

President's Message



The Dyslexia of Singapore (DAS) celebrated our 25th Anniversary in FY2016-2017. This was kicked off with a 25th Anniversary Carnival at the Toa Payoh HDB Hub on 8 October 2016 where DAS reached out to many members of the public. This was the first time we have tried this approach and it was a success, based on the constant stream of visitors.

We also organised a 25th Anniversary Charity Dinner at Hotel Jen Tanglin on 21 October 2016. I am most thankful to Ms Low Yen Ling, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry & Ministry of Education Mayor, South West CDC who was our Guest of Honour. With Ms Low's support, DAS raised \$514,000 for the Jimmy Daruwalla Fund which will go towards supporting DAS alumni and staff to pursue higher education. Our 25th Anniversary celebrations will culminate with the launch of our 25th Anniversary Book in late July 2017 which will be titled "Clearly Different" and written by Dr William Wan.

The work and achievements of DAS over 25 years 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

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the years and providing the MOE Grant for dyslexic students attending the main literacy programme at our thirteen DAS Learning Centres. This Grant amounted to \$10.195 million in FY2016-2017.

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 main literacy programme to be sustainable. With MOE's support, we will keep our fees affordable and our services accessible to parents and their children.

I am also most grateful to Dr Janil Puthuchery, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Communications and Information & Ministry of Education who visited DAS Rex House Centre on 16 November 2016 to better understand our work. He also attended the DAS Student Graduation and Achievement Awards Ceremony on 26 November 2016 as our Guest of Honour. The presence of Dr Puthuchery was incredible encouragement and affirmation of MOE's support for our students and their parents.

Besides the 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. DAS has also benefited from the government's Skills Future Study Awards 2016 which is sponsoring three DAS psychologists to attend the NIE Masters course in Educational Psychology. Many other DAS staff have also attended training supported by the NCSS-managed VWO Capability Fund.

The President's Challenge again has been a great supporter, donating substantial sums to DAS over

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the years, and has once again confirmed that DAS will be a beneficiary for 2017. We also thank the generous support of NTUC Income OrangeAid, the Toteboard and members of Keppel Club to name a few. The disbursements from donations that attracted dollar-for-dollar matching via the government's Care and Share Grant were also received in FY2016-2017. 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.

I would also like to express my deep appreciation to my fellow Executive Committee members for their unstinting support, particularly during the transition following the untimely passing of our founding President Dr Jimmy Daruwalla last July. Together, we will do our best to continue with the legacy he has left behind, and to build on it.

Last but not least, I would like to express our immense appreciation to our ever supportive patron, Mrs Goh Chok Tong. Mrs Goh has been our Patron since 1995 and her encouragement has been instrumental to our development.

The passing of Dr Jimmy Daruwalla has underscored the importance of Board renewal. While I am pleased that we now have three Executive Committee members - Mr Kevin Kwek, Ms Connie Yang and Dr Zubin Daruwalla who are under 50 years old - we need to attract even more qualified and committed people to join the ExCo to ensure the continuity necessary to pursue the outstanding work achieved over the years to help people with dyslexia.

DAS has continued to grow from strength to strength with the crossing of two significant milestones in FY2016-2017.

I am delighted that at the management level, there has continued to be stability and progress 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 FY2016-2017. The MOE-aided DAS Literacy Programme (MAP) enrolment crossed the 3,100 students mark in Term 4, 2016. Enrolments under Specialised Educational Services (SES) which includes the Preschool, Maths, Chinese, Exam Skills programmes, etc, reached a new high of 1,100 students enrolled in Term 2, 2017. I would like to thank Lee Siang and his team for another outstanding effort in the past year reaching out and helping many more students with dyslexia!

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 associated learning needs. We will continue to further our mission - Helping Dyslexic People Achieve.

Mr Eric Lee
President