

METTA

慈光心缘



Building Immunity For The Community

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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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为社区提升免疫力 Building Immunity For The Community

2021新冠肺炎已向人类明示了一件事；那就是它不分男女老少，也不分国籍、种族和宗教。由于一种似乎从无变有的新病毒，以高气溶胶传播的方式扩散在人类之间，加剧了大家的恐惧与不确定性，我们许多人经历了一个艰难的2020年。一年已过，人们对这种病毒有了更多的了解，如今制药公司马不停蹄地生产出数十亿瓶疫苗来治疗全世界尽可能多的人。在新加坡，我们非常感恩能够让我们的老年人口从今年1月开始已接种疫苗。慈光福利协会的医疗小组亦已展开这项活动，让弱势社群及我们的年长受益人，在我们的慈光乐龄日间康复中心内接种疫苗。

我们的中心也采用了虚拟方案，让我们的受益者在安全和有利的环境中继续接受培训。在慈光，我们相信必须与时俱进，充分利用科技，才能让我们继续日常营运，不间断地为我们的受益者与社区服务。

岁不我与。世界可能不断日新月异，但要跟上时代进化，就得由我们来决定。我们每个人都有责任，通过负责任的行为，维护社区的安全。我借此机会恳请大家敞开心扉，保持警惕，共同度过这个充满挑战的时期。尽管有逆境，但没有任何更好的方法可以通过毅力、牺牲和决心来尊严一个人的诚信。

If there is one thing that COVID-19 has revealed to all of us, it is that it does not discriminate against age, gender, nationality, race and religion. We had lived through the trying times of 2020. Fears and uncertainties heightened as a new virus seemingly appeared out of nowhere with high transmission and evolving ability, infecting human globally. A year on, more has been known about this virus as pharmaceutical companies rush to churn out billions of vials of the vaccines to treat as many people worldwide as possible. In Singapore, we are glad to have our elderly population vaccinated from as early as January this year. Metta Welfare Association's medical team has also rolled out the exercise to have the vulnerable group, our elderly beneficiaries, vaccinated at our Metta Day Rehabilitation Centre for the Elderly.

Our centres have adopted virtual programmes for our beneficiaries to continue their training in a safe and conducive environment. At Metta, we believe in keeping up with the times to harness the best that technology can offer us, enabling us to continue our daily operations to serve our beneficiaries and the community without any interruptions.

Time and tide wait for no man. The world may be ever-changing, but it is up to us to constantly evolve to keep up with the times. Each of us plays a part in keeping the community safe through responsible behaviours. I take this opportunity to implore everyone to keep our hearts open as we remain vigilant together to get through this challenging period. There is no better way to dignify one's integrity through perseverance, sacrifices, and determination despite the adversities to come.

Triple Gems Blessings

昭坤法照 BBM Venerable Chao Khun Fa Zhao BBM
慈光福利协会主席 President of Metta Welfare Association



Bringing the World of Story-Telling to Them

Article by Metta volunteer Rochona Bose and edited by Jasmine Ong

Storytelling is one of the unique ways to engage young children and take them through a journey of interactive learning. With 9 February being one of the story-telling dates, students from Metta PreSchool @Punggol enjoyed an online storytelling and craft session for their students with special needs where the virtual journey captivated the children in participation.

The Mobile Library, affectionately known as Molly, is a mobile library bus operated by the National Library Board (NLB). The library's storytelling and craft sessions is a service provided free by NLB, which partnered with Metta PreSchool @Punggol for the one-hour session over Zoom as part of the preschool's continuous learning journey. There were a total of 5 sessions over three weeks for the different classes.

Despite not having the physical face to face interaction, emotions, warmth and the connection between the NLB staff and the children remains the same through engaging and participative storytelling and the students.

The children enjoyed listening to the story of "The Ungrateful Tiger" and "Kaza Jizo" as they were involved in the use of various props along with music, sounds and dramatic storytelling



techniques by the Molly library. As excited as they are, the children were swinging, dancing and interacting in all ways possible while participating in the session, facilitated by their class teachers. The smile on their faces and their eyes' brightness spoke volumes of how much they had relished the experience.

Apart from storytelling, the children also got involved in origami by learning to create hats out of coloured papers. Their virtual story-teller from NLB guided them in decorating hats by

drawing, colouring, glueing pictures and pasting stickers. The children were at their creative best while decorating the hats and were equally excited to put them on upon completion.

At the end of the day, the children were filled with happiness, cheer and confidence when they brought home their origami hat.

We are grateful for partnership opportunities such as Molly Library, where our children learn in various environments.

A Charitable Toy Story

That toy you don't need can bring joy to another child's life. That's the belief of staff and students at Temasek Polytechnic when they held a donation toy drive for the students at Metta School and Metta PreSchool @Punggol. Close to 660 various kinds of preloved enrichment toys such as puzzles, board games to soft toys and action figures were among the many donated items. The toys and developmental games and puzzles kept our children entertained and enriched in their learning curriculum that works on their critical thinking and fine motor skills. The young recipients of the toys and games were brightened and full of ecstatic delight when they were greeted with their classroom toys. Thank you Temasek Polytechnic for the smiles you brought to our children!



Wonders Of The Mind



Seah Chee Meng stood intently in front of the rows of magnificent cactuses as he observed their trichomes and glochids running all over the cactus' spine and cladodes. With a sketchbook and a pencil in hand, he began tracing their form and note their every intricate detail, taking in their beauty down in his notes. Like his fellow artists, Arts@Metta's artists spent a fulfilling day trip at the Flower Dome and Cloud Forest in Gardens by the Bay, observing nature up close, which gave them the creativity and inspiration for their batik painting designs.

The purpose of the outing was to allow our artists to sight the perennial blossoms in their natural state. As part of Arts@Metta's plans to incorporate new concepts and ideas into our batik painting artworks, the artists also visited iconic Singaporean landmarks such as the Merlion, the Singapore Flyer and Marina Bay Sands. Our artists have been exposed and trained to produce artworks of native flowers like the iconic Vanda Miss Joaquim orchid through the years. This was the first time our artists went on a still art sketching activity.

They saw for their own eyes the actual buildings and landscape views, as well as the real-life flowers and plants. They learnt the importance of preserving old buildings, the story behind these landmarks and were given more headspace to share new ideas.

Among the most memorable experience would be the artists meeting one another after so long since work from home measures were put in place in 2020. Brenda, one of our artists who could not make it for the outing, joined us through video conferencing on the excursion day. We may be physically apart from Brenda, but our hearts are close to each other.

Building Immunity For The Community



Metta Medical Care held its first COVID-19 vaccination exercise for its clients in its part to support immunity for the community. Held on 23 March 2021 at Metta Day Rehabilitation Centre for the Elderly (MDRC), over 60 elderly clients took their first COVID-19 vaccination. The morning atmosphere was a mix of calmness and anxiousness among the elderly as some were apprehensive over the injection, while others took it casually with no expectations. Many of the clients had their caregivers and/or family members accompany them for the vaccination exercise. Keeping in line with safe management measures, the clients are segregated into six separate slots throughout the day with 12 to 13 elderly in each batch. Staff Nurse of MDRC, Fareha Faeizah Binte Mohamed Yusoff, busily tended to the clients to ensure that they are feeling well before and after the vaccination, as well as check that the elderly have taken a light breakfast before they arrived. This is to ensure that there would be no risks of light-headedness after the process is over.

Metta Welfare Association would also like to thank the staff of Health Promotion Board who assisted us with the registration and vaccination process.



Post-stroke patient and client of Metta Day Rehabilitation Centre for the Elderly, Chan Pueh Teoh (above picture) is among the elderly who

came by for the exercise. He says, "It is the duty to our health and the nation that we keep ourselves vaccinated."

Agreeing with him is Mdm Ling Xia Lan (left picture) who feels that prevention is always better than cure for herself and her family members. Despite looking visibly sceptical before the injection, Mdm Ling shared that the whole experience isn't as 'scary' as she expected it to be.



Despite her frail condition, Mdm Fernandez (above picture) is another client who was eager to have her vaccination against COVID-19. Together with her grandson who accompanied the elderly lady to the premises, Mdm Fernandez was all brave and showed no signs of anxiety.



For some others, caring family members volunteered for the vaccination on behalf of their elderly parent. Says Mr Ong, the son of MDRC client 84-year-old Mdm Poh Chor Hway (above picture), "Venerable Chao Khun Fa Zhao ^{BBM} is indeed a benevolent person. Metta arranged to have the vaccination done at their premises because it is very convenient for me to bring my mother down for her jab as she is wheelchair-bound."



91-year-old Mdm Heng Kim Jong (above picture) was accompanied by her daughter, Ms Anna Ching, whose family was initially apprehensive on having the vaccination as the elderly lady hardly leaves her home due to her limited mobility from a previous fractured hip and recovery from ischemic stroke. Upon discussion with other family members, they finally agree to have Mdm Heng have the vaccination.



Mdm Chia Siew Eng's family (above picture) was full of support when the government announced the vaccination of all elderly Singaporean citizens and permanent residents. Frankie Lim did not hesitate to register his 95-year-old mother to ensure that she stays safe in these uncertain times. Apart from it, the close proximity of MDRC from Mdm Chia's house made the commute a breeze as that would mean she would not have to take the bus to the polyclinic or nearest community centre.

Scan QR code find out more about MDRC.



Immunity Building and You: A Quick Guide 5 easy tips for staying strong and healthy

Article by Metta volunteer Nicholas Lee and edited by Jasmine Ong

Maintaining a strong immune system is a keystone of a healthy and happy life. Much more than just taking sufficient Vitamin C, a strong immune system is only possible with a healthy lifestyle. This is particularly relevant in our Golden Years, where the onset of some chronic illnesses become more common. With World Health Day observed in April, here are some tips that everyone can follow for strong immunity.

1. Maintain a well-balanced diet and drinking sufficient water

A well-balanced diet ensures that our body receives the nutrients required to effectively fight off viruses and recover quickly from infections.



This can be achieved through a diet heavy in fruits and vegetables, wholegrains and lean meat, together with a low intake of salt, sugar, cholesterol and fat. Sufficient intake of fluids, water in particular, is also important as it keeps us well hydrated and is essential in nutrient transfer in our body.

2. Manage stress levels and have sufficient rest

Stress is our body's natural response to difficult situations, allowing us to respond quickly to the problems at hand. The stress hormone, cortisol, is released to direct the body's physical and mental functions on resolving high pressure situations.

However, stress needs to be managed well in order to avoid developing chronic stress. Cortisol has a suppressive effect on the immune system, which over time, can negatively affect the body's ability to defend against diseases.

By taking care of our mental well-being and getting sufficient sleep, we can manage the cortisol levels in our body and allow our body to mount a better immune response when necessary.

3. Stay active and spend time outdoors

Leading an active lifestyle and spending time outdoors not only keeps us fit, but also helps reduce the risks of developing chronic diseases. Spending time outdoors in the sun helps meet our daily Vitamin D requirement, which is essential in the absorption of calcium; Sufficient intake of both is required for strong, healthy bones.

For the elderly, strolls around the park, gardening and *tai-chi* are great low-intensity activities that can be enjoyed with friends and family. Such activities are also a great way to relieve stress and bring happiness into your life.



4. Avoid smoking and drinking

Smoking and alcohol consumption should be avoided as prolonged use impairs our ability to defend against infection. Alternative stress relieving activities like exercise can be a great alternative with positive effects to the body! Additionally, by removing such habits, the risks of contracting associated diseases such as lung and liver cancer is greatly reduced.

5. Remember to take your medication and get vaccinated



Persons with chronic conditions, such as hypertension or diabetes, should remember to take medication regularly and attend medical check-ups with doctors to ensure that their conditions are under control. By

doing so, this prevents further strain on the body's immune system, allowing it to focus on fighting off other incoming infections, rather than managing the symptoms that come with these conditions.

Finally, everyone should get vaccinated as recommended under the National Adult Immunisation Schedule (NAIS). These include vaccinations against seasonal flu and pneumococcal diseases. With the gradual roll-out of Covid-19 vaccinations to all Singaporeans, everyone should sign up for the Covid-19 Vaccination at their nearest Polyclinic or Vaccination Centres when it is available as well.

For other areas of interest that have not been covered by this article, do head over to the Health Promotion Board (HPB) website for more detailed advice on leading a healthy lifestyle and building a stronger, more robust immune system.

Metta Welfare Association Scholarship Award Ceremony 2021 and Launch of Metta School's 20th Anniversary

17 Apr 2021
Metta School



Since 2017, Metta Welfare Association (MWA) has been giving out annual Scholarship support to Metta School students/ alumni. Students who require further financial assistance are provided with additional financial support. This scholarship/bursary encourages our students to further their NITEC/Higher NITEC education journey with the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) through the Education Trust Fund scheme introduced four years ago. Each recipient of the Award received cash of \$500 handed out by Metta Welfare Association's President, Venerable Chao Khun Fa Zhao ^{BBM}, who graced the ceremony.

This year, the Scholarship Award Ceremony is held at the Metta School hall on 17 April 2021. The ceremony is in conjunction with Metta School's launch of the 20th Anniversary Commemorative Magazine that documents the history and achievements of the institution. The magazine shares the school's history from 2001 to 2021, its core programme, signature programme – Performing and Visual Arts (PVA), Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) and other school activities. The magazine also featured Metta School students from different age groups and various programmes.

Metta School and MWA would like to congratulate our students who received the MWA Scholarship to continue their learning journey. We wish them all the best in their studies at ITE.

The achievements of our students:

- 1 student studying Full Time Nitec in Asian Culinary Arts
- 1 student studying Full Time Nitec in Digital and Precision Engineering
- 1 student studying Full Time Nitec in Electronics and Internet of Thing
- 1 student studying Full Time Nitec in Hospitality Operations
- 1 student studying Full Time Nitec in Retail Services
- 2 students studying Full Time Nitec in Pastry & Baking
- 3 students studying Full Time Nitec in Western Culinary Arts



Scan QR code to read or download Metta School's 20th Anniversary Commemorative Magazine.



All About Autism And Our Children

Article by Metta volunteer Binita Chaubey and edited by Jasmine Ong

Autism comes from 'autos', the Greek word for 'self', and a person on the autism spectrum is often referred to as someone who lives in a world of his own. In children, some of the typical traits of autism include difficulty in social interaction with others, need for sameness (e.g., playing with the same toy), unusually strong sensory reactions (i.e. to one or more of their five senses), or emotional reactions, repetitive body movements etc. The United Nations (UN) has internationally commemorated World Autism Awareness Day on the 2nd of April every year to raise awareness about autism and recognize and support various programmes conducted by its member states.

Early detection and redressal of autism and related disorders are of high importance as children get shaped up at this very young age. The learning curve for PreSchoolers with autism is different from their peers. These children need special attention & support to address their social, physical, intellectual development and curriculum education. At Metta PreSchool @ Punggol, we take holistic care of these children and work with their families to address their special needs with the objective of bringing them to the mainstream & leading a normal healthy life.

Dylan Koh, Raphael Wong, and Long Ji Rui are PreSchoolers with Metta PreSchool @Punggol who are diagnosed with autism at an early age. Among the three, both Dylan and Raphael are SG50 babies. While some PreSchoolers go on with the traditional educational curriculum, Dylan and Raphael's parents faced the uphill challenge of acceptance and concerns with their child's academic pathway.

Dylan's Learning Journey

As Dylan was growing up, his parents noticed behavioural traits in him, such as speech delay, difficulty in social interaction, and Dylan's



Dylan exhibits stimming by constantly spinning his toy car's wheels and displaying a lack of functional play, both of which are symptoms of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

inability to take instructions. After a formal diagnosis at KK Women's and Children's Hospital in 2018, Dylan was enrolled in Metta PreSchool @Punggol the following year. Since then, Metta PreSchool's teachers have worked tirelessly on Dylan and adopted various teaching strategies such as Structured Teaching, Picture Communication Exchanges System, including personalizing his intervention plans. A therapist was also appointed to help Dylan to improve upon himself. As of today, Dylan has started to understand instructions from his teachers and responds well to day-to-day instructions with improved attention and focus. Says Michelle, Dylan's teacher, "We are very hopeful that Dylan would be able to apply the strategies and be able to be independent with skills learnt at our PreSchool and cope very well with later phases of his life, as he continues to show improvement."

EIPIC Training for Raphael

Like Dylan, Raphael was referred to KK Hospital for his delayed speech, communication and comprehension difficulties. As a result, Raphael was recommended to attend EIPIC (Early Intervention Programme for Infants & Children) Program with Metta PreSchool. Among Raphael's training, the teachers also worked with his



Raphael performing a circuit of OT exercises with the assistance of Senior OT, Heidi Mosqueriola, as part of the therapy to observe routine in his daily life.

parents on various home-based strategies, such as having a workstation with photos of suggested tasks during the national Circuit Breaker period in 2020. Substantial improvements were observed in Raphael from improved communication, adaptive abilities, alongside enhanced gross motor skills (e.g., activities such as walking, running, sitting etc.) and fine motor skills (e.g., clasping objects, writing, drawing etc.).

Early Intervention, Brighter Future

Long Ji Rui is another student who had benefitted

from Metta PreSchool's EIPIC programme. Ji Rui was diagnosed with autism at the tender age of 2½ years old through behaviours that he displayed to his parents and teachers. Among the challenges faced by children with autism is the difficulty in communication and expressing their thoughts. Social interaction is also an area of deficit for Ji Rui. Through a series of carefully planned differentiated activities and individualized visual supports, Metta PreSchool's teachers devised fun and engaging games for Ji Rui to develop his interest in communication with others and open himself to express his emotions and needs more freely. Ji Rui proved to be a fast learner. He communicates well and is also able to follow instructions apart from showing improvements in his motor skills. At his progress, his teachers are working hard to equip him with skills to be more communicative and interactive in social environments. Ji Rui is expected to be comfortable with social interactions very soon and become part of the mainstream education system.

It has been a very fulfilling journey for Metta to help these young children cope with their difficulties in their formative years and gradually help these young children to learn skills to be successful in their formative years and beyond.. With these early interventions and specially curated programmes, we firmly believe this will undoubtedly help create a better future for children with special needs because no one should be left behind



A Growing Problem

One in 150 children in Singapore has autism, a higher rate than the World Health Organisation's global figure of one in 160 children.

How You Can HELP US to Help Them

At Metta PreSchool @Punggol, we take holistic care of these children and work with their families to address their special needs with the objective of bringing them to the mainstream & leading a normal healthy life. This fundraising campaign aims to raise sufficient resources to fund the individualised early intervention programmes and services to these children.

Scan QR codes to watch how your donation helps them



giving.sg



GIVE ASIA



Mother's Day Special

Show Mum your love when you present her with Metta Café's eggless Chocolate Fudge Cake (500g).

For a limited time, order one for only \$40 during this special moment.

All our cakes and pastries are baked with love by Metta School Alumni youths with special needs. We strive to help these youths achieve self-reliance and help them to create future employment opportunities through our comprehensive training and development programmes.



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