

Autism Resource Centre (Singapore)

6th Annual General Meeting
24 June 2006

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2005/6 Management Committee and Key Management Staff of ARC(S):
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Lam Chee Meng; Anita Russell; Sylvia Yap; Stephenie Khoo; Alina Chua; Goh Boon Keng
Ms Ho Ching (Advisor)



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Denise Phua

*Write the vision and make it plain on tablets
That he may run who reads it.
For the vision is yet for an appointed time
But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie.
Though it tarries, wait for it
Because it will surely come,
It will not tarry.
Habakkuk*

Welcome to the sixth Annual General Meeting of Autism Resource Centre (Singapore) or ARC.

It is yet another year of rapid growth for ARC. This year, we served more than 1000 children and youths with autism and the professionals and parents supporting these lives. More significantly, we moved closer to realizing our vision of introducing more breakthrough, scalable and good quality service models to ensure more are helped faster.

WeCAN, our training arm, offered 1,803 training seats and remains the leading autism training agency in Singapore. It collaborates actively with the Ministry of Education and the National Council of Social Service to train many special and mainstream education professionals, including the first batch of Special Needs Officers in appointed mainstream schools.

Pathlight School, Singapore's first school, which offers a unique blend of both mainstream academics and life skills training, continues its robust growth. It is operating at full physical capacity with 300 students, at the time of convening this Annual General Meeting in June 2006.

Pathlight's successful integration programmes at physical, social and academic levels bear testament to the vision, courage and tenacity of its people and friends. Its partial inclusion model of satellite classrooms at Chong Boon Secondary School is one of its kind in Singapore public schools.

The worry of parents who fear their children are not meaningfully engaged during school holidays was allayed by ARC's successful *Enrichment Unit*. More than 800 places were offered. Our *Outreach Therapy* team continues to grow in its expertise of providing much needed social skills; emotional management and sexuality programmes.

Our *Early Intervention* program is on track now with its first pilot satellite at a PCF preschool where 11 children with autism were served since January 2006. This is in addition to the 100 children served to date.

The Management Committee members and I thank our members, staff, buddies and volunteers who laboured with us, in and out of season, to help make our dreams come true.

Poet Russell Davenport once said that progress results only from the fact that there are some men and women who refuse to believe that what they know to be right, cannot be done. In ARC, there are many of such heroes.

On behalf of the children, youths and adults with autism and their grateful families, we salute you.

Official Membership as at 31 March 2006

The number of official members of ARC are as follows:

Ordinary members	:	341
Corporate charity members	:	31
Professional members	:	27

Comparison of Significant Numbers

	Mar 2006	Mar 2005
Total Staff Strength (permanent)	109	80
No. of Clients Served – Assessment & Diagnosis	93	29
No. of Children Served – Early Intervention Unit	100 (to date)	47 (to date)
No. of Children Served – Pathlight School	298	188
No. of Children Served – Outreach Unit	325	320
No. of Places Offered – Enrichment Unit	810	50
No. of Training Seats Taken Up – WeCAN Training	1,803	900

Staff Strength

Total no. of staff as at 31 March 2006: 109

Staff strength at ARC has increased to a total of 109 employees, an increase of 32%.

The significant trend for the autism community in Singapore is that the dream of developing a bigger pool of autism specialists is being realized.

As a concerned corporate citizen, ARC is one of the few organizations with resident Autism Consultants who not only provide direct services but also purposefully train and grow a pool of teachers and therapists conversant with autism. This is a critical strategy to grow a pool of specialists to address the shortage of professionals available to help children with autism.

<p style="text-align: center;">WeCAN Early Intervention Programme Total number of children served up to 31 March 2006: 100</p>
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The WeCAN Early Intervention Programme (EIP) is in its second year and is currently receiving research and development support from Singapore Pools. It has recently been granted additional operational support from the Ministry of Community Development Youth and Sports (MCYS) and National Council of Social Service (NCSS). This is an important move to ensure that the EIP unit continues to operate after the Singapore Pools grant expires in December 2006.

ARC's EIP is special due to 2 differentiators – its intensive training component and the development of a scalable package for use by other service providers.

Parent and Teacher Training

To ensure that both parents and teachers are equipped to serve the children's needs effectively at the centre and at home, intensive parent and teacher training are conducted throughout the year.

Workshops for EIP parents and professionals

- How we approach the teaching of social skills
- How we approach the teaching of communication skills
- An update of EIP parents and professionals working together
- Autism Toolbox series – Understanding
- Autism Toolbox Series – Communication
- Learning in Autism – EIP Parent training

WeCAN @ PCF Project

Initiated in January 2006 at a PAP Community Foundation (PCF) preschool centre, this is part of a pilot project to develop a scalable autism EIP package that can be effectively applied in preschool centres in Singapore.

WeCAN @ PCF pilot now serves 11 children and the plan is to duplicate more of such satellites in Singapore.

<p style="text-align: center;">Pathlight School Number of students as at 31 March 2006: 247 Number of teaching staff: 70</p>

Education in Singapore has often been labelled as 'mainstream' or 'special'.

Pathlight School is the first autism-focused school in Singapore that offers a unique blend of the mainstream academic curriculum, together with life readiness skills. The school offers the PSLE and GCE 'O' and 'N' Level education for students who require more personalized academic and life skills training.

Fast becoming one of the most popular education offerings in the Singapore education scene, the enrolment has grown 600%, from 41 to 247 students in March 2006.

The following exciting initiatives were undertaken.

Active Integration Programme with Mainstream Peers

- **Physical integration:**
All Pathlight secondary school students have been physically relocated with their teachers in Chong Boon Secondary School, its neighbourly buddy school.
- **Academic integration:**
9 Secondary level students are now attending classes at Chong Boon Secondary for subjects like Geography, Social Studies and Chemistry.
- **Social integration:**
Pathlight students were regularly included in social celebrations with buddies like Raffles Institution Boarding School, Ang Mo Kio Secondary School, Chong Boon Secondary School and St Margaret's School.

Social activities included celebrations of:

- Chinese New Year Celebration
- Family Day.
- Racial Harmony Day,
- International Friendship Day
- Total Defence Day
- Musicals
- Quarterly formal dining events (RI Boarding School)

More Inclusive Student Council Leadership Development

The number of student councilors was increased from 10 to 36 to provide more leadership and expertise development opportunities for Pathlight students.

5 key committees were started under the Student Council

- Prefectorial Board
- Performing Arts Team,
- AVA team,
- Photography and Videoing Team and
- Editorial Team.

New Co-Curricular Activities (CCA) Model

Pathlight has reviewed the CCA model to encompass 4 key areas for all students in Primary 4 and above:

- Physical development:
- Social development,
- Cognitive development and
- Contribution to society

CCA activities now provide more opportunities for students to experience a wider range of development including golf, floor ball, tennis, board games, music and beach clean-up.

Financial Assistance

Close to 40% of Pathlight students receive financial assistance in the form of fee subsidies from the school.

In addition, Pathlight works very closely with **MILK (Mainly I Love Kids) Fund** to support students from the low-income families. MILK provides financial support for 77 students, up from 52 students. The grant helps cover school expenses like uniform, textbooks, transport and holiday programmes.

Through MILK, our students were given the privilege to watch the movie premiere "Herbie: Fully Loaded" on 21 August 2005. As part of Children's Day Celebration in October 2005, they enjoyed having brunch at Modestos.

Autism Outreach Therapy Services
Total number of students served: 325

ARC's current Outreach team comprise of 5 psychologists/autism therapists who run support services to primary, secondary, post-secondary students in the Singapore mainstream schools and Pathlight School.

The team offers a wide range of programmes to train students with autism in the areas of:

- Functional social skills,
- Self-regulation and emotion management,
- Social friendship,
- Problem solving skills.

New programmes have also been developed to address specific areas, such as:

New Programme Title	Coverage
Foundation Social Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing awareness of our social environment, • Being COOL & SAFE, • Communication behaviours with different groups of people
Perspective taking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding perspective taking • Applications of Initiating & Responding, • Making Conversations • Group Work
Making friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making friends of the same gender • Making friends of opposite genders, • Managing "rejections"
Adolescent Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and managing physiological, social & emotional changes in adolescence.

On-Site Outreach Services

Besides in-centre therapy services, the therapists also visit schools to train the teachers and classmates of individuals who require more intensive intervention for integration. However, the number of off-site visits is limited due to manpower constraints.

Outreach Holiday Programmes

In collaboration with the ARC Enrichment Activities Unit, 4 different holiday programmes were also offered over the June, and Nov/Dec Holidays.

- * Smart Study and Exam Skills' Camps
- * Autism Awareness for teenagers with ASD Workshop
- * Autism Awareness for Siblings Workshop
- * Primary to Secondary Transition Workshops

Enterprise-Learning Centres

Pathlight Café

Pathlight Café, our first enterprise-learning centre, is a community project with Starbucks Coffee Singapore. The café was set up with the following purpose in mind:

- to develop it as a job coaching unit, preparing our teenagers for future employment
- to serve as a “canteen” for our younger Pathlight students to practice their money and life skills.

We are very privileged to have Starbucks Coffee Singapore adopt the Pathlight Café as their community project. Starbucks involvement includes:

- Provided assistance with the menu
- Donated air conditioners, bussing station and other equipment.
- Rallied vendors to sponsor the baking oven, chiller and espresso machine
- Provided training to our job coaches.
- Raised funds in active participation of A Very Special Walk 2005.
- Raised funds in organizing a Lantern Charity Pledge during its United Square outlet. 30 lanterns designed by Pathlighters were displayed at the store. 3 best lanterns were auctioned off and all proceeds were donated to us.
- Presently, Starbucks Partners have been involved in working alongside the trainees and helping out in training role-plays.

Job Coaching at Pathlight Cafe

Job coaching unit has started since Sept 2005 and now has 4 job coaches. There are now 7 trainees all from the secondary school. Training starts after school hours, twice weekly, for 1 ½ hour each session.

Their training continues into the school holidays.

Employability skills taught include:

- Good Work Habits
- Customer service
- Money handling
- Food & Beverage preparation
- Facility Management.

Trainees are now trained in bussing (cleaning maintenance), food and beverage preparation and cashiering. Once they are ready, trainees will move on to other essential work skills such as:

- * Project Management
- * Inventory Planning
- * IT skills
- * Marketing and promotion.

Pathlight Design Studio

Pathlight Design Studio has been set up to mentor students with special talents in art and graphic design. School. The ultimate aim is to prepare these individuals with autism for further studies and/or jobs in art and design.

Achievements of the studio in the last year are:

- Launched "Art for Autism" sale items on 19 Jan 2006 (Cafe Opening) which saw a roll-out of Art pieces for auction, Art pieces for sale, as well as a full range of awareness merchandise bearing students' artwork.
- Support of Pathlight School, Pathlight Cafe, ARC(S), WeCAN EIP, WeCAN Training and various Fundraising committees for all their design needs and aesthetics projects
- Ongoing mentoring of talented students for Art/Leisure Skills from Primary 1 to Secondary 4
- Rolled out Flash Animation Basic 1 and Basic 2 Workshops for ARC Holiday Enrichment
- Rolled out lessons for design tools for Primary 5 and 6 and Track 3 IT curriculum 2006
- Synergized with Pathlight School's Student Council with the formation of:
 - Mass Communication (Editorial) Team : 5 Writers, 4 Designers
 - Photography and Video Team: 8 Photographers/Videographers.

These students are undergoing training once a week and have begun to support key school events like Parent Communication and Training Nights.

Enrichment Activities Unit
Number of Class Runs: 48
No. of Training Seats: 723
No. of Hours Run: 632 hours

The aim of the Enrichment Activities Unit is to provide meaningful engagement for students with autism especially during non-school days. The strategy is to create learning opportunities, which are experiential, socializing, and fun. It was started in response to reluctance of external service providers who are either not trained or not willing to work with students with autism.

The 48 class runs include many popular programs such as:

- Pottery
- Flash Animation for Web
- Digital Photography
- Speech and Drama
- Academic Preparation
- Gymnastics
- Sports & Fun Camp (Junior and Senior)
- Floorball
- Archery
- Golf
- In-line Skating

Key milestones include the popular Sports and Fun Camps where students get to experience an over-night stay, 4-km hikes across the Tree-Top Bridge at MacRitchie Reservoir. Most notable was our students' ability in learning to skate in a surprisingly short time.

Traditionally, most programs were held during the school holidays and on Saturdays. Moving forward, in the year 2006 we are running more programs after-school hours to keep the students occupied meaningfully when their parents are working.

Information Service

The Information Service Department provides specialized information and advice on all aspects of ASD, especially to parents and professionals. We have a collection of 438 titles in our reference library, and 253 books for loan to members. The library also includes a video collection, journal publications. To-date we have a total of 285 members who have subscribed with the lending library service.

In addition, our Information Service Officer provides value-added services in the form of counseling and providing emotional and other tangible signposting support to especially parents of children who have just been diagnosed.

Assessment and Diagnosis Service

Number of children served: 93

Number of Service Hours: 246

ARC's Assessment and Diagnosis (A&D) Service is provided by a combination of ARC's own psychologists and external partner psychologists.

Achievements over the past year include the assessment and diagnosis of 93 children in the following key activities:

- **Educational Placement Assessments**
This comprises a cognitive (IQ) component, as well as a developmental interview to determine the child's adaptive daily life skill.
Through these assessments, children were placed in either mainstream schools or special schools including Pathlight, APSN and MINDS.
- **WeCAN Early Intervention Programme Initial Screening**
This is a 2-hour informal assessment by We CAN Head of Program and therapists to assess the needs of the children. These children then proceed to access our WeCAN Early Intervention Program.
- **Outreach Intake Assessment**
This is a 2-hour informal assessment conducted by therapists to assess the needs of the children who want to access our Outreach program. These children then proceed to access our Outreach programme catered according to their specific needs.

WeCAN
(Worldwide Collaborations on Autism Needs)
Training Division
Number of Training seats filled: 1,803

WeCAN continues to provide world-class training to equip professionals, family caregivers and teachers working with individuals with autism with the world's best knowledge/skills in autism interventions. The highly-customized autism training programmes delivered by a strong network of local and overseas autism experts has become the trademark of WeCAN. It is by far the largest provider of autism training services in Singapore and the region.

This year, WeCAN has been appointed by the MOE-NCSS Steering Committee for Teaching and Learning as the preferred service-provider of autism and autism-related training programmes for teachers, school leaders, therapists and other professionals in the Singapore **Special Education Schools** (SPED schools).

Training for **MOE's Special Needs Officers (SNOs)** started this year. This is the first year of a 5-year contract with MOE to train SNOs in the area of Autism intervention as part of their Diploma in Special Education with NIE. The first batch of 15 SNOs completed the 1st 2 modules of the Autism component.

Between April 2005 to March 2006, a total of 1,805 training seats were filled at WeCAN's sought-after seminars, workshops, conferences and certificate courses.

The **Educational Products** retail service for WeCAN established in May 2003 continues to benefit hundreds of parents, teachers, and professionals. Educational resources include imports from United States, Australia and UK, as well as locally-made products incorporating local and Asian contexts. Products ranging from books, CD-Roms to visual aids are on sale at highly discounted prices via WeCAN's website or retail store at the Autism Resource Centre premises.

List of WeCAN Training Programmes (April 2005 to March 2006)

Programme Name	Number of Participants	Instructor/Facilitator
WeCAN 4 th National Autism Best Practices Conference	586	An expert panel of foreign and local autism experts including: Prof Rita Jordan Prof Gary Mesibov Dr Jacqui Roberts And many others
Developing an effective TEACCH programme within Special and mainstream schools (3 runs)	220	Prof Gary Mesibov
Introduction to TEACCH Structured Teaching	107	Prof Gary Mesibov

The Culture of Autism and TEACCH approach	215	Prof Gary Mesibov
Success with Autism	63	Stephen Shore
Certificate in Autism for EIP, Pathlight (2 intakes)	82	Dr Lam Chee Meng Anita Russell
Certificate in Autism (SPED schools) (2 intakes)	37	Dr Lam Chee Meng Anita Russell
Fundamentals of Autism	84	Dr Lam Chee Meng Trainer Pool
Workshops for EIP parents and professionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How we approach the teaching of social skills ▪ How we approach the teaching of communication skills ▪ An update of EIP parents and professionals working together ▪ Autism Toolbox series – understanding ▪ Autism Toolbox Series – communication ▪ Learning in Autism – EIP Parent training 	120 120 38 29 23 12	Anita Russell
SNO – Certificate in Autism (as part of their NIE Diploma in Special Education)	15	Dr Lam Chee Meng Anita Russell
Empowered Learning Series (SPED schools)	16	Dr Lam Chee Meng Anita Russell
Autism Application Workshops (SPED schools)	38	Dr Lam Chee Meng Anita Russell

Fundraising

Fundraising is one core activity of ARC(S) to source sufficient funds to develop new services and meet operational deficits for especially services which are free or subsidized. An average of 35-40% of clients receiving ARC(S) services are from needy backgrounds.

ARC (S) has always relied heavily on volunteers within ARC and outsiders to help organise fundraising events.

A Very Special Walk 2005

Date: 9th July 2005

Venue: Marina City Park

Gross Amount Raised for ARC: \$139,604

In 2005, *Gryphons Alumni* (ex-RI 01 scouts) initiated to organise A Very Special Walk. The beneficiaries of whom were Pathlight School's Enterprise Unit and Rainbow Centre's PRiEP. The Guest of Honour was Dr Ng Eng Hen, Minister for Manpower, Second Minister for Defence.

Half of the gross amount raised went to **ARC's Enterprise-Learning Centres**. The other half of the amount went to Rainbow Centre's PRiEP, which provides training for preschoolers and teachers in mainstream kindergartens.

A big thank you goes to our main Sponsor Cargill Singapore and co-sponsors - Kah Motor Sdn Bhd, StarHub and Ginga Petroleum (S) Pte Ltd. Thanks also to every one else who have come forward to make the event a success.

Pathlight Café Opening

Date: 19th January 2006

Gross amount rose: \$10,900

The Pathlight Café was officially opened on 19th Jan 2006. Guest of Honor was Ms Ho Ching, ARC's Advisor. 8 "Art for Autism" paintings were auctioned off that evening, raising a total amount of \$10,900 to go into the School Building Fund.

A full range of art pieces and autism awareness merchandise bearing Pathlighters' artwork was launched. These artwork and merchandise will be a permanent feature to help to continue to raise funds for the Enterprise Learning Centres.

Future Fundraising Needs

The next few years will pose a bigger challenge for the fundraising team. Our future needs include:

- Building and construction of a purpose-built school for Pathlight School
- A larger ARC Headquarters to house existing and future new services especially in the area of Employment Development, Job Coaching, and Social Enterprises, etc.
- A dream to develop a piece of farmland to employ and house young adults with autism.

A target to raise S\$4million in the next 2-3 years is set to further fulfill our vision to develop a world-class ASD-specific Centre of Excellence in Singapore and the region.

We are extremely grateful to the following donors who believed in us and contributed generously in the past 12 months so that we were able to continue our work to serve the many individuals with autism and their families:

Donations specific to Autism Resource Centre (S)
(April 2005 to March 2006)

\$100,000 and above

Loving Heart Needy Plus, PCF Welfare & ARC Funds
Singapore Pools (Pte) Ltd
Hong Leong Foundation (specific to Project Platinum)

\$50,000 to \$99,999

Roland Tay Kiong Hong (specific to Project Platinum)

\$10,001 to \$99,999

Lee Hsien Loong (specific to Project Platinum)
Singapore Totalisator Board (specific to Project Platinum)
Ho Ching (specific to Project Platinum)
Ng Ghim Choo and Etonhouse Pte Ltd (specific to Project Platinum)
LBG-NGT Corporation Pte. Ltd.

\$5,001 to \$10,000

Lam Yew Chong

\$1,001 to \$5,000

Australian Fruit Juice (S) Pte Ltd
Er Sock Kian
Lee Chier Hian
Lim Leong Guan
Starbucks Coffee Singapore Pte Ltd
Singapore Oilwives Club
Tay Kiong Hong Roland
UBS AG

Up to \$1,000

Amy Ying Mei Leng
Andrew Low
Baker's Inn Holdings Pte Ltd
Chan Kok Peng
Chia Weng Seng
Choo Swee Kieong
Christina Goh
Chua Soo Hwee
Collin Teo Seng Soon
Connie Lim
Goh Chin Kwee
Grace Assembly of God
Huang Yuen Chin
Ivy Yap Chiew Fah
Joshua Yang
Kan Shook Wah
Ken Chua

Kevin Leong
Kho Ai Ling Linda
Koh Cheng Chua
Lam Chee Meng
Lee Ming Cherk
Leonard Kim
Lim Eng Kiat
Lim Siew Kiak
Lim Sock Hui
Lo Hock Ling Consulting Pte Ltd
Low Chee Kian
Low Li Sze
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Tong Boon Eng
Vivian Ang
Wong Kwan Nga
Wong Lai Wah
Yu Pang Fey