



Jonathan Koh, seven, sits in a basket as his parents Wilson Koh, 36, and Yong Siew Peng, 37, look through their book haul. The family, who took part in the event for the first time on Saturday, exchanged a total of 67 books. ST PHOTO: NURIA LING

## Over 77,000 books change hands at exchange

MR WONG Kim Song, 71, was the first in line at this year's National Library Board (NLB) Book Exchange on Saturday.

The retiree arrived at 6am, 2½ hours before the event at the National Library began, with his daughter-in-law and two other relatives.

He has participated in all the book exchanges since the inaugural event in 2009, and he was also first in line last year.

"I like reading, and I like my grandchildren to read as well. Coming early allows you to choose the books you want.

I'll come back every year because I think recycling books is a good idea," he said.

This year's book exchange saw more than 7,000 participants exchanging over 77,000 books, a record number.

Participants could drop off their books from April 2. Books donated were checked by NLB to ensure they were in good condition.

Every book accepted then qualified its owner to a coupon which could be exchanged for a book.

Also among the crowd on Saturday were 15 students from Raffles Institution who were picking out children's books.

They were sourcing for books which will go to a library to be set up in a community centre in Kenya's Tana River Delta area. The centre is being built by non-profit organisation Tana River Life Foundation.

NLB chief executive Elaine Ng said the library plans to continue organising the book exchange yearly, given that more and more people are participating.

She said: "The public's support and enthusiasm towards the book exchange are very heartening. It shows that people still love books and reading."

**HEATHER MARIE LEE**