

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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### **MR LEE SIEW PIN ERIC PRESIDENT**

2016 was a very sad year for DAS. We lost the most significant person in the history of the DAS to date when Dr Jimmy Daruwalla passed away on 6 July 2016. Dr Daruwalla has been President of DAS since our founding in 1991 and has been instrumental to the growth and success of the organisation in reaching out and helping thousands of children with dyslexia and their families.

He was especially keen to emphasise the strengths of those with dyslexia and encouraging them to develop their areas of excellence to achieve and contribute at their optimum level to society. In taking over the Presidency of DAS, I am aware that DAS must continue the legacy of Dr Daruwalla and I am humbled by this most important responsibility. Together with my colleagues in the Executive Committee, management and staff of DAS, I am confident that we will continue the outstanding work achieved over the years.

I would also like to acknowledge the wonderful contributions of Mr Arun Desai who served on the Executive Committee from 2013 to 2016 and as Honorary Secretary from 2015 to 2016. He has retired at the end of July 2016. Mr Desai's lengthy experience in Accounts and Human Resources saw him provide management with most relevant insights and guidance in these areas. To address the above changes and after a Special Executive Committee Meeting on 23 July 2016, Mr Rajaram has kindly accepted the position of Vice President. Mr Kevin Kwek has assumed the post of Honorary Secretary while Dr Zubin Daruwalla has been co-opted into the Executive Committee. Mrs Cynthia Tan has also agreed to fill the open position on the Boards of DAS Academy and DAS International. There has also been changes to the various sub-committees of the Executive Committee. I am most grateful to my fellow Executive Committee members for responding and stepping up to take on more responsibilities at this time of need for the DAS.

I am delighted that at the management level, there has been great stability under the leadership of Chief Executive Officer Mr Lee Siang. Under Mr Lee and his team's able management, DAS has continued to grow from strength to strength with the crossing of two significant milestones in FY 2015-2016. The MOE-aided DAS Literacy Programme (MAP) enrolment reached a peak of 3,010 students in Term 4, 2015, up from 2,784 in Term 4, 2014. Regular students under Specialised Educational Services (SES) which includes the Preschool, Maths, Chinese, Exam Skills programmes, etc, increased from 745 in Term 3, 2014 and reached a new high of 1,002 students enrolled in Term 3, 2015. I would like to thank Lee Siang and his team for their outstanding effort in the past year!

DAS' work and achievements would not have been possible without our wonderful supporters, donors, volunteers and parents. I would like to thank the Ministry of Education (MOE) for their continuous support over the years and providing the MOE Grant for dyslexic students attending classes at DAS Learning Centres. This Grant amounted to \$9.8 million in Financial Year (FY) 2015-2016. Students from lower income families also benefited from the MOE Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS). If not for the MOE Grant and FAS, the DAS would have to charge higher fees in order for our services to be sustainable. It is our aim to keep our fees affordable and our services accessible to parents and their children.

I am most grateful to Ms Sim Ann who attended the DAS Student Graduation and Achievement Awards Ceremony on 21 November 2015 as our Guest of Honour. Ms Sim Ann was then the Minister of State, Ministry of Education & Ministry of Communications and Information. Also present at the event as our special guest was Associate Professor Dr Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry

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of Education & Ministry of Social and Family Development. The presence of Ms Sim and AP Faisal was great encouragement and affirmation of MOE's support for our students and their parents.

Besides MOE, we also continue to receive strong support from the National Council of Social Services (NCSS). DAS has benefited much from the NCSS-managed Civic and Community Institution (C&CI) Space Scheme which enabled DAS to set up learning centres in popular shopping malls such as Bishan Junction 8, Jurong Point, Parkway Parade and Chinatown Point. The DAS has also benefited from the government's Skills Future Study Awards 2016 which is sponsoring three DAS psychologists to attend the NIE Masters in Educational Psychology

The President's Challenge again has been a great supporter, donating substantial sums to the DAS over the years. We also thank the generous support of NTUC Income OrangeAid, the Tote Board and members of Keppel Club to name a few. Most donations also attract dollar for dollar matching via the government's Care and Share Grant. It is through these generous funding and donations that more children from lower income families are able to benefit from our services. I am not able to name them all but we must also not forget the many more individuals and organisations who have donated to or supported the work of DAS in various ways.

Finally, I would like to express our immense appreciation to our ever supportive patron, Mrs Goh Chok Tong. DAS staff were very touched when Mrs Goh wanted to acknowledge their outstanding work and bought lunch for everyone during an All Staff Meeting on 27 January 2016.

Looking forward, DAS will continue to focus on quality and sustainability. We will continue to invest resources and expand efforts to secure funding and donations to support a comprehensive and holistic range of programme and services. This is so that the DAS can reach out and serve even more people with dyslexia and related learning needs. We will continue to further our mission - Helping Dyslexic People Achieve.

Mr Eric Lee  
President  
18 August 2016