



## Autism: Making Acceptance an Action

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慈光福利协会  
METTA WELFARE ASSOCIATION



Forging Ahead  
In Partnership  
携手前进 共创未来

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# Autism: Making Acceptance an Action



The Lunar New Year Blessing Ceremony cum 'Lou Hei' Buffet Luncheon on 4 February marked the launch of Metta Silver Jubilee celebrations with a festive big bang. In celebration of Metta's 25th milestone, I am thankful for the community, our corporate partners and committee members as they joined us to officiate the launch through the symbolism of breaking apart two upsized fortune cookies baked by Metta Café.

The recently ended Metta Charity Carnival 2017 saw a great success with a Superhero theme that honours our long-time supporters, donors and volunteers. It is the support of our 'superheroes' that Metta has come this far. It doesn't matter the size of the contribution, it is the gesture that counts and Metta is honoured to have these 'superheroes' making a difference to the community in their own ways.

The World Autism Awareness Day is observed in the month of April with the aim to raise awareness on the needs of persons living with autism, as well as a highlight of their strengths. More concerted effort needs to be done apart from raising the awareness by making acceptance an action. Putting that step towards acceptance of persons with disabilities creates an ideal compassionate society that we aim to become. Metta is working to achieve its mission to encompass acceptance through the collaboration of community projects to its disability care centres as part of its training programme and integration of our beneficiaries into the community.

I take this opportunity to thank Metta's 'superheroes' for coming forward in their selfless efforts to engender a spirit of giving and grace to the less privileged.

With Heartfelt Gratitude

Venerable Shi Pu En  
President  
Metta Welfare Association

# METTA CHARITY CARNIVAL 2017



**IF YOU MISSED BEING WITH US AT THE RECENT METTA CHARITY CARNIVAL 2017, DO JOIN US NEXT YEAR!**

*"THE METTA CHARITY CARNIVAL 2017 APPEARS TO BE DOING BETTER THAN THE PREVIOUS YEARS. I WILL CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE AGAIN AND I HOPE THAT OUR CARNIVAL WILL GET BETTER IN THE COMING YEARS."*

Ms Lian Lin Lian, long-term supporter and stall holder of Metta Charity Carnival.

*"VEGETARIAN SOCIETY (SINGAPORE) IS GLAD TO BE ABLE TO HELP AT THIS CARNIVAL AND WE THANK METTA WELFARE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PARTNERSHIP IN HELPING BUILD A KINDER, HEALTHIER AND GREENER WORLD."*

Yeow, new supporter and stall holder of Metta Charity Carnival.

19 March 2017  
Metta Building and Metta School

19 March saw a smashing Sunday for Metta Charity Carnival goers as Walk participants and volunteers came dressed in their best superhero costumes. With a superhero theme to the Metta Charity Carnival 2017, it represents the unsung heroes of our supporters from the stall holders, donors and volunteers who have dedicatedly served and supported Metta over the years.

Gracing the event as Guest-of-Honour was Ms Jessica Tan, MP for East Coast GRC and Advisor to East Coast GRC GROs as she flagged off the morning 3-km Charity Walk around the Simei estate that preceded the Carnival. President of Metta Welfare Association, Venerable Shi Pu En delivered an opening speech and together with Ms Jessica Tan, they adorned a bamboo screen with a pair of clay butterflies adopted from Arts@Metta as a symbolism of growth to new heights and officiating the start of the Carnival. Ms Jessica Tan also presented the Scholarship Awards to 10 Metta School students who graduated in 2016 from the ITE Skills Certificate courses in Baking Practices and Facilities Technology.

Getting to and from the Carnival was also a breeze with a \$5 discount promotion tie-up with ComfortDelgro through the latter's cab booking app. Garnering among the best attractions of the day were five volunteers from the 501st Legion Singapore Garrison who came dressed as Obi-Wan Kenobi, a Starfighter pilot of the Rebel Alliance, and a host of storm troopers. A family of Spiderman and various superhero characters joined in together with an entourage of Harley Davidson bikers who came in their Harleys to pose for pictures with the public.

The Carnival also saw new vendors such as the Smoothie Bike by the Vegetarian Society (Singapore), Churros factory, Minato Singapore (sole distributor of Japanese Disney themed confectioneries) among the new stall inclusions. Entertaining the crowd with magical illusions was Tommillusions, a premium magician who works with Mediacorp on serials such as "The Truth Seekers" and "Soul Reapers", performances by students of Metta School and Fuchun Primary School, amongst others. Our satisfied superhero stallholders had nothing but praises for the Metta Charity Carnival.



**We'll like to thank all our donors/sponsors, volunteers and staff for making this event a fruitful one.**





# METTA CHARITY RUN 2017

Saturday, 26 Aug  
Singapore Sports Hub

- Powerful 5km
- Legendary 10km
- Dynamic Duo 1.5km Parent & Child Fun Run

NEW VENUE & NEW EXCITING ROUTES

**Date & Time**

Saturday, 26 August 2017  
Participants to assemble by 7:30am  
8am flag-off for 10km, 8:15am flag-off for 5km  
and 8:30am flag-off for Parent & Child 1.5km Fun Run

**Registration**

[www.metta.org.sg/mettarun](http://www.metta.org.sg/mettarun)



**Banking in on Love, Batik and Flowers**

15 February 2017

Waxed batik painting may seem like an easy craft to many of us but little is known that the eye candy artwork takes an artist with years of experience and keen dexterity to create a beautiful masterpiece. Such is the honed experience of our Alumni youths with special needs who spend their apprenticeship with Metta Alumni's Arts@Metta upon graduation from Metta School. Staff from Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) got their hands-on experience at the intricate artwork when they came down for a half day batik painting workshop to get a feel of handling the complexity of the wax canting. Coached by Metta Alumni's young artists, SCB staff realised that it isn't easy to keep a steady hand while waxing the outline of the designs. It was a fun and humbling workshop for SCB staff as through the practical experience, they realise how much more concentration and hard work has been put in by Metta Alumni's youths, who despite their challenges, are able to regularly produce batik paintings for sale.



*If you like to have a try at our batik painting workshop, drop us an email at [alumni@metta.org.sg](mailto:alumni@metta.org.sg) to find out how you can go about it.*



**An Afternoon of Joy and Fun**

30 March 2017

40 Metta Home clients had a fun-filled afternoon when staff from PUB came down to engage them in games and an interaction session. The ever-popular bowling game got the clients ecstatic as each took turns to knock the pins down with the help of PUB staff. Jenga, stacking and balancing of paper cups atop each other and throwing ping pong balls into the box are among the other challenging table games for the afternoon. It was a joyous moment as huge smiles and boisterous laughters filled the faces of our clients especially when PUB staff belted out sing-along songs that got some of the clients joining in to dance, sing along and be merry.



# Hope Has Wings



The butterfly is an epitome of Endurance, Evolution, Hope, and LIFE!

Brightly coloured butterflies are aplenty yet dull-coloured butterflies often goes unnoticed; much like Metta Welfare Association's beneficiaries.

The butterfly is a significant metaphor of Metta's beneficiaries and their daily struggles through the metamorphosis of life's stages. With diligence, patience and endurance, Metta's Alumni youths with special needs individually hand-crafted these ceramic butterflies through a long and tedious process of kneading, rolling and cutting. The butterflies are then left to dry for hours before they are fired in the kiln.

Through the creation of the clay butterflies, this initiative is a representation of the efforts to educate, rehabilitate and improve the lives of Metta's beneficiaries.

Look past their disabilities and see the beauty in them. For every \$10 donation, you adopt an e-Butterfly and show your support for Metta's beneficiaries.

## Help them now:

[https://www.giving.sg/metta-welfare-association/hope\\_has\\_wings\\_mwa](https://www.giving.sg/metta-welfare-association/hope_has_wings_mwa)

**With every struggle overcome, hope awaits.**

Adopt a butterfly today.  
Be a Superhero and transform lives.

Scan QR code below to watch how our Alumni youths create the ceramic butterfly.



For more information, please email us at [events@metta.org.sg](mailto:events@metta.org.sg), or call at 6580 4688

## Fun Beyond The Classroom

In celebration of World Autism Awareness Day, Metta Preschool's psychologist, Ms Evania Yeo, shares some engaging activities and tips on interaction that parents can do at home with their children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).



Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is the name for a group of developmental disorders characterised by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviours, speech and nonverbal communication. Its cause is still unknown today. However, new research suggests that the mind of people with ASD is not integrated or connected the way it is in neuro-typical individuals. This deficit inevitably affects quality of interaction. Hence, it is imperative for young children with ASD to seek early intervention in the hopes of alleviating or correcting symptoms such as being socially disconnected.

Here are some activities which you may replicate at home which reinforces the therapies shared in the classroom:

### 1. Develop Connectedness

Developing connectedness can take place in any daily situation: from art and craft, food preparation, playing ball, reading a story, to keeping toys. For example: during a food preparation activity, you can slice up a banana and your child can lay the banana slices on a plate to be served. When keeping toys, you can hold the storage basket and your child can learn to pick up his toys and drop them into the basket. The

key is to create back and forth interaction by establishing a pattern with clear roles for your child and you.

### 2. Simplify

In our enthusiasm to do our best for our children, we do too much at times. Remember that less is more. Keep the room clean and simple so that you can focus on establishing a connection with your child. What distracts him? Cars, building blocks, or the iPad? Keep these distractions temporarily out of his sight. At the start, it will be difficult, however it brings the focus back to your relationship with your child.

### 3. Encourage Thinking

Help your child to develop thinking skills. For example: roll a ball back and forth. Make it fun for the both of you. Once the pattern is established, pass the ball a little differently. Toss it instead of rolling it, change your position, and wait for your child to orientate his. Establish the pattern first, then add variations. It usually takes a child a few minutes to understand the value of "us".

### 4. Give Responsibility

**a) Avoid verbal instructions**  
Your child needs to be aware of things

around him and realise what he has to do. By giving a verbal instruction, you are over compensating and not letting his brain work. It's the easy way out, and counterproductive in the long run. Therefore, describe what you see, instead of telling him what to do. For example: you may say "Your hands are dirty" instead of "Go and wash your hands".

### b) Give Time

A child takes about 45 seconds to process information. In a game activity that involves rolling a ball around the room or passing the ball, does your child notice if the ball has rolled away? Pause instead of fetching the ball immediately for your child. This period of inactivity will encourage him to think of the next course of action. However, if on an occasion that you have to fetch the ball, do say "Your ball has rolled away".

### 5. Save Positive Memories

The more exercise your child's brain receives, the better connected it becomes. Record a video on the progress of your child and share it with him. He will feel proud about being your communication partner with a sense of competency achieved. This will spur him on to try out new things as he will have positive memories to find comfort in.

## Living With Autism

*"My biggest challenge in caring for my son with autism is knowing what makes him happy"*

Caregiver Mdm Koh,  
mother of MHDAC client, Edsel Quek

21-year old Edsel Quek, was enrolled with Metta Home Day Activity Centre since 2015. Edsel has Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) since birth which saw the young man having frequent bouts of depression and mood swings prior to his enrolment with Metta Home Day Activity Centre. His mother, Mdm Koh, hopes that at the Day Activity Centre, her son can learn independence and contribute to society. She acknowledges that the journey is a long and arduous one but she is heartened with every little progress that her son makes.

1 in 150 children in Singapore are diagnosed with ASD, in a report by SG Enable's 3rd Enabling Masterplan (2017-2021) published in December 2016

Currently, there are a range of services (both non-residential and residential) that cater to the young and old with autism. There are also services that match people with ASD with employers in sheltered workshops that offers a structured environment as well as those who attends Day Activity Centres (DAC).

Residential services are available for individuals who require long-term care with the assistance of SG Enable, an agency dedicated to enabling persons with disabilities to disability related services.



# The Kampung Days

Visiting the last kampong in Singapore brings back nostalgic memories for these pioneer generationers.

Almost everyone has their bucket list and for some of us, it would mean reliving old memories and nostalgic moments to reminisce fond recollections. Such is the wish and dream of Metta Hospice patient, Mr Tan Poh Lye, Mr Jaafar Bin Uyob and the late Mr Koh Howe Chua. The pioneer generation and baby boomers spent their childhood in pre-industrialised Singapore where kampong living was the norm for everyone in those days. As Singapore progressed, the kampongs dwindled in numbers as they made way for urbanisation.

But all is not lost as in Singapore still stands the last surviving kampong at Lorong Buangkok. Rustic attap houses with plywood doors and window grills are surrounded by lush trees bearing tropical fruits from coconuts to jackfruits. Accompanied by Metta Hospice's palliative care team of nurses and counsellor, the trio were visibly ecstatic at being in a village that smelled and felt like where their childhood belonged.

"I used to climb coconut trees to pluck the coconuts!"

*Metta Hospice Care introduced the Make-A-Wish program in April 2014 for its patients to fulfil their final wishes. This program aims to bring across the message to our clients that regardless of where we come from, who we are or what we have become, no one should deserve anything less in our final moments. The Metta Hospice Make-A-Wish program is sponsored by The Singapore Ireland Fund and the Singapore Jain Religious Society.*



Gushing like a little boy, Mr Tan shared fond memories of his childhood days to everyone as manoeuvred his way along the rows of lime plants and banana trees

Mr Tan's Hospice companion, Mr Jaafar, was more collected. Not a man of many words, Jaafar remained in silence throughout most of

the journey as he keenly observed the nature surroundings leading to the village. He opened up as the team reached the kampong and shared stories of his fondest memories while growing up. Unlike his usual routine, the fresh air, greenery and open space was an immense change otherwise.

Despite spending just half a day at Lorong Buangkok, it was nevertheless a fulfilling outing and dream for all three men. The "Make-a-Wish" program would never happen without the sponsorship of The Singapore Ireland Fund (TSIF) and Singapore Jain Religious Society (SJRS).

## Join Us To Do Your Share For Our Community



### Be Our Fundraising Partner

As part of Metta's fundraising efforts to raise funds for its beneficiaries from nine various welfare centres, we invite corporate partners to join us in placing our donation boxes at your stores and outlets to cultivate the spirit of generosity and giving back to the community

Your partnership means a lot to us. Contributions will go towards funding of Metta's programmes and services which help children, youths and adults with intellectual disability, the elderly, chronically and terminally ill patients.

To join us as a Donation Box Placement partner, please register your interest to [events@metta.org.sg](mailto:events@metta.org.sg) or call our fundraising team at 6580 4688.

Scan QR code below to know more about Metta's donation box placement programme.

