

World Down Syndrome Day National Seminar 2016

As part of DSA's 20th Anniversary celebrations and in conjunction with World Down Syndrome Day, we held our inaugural World Down Syndrome Day National Seminar on 19 March 2016 at Enabling Village. The event was also supported by various workshops for persons with Down syndrome viz-a-viz; the infant-toddler programme, child minding services as well as a National Alliance Forum (NAF) which was aimed at giving a voice to persons with special needs the opportunity to share the various aspects of their daily life. We were also supported by partner VWOs who joined us with awareness booths, showcasing their services to the special needs community.

Based on the theme "Enabling families & enhancing caregiving together as a community: Respect, Support & Protection", the seminar's main objective was to equip caregivers of persons with special needs with knowledge and support. Guest-of-Honour, Mr Tan Chuan-Jin, Minister for Social and Family Development, acknowledged in his address that the challenges faced by caregivers on a daily basis was very real. Besides having to manage their dependents' daily needs and behaviour, caregivers also need to manage their own personal needs as well as emotions and stressors. This is by no means an easy task and indeed, a study on respite care conducted by the National Council of Social Service has also found that many caregivers experienced caregiver strain. He further shared: "As we work together with the disability sector to further improve the support given to caregivers, I would like to encourage the community to continue to do their part to support caregivers."

The seminar proceeded with four distinguished speakers addressing different aspects in caregiving, namely: Prof. Tamar Heller, PhD., Prof. Patricia O'Brien, PhD., Dr Balbir Singh, PBM and Prof. Emeritus Trevor Parmenter, PhD.

We hope everyone has benefited from the seminar, and we would like to thank you for joining us.



Choir performance by DSA members and student volunteers from United World College SEA, paying tribute to all caregivers with "You Raise Me Up"



Guest-of-honour Mr Tan Chuan-Jin, Minister for Social and Family Development, thanking DSA drummers after his welcome party



Persons with special needs voicing their views during the National Alliance Forum



Clay art instructor and volunteer guiding DSA member, Rueben Khanal, on clay art flower making.