

# DSA NEWS

Newsletter for Down Syndrome Association (Singapore)

## Platter of Joy

**DINE for a cause**

**SHOP for a cause**

**BID for a cause**

### Rock The Stage

The 1.5 hour live-streamed show launched by Minister Chan Chun Sing on 4 July 2020 garnered over 4,300 viewership.

>>>page 3

### Resumption of Programs

The resumption of face-to-face ITP and IFSP sessions was a long-awaited and exciting moment for all families and teachers.

>>>page 6

### Singapore Together Pack

Five of our AEP learners' artworks were chosen to be part of the Singapore Together Pack for National Day 2020.

>>>page 8

# FROM THE ED'S DESK

Dear Members,

My hope for you is that this newsletter finds you and your family healthy, safe and managing to the best of your ability what are truly extraordinary days for all of us.

Besides keeping you abreast of the progress made by DSA through this quarterly issue and how you have contributed to the positive outcomes despite the pandemic, we wanted to keep you in the pulse of the evolving COVID-19 situation and how it has impacted our learners, caregivers, family members and the community.

You may have seen the regular advisories that were disseminated to our learners and caregivers to keep them abreast of the pandemic situation. You may have heard or witnessed the safe management measures that DSA has taken to ensure the well-being of our learners, staff and other service users. These measures became more pronounced when DSA resumed its centre-based programs on a daily basis from 31 August 2020.

Like many other SSAs, DSA too faced challenges in sustaining our fundraising efforts amid COVID-19. With four of our signature events namely the World Down Syndrome Day, Charity Bowl, Charity Movie and Mystique Charity Gala Dinner suspended this year, DSA had to find alternate avenues to raise the much needed funds to minimise the disruption of our essential programs and services to our beneficiaries.

The Board took the unprecedented decision to launch a virtual talent show 'Rock The Stage' in July 2020 when we knew that the physical event for the World Down Syndrome Day in March 2020 could no longer take place due to safe distancing measures. To our relief, the live-streamed show not only invoked the talents of our members, it also garnered a credible 4,300 viewership.

The Board also made the decision to suspend the perennial Mystique Charity Gala Dinner this year due to the uncertainties in safe management measures for the physical event to be held under COVID-19. That decision was also taken on hindsight that the safety requirements and restrictions may hinder our best efforts in putting on the event befitting of its past magnitude and prestige. In its place, DSA launched 'Platter of Joy', our first meal delivery fundraising initiative in September 2020 to great reviews and support.

Five Adult Enhancement Program (AEP) learners did DSA proud when their artworks were selected as part of the National Day Singapore Together Pack.

We were also blessed with partnerships from E-Bridge Pre-School, SportsCares, RSVP Singapore, Radin Mas Citizens' Consultative Committee, National Library Board, Singapore Medical Society in Ireland and Temasek Polytechnic who helped to foster greater social interactions with our learners despite the presenting physical constraints.

We have made modest progress in generating local awareness and understanding of Down syndrome over the years. However, much work remains to be done especially in getting society to eliminate all forms of prejudices against people with special needs. We need to equip our beneficiaries with the skills and the confidence they need to lead happy and fulfilling lives. And on that note may I urge all of us to respect the independence of people with Down syndrome and make our society more conducive in their development and empowerment.

Thank you.

**Yeo Ando**  
Executive Director



# ROCK THE STAGE



DSA member, Allan Cai

DSA member, Megan Tang

DSA member, Marcus Tham

When Singapore exited COVID-19 Circuit-Breaker on 1 July 2020, one of the many impacts of containment measures, including confinement, is that our society's most vulnerable are often those most affected by the dramatic decrease in participation opportunities and social activities.

To counter this, DSA took the unprecedented decision to provide our members with opportunities for positive social engagement by hosting our first ever virtual talent show 'Rock The Stage' via Facebook Live. This event was specially aligned to the theme of World Down Syndrome Day 2020 - 'We Decide' - where we believe all persons with Down syndrome should have full participation about matters relating to their lives and advocating for their meaningful participation. Hence, in collaboration with our members with Down syndrome, we have initiated this virtual show to showcase their talents and aspirations to the community.

Produced by TFD Pte Ltd and hosted by Mark van Cuylenburg a.k.a The Flying Dutchman, the 1.5 hour live-streamed show was launched by Mr Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Trade & Industry on 4 July 2020 and garnered over 4,300 viewership.

Efforts like 'Rock The Stage' leverages on our unwavering mission to leave no persons with special needs behind in our Society. *"When each and every person, including those with special needs, are given the opportunity and support to realise their life potential, all of us will be able to lead a meaningful and enriching life."* - Minister Chan Chun Sing

The show attracted the support of local celebrities including Gurmit Singh, Joanna Dong, and Rahimah Rahim, students from Kids Talent Singapore and family members of persons with Down syndrome who performed alongside our talented members. It not only gave the spotlight to our



Local celebrity, Rahimah Rahim



Local celebrity, Joanna Dong



Local celebrity, Gurmit Singh



Performer from KidsTalent, Shannon Teo



Singapore radio presenter, Mark van Cuylenburg

members with Down syndrome for their often overlooked talents but we also wanted to inspire audiences with their talents and aspirations.

16 drummers from DSA Drums & Percussion Group came together to perform a finale for the show. Although it was the first time our members had to practise and synchronise their performances together with their peers through the virtual platform, the drummers and their caregivers were upbeat with the novelty.

'Rock The Stage' delivered not only an unforgettable and heart-warming show, it also exemplifies the effort put in by all performers as well as the participation of the family members in support of their child's passion and interest in music.

The positive outcome of 'Rock The Stage' would not have been possible without our staunch donors and partners as well as the support of viewers tuning in to the show.

Our deepest appreciation to our sponsors:

- Producer:** TFD Pte Ltd
- Emcee:** Mark van Cuylenburg
- Donors:** BinjaiTree, Bowl Chap, D.S Lee Foundation, Floral Garage Singapore, Hong Leong Foundation, Lee Foundation, Loyang Tua Pek Kong, Overseas Family School, PriceBreaker, Pei Hwa Foundation, Upcakes, Woh Hup



Relive the memories of 'Rock The Stage' by scanning the QR code.



Like many other Social Service Agencies, DSA too faced unprecedented challenges by COVID-19 in sustaining our fundraising efforts. To minimise the disruption of our essential programs and services to our beneficiaries, we were delighted and excited to launch 'Platter of Joy', our first meal delivery fundraising initiative in September.

'Platter of Joy' is made possible through the support of our long-term partner and goodie-bag sponsor, L'Oréal Travel Retail Asia Pacific and our F&B partners, namely Bowl Chap, Indochili, The Plattering Co., Tom's Palette, and Upcakes.

If you have not had the opportunity to grab an order for our 'Platter of Joy' which closed on 18 September 2020, fret not as we have provided

other options for you to show your support for the Down syndrome community:

1. Purchase a labour of love, designed and crafted by our persons with Down syndrome at: [bit.ly/poj-catalogue](http://bit.ly/poj-catalogue)
2. Participate in the silent auction from 1 to 25 October 2020 at: [bit.ly/poj-catalogue](http://bit.ly/poj-catalogue)
3. Make an outright donation at: [bit.ly/poj-donate](http://bit.ly/poj-donate)

Your support will help us provide lifelong opportunities for our beneficiaries and their families.

We'd like to thank all our supporters who have purchased our 'Platter of Joy'. We cannot contain our excitement in delivering this joy package to your doorsteps in October 2020!

## DSA 23<sup>rd</sup> AGM

Mr R. Sivanandam, Chairperson of DSA extended a warm and hearty welcome to 37 members joining DSA's first virtual Annual General Meeting on Saturday, 26 September 2020 at 1.30pm.

Mr Siva's opening address outlined the progress DSA had made over the past 18 months from 1 July 2018 to 31 December 2019 and how DSA's growth strategy remains intact despite the onset of Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr Siva shared two takeaways at the meeting - He urged members to continue to help DSA pursue and contribute constructive ways of learning, listening and working together, to achieve greater success for DSA and the betterment of our beneficiaries and encouraged members to embrace IT and AI as the new norm.

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

Mr Siva closed the meeting at 2.15pm with a note of appreciation to members, volunteers and donors for their unstinting support and thanked members present for their valuable inputs at the AGM. He also urged more parents to come forward to serve on the Board and its committees.



Key Office Bearers and the ED engaged in the AGM



DSA Board of Management

# RESUMPTION OF PROGRAMS

## Infant Toddler Program (ITP)

As COVID-19 is upending lives globally, DSA has been nimble in responding to the virus. We navigated through unforeseen environments and configurations with stringent vigilance. Our Infant Toddler Program (ITP) resumed on 3 August 2020 after a four-month suspension, with enhanced health and safety measures in place.

The introduction of one-to-one session for individual families with revised session hours was widely welcomed by parents. One parent complimented DSA's proactive approach in providing a safe and positive experience, which is valuable. Another parent commented that she is delighted to return to the centre-based sessions; where she can learn hands-on strategies and intervention techniques.

We are pleased that DSA's decision to selectively reopen is greatly supported and appreciated by our ITP's families. Parents' trust rests on the fundamental belief that DSA holds paramount the safety and well-being of our children and families as the ultimate priorities.

We are excited to have the children back in the centre and we will continue to deliver our program to the best of our ability while maintaining a safe and conducive environment for our children to learn and play.



One-to-one sessions at DSA Centre was introduced to provide a safe learning experience for all

## Integration Facilitation Support Program (IFSP)

The return to full-time, face-to-face learning in schools after three months was a long-awaited and exciting moment for all our IFSP students and teachers. It was also a critical time to optimise learning opportunities for our students.



Home-Based Learning (HBL) had been a challenge for some of our students due to the lack of individualised, one-on-one support they receive at schools. Some parents also expressed their concerns of playing the primary role of a teacher for their child, which was already beyond their capacity as a caregiver and was too demanding on their schedule.

After understanding each student's progress and challenges during HBL from the mainstream school teachers, allied educators and parents; IFSP developed a blended learning approach that includes the integration of traditional instructional methods and online lesson resources. While IFSP students received face-to-face teaching, parents received on-line resources to increase learning opportunities at home.

Collaboration with teachers and parents has always been an integral part of IFSP and it continues to be essential during this challenging time. To address the unique needs of IFSP students, we will continue to work with teachers and parents to collaboratively identify essential learning and engagement opportunities for our students.

As schools around the world face varying challenges that arise from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that we continue to engage, try and push ahead with the desired outcome of our students despite the challenges ahead.

# GREEN ADVENTURES WITH ILT CENTRE



Growing vegetables may seem like a mundane and dirty task to most, but our ILT learners take great pride in their new gardening adventure.

The miniature garden, a partnership with E-Bridge Pre-School, provides a platform for ILT learners to hone their green fingers and foster interactivity between the children at E-Bridge Pre-School and learners at ILT Centre. Materials such as pre-cut plastic bottles, soil and seeds of several different vegetables were provided by the stu-

dents of E-Bridge Pre-School to create the garden. ILT learners then decorated the bottles of which half were returned to E-Bridge Pre-School so that they too, could also be part of this journey by planting seeds using the bottles painted by our learners.

While our learners were unfamiliar with gardening, they enthusiastically embarked on their new journey of growing vegetables. By being involved in each step of the process, from painting the bottles, preparing the soil and seeds, to faithfully watering them each day, it reinforces many of the qualities ILT learners are learning at ILT Centre.

Responsibility, organisational skills, empathy and patience are a few requisite qualities needed to live a life of independence. Through this initiative, our learners are well on their way to achieving the independence they so desire, which many of us have taken for granted.

## VIRTUAL EXERCISES

For some adult learners at DSA Centre and ILT Centre, nothing could be more fun than grooving to the dance workout videos each morning.

Thanks to Ms Rachel Tan, an instructor from SportCares, our adult learners had the opportunity to attend 14 virtual exercise sessions conducted over Zoom when DSA resumed its centre-based programs. These sessions which were completed in the last week of September 2020 were conducted every Friday from 10.00am to 11.30am.

The exercise program, based on Pilates, Yoga and Functional Training, aims to improve one's flexibility, strength and mobility. Ms Rachel also included dances like Hip Hop, Reggaeton, Salsa and Brazilian to ensure that it gave our learners

an effective cardiovascular training workout. She is very patient with our learners and is able to cater to their needs. Our AEP learners were always looking forward to moving along with her.

Our heartfelt appreciation to SportCares and Ms Rachel Tan for the meaningful partnership which brings active and engaging activities to our learners!



AEP learners following the moves by Ms Rachel Tan via Zoom

# SINGAPORE TOGETHER PACK

National Day has always been one of our favourite celebrations. One can usually hear our learners singing to NDP songs in the weeks leading to the National Day Celebration on 9 August 2020. This National Day was extra special to us. DSA is proud of our five AEP learners whose artworks were selected to be part of the Singapore Together Pack.

Gabriella Francesca Allan's artwork titled 'Dancing Queen and Kings' was selected to be printed on the Singapore Together Pack. 'Fireworks', a collective piece by Jayant Dayal Sujanani, June Lin, Lau Su An and Lim Thye Ann and Rachel Hong's artwork, 'Glorious Gardens' were printed on pledge cards which were placed in the Singapore Together Pack.

'Dancing Queen and King' serves as a celebration of the people Gabriella cherishes around her. Depicting herself as one of the figures in red, she is surrounded by many of her friends, teachers and family members, engaging in her favourite activity - Dancing.

'Fireworks', artistically put together by four of our talented artists, Jayant, June, Su An and Thye Ann, was inspired by National Day Parade. Each artist produced an acrylic dot painting which were combined into one artwork.

'Glorious Gardens' is a reflection of Rachel's admiration for the Supertree Grove's height and size at Gardens By The Bay. The use of bright colours is a manifestation of her lively and energetic personality. Rachel was assisted in the artwork but she took full charge of the concept which is her favourite part of creating art.

All of our artists were very excited and proud to receive Madam President Halimah's signature on their artwork. Kudos to all our artists for contributing to the National Day celebrations with their artistic talents.

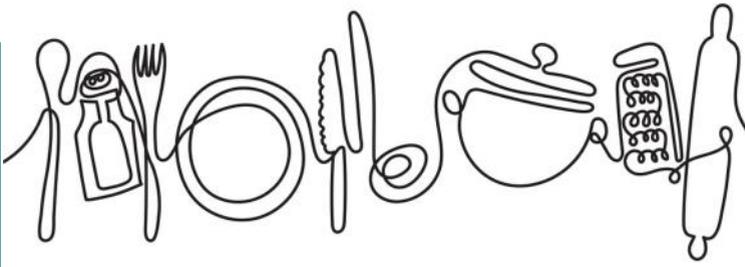


Scan the QR code  
to read more about  
their stories

Madam President Halimah and Gabriella at the Singapore Together Pack launch event



Rachel Hong's 'Glorious Gardens' was printed on the pledge cards



## SIMPLE FUN IN THE KITCHEN

Cooking is an incredibly motivating and versatile activity that can be used to teach a wide variety of skills to persons with Down syndrome. It is also a great activity for families to improve on their communication skills and strengthen family bonds while whipping up joy in the kitchen.

Baking and cooking sessions with RSVP Singapore has always been one of the sought-after workshops offered by Family Support Services (FSS). When COVID-19 pandemic disrupted all our centre-based workshops, FSS partnered with RSVP Singapore trainer, Ms Elaine Teng and RSVP Singapore volunteers to bring online cooking tutorials to our families' homes.

This pilot project between DSA and RSVP Singapore took off in July 2020. Ms Elaine kept the recipes simple to ensure that everyone was able to follow through the steps demonstrated by the trainers.



*DSA member, Tyler Lu successfully created the Angel's toast at home under the guidance of Ms Elaine and his parents.*

It was a very meaningful and fulfilling experience for both parents and children as they were able to witness the transformation of the ingredients to delicious creations at the end of each session. Parents and children had plenty of fun creating tasty dishes such as Angel's toast, Tuna hamburger and yogurt during the hour-long live cooking sessions. Some of the children could not wait for the sessions to end to savour their creations!

## RESOURCE LIBRARY GOES DIGITAL: PART II



The digitalisation of NLB's e-library platform at DSA Centre was officially launched on 18 August 2020 and is located at the Parents' Lounge.

With the launch of the e-library, staff and members of DSA are able to access thousands of titles from NLB's library resource database at the centre. The books selection will be renewed by NLB every two months. With this new feature, we hope that our members can tap on this platform to find books that cater to their needs and concerns.

How to use NLB e-library platform:

1. Install and launch the NLB app on your mobile device.
2. Tap "Login" or "Sign up" and follow through the set up instructions.
3. Tap on the camera icon at the top-left corner and scan the QR code.
4. Click "Borrow" and the check-out will be effective immediately.

# NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION WITH RADIN MAS SMC



The lack of National Day Parade (NDP) celebration at the centre did not dampen the spirits of our members as our Zumba Group put up a performance for 'Radin Mas Celebrates Singapore 55<sup>th</sup> National Day' event via Facebook Live.

It was no mean feat that our members learnt and recorded the choreography of 2018's NDP theme song, 'We Are Singapore' through Zoom in just over four sessions. Our members also penned their wishes for the Nation which was incorporated in the virtual performance. Our Drums & Percussion Group performance was such a hit during 'Rock the Stage' that they were also invited to showcase the item for the celebration.

As part of Radin Mas NDP celebration, we were privileged to have MP Melvin Yong officiate the unveiling ceremony of the wall mural outside of

our Thrift Shop, DSA@21 on 2 August 2020. DSA has been operating our Thrift Shop in the Radin Mas Constituency since 2008 with the objective of building, training and bridging employability skills of our members with Down syndrome.

The completion of the wall mural in partnership with Radin Mas Community Arts & Culture Committee and students from NAFA took us a step closer in realising our mission of developing individuals with Down syndrome through lifelong learning and our goal to equip these individuals for independent learning and employability.

Besides the unveiling ceremony, the Guest of Honour accompanied by Grassroots leaders of Radin Mas Constituency and DSA Board members were given a guided tour of the Thrift Shop and the Independent Living and Training (ILT) Centre.



The wall mural was painted by our learners from ILT Centre and students from NAFA

The unveiling ceremony of the wall mural was officiated by MP Melvin Yong

## SMSI BRINGS NDP TO HOMES



DSA collaborated with Singapore Medical Society in Ireland (SMSI) to organise a series of activities revolving around the theme of National Day for our members in August 2020. Over the course of two weekends, SMSI volunteers and DSA members were actively engaged in morning exercises, storytelling, Origami and NDP singing sessions all conducted virtually.

Laughter rang aloud in the Zoom meeting room and screens were filled with smiles as DSA members immersed themselves in the story of 'How the Island of Singapore came about?'

*"We received a loud and resounding "yes!", followed by them telling us which part of the story they enjoyed the most. For some, it was the shiny props. For others, it was a particular character.*

*Regardless of what their favourite parts are, I am glad all our efforts to rehearse the lines, make the props and plan the play paid off!" – Verlyn Tan, Co-organiser*

George He, SMSI volunteer also shared that during the origami session, our members *"demonstrated incredible creativity and imagination by decorating their Origami hearts to the theme of National Day. And during the singing session, everyone sang with much gusto and passion to the likes of National Day songs such as 'Home'."*

A big thank you to all our friends from SMSI who have pulled off such a heart-warming and meaningful virtual NDP celebration for our members amid the pandemic.

## ANIMATE TO AWARENESS



DSA is thankful for the opportunity to partner with Temasek Polytechnic (TP), School of Humanities & Social Sciences to raise awareness for Down syndrome.

As one of their modules, TP students were tasked to create animation videos targeted at children aged 5 to 8 years old to educate and raise

awareness of the Down syndrome community. In addition, students also embarked on individual assignments where they had to develop teaching resources for our adult learners. Some of the resources produced for topics such as money skills and travelling skills will aid DSA's training officers during the conduct of their lessons.

*"Even though we were unable to meet DSA's clients, we are grateful for the opportunity to create materials that we believe will benefit them and the Association. This experience has increased our respect for individuals working in this industry as through this project, we learnt how meticulous it is to create something that would cater to the clients' needs."* – Year 1 students from Diploma in Psychology Studies

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 programmes 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 Board of Management of DSA, staff and our community of persons with Down syndrome!

### **DONATION FORM** (NEWS/2020/09)

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".



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



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