

DSA NEWS

25 years of service to the Down syndrome community

Heart Zone

A place for commuters to help commuters



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2021 marked the tenth year of Lin Chun Ru's employment with ISG Singapore.

Chairman's Message



Dear Members,

2021 has been another challenging year for DSA. As 2021 comes to a close, the uncertainties of the pandemic evolution continue to loom large even though we see signs of living with pandemic taking root in our lives. Notwithstanding the challenges, DSA has quickly pivoted and will continue to adapt and stay relevant to the needs of the Down Syndrome community.

This newsletter chronicles some of the milestones in 2021 and profiles the inspiring stories of some of the members. All these would not have been possi-

ble without the collective effort of all the Staff, Management, Volunteers, Board members, Advisors, Donors and most importantly, the Members themselves.

We look forward to 2022 with hopes of achieving even more for DSA and the community. We welcome more volunteers to step forward to join us in this meaningful journey.

Happy New Year!

Alex Yan
Chairman



ED's Message

Dear Members,

As the year draws to a close, it is often a time of reflection for us on how we have matched up to the goals we have set for the past year. It is also a time to think about our goals for 2022, as well as the opportunities and challenges we will face in the coming year.

Looking back at the past year and how we remained in a state of flux due to the unrelenting pandemic, DSA has decidedly and progressively taken practical steps in resuming our programs and activities to its full capacity. In reality, many of us neither have the opportunity nor the desire to place our lives and activities on hold and wait for the current pandemic to ride out its course.

This is especially so when it comes to in-person

training at our centres where routine learning can help our learners understand what is expected of them in specific environments and situations. Hence, help to alleviate their anxiety as they can be confident in knowing what will happen next, how people around them will behave and what they will need to do.

Despite the challenges presented in 2021, DSA has again registered modest success at the close of the year due to your unstinting support and participation. What makes it most memorable this year is undoubtedly DSA heralding its Silver Jubilee celebration and our commitment to support persons with Down syndrome and their families through all life stages to the best of our ability.

Yeo Ando
Executive Director

DSA's Silver Jubilee



DSA celebrated its 25th Anniversary at the annual charity gala event – *Mystique XV* at the Shangri-La Hotel Singapore on Saturday, 2 October 2021. Madam Halimah Yacob, President of Singapore graced the hybrid gala event attended by 50 guests.

In commemoration of its Silver Jubilee, Madam President Halimah Yacob and spouse Mr Mohammed Abdullah Alhabshee and Mr Chee Hong Tat, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Transport unveiled the milestone video charting the progress of DSA from a parent support group back in 1995 to a medium-sized Institution of Public Character today. To appreciate and recognise the fervent support of its community partners over the past 25 years, corporate partners were invited to receive a token of appreciation from the President. A specially curated Commemorative Book 'Our Lives Our Voices' documenting DSA's 25-Year Journey of Persons with Down syndrome were also presented to our Guest of Honour and guests in attendance.

The ceremony opened with a specially curated performance by Megan Tang, recipient of the Goh Chok Tong Enable Awards 2020, featuring her interpretation of "A Million Dreams" - a song of optimism and positivity to celebrate DSA's Silver Jubilee. In addition, 12 beneficiaries rose above their challenges, displaying sheer dedication and commit-

ment to master the dance choreography to "Flashlight" & "Dynamite" within the course of two weeks and over eight hours of practice sessions. The powerful and intricate dance moves unveiled their passion and excitement towards the craft.

Over \$270,000 was raised through the event to support DSA's four key initiatives – Early Intervention Program, Independent Living & Training (ILT) Centre, Job Readiness (Open Employment) and Talent Enhancement Fund which supports persons with Down syndrome to become more independent and lead productive lives in an inclusive society.

The success of this event despite the restrictions imposed under COVID-19 safe management measures would not have been possible without the staunch support of our beneficiaries, donors and sponsors. We look forward to hosting the next *Mystique* in person when circumstances allow with all our community partners, beneficiaries and our DSA family!

Contributor: Joanne Toh, Executive, Events & Community Partnerships



World Down Syndrome Congress 2021 (Virtual)

The 14th World Down Syndrome Congress (WDSC), hosted by The Emirates Down Syndrome Association, was held virtually from 18 to 20 November 2021. DSA's staff, Viemala Davie Kelavar, Head of Children Education Services (CES), Todd Simonson, Supervisor of the ILT Centre and Tan Hui Hoon, Senior Early Intervention Teacher had the privilege of sharing DSA's programs and services with over 1,500 delegates, including persons with Down syndrome, their families and advocates, experts, specialists and researchers in the field from all over the world.

IFSP Graduate Lee Zhuo Ying makes a Mark

Faith in equitable education opportunities led Lee Zhuo Ying to make history again.

Since its inauguration in 2009, numerous students have benefitted from the Integration Facilitation Support Program (IFSP). Zhuo Ying is our first graduate to complete P.S.L.E, 'N' Level and pursue a course with Institute of Technical Education. She graduated from Crest Secondary School in 2019 specialising in Retail Services. In November 2021, she made history again by sharing her story with international delegates, professionals, researchers, and caregivers at the World Down Syndrome Congress 2021.

The oral presentation by Zhuo Ying and her mother, Mdm Chris Hui which was translated in Arabic enhanced the engagement between Chris and the attendees

As shared by Mr Seet Tiat Hee, Principal, Crest Secondary School, "Zhuo Ying showed an excellent level of resilience and determination by overcoming her personal challenges to do well in her academic and vocational subjects. She takes pride in her daily work and constantly challenges



herself to perform better in class. When in doubt, she will ask her teachers for help, and she puts in extra effort to complete her homework conscientiously. Zhuo Ying relates well with her classmates and demonstrates good manners such as care and appreciation towards her peers and teachers.

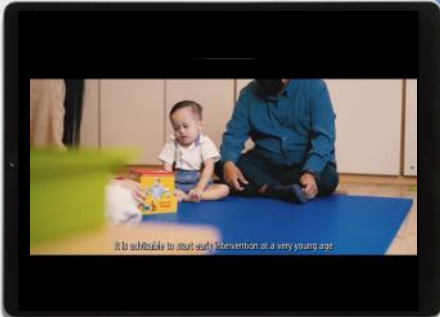
At Secondary 3, Zhuo Ying successfully completed four weeks of internship at Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Parlour by taking on the role of a customer service representative. In class, she enjoys reading aloud and speaking in front of an audience. She excelled in creative subjects such as Arts and expresses herself well in dance and aesthetics subjects. She also scored a distinction in Information communication technology."

We wish Zhuo Ying continuous success as she achieves more milestones in her life.

Empower > Enable

Awareness and education are equally important in advancing the cause for persons with Down syndrome and intellectual disabilities. Our message is one that is both straightforward and simple; 'Empower' instead of 'Enable'. On behalf of our learners, we would like to stress the importance of providing them with opportunities to prove their capabilities. Trying new things and making choices are crucial for the learners to be empowered. Give them the chance and they will surprise you. They deserve the chance to prove themselves; and the more we, and you, give them opportunities, the more confident they become. Confidence is a pre-requisite for independence. We encourage you to provide your child with at least one opportunity each day, or once a week, to make a choice for themselves, and to try something they have not tried before.

Contributor: Viemala Davie Kelaver, Head, Children Education Services (CES) and Todd Simonson, Supervisor, Independent Living & Training (ILT) Centre



Learn more about our programs & services from our beneficiaries



Allan Cai - Goh Chok Tong Enable Award 2021

Our heartiest congratulations to Allan Cai for doing DSA proud! Allan is among the 13 recipients of the Goh Chok Tong Enable Awards (GCTEA) ceremony held at the Istana on 3 December 2021. The GCTEA, an initiative by MediaCorp Enable Fund was launched in 2019 by Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong to recognise the achievements of persons with disabilities and to motivate those with promise and potential to go the distance with their endeavours.

Allan is one of the pioneering advocates of the 'Our Lives, Our Voices' (OLOV) Self-Advocacy programme jointly run by the Down Syndrome Association (Singapore) and Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore (MINDS) since 2017. As an advocate, Allan had the opportunity to represent the disability community in co-delivering keynotes at "Having A Say Conference 2018" in Geelong, Australia, as a co-presenter at the National Council of Social Service "We Are Able! 2018" conference and as a panelist at the Purple Parade "Conversations" 2019.

"Inclusion to me is when we respect each other as Singaporeans living in the same community". Allan's sharing of inclusion left such a lasting impression that he was invited to represent persons with intellectual disabilities in the Purple Parade Working Committee. He attends meetings and participates in discussions and decision-making for this year's edition of Purple Parade.

"I feel very happy and excited when I received the award at the Istana from Madam President Halimah Yacob and ESM Goh Chok Tong. I also feel very proud to be a self-advocate. This award encourages me to continue to be an active self-advocate for an inclusive Singapore."

- Allan

With his positive and "can do" spirit, Allan has great potential to contribute to the community as a self-advocate for an inclusive Singapore. His positive outlook in life and his passion are commendable and inspiring. We wish Allan every success in his future endeavours!

"This award would not have been possible for Allan without the nurturing of the OLOV programme offered by DSA and MINDS and we are very grateful for the support given to Allan. He fully understands that this award is an honour and privilege. He is very motivated to contribute back to the community by continuing to be a self-advocate and inspiring more people to join him in the journey to make Singapore a more inclusive society for all." shared by Mr and Mrs Cai, Allan's parents.

Contributor: Amelia Sim, Executive, Membership & Enrichment Programs

Paving the Runway with Inclusive Education

Just over a year ago, Jacob Sim became Mustela® “I Am Unique” casting call winner.

With celebration in mind, we are thrilled and overjoyed with Lim Ying Kang’s recent ‘The Singapore Fashion Runway’ award. Ying Kang is a Primary 2 student in a mainstream primary school. He is enrolled in DSA’s Integration Facilitation Support Program (IFSP).

Showcasing inclusiveness instead of diversity is challenging and hard to happen. We are breaking stereotypes but still have a long way to go. I thank ‘The Singapore Fashion Runway’ for representing children with Down syndrome with adorned sophistication. I hope that more families like Ying Kang’s will come forward as our representatives and campaign inclusiveness for children with Down syndrome.

Contributor: Viemala Davie Kelaver, Head, Children Education Services



A Year to Remember

2021 marked the tenth year of Lin Chun Ru’s employment with ISG Singapore. At ISG, Chun Ru does filing, archiving, photocopying, and setting up of workstations. To commemorate her achievement, Chun Ru was invited to ISG’s End of Year Comms 2021 to receive her award personally from ISG Singapore’s General Manager, Mr Kelvin Hon.

Chun Ru shares that she is “overjoyed and proud to receive my 10-year Long Service Award from ISG. I want to thank my family, training officers from AEP, and my colleagues in ISG for supporting and guiding me.”

Contributor: Lin Chun Ru, Learner from Adult Enhancement Program (AEP)



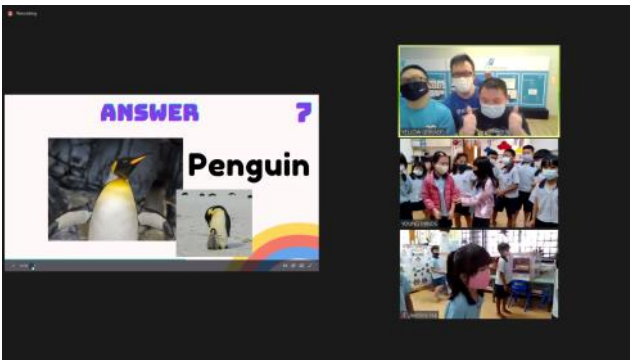
Start Small, Dream Big



Instead of the usual practice where our partners organise the activities for our beneficiaries, our AEP learners rose to the challenge to host and plan an interactive online session for our K1 and K2 friends from Young Minds Childcare Centre.

The session started on a high with a game of Pictionary followed by a session of music and movements to 'Under the Sea' and 'Jai Ho' led by our learners.

Cheers to our learners and their training officer, Nur Shuhada who believes in the potential power of her learners to be teachers and instructors to the young. Truly our learners are extraordinary people. All they need is a little help, a little hope and someone who believes in them. When we listen and celebrate what is both common and different, our perceptions change and we see beauty abilities and uniqueness.



The enthusiasm level for both our AEP learners and friends from Young Minds Childcare Centre was over the top

Contributor: Premalatha P, Manager, Services

Workplace Numeracy and Literacy Workshop



AEP learners tuned in to the workshop for seven consecutive Thursdays over Zoom video conferencing

Five of our AEP learners attended the Workplace Numeracy and Literacy Workshop conducted by 'Extraordinary People'. The objective is for our learners to understand basic elements on what to expect when they are preparing to sign on for a job, for example, the different phrases and questions found on an employment form and how to fill in the application form. The interactive sessions were not only beneficial but also enjoyable for our learners, which resulted in them scoring well in the quizzes.

Contributor: Catherine Michael, Supervisor, Adult Enhancement Program (AEP)

We are WSQ certified!



June Lin (R) shared that she enjoyed the workshop a lot and looks forward to putting her learning into practice

AEP strongly believes in lifelong learning for our learners. We are very proud of six of our learners who successfully completed a Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ) Certification Course on 'Horizontal Surface Maintenance (Perform Basic Cleaning of Hard Floor Surfaces)'.

The course was conducted by an external trainer from the NTUC Learning Hub. Leading up to the certification course, our learners underwent two months of intensive in-house training conducted by our training officers, Simon Tng and Nur Shuhada. Our learners were very confident, attentive, and participative during the WSQ training, which involved theory and practical sessions over the course of four days. There were three components of assessment: practical, theory and oral. Our learners passed all three components with flying colours. The trainer was very impressed with their perseverance, attentiveness, enthusiasm, and commitment to learning. Our learners are rightfully proud of themselves and their achievements, and we in AEP are even prouder of them for showcasing their abilities and achieving the certification.

Collaboration with Artducated

One of the skills learned in Job Readiness was packing. Our learners from AEP were involved in packing art materials into ziplock bags. The owner of Artducated, an art enrichment centre, Ms Anna Kamsan gave our learners the opportunity to put into practice the skills they have learned. Some of the tasks they had to do were to scoop and place glitter into small ziplock bags and pour glue from big plastic bottles into small bottles. Learners then had to pack each of the materials in ziplock bags. A simulated workplace was created for our learners to have the feel of working in sheltered employment, and they were able to do the job independently.

Our DSA logo was attached on the packets to recognise that the packing was done by DSA learners who have Down syndrome. Ms Anna was very impressed with the good work they have produced.

Contributor: Catherine Michael, Supervisor, Adult Enhancement Program (AEP)



Su An (L) and Ming Fei (R) meticulously packing the package for Artducated workshop participants

Artwork by ILT Centre brightens Commuters' Day



After discussing on what a caring commuter culture means to them, the artists worked together with our training officers to create this exclusive piece for the Heart Zone at Bukit Batok Bus Interchange

On 2 December 2021, our ILT Centre learners and lifestyle educators were invited to the launch of Bukit Batok Bus Interchange Heart Zone. Upon arriving at the bustling bus interchange, our learners were incredibly excited and proud at the sight of their artwork that is now on display. The artwork conceptualised by our lifestyle educators and adult learners from ILT Centre, Angie Ng, Jenny Chen, Toh Wei Kang, John Patrick Grace, Lee Pei Yun, Dylan Kwok and Kenneth Tan encapsulate their thoughts and perspectives on what a caring commuting culture is.

At the event graced by Mr Baey Yam Keng, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Transport,

Pei Yun and Dylan were given the opportunity to share their thought process and experience creating the artwork. They also shared their hope to inspire and brighten commuters' day through the bold and colourful artwork that they have created.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Tower Transit Singapore for giving our learners the space to create what speaks to them, and the joy that they hope to bring to the commuters.

Contributor: Anne Chua, Lifestyle Educator, Independent Living & Training (ILT) Centre

Exclusive Hangar Tour



DSA members were given an exclusive tour around the private hangars

Over several sessions during the year-end school holidays, 40 members and caregivers had a fun-filled day at the private Aviation Tour thanks to Xperience Singapore Destination Management Company. Lesser-known sights of Seletar such as black and white houses used to home Royal Air Force Personnel were explored, and sheltered walkways which resemble wings of aircraft were

hunted down.

Members also were given the opportunity to get an insider's look into a private hangar! It is linked to the runway of Seletar Airport and is only accessible by members of a private aviation services company, WingsOverAsia. Our members marvel at the variety of planes parked in the hangars up close and even had the opportunity to get into a propeller plane for a photo! The tour ended with a rare unobstructed rooftop panoramic view of the Seletar Airport runway, and a delicious meal at Hangar66 Café.

DSA would like to thank the public for their kind donation of the SingapoRediscoverers Vouchers and Xperience Singapore for the educational and memorable day!

Contributor: Hannah Binte Mohd Zulkiflee, Services Trainee

Dazzling Deepavali Event

Six DSA dancers were invited to put up a performance for the virtual Deepavali event organised by Bishan East - Sin Ming Community Centre. The dancers cherished the opportunity to perform as invitations for physical performances were suspended during the pandemic.

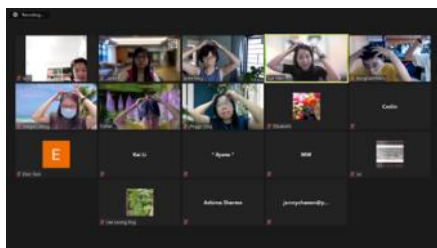
The seasoned dancers looked forward to the performance and put in their best efforts to prepare for the show. Everyone enjoyed themselves as they engaged and entertained the audience and the invited guests for the event.



DSA dancers were brimming with excitement at the opportunity to perform for a live audience after the long hiatus

Contributor: Nur Sulyanna Sumali, Community Partnership & Corporate Communication (CPCC) Trainee

TCM Wellness Online Workshop



TCM has always been a popular complementary treatment in addition to conventional therapy. Chinese Physician, Ms Sue Wan shared her knowledge on basic TCM concepts with our caregivers. She delved into ways of understanding one's body constitution, the common herbs and food you can add to your diet, and even had an interactive demonstration on acupuncture massage, which you can do for oneself or your loved ones to improve overall wellness. Participants especially are enthusiastic and appreciative of the interactive segment and are keen to apply their newfound knowledge in their daily lives.

Contributor: Janet Boo, Executive, Family Support Services (FSS)

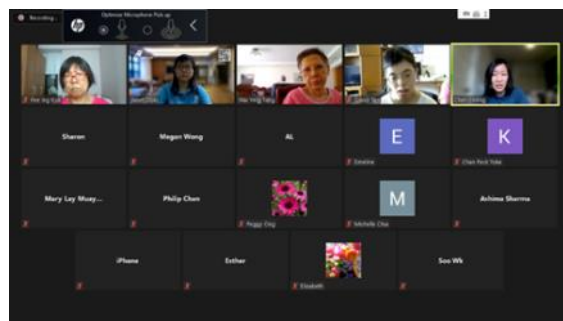
Challenges of Ageing

Singapore is becoming acutely aware of the challenges of having an increasingly ageing population, and that includes the Intellectual Disability (ID) community. To better prepare parents of our persons with Down syndrome, Dr Chen Shi Ling of Tsao Foundation conducted a workshop for our FSS members.

The three key points covered in the workshop are premature ageing and how different are the health conditions of persons with IDs compared to the general population, how persons with IDs can manage dementia, and how we can meet these emerging and complex needs for them and their caregivers.

The participants analysed case studies to better understand how to help their child when they face ageing challenges in time to come. Parents also shared their personal experiences with one another. Going beyond the topic, Dr Chen also patiently answered questions from the caregivers with regards to their child's behavioural concerns.

Contributor: Janet Boo, Executive, Family Support Services (FSS)



Want to find out how you can volunteer your skills and talents with us?
Scan the QR code to visit our website or write to us at volunteer@downsyndrome-singapore.org

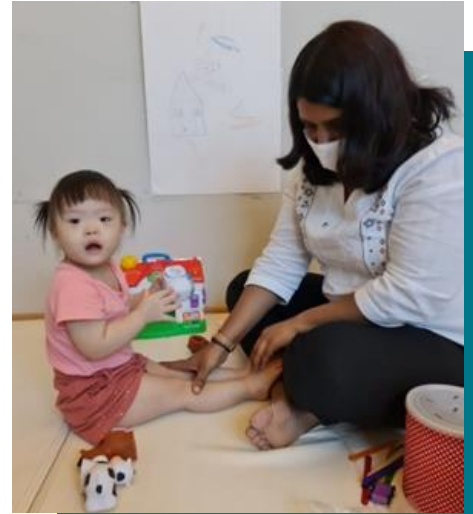
Transcending all Challenges

Although there is a general perception that working with a transdisciplinary team can be challenging, it is quite the opposite for me. I am an experienced physiotherapist, specialising in Paediatric NDT and DSA's Early Start Family Program (ESFP) experience is exceptional.

DSA staff, the SPD therapists, parents, and caregivers work closely as a team with understanding, adaptability, and flexibility. The team's culture of staying focused and working towards a common goal, celebrating each child's success hardly comes as a surprise. I am a huge fan of ESFP's intensive documentation process. The team accesses an online platform and writes session notes together, capturing all the key points. The same practice encompasses Virtual Intervention Sessions (VIS) with parents. During my VIS, the Early Intervention Teachers and Head of CES write session notes for me, capturing all the details. This effective note-taking method comes with big benefits for the parents.

The untiring attention and focus on meticulous planning, sharing and collaboration with therapists, parents and caregivers are testaments of DSA's integrity and service standards.

Contributor: Vanitha Muthiah, Physiotherapist, AWWA



Vanitha working with our ITP clients at DSA Centre

Internships at ILT Centre

Lourdes is our intern from ITE who came on board in October 2021 while Marcus, an intern from Hwa Chong Institution joined us in Mid-November 2021. They progressively learned how to interact and understand the learners at the ILT Centre better through observation and by developing a rapport with them over time.

Marcus built his rapport with the learners by raising more questions to them during circle time to make them share more. He is visibly more comfortable with handling various learners. Lourdes, on the other hand, does so by conducting sensory lessons, assisting lessons, and encouraging learners to exercise by modelling after exercise videos.

Having seen their progress in a relatively short time, it is apparent that both of them have grown to be more receptive to our learners' needs and have shown passion in helping individuals with Down syndrome.

Contributor: Yoginita S Vanu, Lifestyle Educator, Independent Living & Training (ILT) Centre



My Internship Experience with AEP

When I found out that I was posted to DSA as an intern, I was worried as this was my first time interacting and managing adults with special needs. Prior to the start of my internship, I did some research on how to interact with adults with Down syndrome.

When I arrived at DSA on my first day, I was very nervous but that quickly eased away with the friendly welcome by the training officers and learners.

Some of the tasks assigned to me include taking temperature and guiding the learners to do the 'SafeEntry' check-in and assisting the trainers in the activities they were conducting, for example, baking, arts and crafts, job readiness workshops, and sensory and gross motor skills practice.

During my internship, I was given the opportunity to plan and execute lessons on Gross Motor and Sensory skills. Initially, I was apprehensive when I

conducted the first few lessons as I was not sure how the learners would react to my teaching. Under the guidance of the training officers over the weeks, I was able to conduct the lessons more confidently.

My experience in DSA has given me the opportunity to interact with adults who have Down syndrome. My perception before my internship was that people with Down syndrome are not independent, they cannot hold conversations or are not able to work. However, the learners in AEP have proven me wrong. They have showed me that they too are capable to do many things. I am not a patient person but AEP learners have shown me what patience is all about. Thank you training officers and learners for a memorable internship.

Contributor: Wong Jun Jie, Intern, Institute of Technical Education



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/2021/12)

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

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Email: _____

I would like to make a contribution of:

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

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One-time Monthly Contribution

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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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EXCELLENCE FOR INDIVIDUALS
WITH DOWN SYNDROME,
THEIR FAMILIES, AND
THE COMMUNITY.



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