

Let's Talk

Julia Gabriel
EDUCATION

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JULIA GABRIEL CENTRE

Honorary Membership of Trinity College London for Julia

CHILTERN HOUSE PRESCHOOL

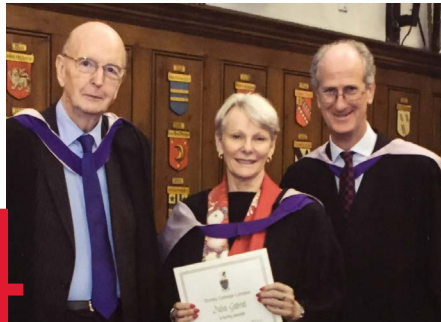
The Rewards of Letter Writing

CHENGZHU MANDARIN KINDERGARTEN

Settling into Nursery 1

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a **DRAMATICALLY DIFFERENT** conversation

EVENTS

CHENGZHU MANDARIN KINDERGARTEN

Open Week

27th February - 2nd March

Experience our dramatically different culture, learn about our fully Mandarin curriculum and meet our team of educators.

Visit www.chengzhu.edu.sg to arrange your personalised tour.

Chinese Cultural Evening

18th February

To round off the Chinese New Year celebrations 2017, Chengzhu Mandarin Education will throw open its doors to welcome visitors of all ages into a world that lives, breathes and loves Mandarin language and Chinese culture. Our Chinese Cultural Evening is one of the highlights of the year. The event is an opportunity to experience a range of traditional Chinese art forms (such as calligraphy painting), to sample traditional Chinese fare, and to enjoy traditional Chinese folk music, among other activities. This year, there will also be a special activity celebrating the Year of the Rooster.

Our talented teachers will also perform a traditional Chinese shadow puppet play about a family of mice and a very large egg!

We look forward to welcoming you to this vibrant event soon! For more details visit www.chengzhu.edu.sg.

ON THE COVER

Learning is three times the fun when you're a triplet. Though for our handsome cover boys it's not just three, as their two older siblings also attend programmes at Chengzhu Mandarin Centre.



EDITORIAL

Another year has flown by and we are now looking forward - ready to face 2017. It has been a busy year at Julia Gabriel Education. One where we have seen so much exciting growth in a number of programmes.

Our Readers and Writers programme, overhauled a few years ago, continues to delight both children and parents, as does our new Chengzhu Mandarin Kindergarten, which we launched last year. Our established programmes, such as Speech and Drama and Adult Accompanied Programmes (from this year Adult Accompanied Programmes will be known as Early Learning Programmes), continue to go from strength to strength and for that we must thank our amazing and inspiring team of educators. Chiltern House Preschool continues to offer the highest quality early childhood education, balancing the needs of our young students, their families and the educational context in Singapore.

I often talk about the skills our children will need as they move forward as young adults into a very different world from the one we experienced when growing up. For a long time there has been a lag between what schools prepare children to do and what they actually will need.



JULIA GABRIEL EDUCATION

Julia Gabriel Centre
www.juliagabriel.com

Chengzhu
www.chengzhu.edu.sg

Chiltern House Preschool
www.chilternhouse.com.sg

The Ministry of Education addressed that lag recently with their secondary school principals. They spoke about the skills which have been identified by the World Economic Forum as those that children must develop in school in order to be successful when they enter the rapidly changing workforce. The skills mentioned are: **complex problem solving; critical thinking; creativity; people management; co-ordinating with others; emotional intelligence; judgment and decision making; service orientation; negotiation and cognitive flexibility.**

These are all skills that we have been developing in children since 1990, with educational drama as the key tool for learning. Today, there is a vast amount of research that supports the fact that **drama in education develops leadership skills, flexibility and creativity in children, and most importantly, emotional intelligence.**

We know that children who have a foundation set in Julia Gabriel Education programmes, whether at Chiltern House Preschool, Julia Gabriel Centre or Chengzhu, are more than prepared to face the future.

To hear the Ministry of Education clearly state the skills that children need, and to know they are exactly the same skills we have successfully been nurturing and developing over decades, confirms we are indeed on the right track! That's why we are confident that we are preparing our students - your children - for success in both school and life!

Thank you for your support this year. We look forward to working together for your child's happiness and success in the year ahead.

Fiona

Fiona Walker
Group Managing Director, Julia Gabriel Education

TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON PRESENTS HONORARY MEMBERSHIP TO JULIA

JULIA GABRIEL
CENTRE

On 1st December 2016, our founder, Julia Gabriel, entered the Armourers' Hall, a magnificent building located in the heart of the City of London, for a very special presentation ceremony in which she and five other distinguished individuals from around the world were presented with Honorary Membership of Trinity College London (TCL).

The Council of Governors of TCL bestows Honorary Membership on a small number of select individuals each year in recognition of outstanding achievements and contributions. Julia Gabriel Centre established a relationship with TCL back in 2005, and since then Julia has personally played a key role in the establishment and development of TCL's Speech Communication Arts and Young Performers' Certificate examination syllabuses, which are now available through TCL examination centres across the globe. It is in recognition of this and of Julia's wider contributions to the field of speech and drama in Asia that TCL has awarded her Honorary Membership.

Julia shared her experience at the awards ceremony with *Let's Talk*:

"What an Honour! To be at the TCL awards ceremony in maganificent Armourers' Hall and to be honoured alongside such eminent scholars and performers was quite unforgettable. I feel that I have accepted this award on behalf of all my colleagues who have worked with me to develop, trial and implement the Speech Communication Arts syllabus. We have, together, earned this recognition."

This is the second honorary award which Julia has received from a major organisation in the field of speech and drama. Back in 1993, she was awarded Honorary Membership of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, an award presented to her by the Lord Mayor of London. That honorary membership has since been re-designated as Honorary Fellowship of the Guildhall School.



Julia with TCL's President Emeritus, Sir Keith Stuart (left), and Chairman, Mike Hildesley (right).

"I have accepted this award on behalf of all my colleagues who have worked with me to develop, trial and implement the Speech Communication Arts syllabus. We have, together, earned this recognition."

EXHIBITION AWARD FOR MARIE

Julia is not the only member of our staff to have received a special award from Trinity College London (TCL) recently. Last year, speech and drama teacher Marie Kogelavani was the recipient of TCL's Exhibition Award for having received the highest TCL Grade 8 Speech and Drama examination score in Singapore in 2015.

Most of Julia Gabriel Centre's speech and drama teachers (including Marie) have teaching certificates from TCL. After completing their teaching certificates, many of them also choose to do individual performance examinations in order to continue honing their craft as performers and presenters. Marie did her Speech and Drama Grade 8 exam to further develop her understanding of the subject and her personal performance ability, and was delighted to discover that she had emerged as the top candidate of the year in Singapore. This is not the first time that a member of our staff has achieved this award – our speech and drama teacher Meera George previously received the Exhibition Award for attaining the highest Speech and Drama Grade 8 mark in Singapore back in 2011.

After completing Grade 8, Marie has continued to develop her craft through TCL examinations and recently completed the Associate of Trinity College London (ATCL) diploma in speech and drama performance. Four more of our teachers also completed ATCL diplomas in November – Mabel Yeo, Rashmi Koslaphirom, Reuben George and Shyamala Menon – with all of them being awarded Distinction by TCL examiner Paul Mills.



ADULT LEARNING



The 37th intake of the Julia Gabriel Foundation Teaching Certificate (Speech & Drama) commenced in January. Over the past decade, several hundred students have graduated from this programme as certified speech and drama teachers and gone on to take their newly-acquired skills into classrooms across Singapore. The five-month part-time training programme covers topics including how to use drama in the classroom, positive discipline and classroom management, and the joy and benefits of using poetry, prose and stories with young children. Students are also introduced to Julia Gabriel Education's unique EduDrama® methodology, learning more about our culture and approach to education.

Students who attend the programme (which is now also available in both English and Mandarin) hail from a variety of backgrounds. In addition to preschool and primary school teachers, past students have included lawyers, accountants, civil servants, business owners and even a television presenter! And many are parents, keen to learn new skills and techniques for enhancing their own children's creativity, confidence and oral communication skills at home.

For individuals who want a shorter 'taster' programme which introduces our EduDrama philosophy and methodology, we also offer the three-week 'Introduction to EduDrama' course. The latest intake of this programme finished in January with a group comprising a mixture of members of the public and some of our own staff. The dynamic of having existing educators and people with a variety of working backgrounds brings a wide range of experiences to the group, adding a richness of learning which benefits everyone.

For more information about our adult training programmes, kindly visit the Julia Gabriel School of Education section at www.juliagabriel.com.

For the first time, Chiltern House Preschool opened its doors to prospective new families for a whole week! Visitors got to see how students interact with each other, their teachers and support staff, as they experienced a class in action. Visiting children had the opportunity to join in with some class activities, such as working in designated Learning Centres, while parents got to chat with class teachers and the Head of Centre to learn more about our curriculum and culture.

Principal Iris Lim and Julia Gabriel Education's Managing Director Fiona Walker were also on hand throughout the week to share more about school activities.

We have some exciting news to share too!



From time-to-time we have written about the Mindfulness sessions which we have gradually been introducing as part of the daily routine at Chiltern House. Launched in 2015 at Chiltern House Mountbatten, this year our Mindfulness programme will be implemented across all the Chiltern House centres. The response to this programme from the outset has been so positive, with many parents telling us how much their child's concentration has improved, as well as their sense of responsibility, among many other benefits. This is very exciting to hear!

Chat to your child's Head of Centre or class teacher to learn more about our Mindfulness programme.

OPEN WEEK

6th - 9th February, 9.00 am - 5.30 pm

DISCOVERY TREE – CATCHING UP!

Julia Gabriel Centre's Discovery Tree programme for children with special needs began over 15 years ago, and for many years the programme was run by Fiona McDonald. She recently met up with some of the Discovery Tree alumni, and shared her experiences at this very special meet up with *Let's Talk*:

"In November, once the busy term and exam time was over, ex-students of our Discovery Tree programme got in touch about meeting up. The boys were proactive in organising the date and the location, first establishing a Whatsapp chat group in order to co-ordinate everyone's ideas about what we should eat and where we should meet.

"On the evening itself, it was with great excitement that we came together. The boys had decided on eating at Marché so that everyone could have a choice of food. It was exciting to catch up, not just with the boys from my class, but also their mothers. It was amazing to see how much the boys had grown physically (I felt very short), but also how much they had grown up! We chatted about school – for them now secondary and ITE – their interests and even girlfriends! It was also lovely to hear from the fantastic supportive group of mothers how much they are truly enjoying being an important part of their children's lives. We had fun taking photos and even doing our own mannequin challenge! We made an agreement that we must catch up more for social events such as going to movies. So I think 2017 may be a busy year for us all!"



CHILTERN HOUSE CARNIVAL 2016

Thank you to everyone involved in the Chiltern House Preschool Carnival in November last year. We raised \$11,444.50 for Very Special Arts Singapore.

SETTLING INTO NURSERY 1

The beginning of the year often evokes feelings of excitement mixed with anxiety for young children. As Nursery 1 students begin their formal education journey, donning their school uniform and backpack for the first time, separation from home and Mummy and Daddy can be very daunting indeed. The role that our N1 preschool educators play in the life of these little adventurers therefore is vital. There are so many 'firsts' that new students face. Feeling safe and secure, nurtured and loved, is paramount to a successful start for these little ones – and their parents!

Gong Chong Wen, Principal of Chengzhu Mandarin Kindergarten, tells us how she and her team help N1 students to settle in:



安置到苗圃1

Nursery One 新生入学对老师和家长来说，最大的挑战就是如何尽快安抚孩子们的情绪，让他们停止哭闹。为了帮助孩子和家长尽快度过这艰难的时刻，在成竹华语幼儿园老师们在多方面做了充分的准备。

1. 建立孩子的安全感。

孩子们来到全新的环境，周围的一切对他们来说都是陌生的，他们会哭闹，最根本的原因是缺乏安全感。这样的情形下，老师们会用温暖的拥抱，温柔的话语去安慰他们，让他们觉得老师的怀抱就像妈妈一样温暖，他们的情绪就会慢慢地平复下来。

2. 用丰富多彩的活动转移孩子们的注意力。

当老师通过新奇的玩具，生动有趣的活动来吸引孩子时，孩子们的注意力很快被转移了，这样他们就能因暂时忘却对妈妈的思念而停止哭闹。



3. 积极与家长沟通，取得家长的信任和支持。

如果孩子们上学三天打鱼两天晒网，无疑会拉长他们的适应期。为了避免这样的情况，老师们积极地与家长沟通，取得家长的信任和支持，在艰难的时刻坚持送孩子们上学，这样会帮助孩子尽快适应新的环境。

经过短短几天的时间，大多数孩子已经开始适应学校的生活，他们能和同伴们一起愉快地听老师讲故事、唱歌；开心地在游乐场里玩耍；在老师的帮助下上厕所；与朋友一起愉快地吃点心...

当孩子们真正适应环境后，我们的任务就是要让成竹幼儿园成为所有小朋友的第二个家，小朋友在这个家里开心快乐地学习华语，健康快乐地成长！

A DRAMATICALLY DIFFERENT CONVERSATION

We live in uncertain times. Today we exist in a world where a major event in one part of the globe can have major consequences in another. Technology connects us in real time, serving as a powerful influencer in ways which are both positive and destructive. Strengthening our connections as individuals and as societies in positive ways is increasingly important. Fostering empathy in our children is certainly one way to ensure the creation of these ties for the future.

We all hope our children will grow up to be happy and successful in whatever they choose to do in life. And ideally we hope that they will become kind, caring and compassionate adults, aware of events in the world around them, the varied circumstances of others and willing to contribute positively wherever possible.

Children who are empathetic are more likely to succeed at school and consequently in their careers. They are usually socially more confident, with a healthy level of self-concept. Employers are increasingly seeking candidates who possess high levels of emotional intelligence because they demonstrate strong communication skills, are good at building relationships and more likely to have a positive influence on a team. Empathy is widely recognised as one of the most important qualities a leader in any field can possess. An empathetic leader is thoughtful as well as intellectually competent. These days, someone's Emotional Quotient, or EQ (measure of empathy and levels of self-awareness), is as important as their Intellectual Quotient, or IQ.

While some children are more instinctively empathetic than others at a young age, empathy is a quality which can be learned. Young children rarely show empathy consistently, however, so as parents we should avoid unrealistic expectations of our children's behaviour.

Overseas travelling, introducing your child to another culture, sharing stories about people of different races, colour and religions, watching documentaries about animals and the environment, and caring for a pet, are just some ways to instil empathy.

On a more personal level, talk to your child about feelings – yours and your child's. A child who feels safe to communicate openly develops emotional fluency and the ability to handle different kinds of relationships. They are more likely to grow up with an awareness of the feelings of others. And, as we always encourage throughout our centres, role model what it is you would like your children to learn. Role model empathy yourself! Show your interest in and enjoyment of the diversity of this planet, as you demonstrate kindness towards others. Your child is then more likely to follow you and grow up to be an adult who does the same!



Children who are **empathetic** are more likely to **succeed at school** and consequently in their careers.

Do you have a query about some area of your child's cognitive, social, emotional or physical development? Are you struggling with some aspect of your child's behaviour at home or outside? Do you need tips about how to encourage your child's reading and writing habits for example? Are you looking for book recommendations in Mandarin? Or perhaps your teen needs a tried and tested formula for overcoming nerves during an upcoming presentation at school?

Julia Gabriel Education has a combined team of over 200 skilled professionals dedicated to education and communication. Teachers of voice, speech, drama and literature. Early childhood educators, musicians, linguists and speech and language therapists.

Write to us with a question, whether concerning your infant or teenager, and one of our senior members of staff will respond. Your question, along with the reply, will appear in an upcoming issue of *Let's Talk* or on one of our websites. In this way, we hope that you will feel supported on your parenting journey, along with other parents experiencing similar issues.

Send your questions to Gaynor Fitzgibbon at gaynor@juliagabriel.com. Please write 'Ask the Experts' in the subject bar of your email.

ASK THE EXPERTS

