

A Publication Printed By
The Society for the Physically Disabled

extrapage



▲ RADM Teo Chee Hean taking a keen interest in the assistive devices available at the Assistive Technology Centre

COVER STORIES

- **SPD Education Programme Disburses \$200,000 to 171 Students** 1, 2
- **Web Design Team of People with Disabilities Begins Operations** 12

IN & AROUND

- **SPD Sports cum Family Day 2003** 2
- **A Rousing Start to the Year** 3
- **Annual Staff Dinner 2003** 4
- **Visit By JAED Promotes Goodwill and Understanding** 5
- **Students of St Theresa's Convent Offer Help to SPD** 5
- **Fundraising**
 - Slow Economic Condition No Foil to Charity Hongbao 2003 6
 - Junk's Alive at the Singapore River Raft Race 2003 6
 - All-Disabled, All-Singaporean, Unsupported Ascent of Mexico's Highest Summit in aid of SPD 7
 - SPD's Donation Box Exercise Expands 8
 - BRAND'S Second Cap-Collection Drive Raises \$20,000 for the SPD Education Programme 8
- **International Sports Celebrities Visit SPD** 9
- **The Pittsburgh PEBBLES PDA Project** 9

FEATURE

- **Love Never Fails...** 10
- **Learning From All Things** 11

SPD Education Programme Disburses \$200,000 To 171 Students

Helping hands from MOE allows SPD Education Programme to do more for student recipients who will receive educational assistive devices to enhance their learning capabilities

“**E**DUCATION is of paramount importance for all of us, regardless of the physical challenges we may face” says RADM Teo Chee Hean, Minister for Education and Second Minister for Defence. We at SPD couldn't agree more.

That is why the SPD Education Programme has been in existence for the last 18 years. In the preceding five years alone, over \$1 million has been disbursed to more than 1,000 recipients.

The objective of the programme remains unchanged since 1985 – to provide financial assistance to physically disabled students and students with a physically disabled parent(s) in their studies so that they are better able to concentrate on their studies without having to worry about adding to the family's financial worries. The assistance would also provide a more level playing field to this group of students with special needs.

At the SPD Education Programme Awards Presentation Ceremony held on 25 January 2003 at the SPD Ability Centre, Guest-of-Honour RADM Teo announced that the Ministry of Education would support pupils with physical disabilities in mainstream

schools in the form of funding the Educational Assistive Devices (EADs) required by the pupils. Such devices include specialised computer keyboards, typing aids, page turners and book holders. The EADs will help pupils overcome physical limitations and enhance learning capabilities.

SPD is currently working with MOE in the identification and assessment of pupils who require EADs. The assessment ensures that pupils will get devices best suited to their needs.

Going further, RADM Teo highlighted the commitment of MOE in supporting the work of Voluntary Welfare Organisations in enriching the lives of the disabled and helping them to reach their potential. In his speech, he also commended SPD for its variety of programmes that have touched many lives.

A good example of someone who has benefited from the assistance SPD has provided in the area of education is Dr William Tan, the prolific fundraiser and world-renowned wheelchair athlete. Dr Tan received financial assistance from SPD for his

continue on page 2...

PATRON

Dr Wee Kim Wee

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Prof Kiang Ai Kim, PBM
Joseph Hoo, PBM
Milke Gray, PBM, BBM

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT 2002/ 2004

President

Koh Nai Teck

1st Vice President

Tan Eng Lock, PBM

2nd Vice President

Soh Chee Keong, PBM

Honorary Treasurer

Yeo Jiu Nam

Honorary Treasurer

Frankie Thanapal Sinniah, PBM

Ex-Officio Secretary

Loke Ho Yong, PBM

BOARD MEMBERS

Nancy Chia

Benjamin Gan Beng Chwee

Anthony Gan Kong Meng

David Goh Kia Ngan, PBM

Kong See Wah

K V Veloo

Laurence Wee

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Mr Loke Ho Yong, PBM

Ms Loi Boon Lee

Ms Katherine Sng

Design by Milk Creative Pte Ltd

extrapage

is a quarterly public affairs
communicator published by:



Society for the
Physically Disabled

2 Peng Nguan Street

SPD Ability Centre

Singapore 168955

Tel: (65) 6323 2303

Fax: (65) 6323 7008

E-mail: information@spd.org.sg

Writers' views and opinions expressed in **extrapage**
are not necessarily that of SPD's.

COVER STORIES IN & AROUND

SPD EDUCATION PROGRAMME DISBURSES \$200,000 TO 171 STUDENTS
SPD SPORTS CUM FAMILY DAY 2003

...continued from page 1

postgraduate studies at Massey University, New Zealand, where he graduated in 1986 with a Master of Science degree with first class honours in physiology. He says: "SPD places a lot of encouragement on the education of its members by having all these scholarships and bursaries. Through SPD I was able to go abroad for my Masters degree through a study loan."

The staff and management of SPD would like to congratulate the award recipients and share in the joy of all the parents in seeing them overcoming the challenge of disability and succeeding in their studies! We look forward to turning up many more Dr William Tans among you!

SPD also extends its deep appreciation to Caltex Singapore for funding its education programme this year by

organising a series of fundraising events in its Golfers With Hearts 2003 Charity Drive. The Education Programme is also supported by BRAND'S Enriching Lives Campaign organised by Cerebos Pacific Ltd. 🍪



▲ RADM Teo Chee Hean presenting the award to 19-year-old Eric Loo Poh Liang who suffers from Muscular Dystrophy. Eric has been on the SPD Education Programme since 1996.

SPD Sports Cum Family Day 2003

The rain didn't sour plans but instead, put into action the organiser's wet weather plans that proved to be just as fun and exciting, if not more so, for the participants

WITH the support of Nanyang Polytechnic and the participation of the beneficiaries of Spastic Children's Association of Singapore, SPD pulled off its second Sports cum Family Day on 19 January which brought together staff, beneficiaries, volunteers, friends and family members in friendly competition over games.

Split into four teams, participants competed in a Scavenger Hunt, Wheel Wagon game, Masquerade, and even a Cheering Competition. The day ended with performances put up by the beneficiaries and the students of Nanyang Polytechnic, and a lucky draw for all the beneficiaries. 🎉



▲ When told to shout as loud as they could, the beneficiaries give it all they have got!



▲ Elated winners crossing the finishing line

A Rousing Start To The Year

The festive season did not end at Christmas and New Year for our clients. We continued to bring joy to them with the celebration of Chinese New Year and Hari Raya Haji

It was an event akin to racial harmony day at SPD on 29 January 2003. Beneficiaries of two of Singapore's main races at the DAC and WAC celebrated their respective festivities – the Muslims, the commemoration of the start of the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca, and the Chinese, the marking of the Lunar New Year.

Tan Bee Lian, a beneficiary at the Work Activity Centre who is currently undergoing the WISE Programme, expressed her elation at celebrating Chinese New Year, SPD-style, in the following essay:



▲ Lion Dance performance helps to usher in the New Year for the Chinese at SPD



▲ Minah bte Mohd of WAC performing her favourite Malay love song in front of her friends

The Lion Dance

On the 29th of January 2003, we had our Chinese New Year celebration. It was a rainy day, yet it did not spoil our mood. Everyone was wearing red and wore in high spirits. It was realized that we were asked to wear red as the colour symbolises good luck and prosperity. There was a lot of food to eat and performances to watch.

There was a magic show and lion dance performance during the celebration. The magic show was an interesting one. The magician was dressed in a 'clown' outfit. The audience was filled with laughter throughout the show and they watched the show with excitement. I enjoyed the show very much. Some of them were afraid of the lion dance performance while I watched it with delight. After

The performance, the staff of SPD sang some new year songs and we joined in and sang with so much joy. We were treated with food and drinks at the end.

We went home happy and satisfied with a bag of goodies.

Annual Staff Dinner 2003

Staff of SPD revisited the Yesterday on 10 January at the Annual Staff Dinner 2003. The occasion brought staff and management together and generated lots of fun. The evening's programme and the sporting participation from the floor added even more fond memories as part of the Yesterday.



▲ The SP-PARC strutting their 'staff' on stage



▲ Everyone getting in on the act in the jigsaw puzzle game



▲ SPD's first ever guitar ensemble led by Abhimanyu Pal of Rehabilitation Programmes



▲ Not wanting to lose out on the fun, the Board Members got together and started an impromptu guitar ensemble as well



▲ Tan Chwee Suan of Production Workshop receiving her token of appreciation for her 20 years of service



▲ Social Worker by day, King of Croon by night - Alan Poon winning the votes of the judges

Visit By JAED Promotes Goodwill And Understanding

Three representatives from the Japan Association for Employment of Persons with Disabilities (JAED) visited the SPD Ability Centre and provided the opportunity for the exchange of ideas and information between the two organisations with similar causes operating in different cultures.

SPD is proud to play host to the guests from the Association on the afternoon of 21 February 2003. Mr Tadashi Shiiya, President of JAED, Mr Mori Seiichi, Deputy Director of the Association's Vocational Centre of the National Institute of Vocational Rehabilitation and Ms Chikako Kohyama, International Conference Coordinator, were given a tour of SPD's facilities. This was followed with a chat session when the JAED and SPD discussed disability issues in their respective countries and the challenges facing each organisation.

The JAED was formed with the objective of promoting the

employment of persons with disabilities in Japan. The association made up of employers is largely concerned with promoting measures that encourage the employment of the disabled as well as encouraging a better understanding of the disabled.

The visit promoted goodwill and understanding between the two organisations and SPD has further benefited from the knowledge our visitors shared with us. We were indeed very glad to host the visit and look forward to future opportunities of networking with JAED in serving people with disabilities. 🌟



▲ SPD's Executive Director Mr Loke Ho Yong giving Mr Tadashi Shiiya, Ms Chikako Kohyama and Mr Mori Seiichi a run-down of SPD's programmes and services

Students Of St Theresa's Convent Offer Help To SPD

Apart from lending a hand in the production of handicrafts, these students also dig into the soil at SPD to help revitalise some of the flora in SPD's garden.

EVERY Friday afternoon since 17 January 2003, groups of students from St Theresa's Convent have been entering the gates of SPD. For two hours each week, these members of the School's Girl Guides and Interact Club have come ever ready to offer their services in any area which they can help.

This effort is part of the School's Community Involvement Programme. The school first came to know SPD through its 'Interactors' who were involved in the Christmas Cheer 2002 project organised by the Rotary Club of Singapore West over Christmas last year. The students from the Interact Club helped sell cookies and other festive goodies to raise funds for SPD to train people with disabilities in IT.

Here are some of the comments made by the girls when asked how they feel about coming to help at SPD:



▲ Desiree Sim, Sec 3, Girl Guide helping in the Finance Dept: "It's interesting! It's a new experience and we get to socialize with different people!"



▲ Cheryl Kho, Sec 3, Interactor helping in the Handicraft Section: "Coming here is meaningful, and we get to meet a lot of people. We are kept busy - we leave feeling tired but happy to have helped the disabled. And the staff here are very friendly!"



▲ Roshini d/o Dhanabalan, Sec 1, Interactor, on helping with telemarketing: "Coming here to help is good. I can get to learn a lot of things like how to talk on the phone with others politely."



▲ Nurul Atika, Sec 3, Interactor helping in the Handicraft Section: "It's good coming to SPD - we get to make a difference in other people's lives, helping to make things for sale. It's tiring but we leave feeling that with our help, we can change somebody's life!"

Slow Economic Condition No Foil To Charity Hongbao 2003

Despite the gloomy economic conditions, the annual Lunar New Year fundraising drive saw its highest participation yet since its inception in 1998 with participation from 57 educational institutes.

Every Lunar New Year, scores of students islandwide turn into supporters and donors of SPD. They are involved in the annual Charity Hongbao appeal in aid of the disabled beneficiaries of SPD.

This year, thanks to the help of volunteer Ms Roslyn Loke in encouraging greater participation among the schools, close to 40,000 pre-schoolers and students from primary and secondary schools, Institutes of Technical Education (ITE) and junior colleges partici-

pated in the effort. This was an increase of 33% from last year.

The exercise encouraged students to share a part of their hongbaos with those less fortunate than themselves over the festive season. This year's hongbao design featured a drawing by 10-year-old Philip Loh who has Arthrogryposis Multiplex Congenita. Philip is receiving assistance from SPD's Education Programme. 🍊

This year's hongbao design features a drawing done by SPD's Education Programme recipient Philip Loh. ▶



Junk's Alive at the Singapore River Raft Race 2003

After 15 years, the unique watercraft race remains unparalleled in unconventionality while retaining its noble objectives of contributing to charity and encouraging recycling efforts.

Eight beneficiaries joined over 6,000 people in braving the rain on the morning of 16 February to watch the annual Singapore River Raft Race held at Clarke Quay. With the display of 140 colourful homemade rafts put together with recycled materials, they were certainly not disappointed.

The objective of the race organised by Singapore Polytechnic was to promote creativity, innovativeness and a spirit of adventure among young Singaporeans. Participants demonstrated their creativity by designing and constructing rafts out of recyclable materials.

Five schoolmates from the Institute of Technical Education West, Bukit Batok, won the Most Innovative Raft category. They proudly took home \$1,000 in prize money for their creation of a green sea turtle made from mosquito nets, tyres, waste wood and even parts from a vacuum cleaner. The team took less than a month to put their raft together and spent as little as a few dollars on nylon

strings while the rest of the parts were donated materials or picked up from industrial park dumps.

First organised in 1989 to mark the Singapore River clean-up, this year's event raised \$124,000 of which \$60,000 was channelled to support SPD's Post Acute Rehabilitation Centre. 🍊



Using only recycled materials, participants put together rafts ranging from the functional to the downright comical, all in the name of fun ◀

All-Disabled, All-Singaporean, Unsupported Ascent of Mexico's Highest Summit in Aid of SPD

Mountaineers David Lim and Wong Ting Sern engaged in a double peak ascent and raised funds for SPD as well as awareness of disability issues.

Partially disabled Singapore mountaineer David Lim has struck again. This time, he partnered 45-year-old Wong Ting Sern in a bid to ascend Mexico's highest mountain, *El Pico de Orizaba* (Mountain of the Star).

Standing at 5,700m, the mountain is situated at 180 km southeast of Mexico City. A dormant, ice-capped volcano, *Orizaba* is also the third highest mountain in all of North America.

The duo left Singapore on 25 February and in preparation for the *Orizaba* ascent, attempted Mexico's third highest peak *Iztaccihuatl*. Proving that disabilities do not hold people back, David and Ting Sern braved extreme challenges such as strong winds, climbing on sheets of steep ice and coping with high altitude, all without support such as professional guides, porters, airdrops or similar aid. Theirs is the first expedition of its kind by disabled Asian mountaineers.

This is the second climb David has done which helps to raise funds for SPD. In February 2000, his ascent up Aconcagua in Argentina raised \$100,000 for the purchase of a specially-adapted vehicle used to ferry SPD's beneficiaries to and from the centre. The current expedition would raise funds for another specially-adapted vehicle that would be used to provide transport for those people with disabilities who visit SPD's Post Acute Rehabilitation Centre for therapy service. At the same time, the team helped to raise awareness of disability issues and the importance of disability sport.

38-year-old David was the mountaineer who led the first Singapore expedition to Mount Everest in 1998. He suffered from Guillian-Barr Syndrome (GBS) after the expedition, causing him to be partially disabled in his left hand and legs. Although he has recovered, the expedition has left its mark. His right leg below the knee is non-functional.

Ting Sern, is partially disabled from infant cerebral palsy. He is also hearing impaired, has a speech impediment and balancing problems.

The expedition was successfully completed when David summited *Orizaba* at 7.30 am, Mexico time, on 8 March. At pre-dawn conditions, he toughed out strong winds at the summit before descending. He described the climb as "very physical and the hardest technical alpine climb since being partially disabled in 1998".

The efforts of David and Ting Sern provided an ideal educational tool for schools in the effort to inspire students with lessons on overcoming disabilities, as well as educating them on the importance of disability needs in society. The four schools participating in the educational and fund-raising projects were Seng Kang Secondary School, Marsiling Secondary School, CHIJ Kellock and Henry Park Primary School.

In order that the students and the general public could keep pace with their progress, the duo sent regular email dispatches of their experiences including photos and other data via the expedition site <http://www.everest.org.sg>.

This event is supported by CHIJ (Kellock), Henry Park Primary School, Marsiling Secondary School and Seng Kang Secondary School. 🍌



The summit of Orizaba at 7.30 am – David victorious! ▲



David acclimatising to the conditions before the actual climb up Orizaba ▲



Thanks to David and Ting Sern, the SPD Flag makes its way to Mexico ▲



Students of Seng Kang Secondary School forming a rousing welcome committee for David Lim at Changi Airport on 14 March ▲

SPD's Donation Box Exercise Expands

30 new donation boxes installed in Shop N Save supermarkets island-wide reach out to heartlanders while another charity project brings donation boxes to the staff canteens and cafeterias at various hotels and factories

The project first began in 2001 with 10 boxes placed at 6 NTUC Fairprice outlets. Today, 40 boxes adorn the cashier counters of 18 supermarkets island-wide, with the recent participation of supermarket chain Shop N Save. A spokesperson for Shop N Save said: "With Shop N Save supermarkets located in various places islandwide, we are in an ideal position to bring awareness of the needs of the physically disabled to more people. We are certainly happy to

be able to help the physically disabled in our community, especially during this time of economic recession".

Once a month beginning January 2003, SPD's donation boxes are also set up at the staff canteens and cafeterias of 20 hotels and factories. WOKO F&B, operator of the food outlets, will conduct the charity appeal at the monthly DIY lunch promotions at the premises of 3M Singapore, Exxon Mobil Chemical Manufacturing and Chartered Semiconductor among



SPD's donation box set up at 13 Shop N Save outlets ▲

others. Staff who enjoy the complimentary monthly DIY meals (eg. popiah, rojak) are encouraged to make donations to SPD to show their appreciation for the meals. ☺

Donations can be made at:

NTUC FairPrice

- NTUC FairPrice Bukit Panjang Plaza
- NTUC FairPrice Changi Airport Terminal 1
- NTUC FairPrice Coronation Plaza
- Liberty Market Jurong Point
- NTUC FairPrice Rivervale Mall

Shop N Save

- Amara Hotel
- Ang Mo Kio Ave 4
- Beauty World
- Bedok Central
- Ginza Plaza
- Toa Payoh Lor 4

- Tanjong Katong Complex
- Thomson Imperial Court, Upper Thomson Rd
- Woodlands North Plaza
- UE Square
- New World Centre, Jalan Besah
- Serangoon North Ave 3
- Kovan Centre, Yio Chu Kang Rd

BRAND'S Second Cap-Collection Drive Raises \$20,000 for the SPD Education Programme

Singaporeans responded strongly again to appeals to help the disabled community and in the process helped to recycle BRAND'S bottle caps and BRAND'S glass bottles.

BRAND'S Enriching Lives Campaign held from 15 October 2002 to 15 January 2003 collected 65,000 BRAND'S bottle caps to raise \$20,000 for the SPD Education Programme. This is the second year that Cerebos Pacific Limited, manufacturer of BRAND'S range of health products, had contributed to SPD's fundraising efforts.

Through the campaign, BRAND'S glass bottles were also collected and donated to BizLink Centre for

repackaging into gift packs for sale. Mr Lam Pin Woon, Chief Executive Officer (South Asia) of Cerebos Pacific Limited, said: "The public's charitable

spirit in these economically challenging times has helped to touch the lives of the less fortunate. We believe that we can do more to help the disabled. For this reason, Cerebos will continue exploring opportunities to enrich the lives of the disabled."

The funds will be used to support the education of physically disabled students and students with physically disabled parent/parents under our Education Programme. This year, a total of \$190,950 was awarded to 171 students with disabilities and students with disabled

parents. Mr Lam Pin Woon, presenting SPD's Executive Officer, Mr Loke Ho Yong with a cheque of \$20,000 at the closing ceremony of BRAND'S Enriching Lives Campaign held on 21 February 2003 ▼



International Sports Celebrities Visit SPD

SPD's clients engage in a friendly match with international sports celebrities

IN a rare opportunity, SPD's clients were treated to a friendly game session with 15 international sports celebrities brought in to Singapore by Caltex Singapore Pte Ltd for the Caltex Celebrity Cup and Caltex Masters held at the end of January. SPD's mini sports event held on the morning of 21 January saw the

likes of Kenyan running legend Kip Keino, South African rugby hero Joel Stransky and world squash champion Dame Susan Devoy of New Zealand gracing the corridors of SPD.

Although trained to play conventional sports at international standard, these celebrities proved that they were also

as adept in less challenging games of millipede race, beanbag relay and captain's ball. Not to shy away from a challenge, the clients showed their mettle by playing just as hard!

SPD takes the opportunity to thank Caltex Singapore and all the celebrities for the wonderful treat! 🍷



▲ Waiting for games to begin



▲ SPD's sports celebrities on the morning of 21 January 2003

The Pittsburgh PEBBLES PDA Project

Five clients with muscular dystrophy are participating in an experimental project using personal digital assistants as computer keyboards

SINCE the beginning of the year, SPD has been working with the SP Centre for Applications in Rehabilitation Engineering (SP CARE) on an experimental project using the PDA as an assistive device for people with muscular dystrophy.

This is part of the collaboration between SP CARE and the Human Computer Interaction Institute, School of Computer Science, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, USA. The University is carrying out the PEBBLES Project to find out the many ways the small handheld PDA can serve as a useful adjunct computer.

Having come across the project at a recent conference, Mr Michael Khor, Manager of SP CARE at the Singapore Polytechnic, mooted the idea of carrying out the experiment in Singapore to SPD. The results of the experiment would provide input to the PEBBLES Project on the experience of people with muscular dystrophy in Singapore. Presented with the

opportunity of contributing to the development of software and assistive devices to help people with disabilities around the world, SPD gladly accepted.

People with muscular dystrophy or disorders of other muscles and nervous system may lose their gross motor control while retaining fine motor control. They may then have difficulty in operating a mouse and keyboard. However, they can often still use their fingers to control a pencil or stylus, and thus can use a PDA.

This is possible with the development of the software PEBBLES – PDAs for the Entry of Both Bytes and Locations from External Sources. Installed onto the PDA, this software allows people with weak muscles to use it in place of the conventional keyboard. If proven to be successful, people with muscular dystrophy would be able to use the PDA as an alternative means to accessing their computers.

The experiment involved training five persons with muscular dystrophy, four of whom are studying in mainstream schools. The first training session started on 11 January 2003 and would run for an initial period of three months after which SP CARE would present the feedback to the Pittsburgh PEBBLES PDA Project. The participants are committed to follow-up experiments for up to one year.

The PEBBLES PDA Project is supported by the InfoComm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA) and the Singapore Science Centre. 📺



▲ The team involved in the Project take a moment for a group shot

Love Never Fails...

This article written by SPD Social Worker Angela Chung shows us how the power of a mother's love helped her daughter with cerebral palsy overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles



Mdm Chang helping Chuan Chen with her schoolwork in class

When I stepped into one of the classrooms of Nan Chiau Primary School, I could not imagine that there could be a girl who was once told by doctors that she would be intellectually disabled and consigned to a life in a wheelchair. This girl is Chuan Chen, a Primary 5 student, suffering from Cerebral Palsy. Her condition results in poor head control, stiffness of limbs and much involuntary movement. Despite her physical disability, today Chuan Chen is well-integrated into mainstream education and living life to the fullest, all thanks to her devoted mother, Mdm Chang Lye Kuen, an ex-school teacher turned full-time housewife.

When Chuan Chen was born, doctors told her parents that she would be intellectually disabled and wheelchair-bound. Mdm Chang recalled, “My spirit was brought to a very low point at that time. I asked myself ‘Is there really no hope for my daughter?’” But Madam Chang and her husband did not dwell in self-pity, for soon they met a physiotherapist who recommended that Chuan Chen should begin intensive therapy as soon as possible. For the next two years, every weekday without fail,

Mdm Chang and her husband tirelessly ferried her from their Ang Mo Kio home to the physiotherapist’s home in Bedok for physiotherapy. On weekends, they would continue the therapy sessions with their daughter on their own. Despite the daily demands for therapy, Mdm Chang did not complain but clung tightly to the hope that one day, Chuan Chen would be able to walk. Mdm Chang added, “Every slight improvement that Chuan Chen made is an encouragement for me to go on”.

In 2001, the family dug into their savings to enrol Chuan Chen for a therapy programme in China. Leaving the comforts of home and the protection of her husband, Mdm Chang accompanied her daughter to China for the programme. During the gruelling 6-month-long intensive therapy, Mdm Chang became her daughter’s pillar of strength. At the end of the programme, against all odds, Chuan Chen was able to walk a few hundred steps and climb stairs with support. Mdm Chang shed tears of joy when she witnessed the momentous breakthrough. “My daughter, Chuan Chen could walk!” was all that mattered and justified the long years of hard work.

However, Mdm Chang was quick to point out that Chuan Chen would not have achieved such progress without the strong support of her loving husband, their extended family and church friends. Even as Mdm Chang’s turbulent journey of caregiving is far from over, her sacrifice, dedication and commitment towards her daughter are worthy of our emulation. Her advice to other parents is: “Every child has potential. As a parent, one should discover what his/her child’s potential is, and start the rehabilitation as soon as possible. In the end, the child’s prognosis is always not as bad as one thinks”. 🌟

Learning From All Things

Julian Wee, a quadriplegic and former beneficiary of the SPD Education Programme shares his experience undergoing formal education and the benefits he has reaped from it. Today, Julian works as an editor/analyst in an economic research firm.

Most of us believe that paper qualification brings about better employment opportunities. While this is true and formal education is important, we cannot ignore other sources of learning and look at formal education just for its paper qualifications.

I'm fortunate to have liked what I studied in school and then find a job that utilises that training. I first studied economics in Victoria Junior College then at the National University of Singapore. After graduation, I wrote freelance for a while before joining an economic research firm. Without all the training and qualifications I obtained from schools, I would certainly have been worse off not just financially, but also mentally and psychologically. I now have a job that I like and a future to look forward to; both of which would not have been possible without the educational qualification and the many people who have helped me achieve it. I also intend to further my studies in economics.

Besides providing better job opportunities, education also helps to develop us socially. My friends and I have a difficult time integrating into the working world after emerging from the

rather protected environment of school but this is more so for the disabled. School for me, and I think for most people, was a very important bridge from the even more sheltered environment of home to the harsh environment of the working world. The ability to interact and converse with others is a skill that cannot be taught or learned from books but has to come through being around people. I found the years in mainstream schools have contributed tremendously to my social development. Integrating people with disabilities in schools will help the disabled to be more confident and to feel more comfortable around others.

One big challenge for most disabled students is financial. For a start, traveling is often more costly as they have to use taxis instead of school buses or public buses. Medical costs and insurance premiums are also often higher for the disabled. Financial schemes of grants, bursaries and scholarships are available for people with disabilities. The additional funding helps disabled children achieve the all round development that they not only need but also deserve as equal members of society. However, disabled children often also need other non-financial

assistance more than others. My mother had to give up her job to take care of me full-time to take me to school and attend to my daily activities needs.

I must admit that I have been incredibly fortunate to be able to go as far as I have up the educational ladder. Much of the credit must go to not just my parents but to all my classmates, teachers and school administrators who went out of their way to ensure that I had all the support I needed to overcome the obstacles I faced. I know that much good work has indeed already been done by many, but still I look forward to even more to be done to provide equal opportunities for people with disabilities. 🍌



A younger Julian receiving his education awards from SPD's Patron Dr Wee Kim Wee at the SPD Education Programme Awards Presentation Ceremony held on 22 November 1997

Web Design Team Of People With Disabilities Begins Operations

SPD's first web design team made up of people with disabilities kicks off with a full range of web design services

For those desiring to support charity and yet too busy with their businesses to do so, we have an answer for you! SPD's inaugural web design team made up of people with disabilities has begun operations, and besides providing an avenue for you to help the less advantaged, they can provide you with a complete solution for your website woes!

This is a pilot project started by SPD. Recognising that this area of work offers great potential for people with disabilities, SPD embarked on identifying suitable beneficiaries and providing training and suitable assistive technology devices to get them started. After 50 hours of training, the team members are already well equipped with the necessary IT knowledge and skills.

They have already taken on commercial assignments and have been able to meet the high quality standards of the market. Ten organisations have already engaged the services of the team which is raring to do more and to serve more customers. To view a sample of their design, please look at www.rotarysingaporewest.com.

"I'm happy to be a part of this project," says Lim Koon Heng, one of the tetraplegic team members. "Because we work as a team and specialise in different areas, we can all learn from one another. It has been a very enriching experience for all of us!"

The services currently offered by the web design team include web page creation and maintenance of existing



websites, hosting of websites, registration of domain names and creation of electronic greeting cards.

SPD has plans to train more people with physical disabilities to provide web design services if there is sufficient market demand. Other services planned for the near future include desktop publishing services, secretarial support services and call centre services. This is part of our effort to train people with physical disabilities in IT knowledge and skills so as to enable them to secure employment especially in the IT related industries.

Those interested in the services offered by the web design team can contact Mr Tommy Tng at contact no. 6236 6360, fax at 6236 6396, or send him an email at Tommy_TNG@spd.org.sg.

Web Hosting

Three plans are offered:

Specifications	Lite Host	Basic Host	Business Host
Web Server Size (MB)	20	40	80
Email Account (POP)- Free 5 MB per mailbox	5	10	20
Email Forwarding	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Auto-responders	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Platform	UNIX	UNIX	UNIX
Contract Terms	Yearly	Yearly	Yearly
Price			
Setup Fee (one-time)	\$50	\$50	\$50
Monthly Fee	\$18	\$35	\$68

To remain competitive, the prices for these services are kept to market rates:

Web page design

Creation of home page (first page) \$200
Subsequent pages \$40/page

Website Maintenance

Two types of plans are offered:

Option 1:

Adhoc services where updates are done whenever necessary:
Changes to text \$20/page
Addition or replacement of images \$20/image
Insertion of additional pages \$40/page

Option 2:

Regular services where updates are done on the regular and unlimited basis. A monthly retainer fee of \$100/month is charged.

We welcome contributions and feedback. Also, if you would like to make a donation or know more about SPD, kindly get in touch with us.

The Editor, **extrapage**

The Society for the Physically Disabled
2 Peng Nguan Street
SPD Ability Centre Singapore 168955
Tel: (65) 6323 2303 Fax: (65) 6323 7008
E-mail: information@spd.org.sg
website: www.spd.org.sg

