

LET'S TALK

Julia Gabriel
EDUCATION



JULIA GABRIEL CENTRE

Celebrating 25 Years of
Excellence in Education

Performance Storytelling

CHENZHU MANDARIN CENTRE

JGFTC (Mandarin Speech
and Drama)



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Sarah Diab,
Head of Readers and Writers
Programmes

JULIA GABRIEL EDUCATION CENTRES

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Chiltern House Forum

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Chiltern House Thomson

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Chiltern House East Coast

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Chiltern House Turf Club Road

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Chiltern House Mountbatten

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ONLINE

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Chengzhu Mandarin Centre hosted their annual Chinese Cultural Evening on Saturday 7th March. After being greeted at the entrance of the centre by musicians from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts playing a Dulcimer (扬琴 - hammered stringed instrument), a flute (笛子) and an Erhu (二胡 - two-stringed fiddle), visitors went on to enjoy drama performances, games and try their hand at a host of traditional Chinese activities. Popular as always were the ink-brush painting, dumpling making, bamboo dancing and a traditional Chinese tea ceremony. This event is always a highlight of the centre's calendar as it showcases a variety of traditional Chinese cultural activities together, provides an opportunity for parents, students and educators to mingle informally and immerses everyone in a fully Mandarin environment in the most enjoyable way.

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JULIA GABRIEL EDUCATION RECOMMENDS....

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

Oral storytelling is a way of life that has been in existence for centuries in many parts of the world. Whether an ethnic hill tribe community in northern Thailand, a remote jungle culture deep in the Amazon rainforest, or the ancient plane-dwelling communities of East Africa, people love to tell and pass down stories. This tends to be less so in Western or highly developed countries - until now! With the invention of StoryCorp booths by the self-styled 'story collector' Dave Isay, a change is gradually taking place. Stories do not have to be dramatic or complicated. Simply two people, sitting together in a safe space, talking to each other, sharing thoughts and feelings rarely expressed is all it takes to tell a story. And that's just what this wonderful TED Talk by Dave Isay is all about. Sometimes, a great story comes from simply listening to someone else...

https://www.ted.com/talks/dave_isay_everyone_around_you_has_a_story_the_world_needs_to_hear

EDITORIAL

As Singapore celebrates 50 years of independence, we at Julia Gabriel Education (JGE) are excited to have reached a quarter of a century of Julia Gabriel Centre (JGC). I'm happy that the team at JGE is celebrating, true to our tradition of exciting innovation based on researched learning, as 2015 has already proved to be a most significant year.

In January... A big thumbs up to Winnie Ang, Head of Marketing, who, following on from the launch of our bubbly new look for Julia Gabriel Centre last June, launched our fresh branding for Chiltern House Preschool, starting with Chiltern House Thomson.

In April... Head of the Speech & Drama and Readers & Writers Departments, Mala Sundram, opened the doors to her colourful and technologically-alive Julia Gabriel Centre at Tampines Mall, our first centre dedicated to language and literacy.

In life... Perhaps more significantly, I'm writing at a time of enormous loss. In March we mourned the passing of Lee Kuan Yew. In April, JGE lost our first Chairman and mentor to our Board of Directors, Leow Siak Fah (see page 8). Both were exceptional men who gave their lives, their energies and great passion to build strong communities.

I too have been personally affected by the events of this year as my cancer of seven years ago returned right at the start of 2015. I am blessed and fortunate to be in Singapore (my 50 year anniversary is in 2017!) where I am about to finish chemotherapy feeling healthy, well and optimistic. 25 years of JGE has meant that my amazing colleagues, headed by Managing Director Fiona Walker and a strong Board of Directors helmed by Leow Tze Wen, have supported my recovery and carried on without missing a beat. My proudest achievement? A team of over 40 educational leaders across four countries including my son and daughter-in-law, Mark and Agnes, who understand the founding values of JGE and dare to continue creating dramatically different education programmes for another 25 years.

As JGE and Singapore celebrate renewed life in 2015, my dream for JGE is similar to that of Lee Kuan Yew for our beloved island nation: That our leaders take us forward with foresight and passion into a future that belongs to them. I am reminded of the words of Khalil Gibran in his book *The Prophet*, on children, that sum this up so well:

*Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you.
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.
You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit,
not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.*

Now isn't that most apt for 2015? Happy 50th anniversary Singapore!
Happy 25th birthday Julia Gabriel Centre!

Julia Gabriel, Founder and Director

HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES

8th - 12th June



Don't miss out on all the fun during the school holidays. For more details about English and Mandarin holiday programmes, including available discount packages, please contact:

Julia Gabriel Centre : T 6733 4322
Chengzhu Mandarin Centre: T 6737 5348

PICNIC OF WORDS CHILDREN'S EDITION

Exciting news! Julia Gabriel Centre Forum will be hosting the first ever Picnic of Words for children this coming May. This is the children's chance to take the spotlight and present their favourite poems to an audience of peers and their parents, or to read an excerpt from their favourite story. Picnic of Words is intended as an informal evening, offering all those who love words to get together, share their passion and enjoy some delicious treats afterwards! Presentations do not have to be pitch perfect – just have a go and have fun!

Venue: Julia Gabriel Centre, Forum, Level 4
Date: Saturday 16th May
Time: 5:30pm - 6:30pm

The recent Picnic of Words held at Julia Gabriel Centre, Forum (14th March) was a cozy and enjoyable evening. Our Julia Gabriel Centre educators demonstrated their love of poetry and stories through a variety of performances, all of which were well received by the students and parents in the audience. Now it's the turn of the children themselves and we can't wait!

Happy 25th Julia Gabriel Centre!

"A very very Happy Birthday to Julia Gabriel Centre! A place where love, joy and passion fuel the learning process. I feel incredibly blessed for my time spent working with Julia and all her team and wish you all a fantastic next 25 years!"

Louise Dreisinger (née Hawkins, Julia Gabriel Centre Speech and Drama Educator, 1996 to 2000), Author of *Whatever: A Mindful Adventure for Teenagers*. Louise now lives in Vancouver, Canada.

MEET OUR STAFF

JULIA GABRIEL EDUCATION

Let's put a face to Julia Gabriel Education staff! Starting in this issue of *Let's Talk*, here are some long-timers who recently took on additional roles.



Suzette Peterson
Head of Enrolment at Julia Gabriel Education / Duty Protection Officer, Julia Gabriel Education



Lynette Chua
Head of School Support Services



Mala Sundram
Head of Speech and Drama / Readers and Writers Department



Shalini Pattabiraman
Senior Mentor Teacher for Speech and Drama



Karen Foo
Sales Manager for School Support Services and Administrative Manager for Speech and Drama / Readers and Writers



Fiona Walker
Chief Executive Officer, now also Managing Director Julia Gabriel International



Fiona McDonald
Training and Programme Quality Support for Julia Gabriel International (remains Head of Learning support for Julia Gabriel Education).

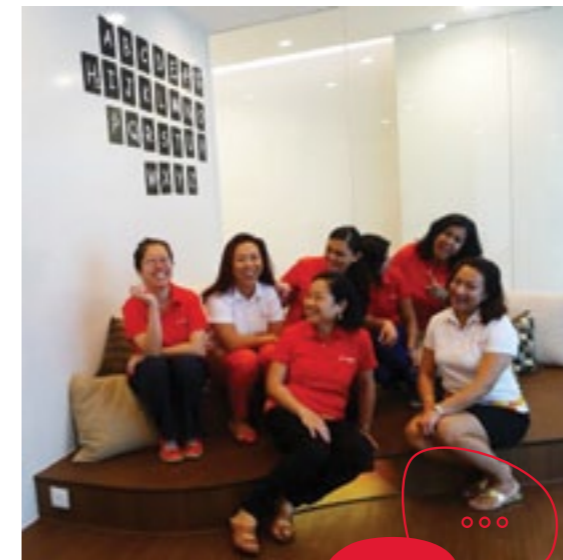
A growing number of Julia Gabriel Education staff are welcomed each year into our Ten, Fifteen and Twenty Year Long Service Clubs. The seven long-timers featured in Meet our Staff here have clocked up almost 100 years of service between them!



JULIA GABRIEL INTERNATIONAL

Julia Gabriel Education Singapore enjoys close relationships with overseas partner centres in Jakarta (Indonesia), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) and Shanghai (China). Throughout the year, Julia Gabriel Education Singapore supports the overseas centres through staff training, curriculum development and sharing of resources. Once a year, all centres come together to share updates, discuss developments and strengthen ties. The most recent gathering took place earlier this year across three days in February, at Julia Gabriel Centre's corporate office in Forum. Julia Gabriel International's Overseas Co-ordinator Kristin Liu reports, "There was a lot of sharing and discussion. It was a very successful meeting - and we got to enjoy some delicious meals each evening at Long Beach Seafood, The Straits Kitchen and The Rice Table, a great Indonesian Restaurant!"

25 YEARS OF DRAMATICALLY DIFFERENT EDUCATION



In 1990, Julia Gabriel Centre became the first government acknowledged Speech and Drama Centre in Singapore. Founded on a deep understanding of how children learn best, we help infants, young children and teenagers develop and master social, emotional and academic skills. We do this through our EduDrama® philosophy, which remains the cornerstone of all our programmes and teaching methodologies throughout Julia Gabriel Centre and Chiltern House Preschool.

Julia Gabriel Education's founder, Julia Gabriel, first started using drama as a tool for learning in Singapore over 30 years ago because she understood its benefits on the academic progress of children, as well as the cognitive, social and emotional benefits. This is why EduDrama works so well at all levels and for all ages, whether play-based drama for infants and toddlers, role-play and improvisation for young children, or the performing arts and debate for older students.

We all learn best when we feel motivated. And for children especially, optimum learning takes place when they are exposed to highly stimulating and interactive activities within a nurturing and positive environment that encourages and acknowledges achievement.

When children feel good about themselves they are much more likely to reach their full potential.

We facilitate learning, enhancing the innate skills and talents within every child; we do not 'teach'! Hence, our educators understand the importance of being role-models rather than teachers. This kind of approach builds self-esteem and confidence, establishes an enjoyment of learning naturally, encourages curiosity and leads to success. When children feel good about themselves they are much more likely to reach their full potential.

Our company values, Relationships, Passion, Balance, Excellence (we encourage the entire Julia Gabriel Education community to abide by them) serve as a constant guide to how we develop our programmes, environments and ourselves.

Our specialist educators, many of whom have remained with us for 10, 15 and in some cases 20 years, come from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This brings a rich diversity of experience and styles to our classes, while all under the umbrella of EduDrama. Educators are chosen for their qualifications and experience as well as their passion for children, education and the arts. Importantly, we are a community of lifelong learners. Staff at all levels are encouraged and often assisted to take further degrees or Trinity College London exams. We learn together, play together and cry together. We're not afraid to be dramatically different and we love to share that approach with our students too!

JULIA GABRIEL CENTRE



Storytelling at Times

Popular educators William Royston and Farhan Mohammad captured the imagination of children and adults alike with their special kind of performance storytelling on Saturday 18th April at Times Bookstore in Paragon. The celebrated duo were accompanied by Julia Gabriel Centre Programme Sales Executive Jack, who happily assisted when it came to 'singing' the story of Julia Donaldson's *The Gruffalo* in William and Farhan's inimitable style! In addition to all the centre's educators, Julia Gabriel Centre Programme Executives also go through the Julia Gabriel Foundation Teaching Certificate (Speech and Drama). This not only ensures a sound knowledge base of the programmes at all levels but connects them through experience with the programmes when discussing them with parents. And that's just one of the reasons why we love to get out there and perform in public! Interactive, lively and highly enjoyable experiences help create a connection between audience and performer, drawing them in to the story, enlivening the imagination and leaving everyone feeling on a high at the end. Now doesn't that make it worth joining the next performance storytelling session? Check our Julia Gabriel Centre website and Facebook page for notice of where to find William and Farhan next!

JGFTC (Mandarin Speech and Drama)

Congratulations to a team of educators from Chengzhu Mandarin Centre and Chiltern House Preschool who recently became the first ever graduates of the Julia Gabriel Foundation Teaching Certificate (Mandarin Speech and Drama). Following the moderation evening (26th March), when graduands performed poems, choral pieces and presented talks to an invited audience of family and peers, Lynette Chua, Head of School Support Services at Julia Gabriel Centre, remarked how the Mandarin educators were, "fabulous and really harnessed both effective use of facial and vocal expression to convey the mood and meaning of their pieces." So much so that the moderator, Ma Tian Ling Laoshi (a former lecturer from Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts) had tears in his eyes while conveying his feedback after the event!

For more information about the Julia Gabriel Foundation Teaching Certificate (Mandarin Speech and Drama), please call Fang Ping on 6578 9410 or write to her at fangping@chengzhu.net.

恭喜黄颖和11位来自成竹华语中心和Chiltern House的华文老师们，恭喜她们顺利地通过Julia Gabriel 华文教师资格证书（语言和戏剧教学专业）课程毕业了。在3月26日的第一届毕业汇报演出中，学员表演了诗歌、集体诗歌和演讲。来自学校支持服务部的主管Lynette Chua,对华文班毕业老师的评价是：“非常优秀，用表情和声音准确地表达了诗歌的情感和内容”。考官马老师被如此高水平的呈现感动得热泪盈眶。

想要了解有关Julia Gabriel华文教师资格证书（语言和戏剧教学专业）课程的更多信息，请联系方萍。电话：65789410；电邮：fangping@chengzhu.net



SPOTLIGHT ON...

SARAH DIAB,
HEAD OF READERS
AND WRITERS
PROGRAMMES



When you meet Sarah Diab for the first time, you can't help noticing there's something just a little bit different about her. Quirky, enthusiastic and with a zest for life that characterises so many Julia Gabriel Education educators (quirky is in their DNA!), what sets Sarah apart is her hair. As luxurious thick curls cascade over her shoulder it's almost impossible not to stare enviously at her crowning glory – an aspect of her appearance that Sarah now fully and confidently embraces, unusual in a region where hair bonding is the norm. She even has a Facebook page dedicated to her hair! Sarah explains, "Our [Sarah and her sister] latest project is our curly hair movement. We started a Facebook page called 'Curlettes' with the tagline 'Curly and Confident'. It's aimed at providing a platform for curly haired fellows like us to share challenges and tips. It was inspired by our experience growing up when we were teased for being different. Some people criticised us for having 'messy' hair or 'noodles' for hair. It was a struggle feeling confident in our own hair and it made it worse when we did not know how to handle our curls. With Curlettes, we hope to inspire more people to stay away from chemically damaging their hair and being confident with who they are. We hope to spread the movement with the hashtags #curlyandconfident and #bighairdontcare."

This confident ability to embrace her authentic self is just one of the reasons why Chiltern House Preschool jumped at the opportunity to take Sarah on as a teacher in 2009. Since then, her passion for education, curriculum development and literacy has seen her grow through various roles at both Chiltern House and Julia Gabriel Centre, culminating in her present position as Head of Readers and Writers Programmes, based at the new Julia Gabriel Centre in Tampines.

This new centre, dedicated solely towards Readers and Writers Programmes, opened its doors to students just a few weeks ago - and Sarah couldn't be more excited about the centre's concept: "We believe the set-up of the centre is a winner! It's aesthetically pleasing and functional at the same

time. Our aim is to promote a love for reading and the entire centre encourages that. The Knowledge Corridor is lined with books and reading pods, ending with a projector screen where activities and talks take place. The moment you step into the centre, your eyes take you to the Activity Courtyard, an interactive space for children to read in, for storytelling sessions and language games. There's also a magnetic whiteboard wall which students can 'write' on to create words, sentences and poems. This concept continues in the studios which are all fitted with a low beam projector and bar. Learning must always be interactive and fun for the children."

Sarah continues, "It's so important that students see the relevance and purpose of what they are learning, especially in their daily lives. The more exciting the learning space, the more fun and interactive the teaching, the more likely it is that students will achieve success in school and beyond. At Julia Gabriel Centre we help develop our student's reading and writing skills by inculcating a love for reading and writing in ways that engage them deeply. Through our EduDrama methodology, lessons include drama games and activities that inspire each child's desire to learn. And a key feature with EduDrama is that we recognise every child as an individual. Our educators nurture and respect every child, allowing for differentiated instruction according to their needs and developmental level."

The concept of a truly child-centrally designed centre, where corridors and corners are integral to stimulating learning (as opposed to conventional classroom teaching), enables Sarah and her team to maximise use of the centre's space and environment towards very focused goals. It also takes into consideration the way that children learn today, offering an exciting compromise between the use of technology and more traditional literacy tools.

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OBITUARY:

MR LEOW SIAK FAH



By Julia Gabriel, Founder and Director, Julia Gabriel Education

On 14th April, the first chairman of Julia Gabriel Education's Board of Directors and our mentor, Mr Leow Siak Fah, passed away in Germany, surrounded by his family, while receiving treatment for cancer.

Mr Leow became a shareholder, and our Chairman, in 2003. What a successful partnership it has proved to be. We are all indebted to him for his unfailing advice, support and trust that enabled us to take on the discipline of corporate

diligence while continuing to run Julia Gabriel Education with a focus on our values and quality education. Nothing was ever too much trouble for Mr Leow, who was always only a phone call away despite his busy schedule, interested and encouraging about new ideas, challenges and progress.

As well as being a highly successful and astute businessman Mr Leow had an artist's soul. An accomplished tenor he founded Singapore's first opera company, Singapore Lyric Opera, and, as a patron of the arts, founded and supported OperaViva, dedicated to baroque and contemporary opera as well as new works by Asian composers. Many of us will long remember his enthusiastic opera performance at our Picnic of Words!

As a company we will mourn the loss of our Chairman and offer our support to his family in any way we can. In his wisdom, Mr Leow has left us well taken care of as he retired last year to take care of his health appointing his son, Tze Wen, as Chairman of Julia Gabriel Education. This has allowed Tze Wen to build a happy, supportive and trusting relationship with our team. We are ready and confident to face the future.

On a personal level I am deeply saddened to lose Siak Fah who was, for me, a friend for over 40 years and my mentor and guide for the last decade.

continued from page 7 - "Spotlight on... Sarah Diab"

"Nothing beats having the actual, physical copy of a book in hand", says Sarah, "Nonetheless, technology has become part of our lives and is in the blood of children today. It's what engages them and keeps them motivated. We cannot deny this and we can use technology to our advantage in many ways. However, it is very important that we strike the right balance and ensure that there are still plenty of opportunities for children to experience language through traditional methods, such as the basic pen and paper." And her advice to parents who struggle with this? "When outdoors, keep the technology at home" Sarah says. "When families do this, it helps promote social interaction. Children may even record what they see by drawing or writing it down later. I recently forced my technology-attached teenage nieces to have a picnic without mobile phones. We had an amazing picnic by the beach playing the physical game of Taboo. The quality time we had is certainly 'not available on the app store'!"

Sarah attributes her love of books and language to the person she describes as her first and most inspirational role model - her mum! "She was my first storyteller and my first language role model. It is because of her that I grew to love language and was an expressive reader from a young age. She always spoke Standard English and would read to us with full expression, using different voices and intonation. Being a stay home mum, she was also my first educational role model. She was patient with us and would spend time playing and learning with us. I remember her staying up late one night trying to figure out a maths problem just so that she could help me with it the next day. Her dedication as a mother and as my first teacher has inspired me and the passion that I have for education today. More importantly, mum showed me how vital it is for me to



love what I do!"

To find out more about Readers and Writers Programmes at Julia Gabriel Centre Tampines, please call 6444 6735 or 6733 4322 (Julia Gabriel Centre Forum). Registration can take place at either centre. Julia Gabriel Centre Tampines will waive the registration fee of all programmes until the end of Term 2.