



News and Round Up 2009

The Rainbow Project

The Rainbow Project

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

2009 – Well, it has been another year of considerable financial strain and, like everybody else this year, Rainbow has had to work harder to make it through the difficult economic climate. So we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to you, our long term supporters, for your generosity through this hard time.

The Rainbow Project has had two main aims for the 2009 school year; to increase the client base at the Rainbow Project Learning Centre in the Sai Ying Pun district of Hong Kong and to reach out to more of those in need of autism specific services. We have made positive steps towards achieving both of these goals. By employing a qualified full-time Special Needs Outreach Teacher, Shela Appling, we have been able to give onsite consultation services to clients and their families and to put individualised home-programmes in place for them. The Rainbow Project has also launched a tailor made Shadow Teacher Workshop for schools and a course specifically designed for Domestic helpers who work in families with children with special needs. In addition to working with adults we have also



**Alan Mercer
Chairman**

launched Saturday and afternoon clubs for children. The Rainbow Project Learning Centre is a bustling place these days! Since 2008 we have helped over 60 children in our Learning Centre.

Our Pre-school class has had an overhaul this year. We have re-established this class in the Learning Centre. The advantages of this are manifold but most importantly the children in this class now benefit from onsite access to our specialist Speech Therapy and Occupational Therapy services and have everyday use of the fully equipped OT room. This term we have also been very fortunate to form a partnership with City Kids Pre-school. They have welcomed our children with open arms for

integration opportunities and we hope to support them in their aim to work with more children with ASD on a daily basis.

So, as the economy starts to push out green shoots, things are looking up for Rainbow too; our classes are full and the RPLC services are serving twenty families including those who need highly subsidised services.

Looking to the future, we would like to offer more community services to local families and schools. Establishing a secondary classroom for our current students and for other families in need is a priority for the next school year. We shall also continue to work towards creating a network to related organisations in order to provide a brighter future for children with special needs in Hong Kong.

You have helped us so much in the past; please stay with us. We need your continuing support to make these things happen.

With best regards,

Alan Mercer
Chairman

November 2009

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Important dates

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Rainbow Trek | Sun 8th Nov |
| Rainbow Dinner | Fri 13th Nov |
| Matilda Sedan Chair Race | Sun 15th Nov |
| St. Stephen Fete | Sat 5th Dec |



*Hilary Yap
Speech Therapist*

Hilary Yap (Speech Therapist)

Hello everyone. My name is Hilary and I am a speech therapist recently graduated from a university in London. I am extremely grateful for this opportunity to work with the Rainbow Project team. I have always enjoyed working with children and hope to try my best to help the children and their families at Rainbow Project. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I look forward to meeting and working with you all. "



*Winnifred Lai
Educational Assistant*

Winnifred Lai (Educational Assistant)

Hello Everyone! I am Winnifred and I am a graduate from The Chinese University of Hong Kong where I majored in Psychology. I have just joined the Rainbow Project in August 2009 and working as a teaching assistant is a totally brand new chapter for me. After spending 4 years in psychology, I would really like to put it into practise what I have learnt. I had experience working with children with learning difficulties during my internships and helping children with special needs is a very challenging and rewarding experience to me. I really enjoy working with children as I believe in their potential to learn and develop.



*Victor Ching
Educational Assistant*

Victor Ching (Educational Assistant)

Hi, this is Victor and I am 1 of the teaching assistants in HKA Rainbow. I did my Bachelor degree majoring in Psychology and Post-graduate Diploma in Education (English). In my experience, it is a lifelong learning process to develop the skills and techniques to play with these kids. Thanks to the help of my friendly and nice colleagues, I find that working with ASD children is challenging, but rewarding! Their responses can always surprise you. I enjoy all the happiness and laughter they have brought to me, and this is the exact reason why I am working here!

Keith Lee (Project Director)

Hello everybody,

Finally I arrived in Hong Kong on Friday September 11. I'm really excited and looking forward to be a part of the team at Rainbow Project.

I've been involved in the special education field for the past 15 years in Singapore. I started as a special education teacher in 1993 with a local Voluntary Welfare Organization "Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore" (MINDS). MINDS operates 4 special schools, 4 Adult Training Centre and Homes for people with various special needs.

MINDS focus on providing educational and training needs for children and adults whose performance IQ fall in the range from 45 to 50. My 15 years of experience with MINDS allows me the opportunity to work with children aged 4 to 18 years old diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention deficit Disorder and cases of Mental Retardation. I have dealt with very severe to mild cases of children diagnosed with ADD, ASD and MR.

As the number of autistic children is on the rise globally, I see the need to take a special focus to work with children with autism. Many parents are very concerned with their children diagnosed with ASD and are earnestly looking for answers to help them cope with ASD. There is a lot of work still needed to be done in meeting the needs of people with ASD.

Sensory Diet at home (by Ida)

Children with autism usually display some unusual responses to some sensory input because they have difficulty processing the sensory information they receive from the environment. In addition to clinical based ther-

apy, a sensory diet is another important way to feed the sensory needs and help the child to process the environment better.

There are 3 main types of sensory diet, comprising activities for arousing, self-

organizing or calming. In different circumstances, the child may need different activities. However, these activities are not necessarily complicated. Actually the sensory diet can consist of simple activities



Keith Lee
Project Director

Sensory Diet is another important way to feed the sensory needs



Hugs



Shower.

"Tools may well be used in Speech Therapy Sessions"

Sensory Diet at home (continues.....)

which parents can do at home with their child. Here are some ideas:

When a child is drowsy/sleepy in the morning, parents can get him/her to:

- take a shower
- eat crunchy food such as crackers, chips or even ice
- jump on the bed/trampoline (of course with supervision!)

When a child is getting too excited or after a child has a strong emotional

outburst, parents can:

- give the child gum or bread to chew
- ask the child to carry something heavy like books or wear a backpack filled with toys
- play at crawling, creeping or wheelbarrow walking games
- assist the child to assume a handstand posture

When it is time to sleep/relax, parents can:

- hug the child, gently rocking from side

to side

- provide the child with something to suck e.g. hard candy, a pacifier or ice lolly
- dim the lights and play low volume relaxation music
- massage the child with oil or an OT brush (applying deep pressure onto the skin)

If parents find it difficult to choose the appropriate sensory activity for their child, it would be helpful for them to



Whistles for blowing.



Kazoos.

Oral motor training (by Carley)

Speech is composed of four primary systems: the respiratory, phonatory, resonatory and articulatory mechanisms. All of these are essential for audible and accurate sounds to be produced. Articulation is accomplished through movements of the jaw, lips and the tongue. Problems in any of these oral motor parts can lead to imprecise

articulation. Through training the oral motor parts, it is hoped that our children's articulation can be improved; meaning that their speech will be made clearer. We use some of the tools shown aside to help with the training. Have you got any idea of what the items shown in the pictures are? The first picture is of whistles, which we use not

just for fun, but because they are good for promoting jaw stability, lip rounding and tongue retraction as well. These are the fundamental skills required for precise articulation. In the second picture, you can see a tiny flute-like object. It's called a kazoo. If you blow it like a whistle, you cannot get any sound. You need to produce

