

DSA NEWS

25 years of service to the Down syndrome community



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DSA 24th Annual General Meeting

A total of 43 members attended the AGM on 26 June 2021.

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The Start of Something New

Our AEP learners embarked on a new initiative this year.

08

A Father's Love

The father-child dyad is an incredibly powerful and nurturing relationship.



Chairperson's Message

Dear Members,

In the recently concluded AGM, the Board unanimously voted me to succeed Mr Siva as the Chairman. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and the team to you. I have been serving as a Board member for the last eight years and was the Honorary Treasurer for four consecutive years before I decided to take on this Chairman role.

The newly elected Board members are excited about the future of DSA and we agree that we have a lot of work to do and goals to achieve and we are eager to start working towards that outcome. The previous Boards on whose shoulders we stand gave us the foundation which now allows us to look further, have a clearer picture of where we have come from and where we are going.

DSA has reached a major milestone of 25 years and no charitable association can survive, let alone thrive, for that long, unless it develops, gains strength, broad-

ens its horizons and continues to inspire all stakeholders to build an inclusive society for all persons with special needs.

Our perennial goal for 2021 and beyond is to have more members especially parents coming forward to serve in our sub-Committees and helping us identify and bridge the access gaps experienced by the underserved. For me personally, that translates to identifying and assisting families with persons with Down syndrome who are not currently served by DSA and other charities. To accomplish this, we need to find new ways to actively reach out to the larger Down syndrome community outside DSA and work alongside other social service agencies to better serve their needs.

I am looking forward to my first term as Board Chairperson, knowing that there are excellent people alongside me whom I shall be working with. It is a privilege to serve and together we can achieve more.

Alex Yan
Chairperson



From the ED's Desk

Dear Members,

At DSA, we are extremely fortunate to be supported by dedicated volunteers who give their time and energy in all aspects of the Association and we could not offer all that we do without them.

Being involved with DSA will not only expose us to the many abilities of individuals with Down syndrome and the value of embracing an inclusive society where we can all live and learn from each other, but it will also help us to become more confident and accepting of persons with special needs. Your willingness to play a major role in supporting many of our programs and events do make a difference in the lives of individuals with Down syndrome we serve.

The support of our stakeholders has helped DSA

established a strong presence in the community to address the needs of our beneficiaries. While DSA's continued work to provide programs, services, and resources to our Down syndrome community achieved modest progress, there is much more work to be done. With the new Board of Management elected on 26 June 2021, I look forward to their valuable inputs and support, which is critical to the growth of our Association.

I am confident that we are off to a great start with your support!

Thank you.

Yeo Ando
Executive Director

24th Annual General Meeting 2021



Key Officer Bearers and the Executive Director engaged in the AGM

Mr R. Sivanandam, Chairperson of DSA extended a warm and hearty welcome to 44 members joining DSA's 24th Annual General Meeting via Zoom on Saturday, 26 June 2021 at 1.30pm.

Mr Siva's opening address outlined the progress DSA had made over the past 12 months from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020 and shared how DSA was able to overcome the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic thanks to the unstinting support of our donors, volunteers and members.

Mr Siva shared the desired outcomes set out by the Board to stay relevant to the changing needs of our community at the meeting — more pathways for DSA graduands, implementation of e-health passport, supported community living for adults, and self-advocacy. He encouraged members to continue giving their support to the new Board of Management and play an active role to serve in the sub-committees for the betterment of our beneficiaries and to achieve greater success for DSA.

Honorary Secretary, Ms Monica Kan and Honorary Treasurer, Mr Alex Yan were also in attendance to present their respective reports with the Executive Director, Mr Yeo Ando facilitating the proceedings.

Prior to the closing of the meeting at 2.30pm, Mr Siva announced a total of 11 nominations vying for 10 positions in the Board of Management were received on the closing date of 19 June 2021 but there would be no election. Mr Siva went on to explain that one nominee had withdrawn her nomination as she was happy to see more new members, especially younger parents coming forward to serve on the DSA Board and she wanted to give them the opportunity to do so. Hence, all 10 nominees were officially elected to the Board of Management.

Mr Siva then called upon each elected nominee to briefly introduce themselves to the members before conveying his gratitude to Ms Lia Marahusin, Mr Roderick Tan and Ms Tan Peck Joo for their valuable contributions to the Board during their term in office.

Board of Management



Deputy
Chairperson

Li Shu Yun

Senior Lecturer, Nanyang Technological University

"It is a privilege to be able to walk the journey with the community over many years."



Chairperson

Alex Yan Chun We

Retired Group Audit Partner, CLSA Singapore Pte Ltd

"I've been with DSA for the last 8 years, first joined and started the audit committee."



Honorary
Treasurer

Adrian Foo Qi Jing

SVP, GIC, Direct Investments Group, Private Equity

"I look forward to contributing further as I participate in the Board and the committees."



Honorary
Secretary

Chan Wing Git

Group Head of Talent and Excitement, Luxasia Pte Ltd

"We delivered a number of initiatives in the past two years, in particular the appointment of our ED."



Member

Arjun Chandrasekhar

Board Match Volunteer, Centre for Non-Profit Leadership

"In the future, I believe I can get the social enterprise going as well."



Member

Gerard Lim Ju Boon

Executive Director, UBS Wealth Management Singapore

"I hope my additional time can be spent on focused fundraising activities for DSA."



Member

Jonathan Seow

Chief Financial Officer, Moleac Pte Ltd

"I look forward to creating a better future for both current and future generations of children with Down syndrome."



Member

Kan Lai Lai Monica

Retired Finance Manager

"I really love doing the job, as I felt that the members needed someone from the family to be part of the conversations."



Member

Prabhakaran Gopalan Nair

Coach, Private Practitioner

"Moving forward, we're re-engineering the way we're thinking of creating new avenues of activities."



Member

Teh Chu Tak Moses

Funeral Director / Consultant, Trinity Casket Pte Ltd

"I want to be there (part of the parenting journey), to be of use and offer my service."



Immediate Past
Chairperson

Ratnasabapathy Sivanandam

Retired, Marketing, Singapore Airlines

"We'd like to welcome more of our members and parents to play an active role and serve in our sub-committees."



The Start of Something New

AEP Learners, Mark Lim and Ryan Lim worked together to create the soap bars

Earlier this year in March, 15 of our Adult Enhancement Program (AEP) learners embarked on an exciting initiative to learn how to make soaps and candles. Conducted by Soaprise and SoapArts, the workshops are held every fortnight on Thursday afternoons. As part of the social distancing measures, learners were split into three groups, with each group comprising learners of differing abilities which helped to encourage peer learning and effective teamwork.

During the first session, our learners were bubbling with excitement, yet they listened intently to the workshop facilitators as it was their first time creating soap from scratch. Although they had no prior experience in soapmaking, our learners

were able to follow the instructions from the beginning to the end and to create soap with minimal prompts from the facilitators. Combined with great teamwork, they were able to produce beautiful soaps at the end of each session.

Our learners' perseverance and desire to learn something new is highly remarkable. Starting something new can bring about feelings of excitement and uncertainty but they have shown us that keeping a positive mindset and attitude can help to push us beyond our limits.

Contributor: Siti Nur' Fadhilah Binte Abdul Halim, Training Officer



Home Care Sessions

Home Care sessions at the Independent Living & Training (ILT) Centre are critical for our adult learners to learn and strengthen their life skills and independence. At ILT Centre, our learners work on a variety of household chores from simple tasks such as wiping down the tables and chairs after mealtimes and sweeping the floor to more complex tasks such as vacuuming the floor and doing laundry.

Doing household chores may seem to be an easy task for most of us, but it does not necessarily apply to our learners who may struggle with sensory motor skills. However, our learners are unfazed by the challenges. Their desire to learn and master these skills can be seen through their enthusiastic and determined mindset when tasked. Our learners approach new household tasks with much fervour and look forward to honing their

life-skills at the Centre and at home. These activities also provide them the opportunities to learn about responsibilities and be more mindful of keeping the shared-space clean and tidy.

Contributor: Anne Elizabeth Chua, ILT Centre Lifestyle Educator



Regular participation in Home Care sessions helps to sharpen their independent living skills

Yes! I Can

The 'Yes! I Can' swimming program was put on hold last year due to the COVID-19 restrictions. However, with the support of SportCares, our swimmers were excited to resume and continue their weekly sessions while adhering to the Safe Management Measures.

Due to the limited capacity per group, six swimmers graduated from the program on 30 April 2021! We look forward to welcoming the remaining swimmers back to the program in the coming months.

Contributed by: Amelia Sim, Executive (Membership & Enrichment Programs)



(L to R): Nur Alisha, Chua Chee Hon, Joyce Elizabeth Hosler, Coach Michael, Anna Ow, Zayna Twardzik Ching, Goh Hui Han

Learning Continues At Home

Following the recent COVID-19 heightened alert, a decision was taken to shift all physical learning sessions to home-based learning (HBL) for the safety and well-being of all our learners and staff.

Drawing from last year's experiences, our Special Education teachers from the Integration Facilitation Support Program (IFSP) refined the support and guidance offered to each student. By tapping on digital resources such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom, it helped to smoothen the transition to live-streaming IFSP sessions. We successfully personalised learning to students' unique academic needs and personal interests within the confines of a computer screen by combining interactive recorded lessons, video clips and live streaming classes. These strategies ensured IFSP virtual lessons are focused on student-centric learning and enabled parents to preview online materials and join the live streaming classes.

On the other hand, our AES team planned and built a quality HBL package comprising three weeks of lessons ranging from worksheets to tabletop tasks within two days. This was made possible because of the team's excellent efficiency and tremendous teamwork. After much hard work, the HBL packages were couriered to the doorsteps of our learners. As part of the resource package, our learners were also able to apply what they have learnt in AES to their homes through activities such as baking and cooking.

HBL provided a differentiated learning experience which was meaningful and enjoyable for all, including parents/caregivers who played a pivotal role in their child's learning at home.

Contributed by: Sabariah Sabri, Special Education Teacher & Lee Ying Suan, Training Officer



Teacher Sabariah teaching creative essay writing through scaffolding



Interactive digital resources keeps our IFSP students engaged during their support session



AEP training officers prepared and couriered three weeks of learning materials to our learners' homes



As part of the AEP HBL package, Benjamin Lee (left) made a baked pasta with his parents' guidance and Govinder Singh (right) work on his worksheets

A Father's Love

"Mrs Bunny looks funny when she twitches her nose...."

Fathers singing, playing, and laughing with their child is a common sight in our Infant Toddler Program (ITP). The father-child dyad is an incredibly powerful and nurturing relationship. As shared by Mr Janson Sim, *"I lost count of how many times I sang Mrs Bunny to Jacob but totally worth it seeing his smiles and him imitating the actions each time."*

Through the ITP sessions, our fathers have gained a better understanding of their child's

needs, current progress, and areas of improvement. We recognise the significant role fathers play in the lives of their children and the huge impact they have on their child's growth, learning and development, and we would like to celebrate our fathers who have provided their child with the best possible experience during sessions and through continuity of learning at home. In commemoration of Father's Day in June, we have collated a series of sharing from our ITP fathers.

Contributor: Dawn Quek, Early Intervention Teacher



Mr Muhd Ridzwan & Raissa

"Raissa has achieved many milestones in just a few months in ITP. She has become more interactive and is able to understand better with the play-based lessons."

"The activities such as puzzles, exercises, songs and flash cards have benefitted Estelle in terms of her speech, cognitive and physical learning. During the sessions, I too, get to learn the songs, stories and exercises that allow me to relate and bond with my daughter."



Mr Kong Kian Haw & Estelle



Mr Mohd. Rizal & Eilhan

"ITP sessions have strengthened my understanding towards Eilhan's needs. I enjoy playing with Eilhan because I can find creative ways to help him learn."



Mr Ng Poh Khai & Joy

"The ITP sessions are invaluable to me. They serve as direct-bonding sessions between me and Joy. The feedback and facilitation from the early intervention teachers are helpful for me to understand her current progress and identify areas where she can improve upon."



Mr Janson Sim & Jacob

"Whenever I get to accompany my son, Jacob to ITP, I feel ecstatic. I get to spend quality time with him and see him enjoying himself whilst learning from the various activities and interacting with his peers and teachers. I also learn how to better communicate with Jacob and support him in his milestones and development as a father"

Kitchen Adventures With RSVP Singapore

On 26 March 2021, RSVP Singapore trainer, Ms Elaine Teng conducted a cooking workshop on Zoom for DSA members and caregivers. During the session, they were taught how to make an Easter Pot Pie in celebration of Easter Day.

At the end of the session, our parents and children were beaming with joy having created their very own Eastern pot pies under the detailed and patient guidance of Ms Elaine. It was a fruitful and fun parent-child bonding experience for all our members, especially when we saw them participating enthusiastically through the screens. In

line with the theme of the workshop, the session ended with a towel bunny making segment much to the amusement of our members.

Contributed by: Janet Boo, Executive (Family Support Services)



The successful completion of a task like making a meal boosts their independence and self-esteem.



A Cohesive Team

Are the COVID-19 vaccines effective? Why do we need to vaccinate ourselves? These are some of the common questions our caregivers had about COVID-19 vaccines. To quell their curiosity, FSS collaborated with Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH), Centre for Health Activation to organise an online workshop titled 'COVID-19 Vaccines: Get the Facts about Our Best Shot Against COVID-19!'

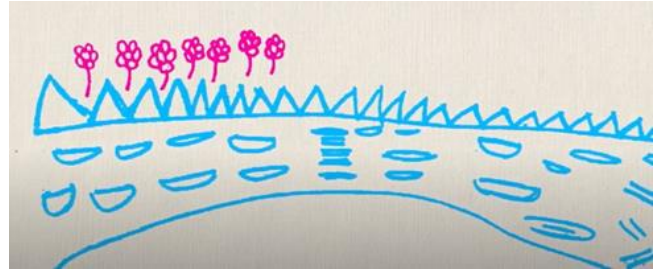
During the session, the speakers shared about the vaccines and answered some of the burning questions our parents had. Thanks to the detailed and informative sharing, our caregivers left the Zoom meeting with more clarity regarding the topic.

Contributed by: Janet Boo, Executive (Family Support Services)

The Feelings Farm

In a 2-part art engagement organised by Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay, seven DSA members aged 12 to 16 years old launched into an explorative journey of their feelings and emotions. Through text, drawings, movements, music and props, facilitators guided participants in their expression and understanding of different emotions. These expressions and ideas helped shape the development of the final performance, “The Feelings Farm” in March 2021. Participants were then invited to the Esplanade to watch their contributions unfold on stage during the live performance.

Contributed by: Amelia Sim, Executive (Membership & Enrichment Programs)



A drawing of a riverbank illustrating sadness with blooming flowers to represent things that the member loves.

A drawing by DSA member depicting his love for his sibling



The Feeling Farm - Documentary

Distance Only Brings Us Closer

We were excited when we received the news that we were collaborating with DSA, and our class was tasked to organise two zoom sessions on 9 and 16 April 2021 for DSA members. Together with my classmates, we came together to brainstorm and conceptualise appropriate activities after finding out more about Down syndrome. We shortlisted three activities: “Spot The Difference” (Objective: to find the difference between

two pictures); “Pictionary” (Objective: to guess what the pictures represent) and “Dance Along” (Objective: to teach simple dance moves).

We faced many challenges and disruptions in planning, due to the COVID-19 pandemic measures. However, after witnessing the happiness and joy the clients showed unreservedly during both Zoom sessions, we knew that every effort was worth it. With this experience, we are now more confident and prepared as a class to work on more Zoom activities to engage with people with special needs. I hope there will be more opportunities for us to organise these events again in the future.

Contributor: Kieran Koh, JCAS Leader, Hwa Chong International School



DSA x UWCSEA: Story Makers



Being able to connect with the members of DSA for the past three months was an amazing learning experience for all of us, UWCSEA students. The gradual bond that was created throughout the sessions was incredibly heart-warming and encouraging to see.

Each week we created stories to guide them through real-life scenarios and problems they may encounter, teaching them ways to adapt and things to keep in mind. Along the way, it was great to see that it was not just a one-sided teaching session, as we were able to gain memorable experiences and learnings from them.

One of my most memorable moments was during the movie scenario where we were going through Allan's favourite movies. It was great knowing that we had a lot in common and how we were able to connect over that - we laughed a

lot and was just a truly great bonding experience.

I will remember all the members; they all had such great positive energy - just interacting with them made a huge impact on us. If we were ever sad or tired, just talking to them lightened up our mood.

Due to the COVID-19 regulations, we were only able to meet the individuals through Zoom. Nevertheless, it was a highlight of our week to see the smiles on their faces, learn from their unique ways of thinking, and even sing Disney songs with them at the end of our sessions! As challenging as it was to hold everything virtually, we still appreciate how cooperative every member of the DSA was, and the great feedback they gave us.

We hope that we can meet with everyone again, and we are grateful for the continuous collaboration with DSA.

Contributor: Manaka Kuze, student from UWC

A sharing by UWC students on their memorable moments and key takeaways from this partnership



Volunteers, schools and corporate partners play a key role at DSA, providing friendship, care and support for our beneficiaries through various meaningful volunteer and fundraising activities. If you'd like to plan an activity for our beneficiaries, drop us an email at: volunteer@downsyndrome-singapore.org

Racing a Triathlon for Down syndrome



Inspired by Chris Nikic, the first person with Down syndrome to finish the IRONMAN triathlon, Amanda Ang signed up for a triathlon to raise funds for DSA.

Amanda shared that *“we must actively work on shifting our own perceptions of people with Down syndrome to focus on their potential rather than their limitations. Let us change the narrative in our everyday conversations by sharing Nikic’s story, and other heroes who break the stigma surrounding their disabilities. With a supportive community, they can achieve independence and employment, just like you and I can.”*

Special thanks to everyone for showing your support by contributing to Amanda’s fundraiser. A total of \$12,057 was raised, surpassing her initial target by over \$7,000!

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

50 Miles for 50k at 50

To celebrate his 50th birthday, Frankie Chee decided to run 50 miles to raise \$50,000 for DSA. The run, dedicated to his eldest son Elliot who has Down syndrome, was his first 50 miles trail run. Over the course of his personal fundraiser, he raised a grand total of \$24,250. This funds will help us to sustain our programs and services for our beneficiaries and their caregivers.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Frankie and all the other donors who have contributed generously to his fundraising endeavour.

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





Say hello to Alisha

Alisha joined DSA's Integration Facilitation Support Program (IFSP) in 2020. Back then, she was still adapting to her primary school life. The first time when she met Teacher Sab for her IFSP session, she was shy and did not communicate much. It took a couple of sessions before Teacher Sab saw the tenacious and cheeky girl she truly is.

Teacher Sab worked closely with the school in suggesting different strategies to see through the challenges that Alisha had in school; namely following directions from teachers and adhering to

classroom rules. With the exchange of ideas that Teacher Sab had with the school personnel and her parents, we saw Alisha attempting to be a more responsible girl and a good friend to her classmates.

This year, Alisha is more focused and engaged in lessons. With her mother exposing her to the different activities outside of school, we see Alisha flourishing holistically.

Contributor: Sabariah Sabri, Special Education Teacher

A Volunteer's Journey

My name is Shereen Mohandas, and I have been volunteering with children with special needs for the last 12 years at various centers and schools.

Last year, I started volunteering with DSA's Our Lives, Our Voice (OLOV) program, a 10-week self-advocacy program run by DSA and MINDS. It aims to inform the self-advocates about their rights and empower them to speak up and explore their dreams and ambitions, amongst other skills. The program is a wonderful way of bringing together the self-advocates and creating a platform where they can share ideas and learn from each other.

I participated in three face-to-face sessions before we had to conduct all subsequent sessions via Zoom, due to the COVID outbreak. This was definitely a challenge, as some of the participants were not so familiar with each other or the facilitators, and it was hard to coax them to par-

ticipate via zoom. As the facilitators and volunteers were also new to this mode of conducting sessions, we were also struggling during the initial transition phase. Now, a year into Zoom sessions, we are more well-versed and better able to support the self-advocates during the sessions.

I must admit that when I was first asked to volunteer in this program, I was a little skeptical. My experience has always been in working with children and not adults. However, I must say that this has been one of the most fulfilling volunteering experiences so far. I really feel honoured that the self-advocates allowed me to join them in their journey of discovery, and I hope that I have been able to contribute meaningfully to their lives.



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/2021/06)

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

Contact no: _____ NRIC/FIN/UEN/: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

I would like to make a contribution of:

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

By Cheque:

Made payable to Down Syndrome Association (Singapore)

Cheque No.: _____ Bank: _____

By Credit Card:

One-time Monthly Contribution

Visa/Mastercard Credit card no.: _____

Card Holder's Name: _____

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".



Scan to Donate



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



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