

# DSA NEWS

Serving the Down syndrome community since 1996



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# From the ED's Desk



Dear Members,

Welcome to our latest issue for the new year.

Thank you for joining us in our recent World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD) celebration at Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park on 18 March 2023. We were blessed with good weather and a strong turnout!

This year's theme 'With Us Not For Us' intends to express our commitment to support persons with Down syndrome, to ensure that persons with the genetic condition can fully participate in all spheres of society and be able to do so in the context of participating in the decision-making process and not simply relying on what we think they should do or can do.

Since 2020, we have been actively engaging our beneficiaries in various capacities in our major events based on their interests. For instance, we have been presenting two Ambassadors among our beneficiaries to host the opening of our WDSD celebrations. This year was no exception, and it was not inconceivable that our hosts were able to hold their own when given the opportunity and support to do so.

Whilst celebrating WDSD, DSA is committed to addressing the barriers that our beneficiaries face. As a progressively inclusive society, we recognise that progress cannot be achieved when some of us are left behind. Since 2021, DSA has

been actively reaching out through our community partners to help us identify persons with Down syndrome in the community who are not currently served by DSA or other charities through our 'Leave No One Behind' project.

I suspect that perhaps stigma or ignorance still persist among us in seeking help or assistance from dedicated social service agencies such as DSA that can provide the relevant programs, training, service and necessary support for persons with Down syndrome and their families and caregivers. In this aspect DSA can and is willing to do more to support these parents to ensure the best outcomes for both their child and themselves. If you know of someone who fits the profile, kindly refer them to us and we will see how best we can support them.

We all need to understand and appreciate that persons with Down syndrome have unique abilities, and that they can dream and achieve their goals if they are supported. Our beneficiaries need people that can support and encourage them, help them thrive, look beyond their disabilities, and give them opportunities to socialise, play and work and fulfil their full potentials.

Enjoy this issue!

**Mr. Yeo Ando**  
**Executive Director**



# World Down Syndrome Day 2023



DSA beneficiaries leading the contingent for the Community Walk at World Down Syndrome Day 2023 event

After a three-year hiatus from physical celebrations, DSA commemorated its 18th edition of World Down Syndrome Day (WDSY) with more than 400 participants on 18 March 2023. We were privileged to have Mr. Eric Chua, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of Social and Family Development & Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth grace the event at Ficus Green, Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park. The event was co-hosted by our very own ambassadors, Avina Yik and Nina Sara Faizal, together with volunteer Brynner Jananto.

This year's theme, "With Us Not For Us", is fundamental to a human rights-based approach to disability. We are committed to moving from the traditional charity models of disability, where people with disabilities were viewed as needing charities to do everything for them. A human rights-

based approach views people with disabilities as rights-holders who have the right to be involved in decisions about their lives; the right to be treated fairly and have the same opportunities as everyone else; the right to work in partnership with others to improve their lives.

“Granted that we may take a bit more time to learn and adapt to society around us. But I firmly believe that we are all Differently Abled and given the appropriate environment we can thrive and be productive citizens.

- Avina Yik,  
DSA Ambassador





The celebration commenced with a community walk around Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park, flagged off by our Guest of Honour, Mr. Eric Chua and DSA Chairperson, Mr. Alex Yan. Aligned with the theme “With Us Not For Us”, DSA recognised and appreciated the inclusive employment efforts of six corporate partners who each received a token of appreciation from SPS Eric Chua. The “Inclusive Employment Award” were presented to Eat What Pte Ltd, ISG Asia (Singapore) Pte Ltd, Natrad Food Pte Ltd, Offer & Save Superstore, Rasa Sentosa Shangri-la Hotel, and Uniqlo (Singapore) Pte Ltd.

53 performers across five enrichment groups, Aikido, Dance, Drums, Speech & Drama and Zumba put together various performance items. The highlight of the stage performances is when friends, family and participants cheered on each performer and participated in the performances. We would also like to thank our Guest of Honor, Mr Eric Chua for enthusiastically leading an impromptu drumming engagement with our drummers.

Running parallel with our WDSD event for the fourth year, “Rock Your Socks” seeks to raise awareness in a fun and easy manner. This year’s sock designs feature artworks created by Benjamin Lee, Brandon Wong, Lim Thye Ann, and Manpreet Kaur. These socks are available for purchase at our retail partner, Bowl Chap located at Fusionopolis.

From the top:  
SPS Eric Chua giving a high-5 to a beneficiary participating in the Zumba warm-up exercise.

DSA Ambassador Nina Sara Faizal and Volunteer Brynner Jananto welcoming all guests to the event.

SPS Eric Chua drums together with our members.

(L to R): DSA Chairperson Alex Yan, SPS Eric Chua, Avina Yik, Nina Sara Faizal, DSA Vice-Chairperson, Li Shu Yun.



Support our Work Readiness Assisted Programme (WRAP) by scanning the QR code



Through the effort and support of our donors, sponsors, members, and volunteers, funds raised through this event will support DSA Work Readiness Assisted Programme (WRAP). The programme offers training and opportunities for open employment to our adult beneficiaries. Capitalising on their strengths and interests, the structured activities empower them with relevant skills to enhance their participation in mainstream activities. Our Adult Education Services

team provides formal job support so as to maximise their success in the workforce.

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*



Michelle Sy and Lin Chunru receiving the "Inclusive Employment Award" on behalf of ISG Asia (Singapore).



Wendy Neo and Nina Sara Faizal receiving the "Inclusive Employment Award" on behalf of Uniqlo (Singapore) Pte Ltd.

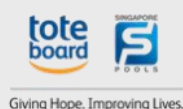


Learners from ILT Centre and their families manning the Thrift Shop booth at WDSO 2023.



Staff from Infineum Singapore LLP participating as a booth sponsor for the first time at WDSO 2023.

Our deepest appreciation to our partners:



# Every Ending Is a New Beginning



People often talk about making a great first impression. However, for the Children Education Services (CES), a lasting impression is what matters most. Over the past five years, the Infant Toddler Program (ITP) helped families navigate their roles as their child's first teachers and understand the complex role and responsibilities to ensure their child's optimal wellbeing, development and education, and instilled confidence in selecting a service that will best meet their needs. ITP has laughed, played, and learned together with numerous children and families since its humble beginning in 2017. Although March 2023 marks the end of ITP, our enriching journey with infants, toddlers and children and the families continues.

The Early Start Program (ESP) set to launch in April 2023 will be a pioneer in providing timely early intervention for children with Down syndrome, and children with autism and other special needs on the EIPIC waitlist. The ESP reflects DSA's passion for giving every child the opportunity to reach their fullest potential. The program, designed to be appropriate for children with Down syndrome and autism, blends the rigor of ITP with play-based routines that focus on building a relationship with the child. Parental involvement and use of these strategies at home during routine and daily activities persevere as important ingredients of ESP, promoting each child's development and meaningful participation in all aspects of life.

*Contributor: Viemala Davie Kelaver, Head of Children Education Services*



Since its inception in 2017, ITP has served 54 children and their families over the past five years.



# Taking Charge of CNY Celebration



*There is nothing like celebrating festivities with our close friends and loved ones.*

This year's Chinese New Year (CNY) celebration for our Adult Enhancement Program (AEP) learners was like no other. Aligned with the theme of 'With Us Not For Us', 12 learners in the Yellow group took ownership of the celebration. They brainstormed on the activities together and each learner took charge of a segment – lion dance, CNY sing-along, dance, and games.

On 19 January 2023, the celebration was off to a roaring start with a lion dance performance and a walkaround by a learner dressed as the God of Wealth. The party ended on a high note where they 'lo hei-ed' for health and happiness. True to the communal spirit, AEP learners also distributed their handcrafted cards and oranges to the vendors in Junction 8 and the food court at the Bishan Bus Interchange.

We are impressed with our learners from the yellow group who displayed their capability to work together as a team and their camaraderie by giving each other an opportunity to be leaders in the different roles. Learners were proud of their achievements, seeing everyone enjoying themselves was well worth the time and effort.

*Contributor: Catherine Michael, Head of Adult Enhancement Program*

## Rising to the Occasion

Rounding up the Chinese New Year celebrations with a heart so full, we are grateful to be part of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) Town Hall cum Chinese New Year celebration on 30 January 2023. Our learners from AEP were invited to put up a CNY-themed performance and they rose to the occasion by putting up a brilliant showcase which ended with a lion dance and appearances from the God of Wealth, garnering much fanfare from the audience.

We are proud of our learners who worked closely with their training officers to choreograph the performances, and we thank NCSS for this opportunity to showcase our learners' talents.



*Learners from AEP were thrilled at the opportunity to put up a CNY-themed performance for the staff of NCSS.*

*Contributor: Catherine Michael, Head of Adult Enhancement Program*

## Tee-Off with Singapore Classic



On 7 February 2023, seven learners from the Independent Living & Training (ILT) Centre participated in a golf clinic and a meet-and-greet session with professional golfers from G4D (Golf for the Disabled) organised by Singapore Disability Sports Council (SDSC) and Singapore Classic.



The driving range was abuzz with excitement as the learners joined the G4D players on the course for some basic putting practice. The professional golfers, all of whom have a physical disability, patiently guided our learners on the basics of putting.

Thank you SDSC and Singapore Classic for a memorable and inspiring event.

*Contributor: Todd Simonson Michael, Head of Independent Living & Training Centre*

## In Awe of Singapore's Port



Learners from AES were treated to a bird's eye view of the port from Level 19 of the office building.

On 22 February 2023, 18 learners from DSA Adult Education Services had the privilege to visit PSA Pasir Panjang Terminal and learn more about the port and its operations as PSA is interested to commission our artists in creating artworks for their merchandise. The learners were mesmerised at the sheer number of containers and the size of the ships. Thank you, PSA Singapore, for the eye-opening visit to one of the world's busiest transshipment ports and witness your advanced machinery at work.

*Contributor: Angeline De Cruz, AEP Training Officer*



## Staying Active and Healthy



Walking has many benefits which include lightening our mood, building some positive emotions and strengthening our bones and muscles.

On 7 March 2023, six learners from ILT Centre embarked on their first hike up Mount Faber as part of their gross motor skills training. The hike was off to a steep start as they climbed up a 40-meter staircase to reach the top of Mount Faber Park. Their efforts were not in vain as they were rewarded with scenic views along Mount Faber Loop. During the walk, they were able to admire the scenery and the buildings from afar, and lush foliage, towering trees and brightly coloured butterflies from up-close.

It was not an easy trail, but our learners had a beneficial experience connecting with nature around our neighbourhood and growing in their confidence that they can complete challenging physical activities as long as they put their minds to it.

*Contributor: Amy Soong, Lifestyle Educator*

## Caregiver Support Workshop

The journey of caregiving is a unique and winding road that is sometimes hard to comprehend unless you have travelled similar routes yourself. We understand that caregivers often neglect their own needs while caring for their loved ones, and this can lead to stress and burnout. To offer assistance and direction, FSS has in place a Caregiver Support Group (CSG) which provides a holistic peer support ecosystem and a safe environment for caregivers to share their experiences and strengthen the community's spirits.

As part of CSG initiatives, FSS held a Caregiver Support Workshop on 25 February 2023, facilitated by Ms Lynette Ong, KIDZ Occupational Therapy Consultant. During this workshop, participants learned practical managing and active listening skills that are useful in providing effective support. Ms Lynette also covered the importance of self-care, managing confidentiality and understanding cultural sensitivity while engaging with others. The workshop ended with participants sharing their thoughts, challenges, and tips. The workshop was well-received by participants who hoped that there would be more peer-to-peer sessions in the future as it brings comfort and relief knowing that they are not alone in this journey.

We would like to encourage parents and family members to join FSS Caregiver Support Group (CSG) to meet other caregivers and journey alongside one another.

*Contributor: Steffi Tjong, Executive, Family Support Services*

# Let's Get Crafty

Arts and crafts are not only therapeutic but also make great family bonding activities. Together with DSA volunteer, Ms Nadhirah Ismail, FSS organised a series of art and craft workshops for caregivers and beneficiaries in celebration of the Lunar New Year and Valentine's Day.

*"It's so great to see how something as simple as crafting can bring people closer together. My favourite part was seeing how even with the same instructions, everyone's creation turned out unique – just like each one of us."* shared Ms Nadhirah.



## Lantern Making Workshop

Lanterns are one of the most iconic decorations during Lunar New Year celebrations. FSS welcomed the Year of Rabbit with a lantern-making workshop on 14 January 2023. Caregivers and their children worked hand in hand to create rabbit-themed lanterns with red packets. Spirits were high as they crafted their lanterns and enjoyed the refreshments to the tunes of CNY songs.



## Pop-up Flower Box Workshop

Pop-up flower box is fun and easy to make. It is great for decoration at home or even a gift for any occasion. On 18 March 2023, caregivers and their children explored the art of creating a pop-up flower box with Ms Nadhirah. This workshop not only enhanced our beneficiaries' fine motor skills, but it was also a great way to express their creativity.

Contributor: Steffi Tjong, Executive, Family Support Services





## 'Project Happiness'

Through the awareness talk and the three interaction sessions that we had, we have learned that people with Down syndrome are beyond special and each of them have their own unique way of expressing themselves and have their own abilities and talents. It is not hard to communicate with them if you take the time to understand and get to know them better, including their likes and dislikes. We also realised that some may express themselves better through the Arts.

Interacting with the beneficiaries cleared up any misconception we had formed due to the social stigma. Although there were some things that we feel we have done well in, like preparing for the sessions, spending time with each beneficiary, and being patient as some of them may take a



while to respond to questions and instructions, we hope to improve on the way we communicate with them so that they can understand us with more ease and be more versatile when teaching them the crafts.

*Contributor: Year 2 Students, Temasek Polytechnic, School of Design*

## VJC 'Project V'



Through my interactions with the learners from ILT Centre, I have learnt that people with disabilities can be very friendly, and that there is no need to be afraid to interact with them. Even though we may be afraid that we are unable to handle their outbursts or overloads at times, it is still possible for us to be kind to them when we see them, for example offering them a greeting and a smile.

One thing in specific that I learnt was that it is common to talk to those with disabilities as if they are young children. It may have been a stereotype ingrained in us since young, but we tend to treat those with disabilities as little kids who need to be pampered and talked to in a very simple way. I have found out that they are quite capable, and do not mind doing things themselves. In fact, speaking to them patronisingly may only make them feel bad about themselves. Hence in the future, I would like to be more sensitive when interacting with those with disabilities, and treat them akin to how I treat my friends.

*Contributor: Year 1 Student, Victoria Junior College*

# DSA Aspiration Camp

As an organising crew member of the DSA Aspiration Camp hosted by Singapore Polytechnic Community Service and Cultural Club (SP CSCC) in collaboration with the DSA, I feel grateful to have been a part of this event. It was truly an enriching experience to work with the participants from DSA, and to witness their enthusiasm and excitement during the games we organised for them.

As group leaders and game masters, our role was to ensure that the participants had a memorable and enjoyable time. The games were held in the form of an Amazing Race, with the objective of finding Elmo. We designed the games in such a way that they were both challenging and fun, with activities ranging from physical challenges to problem-solving tasks. We were amazed to see how the participants, despite facing different challenges, worked together as a team and demonstrated excellent teamwork and sportsmanship.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the event was the opportunity to interact with the partici-

pants and learn more about them. It was heartwarming to see the smiles on their faces as they completed each challenge, and the joy they experienced when they found Elmo. It was evident that they had a great time, and that was all that mattered to us.

Working with DSA was an eye-opening experience. It taught us the importance of inclusivity and how everyone deserves an equal opportunity to participate and have fun. It was truly inspiring to see the participants' resilience and determination, and their ability to overcome any obstacle that came their way.

Overall, the DSA Aspiration Camp was an unforgettable experience that taught us the value of teamwork, inclusivity, and empathy. It was an honor to be a part of such a meaningful event, and we look forward to collaborating with DSA again in the future.

*Contributor: Iffa Natasha Binte Mohammad Zamri, Singapore Polytechnic Community Service and Cultural Club*





## Northland Secondary



Over the past month, 4 Epsilon from Northland Secondary School partnered with DSA for our Values-in-Action project. As a class, we chose to support people with Down syndrome. We visited the centre on 14 February 2023 to find out more about how we can support persons with Down syndrome. Although we started out feeling uncertain and nervous about interacting with them, we learnt how to engage them respectfully and got to know them through playing games together.

Then on the 18 March 2023, we volunteered at the WDSO Carnival. We joined in the 1 km walk to raise awareness for Down syndrome and ran a game booth to raise funds. It was an eye-opening experience, and we learnt many things such as flexibility, problem-solving and customer engagement. We were also impressed by the performances put up by DSA's clients! After our experience, we also made a video to share about WDSO with our school. Our teachers and friends told us that they learnt a lot about persons with Down syndrome through it. We hope to have more opportunities to bond with the people at DSA in future!

*Contributor: Ms Lorraine Soon, Northland Secondary School*

## Our Long Service Staff Awardees

Employees are the backbone of any thriving organisation. We are proud to share that eight employees were recognised for their hard work and dedication to DSA in 2022. This Long Service Award (LSA) is given to staff members who have been with us for five and ten years. The award recipients are:

**10 Years LSA:** Tng Sia Han, Simon

**5 Years LSA:** Nur Shuhada Binte Suhaimi, Quek WeiMing, Siti Nur'Fadhilah Binte Abdul Halim, Tan Hui Hoon, Toh Pei Ting Joanne, Viemala Davie Kelaver, Yen Nie Tjia

Our valued employees have been with us for many years, and we are delighted to recognise their commitment by presenting them with long service awards. They have been instrumental in



(L to R): Quek WeiMing, Siti Nur'Fadhilah Binte Abdul Halim, Toh Pei Ting Joanne, Tan Hui Hoon, Executive Director Yeo Ando, Tng Sia Han Simon, Nur Shuhada Binte Suhaimi, Yen Nie Tjia (Absent: Viemala Davie Kelaver)

our success and growth over the years. Please join us in congratulating them on this remarkable achievement.

*Contributor: Marcus Lo, Executive, HR & Admin*

# 10 Years LSA Awardee - A Source of Encouragement and Support



Working as a training officer for persons with Down syndrome for the past 10 years, I have had the privilege of working with a diverse group of individuals, each with their unique strengths and challenges, and the opportunity to witness first-hand the remarkable achievements that these

individuals can accomplish with the right support and encouragement.

In my role as a training officer, I focus on providing comprehensive training and support to individuals with disabilities, helping them to develop the skills and confidence necessary to succeed in the workplace and in certain areas of their lives. This has involved designing and delivering training programs, providing one-on-one coaching, and working closely with employers to create inclusive and supportive work environments. Over the years, I have learned that the key to success for individuals with disabilities is a combination of support, training, and encouragement. By

providing individuals with the tools they need to succeed and the confidence to believe in themselves, I can help them overcome the many challenges they may face and achieve their optimal potential.

As I reflect on my ten years as a training officer for persons with Down syndrome, I am proud of the work my team and I have done and the impact we have had on so many individuals' lives. I look forward to continuing this important work and helping more individuals with disabilities achieve their dreams in the years to come.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to my supervisors, colleagues, and parents for their unwavering support throughout my journey. Their support has been instrumental in helping me achieve my goals and overcome any obstacles I have faced. Once again, thank you all for your support. It means so much more to me than I can express in words.

*Contributor: Simon Tng, Senior Training Officer*







## DSA Enrichment Programs

### Tuesday

- 4.15pm - 5.45pm: Visual Art  
(Age 10 years and above)
- 6.30pm - 8.00pm: Speech & Drama  
(Age 21 years and above)

### Wednesday

- 6.00pm - 7.00pm: Drums & Percussion Class 1  
(Age 12 years and above)
- 7.00pm - 8.00pm: Drums & Percussion Class 2  
(Age 12 years and above)

*Note that the age group categorisation is only a guide. Students will be grouped depending on observations and abilities.*

### Saturday

- 9.00am - 10.00am: Aikido  
(Age 12 years and above)
- 12.00nn - 1.00pm: Zumba  
(Age 10 years and above)
- 1.00pm - 2.30pm: Creative Dance (Basic)  
(Age 12 to 18 years old)
- 2.30pm - 4.30pm: Fusion Dance  
(Age 18 years and above)
- 2.30pm - 4.00pm: Speech & Drama (Junior)  
(Age 6 to 12 years old)
- 3.00pm - 4.00pm: kidsREAD (Senior)
- 4.00pm - 5.00pm: kidsREAD (Junior)
- 4.30pm - 6.00pm: Speech & Drama (Senior)  
(Age 13 to 21 years old)

Are you thinking of exploring programmes in the areas of Arts, Education, and Sports & Fitness or is your child keen to try out something new? DSA Enrichment Programs are designed to develop the capabilities of each individual and seek to achieve the following objectives:

- Engage, educate, and inspire members.
- Encourage members to acquire new skills, nurture interest, and develop talent.
- Build and strengthen members' cognitive, emotional, physical, and social development.
- Showcase the abilities of our members.
- Change the perspectives of others on the abilities of persons with Down syndrome.
- Raise members as valued people in the community who contribute their areas of interest and skills.

For more information or request to attend a trial session, please contact Amelia or Nalla at [membership@downsyndrome-singapore.org](mailto:membership@downsyndrome-singapore.org).



*Build your child's confidence through strong expressive skills with Speech & Drama program.*



*Learn basic defensive skills with Aikido program.*

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/2023/03)

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".



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



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