

DSA NEWS

25 years of service to the Down syndrome community



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From the ED's Desk



Dear Members,

We all can take comfort in knowing that Singapore has significantly eased its pandemic restrictions and that life and livelihoods are returning to at least some semblance of normalcy that many of us had been yearning for.

Over the past three months, there were several defining events that deserve special mention in this issue of our Newsletter.

The DSA Board got off to a pragmatic start by embarking on a Strategic Planning session in January to work on developing the important goals to take the Association to the next level. The objective was to align the Association's mission and objectives with the needs of our Down syndrome community in the current social service landscape and beyond. The Board has identified and prioritised a few achievable strategies and will be working closely with the management team to create related action plans to achieve those outcomes.

I am also happy to announce that the renovation works to our premises at Bishan Junction 8 and the Thrift Shop at Telok Blangah have been com-

pleted. Besides having a fresh coat of paint to our premises, better lighting and furniture and fittings, some of our program-based and activity spaces have been expanded and re-configured so that our members can enjoy an enhanced and safer experience at our Association. Our learners would be happy to show you around when you visit them at our Association and the Thrift Shop!

The first quarter of 2022 has been nothing short of gratitude to all of you who have supported DSA all this while including the recent World Down Syndrome Day celebration where for the first time, a DSA beneficiary delivers her welcome address alongside our Guest of Honour. 'Inclusion' is the theme behind the celebration this year, but more importantly, it holds an important message to all of us and that is we should plant the seeds of inclusion within ourselves and the community for genuine change to take place in our society.

Thank you.

Mr. Yeo Ando
Executive Director

World Down Syndrome Day 2022



Minister Masagos Zulkifli (center) piecing the final puzzle piece to launch the celebration for World Down Syndrome Day 2022

DSA commemorated World Down Syndrome Day (WSD) in a hybrid format for the second consecutive year. In its 17th edition, the 'live' event was co-hosted by our very own persons with Down syndrome, Grace Gan and June Lin, together with volunteer Brynner Jananto. We were privileged to have Mr. Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for Social and Family Development and Second Minister for Health grace the event at our DSA Centre @ Bishan Junction 8.

The theme for this year's WSD centers around the question of "What Does #Inclusion Means?", emphasizing the importance of the collective effort from the community to advocate for full inclusion in society for people with Down syndrome and for everyone.

Together with our caregivers and online viewers, all were treated to a Drum Performance, a scent-

“ *I have my hopes, dreams and aspirations and I want to be accepted for who I am. We all have our unique challenges and needs but if we are supported, encouraged, and nurtured, we too can achieve our full potential.*
- June Lin, DSA Ambassador

ed soap-making session, and a mini-forum featuring self-advocates from the 'Our Lives, Our Voices' (OLOV), a self-advocacy program by DSA and Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore (MINDS). During the forum, self-advocates shared what inclusion means to them and their hopes for the community. It was encouraging to see so many of you tuning in and engaging with us through the live chat during the show.



In a show of support for WDSO 2022, Tanglin Mall organised an art exhibition to showcase the artistic talents of our members. Six pieces of artwork created by DSA artists were displayed around the mall.

Running parallel with our WDSO 'Live' Show is our online awareness campaign, "Rock Your Socks". Back for the third year running, "Rock Your Socks" is a fun and easy way to raise awareness of Down syndrome.

You may ask, "why socks?" Persons with Down syndrome have an extra copy of chromosome 21 and socks resemble the shape of chromosomes. Hence, we encourage all to share their support for the Down syndrome community by wearing their brightest, boldest pair of socks in March. Socks featuring designs by our beneficiaries, June Lin and Jayant Dayal Sujjanani were also on sale to raise funds for our programs and services.

“Parrots are beautiful birds with coloured feathers. They are also known to be among the most gentle and affectionate birds.”
- Jayant Dayal Sujjanani



Through the effort and support of all our donors, sponsors, members, and volunteers, funds raised through this event will support three of our life-

From the top:
June delivering her Opening Address at the WDSO 'Live' Show

DSA Ambassadors & WDSO hosts, Grace Gan and June Lin complete the jigsaw tree with Minister Masagos Zulkifli at the launch of the event

Minister Masagos Zulkifli tries his hand at making candles with AEP clients

AEP clients gifts Minister Masagos their handmade soap



Relieve memories of WDSO 'Live' Show by scanning the QR code



life-changing programs at DSA, namely Early Start Family Program, Independent Living & Training Centre, and Talent Enhancement Fund! We are immensely grateful for your generous contribution and participation, and we look forward to your continued support in our charitable endeavours.

Contributor: Joanne Toh, Head, Community Partnership & Corporate Communications

“We want to enable all persons with disabilities to enjoy and participate meaningfully in all areas of life. To learn, play and contribute alongside their family, friends, and peers.”



Our deepest appreciation to our partners:



In support of Sports Promotion

Giving Hope. Improving Lives.

Allan & June takes on the World Down Syndrome Conference

Not everyone understands what inclusion means to each of us and how full inclusion benefits everyone – with or without disabilities, and what is happening around the world to bring about inclusion for all. One of the best ways to understand this is to hear from persons with Down syndrome themselves.

As part of the World Down Syndrome Day celebrations, our members, Allan Cai and June Lin were invited to share what inclusion means to them at the World Down Syndrome Conference held at the United Nations Office in Geneva on 21 March 2022. We are incredibly proud and encouraged of the efforts made by Allan and June in championing for the inclusion and empowering of people with special needs.



“I was super excited and happy when I received the email from the United Nations (Geneva) that I was selected to make a virtual presentation to celebrate the WDSO on 21 March 2022. I am also very proud of myself because I represented Singapore.

As a self-advocate, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak up for my community. I shared with people around the world that inclusion means mutual respect: You respect me and I respect you. Each of us is different. Some of us may look different and do things in different ways. We are differently-abled. So, we all deserve the same respect from each other. Let us do our part to make our world a better place for everyone!

“21 March 2022 was indeed a memorable day for me and my friends. We celebrated WDSO to represent the genetic makeup and advocate for people with Down syndrome. I am truly honoured to be given the opportunity to represent ‘Our Lives, Our Voices’ (OLOV) Advocacy Group and DSA in the virtual World Down Syndrome Conference organised by Asia Pacific Down Syndrome Federation (APDSF) in association with the Permanent Mission of India to United Nations Office in Geneva.

Honestly, I was feeling nervous about it because it was my first time. I was able to overcome it and gave my best during my speech thanks to all the support. I received a lot of encouraging comments from other participants which makes me feel happy and proud of my hard work. I hope that my sharing will continue to advocate inclusivity and provide more support for people with disabilities.



DSA Centre Gets a Facelift



Earlier this year, DSA embarked on a renovation project at DSA Centre @ Bishan. Two of the significant improvements were the relocation of the Infant Toddler Program (ITP) facility and the remodelling of our existing kitchenette at the Piazza.

The new ITP facility is now able to accommodate more of our little ones and their families thanks to an encouraging increase in the number of clients. The facility now houses sensory gym equipment, a reading corner, and a slide for the adventurous ones to facilitate and optimise their learning through play and engagement with one another. The kitchenette at the Piazza has been upgraded for safety, functionality, and ease of use by our adult learners with Down syndrome.

We are excited to welcome our little ones and their families to our new ITP room and to give our adult learners from the Adult Enhancement Program an enriching experience during their cooking and baking sessions.

Contributor: Alicia Ang, Senior Executive, Donor Management & Corporate Communications



*From the top:
New ITP Facility*

Revamped Kitchenette at Piazza

The art room before it transformed into our ITP Facility

Before photos of the kitchenette at the Piazza





Preparation for the Reopening of Thrift Shop

For the past few months, learners at ILT Centre had been preparing for the re-opening of the Thrift Shop in Telok Blangah. They had been diligently undergoing training in the areas of retail display, customer service, cashier skills, as well as quality control. As the renovation work went into full swing, the learners are eagerly awaiting the day when they could put their training to good use.

Our learners have played an integral role from the very beginning; helping to declutter things to

make way for the renovation, packing and moving boxes, and giving their inputs on the design and colour scheme. They know what they want, and they do not hesitate to share their opinions. The sense of pride, ownership, and responsibility they have developed is both inspiring and encouraging. The learners would love to show you around when you visit them.

Contributor: Todd Simonson, Head, Independent Living & Training Centre



Before and after photos of the Thrift Shop located at Telok Blangah

Resumption of ITP Home Visits



The ITP team engages the whole family in fun and meaningful activities leveraging on their home environment and common household items

As the pandemic continues to impact families and communities in ways that we did not envisage; ITP families and Early Intervention Teachers have demonstrated remarkable resilience, creativity, and adaptability. We resumed the much-anticipated ITP home visits in January after a hiatus of two long years of delivering home visit services virtually to children and their families in the safest way possible.

There are several amazing benefits of providing early intervention in the child's and family's natural environment. For starters, some working fathers who could not attend the centre-based sessions had the opportunity to be coached directly by our Early Intervention Teachers in their very own living room. We also got to see parents develop skills needed to support their child's development and learning in the home environment as this would work towards helping families realise that they can use items in their homes to play with, engage, and teach their child.

Despite the challenges that the current situation posed for ITP home visits, we are appreciative of the efforts both parents and the Early Intervention Teachers have made to allow us to achieve these positive outcomes.

Contributor: Viemala Davie Kelaver, Head, Children Education Services

IFSP Parent Workshop

IFSP parent workshops are a great and effective way for parents to pick up new skills and gain new information and knowledge. These workshops provide a variety of approaches and resources intended to coach and guide parents in supporting their children at home. It is a unique and valuable approach to facilitate knowledge sharing between teacher-to-parent, parent-to-teacher and parent-to-parent.

Our parent workshop on 'Positive Reinforcement' in January 2022 was designed to provide practical strategies for promoting positive social and emotional growth. Helpful strategies were shared

by teachers and parents about implementing positive behaviour strategies with their children. Thank you to all parents for your enthusiasm, support, and participation in the recent parent workshop!

Contributor: Viemala Davie Kelaver, Head, Children Education Services

Baking Our Own Festive Snacks



Under the guidance of ILT Centre's Lifestyle Educators, Pei Yun (second from right) and John (right most) helped to roll the pineapple fillings while Jenny (second from left) assembled the tarts

Among the many Chinese New Year snacks available, one of our favourite snacks is the Pineapple Tarts. With the Lunar New Year around the corner, our lifestyle educators organised a CNY

party for our learners at ILT Centre on 23 January 2022.

ILT Centre learners tried their hands at baking the festive delicacy. The activity was a collective effort with learners at various stations preparing the dough for the tart, rolling the pineapple filling into bite-size pieces, and assembling the tarts for baking. Baked with love and joy, the learners were incredibly excited at the sight of the tarts coming out of the oven. Each learner went home with a box of home-baked pineapple tarts to share with their family and a red packet filled with chocolates as part of the CNY gifting tradition.

Contributor: Yoginita S Vanu, ILT Centre Lifestyle Educator

Lunar New Year with AEP

Lunar New Year is undoubtedly one of our AEP learners' favourite celebrations. The CNY party held on 27 January 2022 kicked off on a lively note with a Zumba and dance activity to Chinese festive songs. This was followed by a sumptuous bento lunch set sponsored by our favourite mixed vegetable rice stall located above Bishan Bus Interchange and a 'Yu Sheng' platter where all 'lo-hei-ed' for happiness and health. The party ended on a high note when our AEP learners belted out their favourite CNY tunes while mimicking the lion dance and its troop!

Contributor: Lee Ying Suan, AEP Training Officer



Practising Mindfulness with AEP



Mindfulness is an intentional practice of purposefully bringing one's attention to their present moment – where one is, what one is doing and what one can observe through their five senses. Using resources such as breathing activities, mindful looking and Pilates, AEP trainers have been guiding the learners in practising mindfulness at least once a week. Learners have become noticeably calmer and more grounded after each mindfulness session. These activities are also great practical handles for managing ones' thoughts and emotions. Beyond the sessions, we hope that our learners will be able to pick them up and practise them where possible and when needed as well.

Contributor: Lee Ying Suan, AEP Training Officer

Drumming with Passion

Seven drummers practiced hard to put together a performance for WDSO 2022. While it was challenging practising virtually, the drummers conveyed their passion and enjoyment playing the drums through their performance. Every performance regardless of the duration is an opportunity for our DSA performers to shine and share their abilities with the audience. It is an avenue for the performers to apply and showcase what they have learnt which helps to boost their confidence and self-expression.



Contributor: Amelia Sim, Senior Executive, Membership & Enrichment Programs

Art Adventures with RLAF



Rahmatan Lil Alamin Foundation (RLAF) brought our members on a three-part Art Adventures series of activities from November 2021 to January 2022. Through the three sessions, participants got to explore different mediums of art – painting, pasta-making (from scratch!), and crepe paper art.

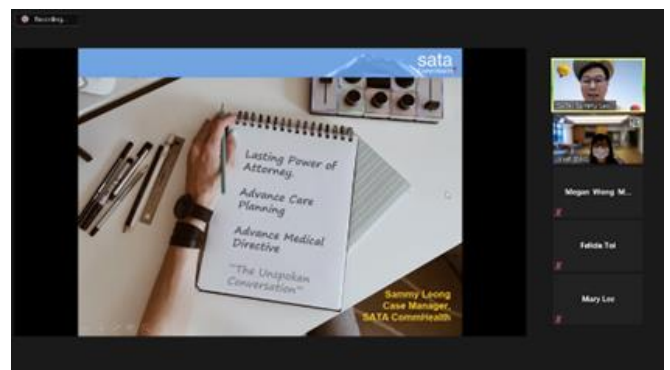
The session opened with a 10-minute energy-boost exercise segment to get their creative juices flowing. The theme for the crepe paper art session is plants or environment. Participants were split into smaller groups in the breakout rooms to help increase their focus and interactions. With only three steps to the process, our beneficiaries were able to follow the instructions easily. All they had to do was start with their desired drawing, crumple the crepe paper into small balls, and glue them on the paper. And voila, they have produced vibrant nature-inspired artworks that they can proudly display! Special thanks to RLAF for brightening up our Saturday mornings with these fun and creative sessions.

Contributor: Nur Sulyanna Sumali, Executive, Volunteer Management & Community Partnership

Care Planning for Your Child with Special Needs

Raising a child with special needs may require additional care planning to safeguard their future, and our FSS is here to support caregivers in their caregiving journey. To better prepare caregivers of persons with Down syndrome, Mr Sammy Leong, Case Manager from SATA CommHealth, conducted a workshop for our members on 22 January 2022.

During the 1.5-hour session, Mr Leong shared insights on Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) and the importance of having an Advanced Care Plan and an Advanced Medical Directive. The interactive session made it easier for parents to share their concerns of their child's future and seek guidance and clarifications. At the end of



the workshop, our caregivers were equipped with more knowledge in planning for their child's future.

Contributor: Janet Boo, Executive, Family Support Services

FSS Celebrates CNY with 'JustUke' Strummers

What is a Chinese New Year celebration without songs? On 19 February 2022, 26 parents and children attended FSS first online Chinese New Year celebration with 'JustUke' Strummers. During the one-hour celebration, the musicians and participants were enthusiastically singing along to popular Chinese New Year tunes such as 'Gong Xi Fa Cai' and other evergreen oldies which brought much festive cheer to the homes of our families.

Contributor: Janet Boo, Executive, Family Support Services



'WeConnect' with ILT Centre

What do you get when K-pop enthusiasts gather? A dance party of course! Our ILT Centre learners had a ball of a time with members from NUS Raffles Volunteer Corps in a two-hour virtual session. It was packed with various activities like 'Draw-and-Tell', Scavenger Hunt, 'Follow-The-Pose' and a sing-a-long segment.



As much as the learners enjoyed each segment, the highlight had to be the impromptu K-pop dance party that they had in the finale with all-time favourites like Super Junior's 'Sorry Sorry' and newer hits like BTS's 'Butter'. Despite meeting for the first time, our learners warmed up to the volunteers quickly by learning more about one another through the activities. It is no wonder that they were able to let loose by the end of the activity!

We would like to thank NUS Raffles Volunteer Corps for bringing big smiles to our learners on a Thursday afternoon.

Contributor: Nur Sulyanna Sumali, Executive, Volunteer Management & Community Partnership

Singing with Friends



We are "Singing with Friends", a group of Grade 11 students at UWCSEA East. We have been working with DSA for over five years and have been so proud of our developing relationship with DSA and its members - despite the hurdles presented by COVID-19. Whilst we used to meet in person, we have adapted our activities to online zoom meetings, where we are still able to sing, dance, do crafts and most importantly build friendships between UWCSEA students and DSA members. In our five years of working with DSA, we have grown to know each other better and we have learned more about Down syndrome and the amazing work that DSA does.

Outside of our online sessions, we have strengthened our focus on advocacy through our celebration of the World Down Syndrome Day. We promoted the commemorative day in school by putting up posters, wearing odd-coloured socks, and presented to over 2,000 students aged 4-18. We hoped such advocacy would help our peers understand more about Down syndrome and what living with Down syndrome looked like, as well as celebrate the inspiring work done at DSA. We look forward to making this an annual event at UWCSEA East to continue to strengthen and build our relationship! We also hope that with the easing of coronavirus restrictions in Singapore, we would be able to finally meet our friends from DSA in-person and celebrate and interact with them more closely.

Contributor: Grade 11 students at UWCSEA East

Charting the Way Forward

On 15 January 2022, DSA Board Members and key staff attended an off-site Strategic Planning Retreat at the PARKROYAL @ Kitchener Road facilitated by Mr Mark Stuart, Virtual Speaker and Trainer from Anagram Group. The objective of the retreat is to draw inputs from the Board members and key staff in identifying the short, medium, and long-term vision of DSA and to ideate and identify actions to be taken to meet the above vision.

During the one-day workshop, Board Members and staff shared and discussed strategies, plans and goals to ensure the relevancy and continued progress of the Association in the changing so-

cial services landscape. The session sparked many meaningful and fruitful discussions in five key strategies, namely Organisation Capability and Capacity, Program & Service Efficiency, Education & Supporting Families, Community Outreach and Research & Ethics.



Meet Hannah, our Care Plan Officer Trainee



My experience as a Care Plan Officer Trainee at Down Syndrome Association (Singapore) has been both insightful and rewarding. With the help of encouraging and supportive colleagues, I was able to achieve my personal and professional developmental goals. Throughout the internship, I took part in various services and were given numerous opportunities such as crafting care plan proposals and templates, planning and conducting individual counselling sessions catered to an adult client's behaviour of concern and co-facilitating the programs under both the Adult and Children Education Services.

Through my interactions, I developed further understanding of the strengths and needs of families, as well as the various capabilities, behaviours and common health concerns of adults

and children with Down syndrome.

Developing my understanding of these components has further improved my skills in conducting proper assessment of their needs and strengths. Additionally, my experience has further inculcated the importance of upholding a client-centric approach. Clients are seen as experts of their lives, given the opportunity and autonomy to make responsible decisions. I believe these attributes are crucial to aid in designing the best suitable care and support plans for clients and their families.

I have honed many skills and knowledge throughout my internship, which will influence how I carry out my role as a Case Manager for years to come. Thank you, DSA, for allowing me to grow as an individual.

Contributor: Hannah Binte Mohd Zulkiflee, Services Trainee



Hannah (second from left) with AEP learners

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/2022/03)

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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.



DSA CENTRE

9 Bishan Place
#09-01, Junction 8 Office Tower
Singapore 579837
+65 6500 9321

INDEPENDENT LIVING & TRAINING (ILT) CENTRE / THRIFT SHOP

17A Telok Blangah Crescent
#01-270
Singapore 091017
+65 6271 3811

www.downsyndrome-singapore.org

@downsyndromesingapore

@downsyndromesingapore

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor Mr Yeo Ando
 Ms Alicia Ang
Advisor Mr Alex Yan

For members who wish to update your contact details, please email membership@downsyndrome-singapore.org or call 6500 9321

For non-members who wish to subscribe to our mailing list, you may email alicia@downsyndrome-singapore.org

DSA welcomes your feedback and suggestions. Email us at admin@downsyndrome-singapore.org