

DSA NEWS

25 years of service to the Down syndrome community



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From the ED's Desk



Dear Members,

Welcome to the first issue of our newsletter for the new year.

Allow me to thank all of you for your unwavering support in our recent virtual World Down Syndrome Day celebration on 21 March 2021. I thought it would be befitting for me to acknowledge the significance of the event with an interesting fact - World Down Syndrome Day was first observed in 2006 in many countries around the world and DSA Singapore was instrumental in hosting the inaugural launch of the World Down Syndrome Day on 21 March 2006 and the WSDS website on behalf of Down Syndrome International (DSi) from 2006 to 2010.

This year is especially poignant to DSA Singapore as we will be celebrating our 25th Anniversary of service to the Down syndrome community. We will be commemorating our Silver Jubilee through the Mystique Charity Gala Dinner on 2 October 2021 with an edition that is both nostalgic and memorable. We are optimistic, especially with the recent announcement by the Government that

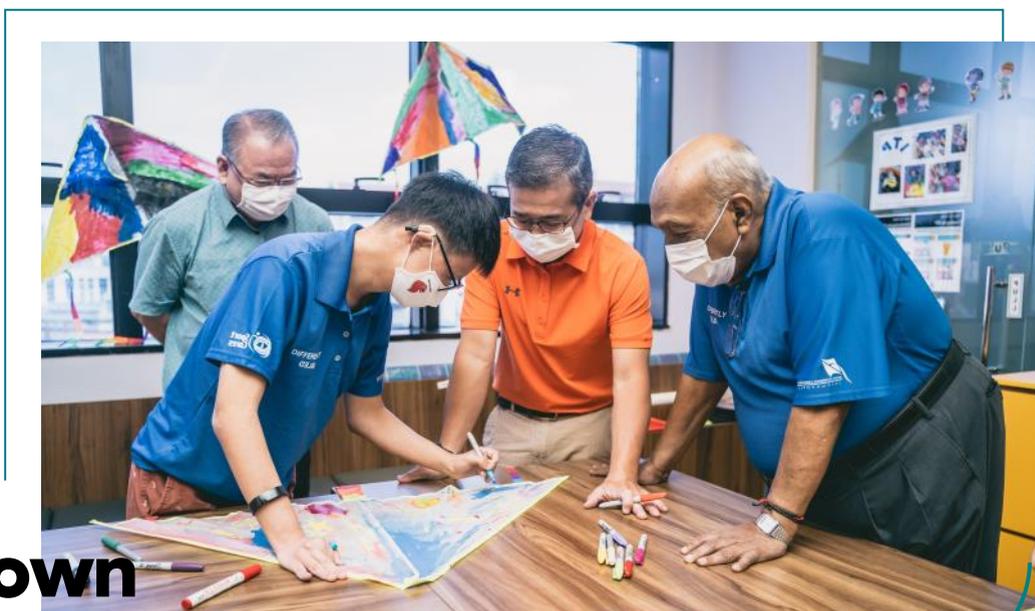
COVID-19 rules at events would be eased in the coming month, that we will be able to deliver a physical event befitting of its past magnitude and prestige.

The Board of Management will be holding a strategic meeting to guide the board's focus and set its priorities over the next 5 years. Our immediate attention would be for our members with Down syndrome to be enabled to live independently or be supported to do so in their own homes and in our local communities.

The Association has made good progress over the years as our society has become more inclusive in accepting persons with special needs but we can do more to develop their skills sets and independence to make society more conducive to their development and empowerment.

Thank you.

Mr. Yeo Ando
Executive Director



World Down Syndrome Day 2021

Minister Edwin Tong (center) putting his creative touches to the DSA Kite Kit with DSA Ambassador Allan Cai.

“Connect” is the theme for this year’s celebration, emphasizing the importance of community participation, interaction and support. Everyone can bring about positive change through sharing of ideas, experiences and knowledge, and empowering persons with Down syndrome.

DSA held its first World Down Syndrome Day celebration online amid the COVID-19 pandemic and safety management measures. In its 16th edition, the ‘live’ event was co-hosted by our very own members, Allan Cai and Judith Teo, together with volunteer Brynner Jananto. We were privileged to have Mr. Edwin Tong, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth and Second Minister for Law grace the event at our DSA Centre @ Bishan Junction 8, and the support of grassroots

leaders from Joo Chiat CCC and Siglap South CCMC.

Together with our online community, viewers were treated to a Zumba workout led by our Zumba group members and youths from Siglap South Youth Network and a montage of past events and activities to recollect over the past year. The 1.5 hours live show also featured an array of performances, a trivia quiz and the launch of a short





From left to right: DSA Ambassador Judith Teo, Volunteer Brynner Jananto and DSA Ambassador Allan Cai hosted the 'live' event on 21 March 2021



Relieve the memories of World Down Syndrome Day by scanning the QR code

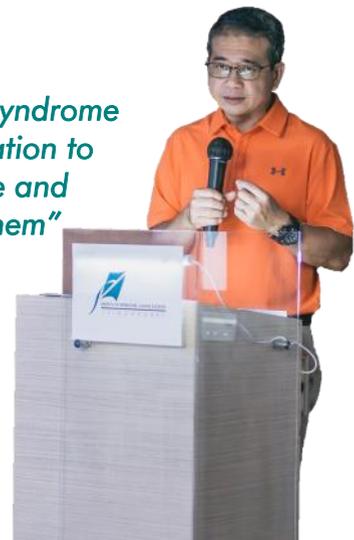
Viddsee. It was heartening to see so many of you tuning in and engaging with us during the live show.

In a show of support for DSA's 'Soar High' campaign, James Cook University engaged their students in a kite-designing activity at their campus while students from ISS International School initiated a series of fundraising activities.

Through the effort and support from all our donors, sponsors, members and volunteers, over \$170,000 was raised through this event for our Down syndrome community! We are immensely thankful for your generous contribution and participation, and we look forward to your continued support in our charitable endeavours.

Contributor: Joanne Toh, Executive (Events & Community Partnership)

"Our persons with Down syndrome need our active participation to make Singapore a safe and supportive home for them"



Our deepest appreciation to our partners:



Chinese New Year at ILT Centre

Lunar New Year came early for our learners at ILT Centre who were excited to usher in the festive season and it is no surprise that Chinese festive songs were top on the play list during their morning routine.



ILT Centre learners were taught Chinese New Year greetings during the celebrations

Our learners put their creativity to play by creating paper fishes and lanterns out of red packets and colouring on A3-sized lions cut-outs during their Arts session. Everyone had so much fun decorating the Centre with their creative artwork.

To usher in the festivity, our training officers organised a CNY party for our learners on 10 Feb-

ruary 2021 which kicked off with a game of musical chairs to the latest CNY tunes followed by a sumptuous KFC lunch and CNY staple snacks. Each learner went home with a red packet filled with chocolates as part of the CNY tradition.

Contributor: Yoginita D/O S Vanu, Lifestyle Educator

How We Can Make a Difference

Contributor: Viemala Davie Kelaver, Head of Children Education Services



Life is all about changes, and changes can be fast and challenging. Helping our children learn how to adapt to changes without undue stress can be one of the most important skills we can impart to them. Our children often need extra time and support to prepare them for major life changes such as the transition from kindergarten to primary school. Having transition supports in place are incredibly effective. We are thrilled to see students, parents and educators supporting one another during the transition.

“We are very thankful to DSA and the support Amos is receiving under IFSP for his mainstream school education. Adjusting to Primary One has not been easy for Amos but we are positive that he will learn and enjoy his time in school with targeted help from his IFSP teacher.” – Sandra, IFSP Parent

Expressing self through art

Our learners at ILT Centre had been working on several art projects over the past few months. These projects had encouraged them to express themselves creatively through the experimentation of different mediums, such as wood, paint, paper and pencils.

One such projects was an up-cycling activity where they created 3-dimensional artwork with pieces of scrap wood. This unique project inspired them to think differently about how to create their artworks, and the 3-dimensional aspect gave them a new freedom in expressing themselves.

Contributor: Todd Simonson, ILT Centre Lifestyle Educator

Right: ILT Centre learner, Jenny Tan enjoys expressing herself through creating art



Left: ILT Centre learner, Kenneth Tan creating his artwork with acrylic paint on paper

Art for Inclusivity Competition



Congratulations to Lin Chunru, Mark Lim and Samantha Teo for making to the top 10!



“May I Have a Seat, please” is an identifier that aims to help commuters with disabilities/ special needs alert fellow commuters that they would like a seat on public transport, a project co-created by Caring SG Commuters Committee and Movement of Inclusivity, to make public transport inclusive for all.

In support of the project, members of DSA participated in the “Art for Inclusivity” Competition held between 18 and 25 February 2021. Themed “Who am I?”, DSA members conveyed how they see themselves and their thoughts of inclusive transportation in their artwork. From 23 entries submitted by DSA, three artworks were shortlisted among the top 10 finalists.

After a round of voting on Movement of Inclusivity’s Facebook page, Samantha’s artwork was in the top 5 “Most Liked” submission!

Contributor: Amelia Sim, Executive (Programs & Membership)

AEP Bakes!



AEP learners prepare the ingredients at their own work stations

As the ongoing pandemic rolled into 2021, DSA's baking lessons continued to be carried out in small groups to ensure safe distancing among the learners. Our learners also brought their own aprons, mixing bowls, spoons and containers from home to avoid equipment sharing among them.

Classes were off to a slow start as our learners

had to revise what they had learned in the past, but the efforts paid off and our learners were rewarded with their freshly baked goods from the oven. Since the start of the year, our learners had successfully baked blueberry muffins, strawberry and cream cheese trifle and chocolate puffs, just to name a few.

Above all these safety measurements, many of our learners have been baking their way through this unusual time with enthusiasm and they continue to look forward to days when baking classes are held.

Cooking and baking with children with special needs can be a fun and sensory experience that the entire family can partake in. Start off with something simple and keep it fun. You can try out the muffin recipe with your family over the weekends!

Contributor: Angeline De Cruz, Training Officer

Blueberry Muffin Recipe

Ingredients

2 cups all-purpose flour
 3/4 cup brown sugar
 1/2 tsp salt
 3 tsp baking powder
 1/4 vegetable oil
 1 cup milk
 1 egg
 1 cup blueberries

Directions

1. Heat oven to 160 degrees Fahrenheit. Line 10 standard size muffin cups with paper liners.
2. Whisk the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl.
3. Whisk the milk, egg, and oil in a separate bowl.
4. Add milk mixture to the bowl with dry ingredients then use a fork to combine. Do not over mix.
5. Fold in blueberries.
6. Divide the batter between muffin cups.
7. Bake muffins 30 to 45 minutes or until tops are no longer wet and a tooth pick inserted into the middle of a muffin comes out with crumbs, not wet batter.
8. Transfer to cooling rack.

CNY Celebration with RSVP Singapore

On 5 February 2021, our members and caregivers turned into master bakers as they learned to bake Pineapple Bear Tart, just in time for the Lunar New Year celebrations. Conducted over Zoom, the participants had a fun and engaging time learning from RSVP Singapore trainer, Ms Elaine Teng who provided a live demonstration with step-by-step instructions. Our members and their caregivers rolled the dough and shaped them into bears. In no time, the screen was filled with many Pineapple Bear Tarts.

In line with the pineapple themed workshop, the celebration ended with a story-telling session about pineapple by volunteers from RSVP Singapore.

Contributor: Janet Boo, Executive (Family Support Services)



Learning about CareShield Life

Caregivers may face financial strain coupled with inadequate information and resources to better manage the financial concerns of their family during their caregiving journey. To strengthen the financial literacy and preparedness of caregivers,

FSS organised a workshop for 17 caregivers via Zoom on 23 February 2021.

During the session, Ms Jasmine Ang of Institute of Financial Literacy shared about CareShield Life with our caregivers to help them better understand the scheme. The interactive session made it easier for our caregivers to grasp the concepts. At the end of the workshop, our caregivers were equipped with more practical knowledge in planning for their finances.

Contributor: Janet Boo, Executive (Family Support Services)



Bag of Goodness

In celebration of World Down Syndrome Day, 21 Extra Goodness (21EG) launched “Bag of Goodness” to raise awareness on Down syndrome and encourage parents with new-born babies with Down syndrome. The welcome hamper hopes to be a source of hope and encouragement for these parents. Packed with an amazing assortment of items essential for new-borns, the ‘Bag of Goodness’ brought much joy and delight to our Infant Toddler Program families.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank 21EG and other collaborating partners namely Hoy Bags, Mothercare, Kao Merries, Dignity Mama and welovesupermom for their generosity.



21EG founder, Anna Tingzon together with her husband, Harry Tingzon and her daughter, Marian Christine Ico Tingzon presenting the Bag of Goodness to DSA ED, Yeo Ando

Contributor: Alicia Ang, Executive (Donor Management & Corporate Communications)

A Cohesive Team

Working as a speech therapist at DSA’s Infant & Toddlers Program (ITP) has been an enriching and fulfilling experience.

The families who are part of this program are eager to learn how they can help their children and are diligent in executing strategies suggested by the team at home to facilitate the development of their child’s gross and fine motor, cognitive, communication and feeding skills. Through these weekly sessions, we build close relationships with the families we work with and rejoice together with parents when their children acquire new skills.

One of the best efforts working in the ITP is the team. It may be small, but it is a close-knit one. Everyone is always ready to share information and strategies, and the DSA Management has also been a great partner as they strive their

best to support their clients’ interests. During the circuit-breaker last year, DSA implemented weekly video calls to continue supporting parents. Although it would have been better to see them in person, it was nonetheless gratifying to witness the progress of our children over video calls and even hearing them speak for the first time!

Contributor: Cindy Low, SPD Speech and Language Therapist



Lights, Camera, Action!

Allan Cai's motto "Work Hard, Never Give Up!" helped him prepare for his role in an episode of *Kin: By The Fans*, a 4-episode series adapted from winners of the fan fiction *Kin* writing contest organised by MediaCorp and social storytelling Wattpad in 2020.

Allan auditioned for the role of Leslie, a young man who works in the Tau Huay Shop alongside Handsome, played by Timothy Lee. After passing the audition, Allan worked hard in memorising his lines and practicing his expressions to accurately portray Leslie's character according to the story line. Allan shared that although he felt excited to be on the set, it was exhausting during the two-day filming as he had to wait for long hours between his parts.

Allan Cai shared that *"it was a fun experience, I really enjoyed pretending to be someone else and*

saw how TV shows are made. It was very cool! There are so many people working together and most important of all, I made new friends! After the episode was shown on 15 February 2021, many of my friends told me they liked my acting. It made me feel so happy. :)"

Well done Allan! DSA is pleased when we hear about the opportunities and achievements our members have attained. We look forward to hearing more stories of our members' achievements!

Contributor: Amelia Sim, Executive (Programs & Membership)

Scan the QR code to catch the episode of Allan playing Leslie on *Kin: By The Fans*



Screengrab of *Kin: By The Fans* episode 2. Allan Cai (right) acting alongside Timothy

Directed by
Ian Seymour



My Name is Alyssa. I have Down syndrome.

Alyssa may have Down syndrome, but that does not stop her from attending a mainstream Primary School and playing sports.

Alyssa takes centre stage as she shares a pictorial description of her life starting from birth to present in a book titled "My Name is Alyssa. I have Down syndrome." Authored by her mother, Ilyana Ali, the book aims to raise awareness and understanding of Down syndrome to the community at large. A poignant moment in the book, Ilyana shared that Alyssa is a gift and blessing, and she is "like the glue that keeps our family together."

Launched on 19 March 2021 in conjunction with World Down Syndrome Day, Ilyana hopes that more people will have a better understanding of Down syndrome and to see and accept Alyssa and other persons with Down syndrome for who they are.

Contributor: Alicia Ang, Executive (Donor Management & Corporate Communications)



Hop over to bit.ly/shopdsa If you like to purchase the book.

Celebrating Abilities!

Some may associate the term 'new normal' as a new way of living and going about with our lives. Others may use the term as a reflection of the current pandemic. When asked to complete an assignment with the same theme, Kai Song immediately thought about his sister, Shu Yi, a member of DSA.

For Kai Song, 'new normal' was how he sees his sister going about with her daily routine, her passions and her ambitions. Through the photo essay, Kai Song hopes to shed light on Shu Yi's abilities beyond the label of being a person with Down Syndrome.

It is heartening to see how Shu Yi's abilities are

being highlighted and celebrated through the photo essay. We hope to encourage for an inclusive community that recognizes and acknowledges those that are differently abled.

"I hope to encourage other parents that their child with Ds can live a normal life despite having limitations in areas such as academics, communication and mobility." – Caregiver of Shu Yi and Kai Song

Contributor: Amelia Sim, Executive (Programs & Membership)



Scan to watch Kai photo essay. Watch with volume for better experience.

Dear Friends,

Greetings to you from all of us at Down Syndrome Association (Singapore).

Your support will enable us to support our children and adults with Down syndrome through various educational, developmental and social programs with the aim to assist them to become more independent and lead productive lives.

Whether in big or small ways, we hope that you will continue to support our Cause. If you wish to make a contribution, kindly complete the donation form below and return it to us via post or at DSA Centre.

Once again, our heartfelt thanks and appreciation from the DSA Board of Management, staff and our community of persons with Down syndrome!

DONATION FORM (NEWS/2021/03)

Name [as per NRIC/FIN/Registered Company]: (MR/MS/MDM/DR)

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Email: _____

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A donation of \$50 / 100 / 500 / 1,000 / Others: \$ _____

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Expiry date: _____ Signature: _____

All outright donations are entitled to a tax deduction of 2.5 times

Kindly drop off this form together with your contribution at our reception counter or mail to DSA Centre, attention to "Team CPCC".



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TO BE THE CENTRE OF
EXCELLENCE FOR INDIVIDUALS
WITH DOWN SYNDROME,
THEIR FAMILIES AND
THE COMMUNITY.



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