My name is Nancy Chen and I am from Ward 14, Parkdale – High Park.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to enjoy the 2017 budget.

I have lived in Canada for 10 years and I have spent all 10 years in Toronto, which Iam proud to call my home. I have three children two of them are 6 and 8 years old.

Thanks to the important services that the City offers, my children have more enriching social and recreational experiences.

My youngest child is in licensed daycare offered by the City. This, however, would not be possible without the subsidy that I receive. Toronto has very expensive prices for childcare, which I couldn’t afford if it wasn’t for the City’s support. I feel lucky to receive this, however, I know many families in Toronto must do without.

My children also attend our local community centre, the Parkdale Community Recreation Centre and Masaryk – Cowan community centre. They participate in many different programs there including drama, painting, karate, gymnastics and swimming. They have made many friends at this program which give us all sense of belonging and community. Again, though, this is subsidized by the City’s important Welcome Policy. My children have learnt new skills – both practical skills like swimming and soft ones like patience – because they participate in those programs. I am thankful for that.

Those programs have also helped me to be more productive. I have recently gained a part-time position at Working Women Community Centre for HIPPY Canada Program where I support other parents and I am a parent leader for Middle Childhood Matters Coalition Toronto. All that is possible because I know my children are cared for while I am there wither in school or in daycare.

I hope that you will remember my story as you enter your budget talks because, like so many Toronto families, I depend on the important supports and services the City provides. I hope you place children and families at the centre of your budget.

 Thank you.