

METTA

慈光心缘



Make Inclusion A Way of Life

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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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Make Inclusion A Way of Life



"If every child matters, every child has the right to be included. And that is so important for children with special needs."

Cherie Blair

The financial and emotional demands faced by families of persons with special needs can be overwhelming. Approaching the parents or caregivers with patience and compassion can have a positive impact on the tremendous stress that the caregivers face on a daily basis. Just as no one person is like another, no person with a disability is the same as another, even if he or she has the same disability.

As educators, doctors, nurses, therapists, and community partners that are involved with persons with special needs and their families, it is particularly important to consider what the families of our clients are going through to provide compassionate care, be it a listening ear or teaching caregivers with intervention strategies. The general public can also do their part with more education and knowledge so that we are not quick to judge another so easily if we chance upon their peculiar behaviours in public as we may never know that the person may have a disability unseen to the eye. Everyone of us is born different and unique, from our physical appearances to our abilities.

Accepting that everyone is different is the first step to making inclusion a way of our life. Through acceptance, we focus on the abilities so that we see the person first.

We must treat people with disabilities respectfully, considering them as able and capable as others in society. We must not let them feel as if they are being pitied. Treating them on par with other people will be the best gift we can offer them. We must encourage and uplift them in their endeavours to be successful through their abilities, by offering our support and respect.

Triple Gems Blessings

Venerable Shi Fa Zhao BBM
President
Metta Welfare Association

Happy 10th Anniversary Metta Charity Run!

28 September 2019
Angsana Green @ East Coast Park

It was a sunny Saturday morning in an unprecedented massive turnout of over 1,700 runners at the Metta Charity X Run 2019 at Angsana Green, East Coast Park. With the good weather and air in our favour, cheery smiles registered on almost everyone's faces. Positive vibes was in the air throughout the entire event with everyone buzzing with excitement. Our participants' enthusiasm was further felt when many joined in to groove with fitness instructors from Usana in an energetic Zumba workout after the invigorating run.

Metta takes this opportunity to thank all our donors, sponsors, runners and volunteers for their contribution in making the Run and milestone a successful event.



X-tra Mile Campaign

In celebration of Metta Charity Run's 10th Anniversary, we commemorated the special occasion with the X-tra Mile Campaign. Many shoes were donated for the campaign which was collected by our recycling partner for a donation in return. This donation goes into the purchase of groceries from Metta's beneficiaries.

Donated shoes are dropped off into a custom-built acrylic X-structure, for which Metta was awarded the title of "Largest Sculpture Made Out of Shoes" by the Singapore Book of Records. The event's Guest-of-Honour, MP for East Coast GRC, Ms Jessica Tan topped the last donation drop-off with her pair of pre-loved track shoes into the X-sculpture.



Metta Charity Movie Screening II: Letting It Go No More



The ever-popular Frozen is back with a sequel in a computer-animated musical fantasy film by Walt Disney Animation Studios.

We would like to invite you to join us this November by bringing your kids to the Metta Charity Movie or by donating tickets for those less fortunate!

Proceeds from the Metta Charity Movie will go to Metta Welfare Association which serves some 1,100 beneficiaries under its care. Your donation will fund the various welfare programmes and comprehensive range of services that goes beyond the mere fulfilment of our beneficiaries' requirements.



For donations of \$50, \$80 and \$100, a movie ticket, a popcorn combo and a goodie bag will be given as an appreciation. All donations are tax deductible at 250%.

Scan QR code or check out <https://www.metta.org.sg/mettamovie/> for more information!

We like to thank our sponsors for supporting the Metta Charity Movie II 2019 with their kind contributions:



Towards Better Living

The activities taught and practised by clients from Metta Day Activity Centre for the Intellectually Disabled (IDAC) may seem like a normal task to many of us but these little acts of training helps develop the gross and fine motor skills of these adults with special needs, many of whom struggle with ADLs (Activities of Daily Living) in their everyday lives. Apart from it, the day activity centre does more than just develop the motor skills of our clients – they train the clients to manage their emotions and outbursts.

IDAC Centre Supervisor, Ms Kookila Kunju, shares the activities that the clients pick up at the Centre which help them progress towards living an independent life.

Junita Binte Senin (36 years old; has Intellectual Disability)



Clothes Pegging

The action of depressing the sides of a clothes peg to open its grip and line them up in a single file strengthens the fine motor skills and finger grasps of Junita. Suffering from intellectual disability, Junita is weak in both fine and gross motor skills. This activity helps her to strengthen her hand muscles.

After years of practise at IDAC, Junita is able to feed herself without dropping her spoon constantly as her grip has strengthened over time due to the individual therapy plan that addresses Junita's weaknesses.

Chew Jin Li (35 years old; has Intellectual Disability, Developmental Delay and Autism)

Jin Li was given a daily one-on-one training by his Training Officers due to his short attention span and was taught sexual awareness and appropriate behaviour.

Jigsaw Puzzles

Through jigsaw puzzles, the activity helps Jin Li to focus on his hand and eye coordination

and develop his cognitive concentration while distracting him away from inappropriate behaviours.



Not only have vast improvements been noticed in Jin Li, he is also now able to perform several other tasks such as assisting with housekeeping of the Centre after lunch time and fine tuning his fine motor skills through occupational therapy activities.

Lee Kow Song (40 years old; has Mild Intellectual Disability and Autism)



Lee Kow Song displayed unprovoked, aggressive behaviour prior to joining IDAC. His actions created much inconvenience to his family and neighbours until he was referred to IDAC for therapy and training.

Soft Approach

Using the psychological soft approach, Training Officers from IDAC patiently spent time with Kow Song, giving him one-to-one individualised therapy. Simple acts such as praising and rewarding Kow Song after a job well done helps to instil a sense of self achievement in him. Our Training Officers constantly counsel Kow Song by engaging him in sharing his feelings and calming him down during his outbursts.

Occupational Therapy Handicraft

Fine motor activities such as clay moulding and painting of art pieces helps to allay Kow Song's aggressive behaviours. His temperament has shown much improvement much to the delight of his family members. In IDAC, Kow Song is one of the most cheerful clients at the Centre as he constantly has a smile on his face.

His cheerfulness can also be seen in his demeanour as he helps the Training Officers in housekeeping during meal times, such as sweeping the floor and carrying the food trays for them.

Seah Ming En (29 years old; has Mild Intellectual Disability and Autism)



When Seah Ming En first joined IDAC, she displayed difficult challenging behaviours to everyone around her. Getting her to come for daily sessions at IDAC was a huge feat for her caregiver. She took no interest in any social and table activities set out for her and often showed her displeasure and uncooperativeness by crying hysterically. It was also noted during that same time that Ming En's fine motor skills was impaired due to her constant action of keeping her fingers shut tight all the time.

What Was Done

Similarly, like Kow Song, the psychological soft approach was used on Ming En. The Training Officers treated her like family and made her feel welcome.

As Ming En required more activities to work her finger grasps, she was given wooden jigsaw puzzle piece that has grips on them for easy holding. Over time as Ming En progressed, the challenge was upgraded to more intricate tasks, such as treading of beads to create beautiful decorative bracelets.

After close to three years of daily training at IDAC, Ming En showed marked improvements to her fine motor skills and her once uncooperative behaviour became an issue of the past. Now, Ming En looks forward to coming to IDAC for daily sessions as every day is a fun-filled day of mingling with fellow peers and creative activities for her.

Making Learning A Joy

Article contributed by Eulisia Er,
Educational Psychologist, Metta School

Activity-based Intervention for Families at Metta School

Research has documented that children with developmental disabilities have an increased risk of developing difficult behaviours which persist through late childhood and adolescence. As a result, families of children with developmental disabilities often experience elevated levels of parenting stress, poor mental health and reduced psychological well-being.

Recent evidence has shown that family-focused interventions, specifically that of improving parent-children relationships, have been effective. Positive outcomes include a sustained improvement over time in parent-related dysfunctions and also a reduction of externalizing behavioural issues in children. For example, intervention efforts on stressful parent-child systems may possibly reduce behavioural emotional problems among children, enhance the parents' knowledge regarding their children's needs and improved parental satisfaction and self-confidence in their role. Parents showed greater knowledge and are more contingent and sensitive to their children's needs which partially mediates the influence of parenting stress.

A research conducted by Metta School's Allied Health Department, as part of its efforts to understand the benefits of activity-based interventions in strengthening parent-child/family relationships, saw students and their families invited to take part in the research activity. The research findings show activity-based interventions is designed with the focus on having parents spend more time with their children through interesting activities that may improve the lines of communication, parental understanding of their children's strengths and difficulties which therefore leads to a major source of stress relief. The positive memories that these families build during these no-pressure timings will act as buffers when more stressful times inevitably come around in their daily lives.

Phase 1 of the study conducted in the first half of 2019 yielded results that indicated that the intervention was effective in improving family functioning and behaviours in school-aged children with developmental disabilities. From the post-data provided by the families, there was a significant reduction in parental stress levels, the child's challenging behaviour, parenting hassles and an increase in parenting competence.



The feedback that some of the families shared with us about the programme:

"I have a better understanding of the style to teach my child and his behaviours within the condition given."

Parent of a 11-year old child with mild intellectual disability

"My child performed beyond my expectations. Can follow instructions, co-operate and is very creative. I learnt to let go and let my child do the activity together with me."

Parent of an 8-year old child with mild intellectual disability

"Realised my child can be rather impatient in approaching the activity. We will work on his patience. Therefore the session has been useful."

Parent of a 10-year old child with autism

"Found out that my son can be really creative and that he can be really good at his colouring"

Parent of a 14-year old child with autism

** Due to privacy concerns, the names of parents will not be published.*

In view of the research findings, it is therefore important for parents to focus on building relationships with their children with developmental disabilities through co-participation in activities.

How do parents go about with activities?

As recommended by The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning

of Vanderbilt University, these 5 elements adopted in *Activity-based Interventions for Families* are important for parent-child bonding activities:

Incorporate your child's interest: e.g., visual-arts

To spend quality time with your child

Follow your child's lead during activity such as listening to the child's ideas

Teach/Assist your child in a positive manner

Provide praise / encouragement and acknowledge your child's efforts

Diagram: Elements adopted in *Activity-based Interventions for Families*

As with Activity-based Interventions for Families, parent-child bonding activities should be carried out on a regular basis preferably on a bi-weekly or monthly basis. Some easy to access activities for parents (depending on the child's interest and ability level) includes:

- Baking
- Card making
- Lego
- Mosaic Art
- Painting

Activity-based Interventions for Families Phase 2 has commenced at Metta School and will be completed in December 2019.

Phase 1 results was presented at Asia Pacific Autism Conference 2019 in Singapore and Phase 1 + Phase 2 preliminary results was presented at the 16th IASSIDD World Conference in Glasgow, leading international research and practice meetings in the field of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

An Egg-cellent Culinary Affair

24 August 2019
Metta School

A culinary storm was whipped up at Metta School when staff from LingJack Engineering Works Pte Ltd paired up with Metta School students from the F&B vocational course in an egg-citing CSR cooking competition. With a theme revolving the ubiquitous egg, the competing dishes are judged according to their taste, creativity, appearance, plating skills and area cleanliness. Metta School's culinary trainers, Chef Azhar and Tommy Chee briefed the rules and instructions to their respective team, as well as preside over the two competing teams. Together with a staff from LingJack as among the panel of judges, the two chefs had a hard time determining the final winner as all of the dishes presented were of a close tie. After much consideration, Team 10 consisting of Lingjack staff Ferrina, James and Metta School student Kay Kit emerged the winner with their cute and quirky "eggie" aglio olio dish. Congratulations to Team 10 and all staff at LingJack and Metta School students for their hard work and efforts!



A Magical Children's Day

1 and 2 October 2019
Metta PreSchool @Punggol

Staff from Standard Chartered Bank gave a surprise Children's Day party to the children of Metta PreSchool @Punggol with a sponsored magic show performance and meals. The magician entertained our children with magic tricks such as making colours appear in an empty colouring book and a puppet rabbit ventriloquism act, as well as handed out sculpted balloons in the shapes of flowers, fishes, water guns, Winnie the Pooh, and many more. The celebration wrapped up with a Happy Meal from McDonalds that filled the hungry appetites of our little tots.

Held over two consecutive days, the party enthralled all the students and left them lasting memories on the joys of being children.



Our Stories: Chua Kin Hoon and Kaydo Huang

Never Letting Her Down

Chua Kin Hoon got up and embraced Nurse Anisa in tears, the staff nurse at Metta Home for the Disabled recalled. Apart from having an impaired mental capacity, 47-year old Kin Hoon faces difficulty in communicating and controlling her emotions.

Earlier, Kin Hoon threw a fit during an activity session. After much persuasion and comfort from Nurse Anisa, Kin Hoon came to realise that it was all a misunderstanding and hugged her as a show of her apology.

Such scenarios are the norm for Nurse Anisa, who often deals with people with intellectual disabilities like Kin Hoon at Metta Home for the Disabled. Down syndrome, also called Trisomy 21, is a genetic disorder that results when a person is born with three, rather than two, copies of chromosome 21. The extra chromosome results in delayed growth, flat facial features and lower immunity to a number of illnesses.

Life was not easy for Kin Hoon, whose main caregiver, her mother, passed on in early 2019. Upon her mother's death, Kin Hoon's siblings



took turns to care for their youngest sister. However, it was challenging as the family members had their own family commitments and are unable to render full care and

attention to Kin Hoon. As much as they tried to coax Kin Hoon to stay with them, Kin Hoon was unwilling as she missed her late mother too much. It was also during this same time that Kin Hoon began displaying behaviours such as throwing tantrums and crying for no reason. This made the caregiving tasks for her siblings a challenge.

Under MSF's efficient framework and assistance, the family received help when Kin Hoon was referred to Metta Home for the Disabled for long-term residential care. Metta Home allows Kin Hoon to be cared for in a structured and safe environment, while providing daily activities and outings for Kin Hoon to explore new places and interact with the other residents. Through the continuing efforts of the nurses at Metta Home, Kin Hoon gradually learned to trust her new caregivers and showed improvements to her previous bad temperament. With regular engagements, she has also learnt to control and communicate her emotions to the nurses, which made Kin Hoon a much happier person. Kin Hoon's siblings, who bring her back to their home during the weekends, are delighted by their sister's uplifted personality and cheerful persona.

A Different Ability Altogether

For most children of Kaydo Huang's age, they attend enrichment classes on phonics and self-improvement. However, the 5-year old boy attends a different kind of class. Upon recommendations of his doctor at KKH, Kaydo, who was diagnosed with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), is required to attend Metta PreSchool @Punggol for a weekly two-day early intervention program on top of his regular childcare classes.

How It Happened

Kaydo's parents noticed that their son wasn't speaking and had difficulty communicating his wants at age 2½. It was also difficult for his parents to understand Kaydo and the peculiar behaviours that he started displaying, such as, fearful of being in crowded places like playgrounds. Much as the Huangs try to initiate their child to join the other children in a common play area, Kaydo would simply protest and avoid it at all cost. Kaydo's speech language delay also affected his social interaction with people and he would often keep to himself. If he needed something, Kaydo would only use hand gestures to communicate instead of voicing it out like most kids would.

What Was Done

Metta PreSchool @Punggol has been adopting a family-centered practice to involve the family, such as upskilling Kaydo's mother with training and caregiver support groups. Kaydo's class teacher has been communicating very closely with his mother by providing regular updates and exchanges information or strategies to support Kaydo and his family.

With the smaller class ratio supported by specially trained teachers and transdisciplinary professionals in a structured conducive learning environment, Kaydo has made significant improvement since he joined Metta Preschool @Punggol two years ago. A quiet and introverted child previously, Kaydo is now one of the most talkative children in his class. He is also able to express his emotions and thoughts and always look forward to attend his early intervention classes.

As Mrs Huang puts it, *"We are very grateful to have Metta at our side to accompany him to grow well and better every single day. We would like to offer our sincere gratitude to all Metta teachers and others who have been helping*



Kaydo all the time in his journey from toddler to kindergarten (sic)"

As with all loving mother's hopes, she envisioned that Kaydo can be healthy and independent, with the ability to face the challenges and live a normal life like other children.

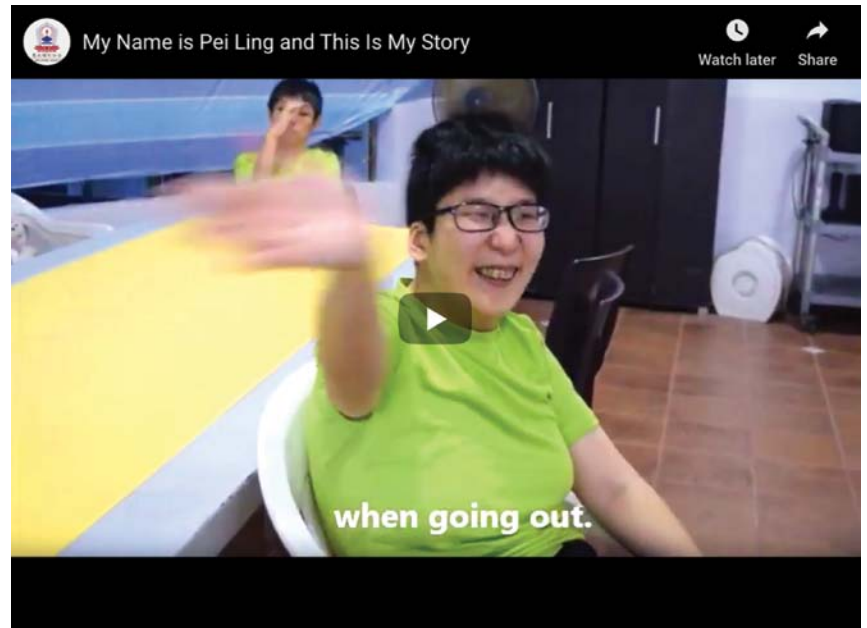


My Name is Pei Ling and This is My Story

Beneath the nation's bustling growth, rich culture and diversity, a small fraction of society's population goes untold and fall through the cracks. Their stories are not told. Such is the case of 30 year old Metta Home client, Lim Pei Ling, who was diagnosed with intellectual disability at birth. Pei Ling came to Metta Home at aged 16 and have since called the Home, its clients and staff as her family. At Metta Home, Pei Ling is taught activities of daily living (ADL) skills to be more independent as she wasn't able to perform these tasks before.

Search "My Name is Pei Ling" on Youtube to watch her story and journey with us.

In conjunction with Disability Awareness Month, Metta Welfare Association seeks to raise awareness and funds for its programmes which aims to equip all recipients like Pei Ling with the skills and means to lead independent and fulfilling lives, so as to achieve social integration and an enhanced quality of life.



Help support a Person with Disability (PWD) in his progress for Self-Reliance by scanning QR code on left or visit:

<https://www.giving.sg/metta-welfare-association/limpeiling>

Behind The Scenes

Metta School Students Rehearsing for Metta Shine Night 2019



Catch Metta Shine Night 2019 on Friday, 8 Nov at 6pm in the Auditorium of Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD). For more information, please contact Ms Pang Shea Lee at 6788 5800 or email enquiry@mettaschool.edu.sg.