union members. Discussions are in the early stages but the anticipated reach runs into the thousands and this will be a great avenue for BMSG to raise breastfeeding awareness.

Health Promotion Board (HPB)

Following the success of WBW 2009, the HPB has endorsed their support for breastfeeding by offering to fund appropriate activities as approved by HPB. Again, Mrs Angeline Wee-Yew and Dr Lena Goh had met up with HPB representatives in February 2010 for an initial discussion. Going forward, HPB and BMSG will work toward a sustainable program for the promotion of breastfeeding.

Workshops

BMSG continues to work with external agencies by providing speakers to share about breastfeeding. To this end, we are looking to increasing our pool of available speakers so that we will be able to accept invitations to speak without hesitation. Trained counsellors who are interested to help are welcome.

Website

We are happy to announce that BMSG is looking at a total revamp of our website which has been around for almost ten years. With a new generation of Internet-savvy mothers, our website will increasingly be accessed for information and therefore it is timely that we consider a more user-friendly website. With this, we hope to facilitate the ease of submission of forms online for such things as donations, workshops, membership sign-ups and renewals. This project has already been set in motion and we are targeting a new look by year end. We thank Ms Kee Peck Yin, our ex-committee member for her invaluable assistance in ensuring that the website remains updated. We are working with a volunteer web solutions expert to complete this project.

In addition to making it more accessible to members of the public, we are hoping to implement a log-in section for counsellors to submit their monthly reports and to obtain useful information such as monthly roster and other information that might be useful in the course of counseling. This should hopefully help counsellors with their reporting.

“Breastfeed” Booklets

We are in the process of printing a new edition of “Breastfeed” booklets. This version will be a bilingual edition of English/Chinese. We appreciate the translation work of Ms Jennifer Lee who offered her services free of charge. Ms Lee is a friend of our member Ms Kee Peck Yin. We are grateful for our advertisers, NTUC Family Unit, The Studio Loft, Mums Fairy and Mothers En Vogue for their immense support.

WBW 2010 / 35th Anniversary

As this is the 35th Anniversary of BMSG, we are hoping to celebrate both together in August with a series of events. Discussions for this will commence in April and BMSG hopes that members can step forward to help make this event a successful and well-publicised one.

Tearsheet Pads for OBGYNs

We have begun to explore this idea with ABAS of providing tearsheet breastfeeding information pads to OBYNs in order to reach the mothers-to-be during their antenatal checkups. The Exco feels that this is a critical time to educate mothers and rather than holding stock of our BREASTFEED booklets, it might be more feasible for doctors/nurses at clinics to simply tear a sheet off the pads. The tearsheet will provide basic information about breastfeeding and where to go for more information such as BMSG’s workshops. Hopefully, we can enlist doctors to help us in this area. The project will go ahead subject to funding which we have been actively seeking.

Administrative Matters

With the resignation of Ivy as our office manager, BMSG is now no longer staffed. Therefore the office is open by appointment only. We will continue to look for a passionate and dedicated part-time staff whilst managing the office affairs on our own. We emphasise that the Exco is being very prudent in replacing a staff not only in terms of cost but also in terms of finding the right person for the role.

Funding

Whilst we are very happy to have raised \$42,000 as at December 2009, the Exco needs to continue to look for funding to help fund our operations in order that we can have a full-time staff on board. In the middle of 2009, we had sent out appeal letters to many foundations and corporations but there were no positive responses. As we plan for 2010, we will seek funding for specific projects instead.

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