

METTA

慈光心缘



Embracing Acceptance of Disabilities

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慈光福利协会
METTA WELFARE ASSOCIATION

Caring For Our Communities
关爱我们的社群

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Embracing Acceptance of Disabilities

World Autism Awareness Day fell on 2 April and it is with great comfort to know that the world is beginning to open up and accept autism with more awareness to the condition.

People with autism and other various mild intellectual disabilities rightly want to feel accepted in schools, at work places and in a community setting. They also want to be heard. Programmes with specially tailored training and activities need to make reasonable improvements to make sure there is full inclusivity for people with mild intellectual disabilities. At Metta, we play our part by providing early intervention programmes for our young beneficiaries in the hope that they may overcome their challenges and be self-reliant.

There is, however, a lot more we can do to embrace people with special needs. Public perception of young adults with mild intellectual disabilities can be intimidating. Too many employers are still missing out on the skills of people who would love to work for them and who would do a great job. I am heartened to know that we have assistance, such as the Metta Alumni, in place to not only match jobs for our youths, but also train them for life skills necessary for independence and assimilating to society.

It is with the dedication and compassion of our donors, sponsors, volunteers and staff that supported the cause of Metta in providing these services to the less privileged. I like to take this moment to thank all of whom have come together over the years to share our passion in engendering a compassionate society.

Yours in the Dharma

Venerable Shi Pu En
Executive Director
Metta Welfare Association

Metta Lunar New Year Blessing Ceremony cum 'Lou Hei' Buffet Luncheon 2016

13 Feb 2016
Metta Building

In our time-honoured tradition, the Lunar New Year "Lou Hei" Luncheon was held at Metta's premises to acknowledge its charitable donors, volunteers and supporters for their stalwart contributions to the organisation throughout the year. Bringing alive to the ceremony was the lively lion dance troupe by students of Metta School. The lions ushered in the New Year by performing a "Cai Qing" (Picking the Green) segment to usher in auspicious luck to all attendees. The hearty event commenced with a blessing ceremony and welcome speech by Metta's Executive Director, Venerable Shi Pu-En.

And like almost all Lunar New Year luncheons, no feast is complete without the yusheng tossing tradition. Good wishes were loudly proclaimed as the "Lou Hei" progressed. Amidst the hearty fare and mingling, everyone was also entertained by a group of youths from the Seik Phu Taung Youth Development Centre who performed lively beats of the traditional ethnic dance moves from the Karen tribesmen of Myanmar.



metta charity carnival 2016

2016 慈光嘉年华会

Date: 20 March 2016
Venue: Metta Building & Metta School

Metta Welfare Association (MWA) recently celebrated its annual mega, family-bonding charity carnival in the heartlands. Gracing the event was Guest-of-Honour, Ms Jessica Tan, MP for East Coast GRC and Advisor to East Coast GRC GROs, who flagged off the 3-km Charity Walk around Simei estate that preceded the carnival. Five Metta School students from the "Healthy Fit Club" kept the adrenalin kicking with an energetic Zumba warm-up prior to the Walk.

After the invigorating walk, participants were greeted by a gastronomic endless array of vegetarian spread from mouth-watering dim sums, vegetarian kong bak paus (braised 'pork' buns), curried potato spring rolls, rich and savoury lontongs and laksa, sushi, and many more.

Entertaining the masses were a non-stop programme of stage performances from Metta School's Lion Dance, Stomp Warriors and Hotsteppers; Compassvale Secondary School; Serangoon Secondary School; Bollywood dance group, Dedancestar; balloon sculpting, and many more! We took the opportunity to award 7 out of our 17 students who graduated from Metta School last year. These students had undergone four modules of ITE Skills Certificate courses in Baking Practices and Hospitality Services. They did well in their Workplace Literacy and ISC courses and are currently studying Nitec Courses in ITE College West.

The Carnival also saw the launch of the new Metta mobile app that was introduced during the event. Explore volunteering opportunities with Metta and be updated on all its future fundraising activities and online news with the new app which shows the various volunteering duties available in Metta's respective centres.

Making a unique highlight to the Carnival this year is a Sherlock Holmes-style, "Metta Adventure Discovery Trail". Participants had to hunt around Metta's premises to

uncover answers in order to win a prize in a sure-win lucky dip.

And what is a carnival without a bazaar of good deals from fashionable shoes, bags and costume jewellery, to attractive terrariums, electrical appliances, health food products and many more!

Young kids had a frolicking good time on bouncy castle inflatables, joyride on animal kiddy rides and indulge themselves in challenging Gladiator inflatable and other games!

IF YOU MISSED BEING WITH US AT THE RECENT METTA CHARITY CARNIVAL 2016, DO JOIN US NEXT YEAR!



As part of the Metta Charity Carnival 2016's success, we like to thank all our donors/sponsors, volunteers and staff for making this event a fruitful one.

Many special thanks to Tote Board-Singapore Pools, Standard Chartered Bank, Aerogaz, AllAlloy Dynaweld, Apollo, Changi-Simei Grassroots Organisation, JP Nelson Equipment, Koufu, Lian Yick Metal Tents, Marigold, PUB, Yeo's, etc.

Notably, French restaurant OCF Singapore, at Arts House at The Old Parliament, serves up classic French cuisine with top-notch wines. Its sister establishment, Olivia & Co. Bistro with their inspiration from world cuisines, are both pleased to be among the sponsors for the Metta Charity Carnival 2016.



6 Classic Outdoor Activities for Children with Autism



If you have to pick a time of year to get outside, this is it! Step away from the computer and get outside for some sunshine and fun.

Sounds, sights and feelings are at their peak therapeutic value and all you have to do is to admire nature. But before you do, let's take a look at some top favourite outdoor activities so that you can maximize the time you spend with Mother Nature.

1. Obstacle Course

The great outdoors provides the most awesome of obstacle courses. Jump over a stick, run around a bush, hug a tree and down the slide you go! You really don't need much in equipment, though it can enhance your obstacle course options. Be creative and let your child help you set it up

2. Head for the Playground

Who doesn't love a playground? Well maybe your sensory avoiders, but a playground is a perfect place for children to work on motor planning, balance, vestibular orientation, confidence and social skills. Though you don't need to hover, stay close by for safety and to encourage some new heights and skills.

3. Hide N' Seek

This game just never gets old. Most people like to play it indoors, but outdoors is great. Little ones just giggle when you find them sticking out behind a pillar. You can incorporate counting, turn taking and visual perception.



4. Treasure Hunt

Make a list and send your children out to find the items listed. Rocks, sticks, leaf, etc.... can be just a few of the items on the Treasure Hunt list. Or make it a real hunt and place notes in various spots outside. Each note can direct your child to a new location and at the end you can have a special treasure waiting. You can even download the Geocache app and go hunting for a real hidden treasure with your

children not too far.

5. Water Therapy

Of course you think I'm referring to a swimming pool, but I'm actually talking about rain! Wait for the rain and send your children outside. With clothes or swimsuits, it doesn't matter. Hand them an umbrella or let them just get soaked. Give them buckets to collect water and a broom to slish it up with. The rain provides a phenomenal sensory integration experience.

6. Rolling Along

Got wheels? Then your child is good to go! Bikes, scooters and skateboards encourage balance, motor planning and linear acceleration, all necessary for effective sensory processing. Make sure helmets and pads are worn at all times! Have a reticent roller on your hands? That's OK. Start out slowly. Try taking the pedals off the bike, lowering the seat so their feet are flat on the ground. Once they learn to walk and glide, you can put the pedals back on and raise the seat.

Caution

Please don't leave your children unattended outdoors! An ounce of prevention goes a long way. In addition, make sure their feet are protected with shoes appropriate for the outdoors and they have plenty of sunscreen applied. Have a wonderful time in the great outdoors!

The Best Brain Food You Should Be Eating

Here are some suggested foods to protect your brain cells, improve memory, and even reduce your odds of developing Alzheimer's disease.

Walnuts

These wrinkly nuts—which kind of resemble the human brain—are rich in vitamin E, an antioxidant associated with a lower risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. Researchers at Chicago's Rush University Medical Center studied the lifestyle habits of 6,000 people who were unaffected by the memory-robbing condition, and found that those who ate the most vitamin E-rich foods had a reduced Alzheimer's risk. Vitamin E may trap free radicals that can damage brain cells, explains the Alzheimer's Research Center.



Eggs

Those bright, round yolks are rich in choline, a B vitamin-like nutrient. When you eat eggs, your brain uses choline to make acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter that may be important for maintaining memory and communication among brain cells. Boston University researchers tracked the eating habits of nearly 1,400 healthy adults for 10 years and found that choline intake correlated positively with better performance on certain types of memory tests.



Blueberries

"Brainberries" is what Steven Pratt, MD, author of *Superfoods Rx: Fourteen Foods Proven to Change Your Life*, calls these antioxidant-packed fruits on WebMD.com. In select animal studies, researchers found that blueberries

helped protect the brain from oxidative stress, and may have worked to reduce the effects of age-related conditions such as Alzheimer's disease or dementia, Pratt said. A Harvard study published last year in the journal *Annals of Neurology* found that women who reported eating more blueberries and strawberries were likely to have less-rapid cognitive decline than those who ate fewer of the fruits. (The research was partially funded by the California Strawberry Commission.)



Wine and Champagne

While too much alcohol can certainly destroy healthy brain tissue, drinking in moderation may be good for your mind. A study published earlier this year in the *Journal of Biological Chemistry* found that the antioxidant EGCG—found in red wine and green tea—helped stop beta-amyloid proteins from harming brain cells in the lab. Additionally, research from UCLA found that wine's antioxidants may block proteins that build brain-destroying plaques. In other recent news, British researchers discovered that rats improved spatial memory when they consumed what would be the equivalent of a daily glass of Champagne; certain antioxidants in the bubbly may encourage growth of and better communication among nerve cells.

Avocados

Avocados are almost as good as blueberries in promoting brain health, Dr. Pratt told WebMD.com. These buttery fruits are rich in monounsaturated fat, which contributes to healthy blood flow in the brain, according to Ann Kulze, MD, author of *Dr. Ann's 10-Step Diet: A Simple Plan for Permanent Weight Loss & Lifelong Vitality*. They may also help lower blood pressure, which can reduce your risks for hypertension or a stroke that could permanently damage brain tissue.



Kale and Other Cruciferous Veggies

These superfoods contain powerful antioxidants that can protect your brain from toxic free radicals. One study of older women found that those who ate the most green, leafy vegetables had minds that functioned like women who were one to two years younger than they actually were, compared to women who ate fewer leafy greens, according to the Alzheimer's Association.



Salmon

Your brain loves omega-3 fatty acids, which are thought to play an important role in cognitive function. According to the *New York Times* describing research in the journal *Neurology*, low levels of these unsaturated fats in the blood are linked with smaller brain volume and worse performance on certain tests of mental function. Omega-3s, which are found in salmon and other cold-water fish, may also bolster the brainpower of younger adults. According to University of Pittsburgh research published last year, adults under age 25 who increased their omega-3 intake over six months improved their scores on tests measuring working memory.

PUB Birthday Celebration at Metta PreSchool@Punggol

29 January 2016

In our regular bi-monthly CSR initiative with PUB, PUB staff made the day of 16 Preschool@Punggol students when they came down to celebrate the birthdays of children born in the months of January and February.

In view of the Lunar New Year season, arts activities related to the festive period were the theme of the party. Each kid prepared their own Chinese lion mask with help from PUB volunteers in colouring and decorating the tail. The indispensable birthday cake cutting and presents for the birthday girls and boys completed the memorable and joyful day for the children.



Lunar New Year Festivities with Metta Day Rehabilitation Centre for the Elderly

20 February 2016

A team of energetic staff from Eelit Placement Agency LLP spent a fulfilling day with elderly clients from the Metta Day Rehabilitation Centre for the Elderly to celebrate the Lunar New Year. Mr. Desmond Choo, MP for Tampines Changkat made his appearance as the Guest-of-Honour to the event when he mingled with the elderly.

Volunteers from Eelit arrived early in the morning to pack the goodie bags and distributed them to the elderly later in the afternoon. Everyone was treated to a lion dance performance from Metta School, a Chinese dance by Metta's multi-cultural staff and volunteers, an entertaining magic show act, the indispensable auspicious lou-hei tossing, and a vegetarian buffet lunch. A special appearance by the God of Fortune brought smiles to the faces of our clients as each took home a hong bao.



My Story – Where the Smallest Successes Are the Most Joyous

Name: Rachel Tan Wei-Lin
Age: 21 years old



Every little step and every little achievement is a milestone for 21 year old demure Rachel Tan Wei-Lin. While most of her peers are in tertiary education or basking in the latest trends, Rachel, who is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at a young age, face basic challenges such as social interactions with people around her.

Rachel was a graduate from Metta School which she transitioned to Metta's Alumni programme for youths with special needs upon her graduation. These youths undergo an apprenticeship to be skilled in either the arts or in an F&B setting. For Rachel, the new role at Arts@Metta was a dream come true as that could mean unleashing her creativity and self-expression in the world of colours. Among the creative art pieces done by Rachel are cross stitching works and acrylic paintings which are made into bookmarks, bags, and handphone charms for sale.

As Rachel spends her youth with her equally like-minded and cheerful colleagues at Arts@Metta, she has also improved on her interaction skills and ability to adapt to new changes in the environment. She has opened up to her mentors and gained more courage to ask for assistance from the people around her. Fortunately for Rachel, she has the strong support from her mother who guides her patiently which helps bolster her development.

Looking forward, Rachel hopes to be able to be more self-reliant and independent as she gets older. For youths like Rachel, the support of a good social community is essential to give them a chance to experience self-reliance, proper work conduct, responsibility, employment and develop good social skills.

Handmade Edible Treats with Preschool@Simei

19 February 2016

As part of its ongoing volunteering programme with Metta, staff of NKF volunteered their time to join Preschool@Simei students in a baking craft session. Coming well equipped with cookie moulds and ingredients, the NKF volunteers helped the students create various cookie shapes and designs in a hands-on 'Play Doh' session. The children's creativity were unleashed by creating works of edible art in a theme of the festive Lunar New Year.



Interactive Learning Playground at The City with Metta PreSchool@Simei

24 February 2016



Staff from Siemens Postal, Parcel & Airport Logistics Pte. Ltd. (SPPAL) took a day off to bring our preschoolers to The City at Liang Court. The City is an Interactive Learning Playground that brings an exciting, first-of-its-kind children's indoor 'playground'. Role play & pretend play experiences in realistic environments and scenarios such as being in a supermarket, a doctor's office and superhero rooms were among the settings to enrich the child's playful imagination. It was both fun and educational at the same time as the children were enthusiastically trying on various costumes with the volunteers engaging them in the role play.

From the looks of it, it was definitely a fun-filled enjoyable experience for our students!



We have finally found a name for Metta's elephant mascot!

Among the many entries poured in on our Facebook page since January 2016, it was a tough decision for our judges to determine the winner as all entries were equally creative. After much deliberation, we would like to congratulate two Facebook fans for their entries and winning the contest.

Congratulations to Jane Chong and Pulu Pumen Pulu for their creative entries. Metta's elephant mascot is now called Ello the Precious!

Winner 1: Pulu Pumen Pulu

Submission: Precious the Metta Elephant

Why was the name chosen:

In Buddhism, the elephant is a symbol of strength. Exhibiting noble gentleness, the mammal represents the symbol of the calm majesty possessed by one who is on the path.

Winner 2: Jane Chong

Submission: MettaEllo

Why was the name chosen:

A cute name that would convey a happy mascot because Ello sounds like Hello.

Hi there! I am **Ello the Precious.**



Metta's volunteering services are now available at the touch of your fingers!

Metta Welfare Association has recently launched a new FREE mobile app that makes tracking of our upcoming fundraising events, various welfare centre's information and best of all, registering and tracking the progress of your volunteer application a breeze!

What you can expect:

Volunteering Opportunities - Registration now made easy on the app. Be a volunteer at our events, activities and our various welfare centres islandwide. Get alerts on your volunteering sign-ups.

Event Updates - Receive updates on events from Metta such as our community fundraising activities with easy participation and sign up through the app.

Publications - Read the latest bi-monthly Metta News from the app. Get updated on the latest CSR activities, news, information, health tips and inspirational stories of our clients.

Donate - Easy, fuss-free online donation to do your part in helping the less privileged.

Metta App is currently available on

