

**GUEST:** PM Lee Hsien Loong and President Barack Obama walking to the Oval Office at the White House.  
PHOTOS: REUTERS

**SPECIAL:** Mr See Toh Sheng Jie with his mum Wendy Chua and dad Jason See Toh.  
TNP PHOTO: JEREMY LONG

Parents of boy who designed Mrs Lee's pouch at White House:

## He just loves dinosaurs

Report by FOO JIE YING  
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**US First Lady Michelle Obama may have dazzled in her brilliant yellow Naeem Khan floral appliqué dress at the White House.**

But it was Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's wife Ho Ching's clutch purse



that got Singaporeans in a tizzy.

It is a denim pouch with a dinosaur motif, designed and drawn by Pathlight School student See Toh Sheng Jie, 20, who has autism.

Mrs Lee told The New Paper that she had taken three different pouches designed by Pathlight students – including Mr Sheng Jie – because she could not decide which to use.

She also took to the White House a set of cups and mugs for Mrs Obama, featuring Supertree artwork done by Glenn Phua, another Pathlight student.

Mr Sheng Jie's parents, who found out about Mrs Lee's decision to carry the dinosaur pouch only yesterday morning, are still reeling in shock.

Holding up the same design of the denim pouch, Mr Sheng Jie's mother Wendy Chua said: "Unbelievable."

"We thought (Mrs Lee) would have carried a branded or designer bag to an event like this. But she chose to use this pouch."

Stocks of the dinosaur pouches are now running low due to demand.

### UNAWARE

Mr Sheng Jie's father, Mr Jason See Toh, 54, said: "Sheng Jie is not really aware of the impact of Ms Ho carrying his pouch to the White House."

"He is just happy when we tell him someone likes what he's made."

Speaking in a mixture of English and Mandarin in their Yishun flat, the couple said that their younger of two sons has been "obsessed" with dinosaurs ever since he watched his first Disney movie, *Dinosaur*. Despite his usual fidgety nature, he sat still for the whole movie.

Then, just three years old, he started shaping dinosaur models with Blu-Tack. He started reading voraciously about dinosaurs from library books.

"Of course he wasn't very good with the Blu-Tack at first, but we let him continue playing with it," said Madam Chua, a residents' committee manager.

Without referring to any pictures, Mr Sheng Jie also started filling notebooks with dinosaur sketches.

Mr See Toh, a cabby, showed TNP his son's "dinosaur encyclopaedia", a book filled with his dinosaur drawings. Each page features a different

### SCHOOL VP: IT'S GREAT MILEAGE FOR ARTISTS

**It was both a surprise and an honour to see Ms Ho Ching carrying a pouch designed by a Pathlight School student at the White House, said the school's senior vice-principal Loy Sheau-Mei.**

"It gave such a great mileage for the artists on our Artist Development Programme (ADP) and merchandise at The Art Faculty," she added.

Products designed by students under ADP are sold at [www.theartfaculty.sg](http://www.theartfaculty.sg) and brick-and-mortar shops at Enabling Village in Lengkok Baru and Pathlight in Ang Mo Kio.

The ADP began in 2011 with the aim of uncovering and developing the potential of artistically-inclined students.

Professional artists work with the students to nurture their talent. Where possible, their works are turned into merchandise.

Student artists earn royalties from each sale so they can have a dignified source of income. They can also take part in exhibitions and speak to visitors about their work.

— Catherine Chang

species, along with a short, neatly-written description of its traits.

Mr Sheng Jie's artistic flair caught the attention of his teachers, who suggested developing his artistic skills further.

In 2011, he became one of the pioneer students to join Pathlight's Artist Development Programme. (See report above.)

Now, despite being unable to verbalise his thoughts well, Mr Sheng Jie can rattle off names and traits of dinosaurs from A to Z.

With nifty hands, he shapes blocks of clay effortlessly into life-like dinosaurs, complete with details.

His dinosaur drawings are now printed on pouches, notebooks and notecards, which are sold at both The Art Faculty's shop and online.

Looking at Mr Sheng Jie fondly as he played with his dinosaurs, Mr See Toh said: "He's happiest when he's immersed in the world of dinosaurs. And when he's happy, we are happy."

