

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



FY 2014/15 was a most significant but sad year for DAS. Singapore lost our most famous person with dyslexia when Mr Lee Kuan Yew passed away on 23 March 2015. Mr Lee first shared with Singaporeans that he was mildly dyslexic in 1996 through an interview with newspapers. He and his son, current Prime Minister, Mr Lee Hsien Loong, each donated \$30,000 to the DAS. In 1997, \$190,000 in proceeds from the sale of his book "Lee Kuan Yew - The Man & His Ideas" - was also donated to DAS. Mr Lee and Prime Minister Lee subsequently donated regularly to DAS. The remarkable achievements of Mr Lee despite his dyslexia will always be a shining example for all young dyslexic children that they too can be a success in life through vision, courage and hard work.

There was a major change in the management of the DAS. I shared with members last year that Mr Lee Siang had taken over from Mr Robin Moseley as Chief Executive Officer on 1 September 2014. Since then, Director of Finance Ms Chai Soo Chiao has taken over from Mrs Corina Lai who retired at the end of January 2015. I would like to express my utmost thanks to Corina for her wonderful contributions to the DAS, first as an Exco member, then as a staff member since 2004. It was during Corina's tenure that DAS grew into a "large charity" with receipts of over \$10 million per annum. However, Corina's team responded to the significantly increased corporate governance requirements. Ms June Siew has also taken over from Dr Thomas Sim as Head of DAS Academy in January 2015 while Ms Quek Gek San took over from Mr Quek Hong Choon as Director of HR and Corporate Services in March 2015.

Despite the above management changes, the succession went most smoothly and DAS has continued to grow from strength to strength. The MOE Aided DAS Literacy Programme (MAP) enrolment increased by 272 students from 2,515 at end March 2014 to 2,787 at end March 2015. Regular students under Specialized Educational Services (SES) increased by 321 from 446 at end March 2014 to 767 by end March 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 won-

derful 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 \$8.6 million in FY2014/2015. Students from lower income families also benefit 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, Minister of State, Ministry of Education & Ministry of Communications and Information who together with Ms Denise Phua, Mayor, Central Singapore District, visited the DAS on 26 February 2015. They spent three hours in dialogue with the DAS Executive Committee and management at our Rex House Centre. Their frank and candid comments and feedback was most appreciated by DAS and we are confident that this will result in a closer and much more open working relationship with the Ministry of Education for the benefit of children with dyslexia.

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. I would also like to thank Mr Sim Gim Guan, CEO, NCSS for attending the recent DAS Academy Conference on 26 June 2015 as our Guest of Honour. I am confident that the collaboration between NCSS and DAS will continue to develop.

The President's Challenge again has been a great supporter, donating substantial sums to the DAS over the years. Many thanks too to the generous support of NTUC Income OrangeAid, Starhub Ltd, members of Keppel Club to name a few. I must also commend Mr Jason Ho from OCBC who made two separate personal donations of \$10,000 each. Most donations will also attract dollar for dollar matching via the government's Care and Share Grant. It is through these generous funding and donations that many more children from lower income families are able to benefit from our services. We must also not forget the many more individuals and organizations who I am unable to name all and thank enough for supporting the work of DAS in various ways.

I would also like to thank our ever supportive patron, Mrs Goh Chok Tong and our Advisor Professor Lee Wei Ling for their continued and unwavering support for the DAS. Last but not least, I would like to congratulate the team of dedicated people in DAS for their excellent work in furthering our mission - Helping Dyslexic People Achieve.

Looking forward, the DAS will continue to focus on the quality and sustainability. We will continue to invest resources and 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.

Dr Jimmy Daruwalla

President

15 July 2015