



## President's Message

The work and achievements of DAS over 27 years would not have been possible without our wonderful supporters, donors, volunteers, parents and of course the staff of DAS. 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 the DAS Main Literacy Programme (MLP) at our fourteen DAS Learning Centres. This grant amounted to just over \$10 million in FY2017/2018.

Students from lower income families also benefited from the MOE Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS). If not for the MOE Grant and FAS, DAS would have to charge higher fees in order for MLP to be sustainable. With MOE's support, we are able to keep our MLP fees affordable and our services accessible to parents and their children. Nevertheless, over the next few years, we anticipate severe financial stresses as demands for our services increase, especially if MOE financial assistance on a per capita basis remains unchanged.

I am very grateful to Ms Denise Phua, Member of Parliament for Jalan Besar Group Representation Constituency and Mayor of Central Singapore District and a true champion of children and people with special needs, for her support. She attended the DAS Student Graduation and Achievement Awards Ceremony on 25 November 2017 as our Guest of Honour. Her presence was an incredible encouragement and affirmation of the Government'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 that enabled DAS to set up and maintain learning centres in popular shopping malls such as Bishan Junction 8, Jurong Point, Parkway Parade and Chinatown Point. I am most thankful to Marine Parade GRC Member of Parliament Mr Seah Kian Peng for supporting our new 14th learning centre at Serangoon Central Block 411 and for attending the official opening of the centre on 31 May 2018. Before the setting up of Serangoon Centre, there were over 100 students residing in the Serangoon vicinity who were travelling to Bishan or Sengkang centres to attend DAS classes; their travel time will now be much reduced.

The DAS has also benefited from the government's Skills Future Study Awards 2016 which sponsored three DAS psychologists to attend the NIE Masters in Educational Psychology and who returned to serve dyslexic students in April 2018. 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 the years. DAS has once again been named as one of their beneficiaries for 2017 as well as 2018. We also thank the generous support of NTUC Income OrangeAid, members of Keppel Club, and Marina Bay Sands, to name a few, for their substantial donations.

I was delighted that DAS raised over \$375,000 including a 40% matching of funds raised from Toteboard for our inaugural Charity Golf and Dinner at Tanah Merah Country Club on 23 May 2018. Minister of Education Ong Ye Kung attended as the Guest of Honour for dinner. Besides the sterling efforts of

the Exco Fund Raising Committee and staff, I would especially like to thank Mr Kevin Kwee, Laguna National Golf and Country Club Executive Director, for his wonderful contributions as part of the organizing committee and connecting us with donors and sponsors. The many donors and supporters included the Lee Foundation, our Gold Sponsor UOB, our prize sponsors Daimler-Benz Asia, Suzuki Motorcycles, Singapore Airlines, Cornerstone Wines, Wine Eden, Canon, Mitsubishi Electric, Fullerton Hotel, Fullerton Bay Hotel, NTUC Fairprice as well as Ms Jenny Khng, Ms Karen Yu, Mr Douglas Ooi, Hans, Mr Bean and Tang Tea House. We also thank our emcee for the night, Mr James Yang who worked pro-bono.

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 will certainly not forget the many more individuals and organizations who have donated to or supported the work of DAS in various ways.

Finally yet importantly, I would like to express our immense appreciation to our supportive patron, Mrs Goh Chok Tong. Mrs Goh has been our Patron since 1995 and her encouragement has been instrumental to our development. One fine example is Mrs Goh buying all staff lunch at Suntec City at the end of the first All Staff Meeting for 2018 on 31 January.

Board renewal continues to be an important item on the Exco's agenda. While I am pleased that we now have two Executive Committee members, Mr Kevin Kwek 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. 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 Lee Siang and his team's able management, DAS has continued to

grow from strength to strength. Siang's appointment to the Board of the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) and as Chair of the IDA's Global Partners Committee reflects the increasing standing of DAS internationally. I would like to thank him 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 programmes. We will continue to invest in the development of our staff. We currently have three educators pursuing PhDs and others pursuing Masters degrees. This is so that the DAS can reach out and serve even more people with dyslexia and associated learning needs with high quality services.

We will continue to engage, collaborate and partner MOE in all our efforts. We will strive to reach out to new partners, donors and supporters. Even while we already have a well-run organisation internally, we will never stop looking at better ways and newer perspectives.

## **Eric Lee**

President

Dyslexia Association of Singapore