

Chengzhu Mandarin Centre



We are very excited about the opening of our new centre in Rochester Mall, dedicated entirely to nurturing Mandarin language skills and a deeper understanding of Chinese culture. For all enquiries about the centre, programmes and registration please call **6737 5348**.

**Holiday Programmes
22nd Nov to 9th Dec 2011**



Places for our 'Discovery' holiday programmes are filling fast!

To find out more, download a brochure from www.juliagabriel.com or call **6733 4322** (JGC Forum), **6737 5348** (Chengzhu Mandarin Centre), **6346 6130** (East Coast).

Online registration available.

Coming soon to a bookshelf near you!



Continuing her series of reading adventures featuring a very special bear, Julia Gabriel (Founder and Creative Director) brings us *Rainbow Bear's Dinosaur Discovery: An Adventure in Blends and Digraphs*. The book, along with songbook and CD, features 24 stunningly illustrated dinosaurs that help young children on their journey to fluent reading.

More details about the book and how to purchase it to follow soon.



David Gabriel

"All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players"¹



Rainbow Bear learns how to make the sound p, p, p from Ping the Panda

As we make our way through life, we play many roles. We have to wear many hats: The hats of baby, child and sibling; the hats of teacher, mentor and guide; the hats of parent, protector, colleague, boss; the hats of neighbour, friend; and, no matter what our age, always the hat of learner.

Life is full of joys and sadness, challenges and successes; of great discoveries and adventures. Ideally, to be well rounded we must experience all these things. Exposure to drama and performance from an early age is a wonderful way of preparing children for life. As they create, collaborate and participate in a host of experiences, real and imaginary, they increase their understanding of the world around them, build self-esteem and the ability to communicate effectively, equipping them confidently for the road ahead.

Throughout 2011, staff and students at Julia Gabriel Centre (JGC), Chiltern House and in local schools took part in, presented, experienced and enjoyed performance in many different guises: Performance storytelling at selected Popular Bookstores, Rainbow Bear performances at Mother & Baby events, Mandarin performances on stage in Forum, where JGC Stage Lights students also honed their skills in front of live audiences. Mums and babes became stars for a day in front of the camera when Dan Rather Reports came to town, and Chiltern House students became the audience, when they visited DBS Arts Centre to watch the 'green' play *Just a Dream*. Some lucky students also got the opportunity to meet an international celebrity, their hero, Mister Maker himself, when he paid a visit to Chiltern House!

Students taking Trinity Guildhall Assessments presented and performed to a visiting examiner

from Trinity Guildhall, London, with higher numbers than ever receiving the award of Distinction. And, last but not least, Singapore debaters (among the team a Chiltern House alumnus) drew on a wealth of performance and presentation experience to become World Schools Debating Champions for the first time! You can read about all these events, and more, in this issue of *Let's TALK*.

This year, we bade farewell to some members of our community, teachers and support staff, as well as students, who either moved away from Singapore or left us for new endeavours. We wish them all the best. Among them was someone who will always be very special to us, our co-founder David Gabriel. David took the decision to retire from the JG Group this year in order to travel more and concentrate on other projects. Though he is sadly missed, we are left with a deep sense of gratitude and many happy memories of someone who was a friend, a mentor and a father figure to some of us for more than 20 years. Thank you David!

With so much political and economic upheaval around the world at present, our task of ensuring that our children are equipped with the skills needed for success in school and in life become increasingly important. This is one reason why we are very excited about the opening of the Chengzhu Mandarin Centre in November, consolidating our commitment to providing meaningful, creative and lifelong learning experiences for all our students.

Wishing you all a very happy and peaceful festive season!

Fiona

Fiona Walker
Principal Director

¹ Quote from William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*

Students at Chiltern House dream green!



Joceline Tan with her students and *Just a Dream* cast members

In August, K1 and K2 children from Chiltern House were treated to the visual spectacle of *Just a Dream - The Green Play*, staged at the DBS Arts Centre.

Exposing young children to a theatre experience provides them with a variety of lasting benefits, particularly if the theme is one that they can take away and put into practice afterwards. Children learn social skills as they are introduced to theatre etiquette. They discover the joy of group activities which they can share and discuss with classmates, and their families at home.

They build confidence and self-esteem through the excitement of a field-trip, outside of familiar territory, and the entire process of a stage production exposes the children to a wider world of language and creativity.

Joceline Tan, from Chiltern House East Coast, who accompanied the children to the theatre, describes the outing:

"The excitement of the children was palpable as they took their seats. The lights dimmed and an immediate hush fell over the entire auditorium.

The children absolutely adored Walter, the main character. An imaginative boy who envisions a future filled with robots, machines and automated items; a fan of sci-fi shows, along with his friend George. Whilst Walter and George captured the hearts of the young audience, many of the children were enchanted by Rose, the righteous and earth-loving friend of the boys.

Throughout the play, the audience was taken on a roller-coaster ride through Walter's

dream world as he traveled from his bedroom to a forest, into an ocean and even a crazy laboratory! Every scene sent the audience on a journey towards discovering how to take care of our beautiful world, driving home the importance of conservation.

To top off the field trip, the children had a lovely surprise when the cast joined them during their snack for photo opportunities.

The conservation message of *Just a Dream* definitely hit home. Echoes of 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' (from the finale song) could be heard from the toilets, at snack time and even as the children boarded the bus back to school! A week after their visit, the children were still talking about the play, chanting 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!' in class and making efforts to throw litter into bins, sort used paper into recycling cans and conserve water while washing their hands.

Just a Dream - The Green Play turned out to be a truly remarkable experience that offered Chiltern House students a platform to express themselves at their best."

JGC and Art Bug combine with Lyra to enhance literacy skills

For the second year running, Julia Gabriel Centre and Art Bug collaborated with the art resources company Lyra to present a one day workshop on 20th August at YWCA Fort Canning titled 'Drama and Art as Pathways to Literacy.' Founder and Creative Director Julia Gabriel gave the keynote speech to an audience of teachers, all eager to hone their creative literacy teaching skills.

Julia described the event to *Let's TALK*: "About 60 teachers gave up a Saturday to join us in drama and art activities to motivate literacy, showing some amazing creativity. They loved Rainbow Bear's adventure in phonemes (speech sounds) and had great fun playing the different characters, changing their voices to become angry Andy Ant or Big Brown Bear, for example. I think the best thing about these events is that people who don't know each other come together with a common passion – to help children learn. Rainbow Bear and the Alphabet Zoo will now be popping up to excite children in preschools all over Singapore."

Manager and Senior Teacher at Julia Gabriel School of Education Mala Sundram said: "Personally, I have read and enjoyed the book many times with my daughter, Roslyn, but found Julia's insight on potential drama extensions from each page truly refreshing. Now I have more to explore with my little girl!"

Catching up with Art Bug

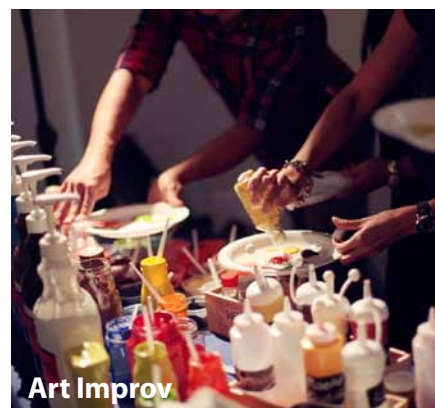
Art Bug introduced two unique programmes in 2011 that tickled the taste buds of budding artists across the age spectrum.

This year Little Art Bug matured to become Art Bug, diversifying the range of courses, workshops and programmes on offer to cater for adults as well as children. At the same time, they introduced Baby Bug to their portfolio of programmes, opening their studios in September to children aged between six months and three years old and their parents. Baby Bug is an interactive accompanied art activity specially designed to enhance the expressive development of the very young.

Audrey Tan, Art Bug Centre Director, told *Let's TALK*: "The children had great fun exploring with paint, communicating through colour and texture, simultaneously strengthening bonds with their parent – and grandparent in some cases. In fact, the accompanying adults clearly learnt just as much as the children about the joys of creative play, as they became so involved in the activities!"



Baby Bug



Art Improv

Something else that was new for Art Bug in 2011 was Art Improv™, an informal and spontaneous approach to art, where a social, art-based activity provides the perfect casual, non-judgmental setting for creative juices to flow. Art Bug hosted the first Art Improv for a group of print and web media friends one evening in August, with a second for a group of blogger friends and their children one afternoon in September. Each event produced a variety of delicious cuisine, beautifully presented dishes, topped with sizzling spices and sauces. A free-flow of paints inspired by the colourful condiments on the 'dining table' encouraged great conversations, unlimited cheer and lasting memories. Art Bug plans to host more Art Improv events in the future.

In *Let's TALK* Term 4, Issue 1, the article 'Making Mandarin enjoyable at Chiltern House' was incorrectly attributed to Genevieve Pereira, Senior Curriculum Specialist. It should have been attributed to Huang Ying, Head of Mandarin Programmes. Apologies for this error.

From Chiltern House to World Champion Debater

By Mark Gabriel

On Thursday 25th August, in the grand setting of the Caird Hall in Dundee, Scotland, two teams squared off in the final of the 2011 World Schools Debating Championships (WSDC). Through eight preliminary rounds and three knock-out rounds, the national schools debating teams of Australia and Singapore had out-debated the teams from 46 other countries to reach the final. And ultimately it was Singapore who emerged victorious, becoming the first Asian nation to be crowned world schools debating champions. Singapore's team captain, 18 year-old Teoh Ren Jie, was also ranked the Best Speaker of the Tournament ahead of over 200 other debaters from around the world.

Ren Jie was a student at Chiltern House from 1996 to 1999. He is now an A-level student at Raffles Institution.

"I have a lot of good memories of Chiltern House", said Ren Jie. "Speech and drama was my favourite lesson, and I think that being exposed to the subject at such a young age has helped me a lot."

Trevor Rodrigues, who was Ren Jie's speech and drama teacher at Chiltern House, recalls: "I remember Ren Jie as a very articulate young boy, and outside class I used to play chess with him. He was very well spoken and

a good strategic thinker. It's great to see that he's gone on to put these skills to use and become such a successful debater."

In 2008 and 2009, Ren Jie represented Raffles Institution in the Singapore Secondary Schools Debating Championships, an annual competition organised and sponsored by Julia Gabriel Centre. He won the Best Speaker of the Tournament Award once and was a member of the Division I champion team twice. "For all secondary school debaters, the Julia Gabriel's debating competition is the highlight of the debating year", says Ren Jie. "It was a great experience for me because of the high level of debates and the chance to meet and make friends with debaters from so many other schools."



Ren Jie's performance at the championships caught the attention of the Ministry of Education, who selected him to become the youngest-ever member of the national schools debating team at the age of 15. He has now represented Singapore at WSDC four times, reaching the semi-finals twice before leading the team to victory this year.

The final debate, on the motion 'This House believes that autocracy in the age of Facebook is doomed', saw Australia in proposition and Singapore in opposition. It was an excellent final and the Singapore team did a great job of winning over the audience with their blend of persuasiveness, clarity and humour. There was a big cheer in the hall when Singapore was announced as the champions.



Dear Julia Gabriel Centre,

We would like to acknowledge that the five of us began our debating careers in the annual Singapore Secondary Schools Debating Championships, which is organised and sponsored by Julia Gabriel Centre. We would like to thank the centre and everyone involved for the wonderful experience that launched us on a lifelong fascination with debates, which has recently culminated in our team becoming the world schools debating champions.



The Singapore National Schools Debating team

(L-R) Ashish Kumar, Ng Li Ki, Teoh Ren Jie, Benjamin Mak & Adil Hakeem.

Speaking about the value of debating, Ren Jie says: "Debate helps you see the world with an analytical mind and has taught me that there are two sides to every argument. I've learned to always consider the other side and realise that other people may have opinions and interpretations of the facts which, to them, may have every bit as firm a grounding as my views. I think that's something which is very important to be aware of in life."

Mark Gabriel is the Head of Debating at Julia Gabriel Centre and attended WSDC 2011 in Scotland as a judge.

Mister Maker makes our day!

It's not every day that a celebrity comes to town – and drops by to say hello! But that's exactly what happened when Cbeebies favourite Mister Maker visited Singapore recently as part of his whistle-stop tour of Asia.

Chiltern House Preschool was one of two lucky schools in Singapore selected by the BBC for a special visit by the Cbeebies star, who spent time at Chiltern House Mountbatten entertaining children from across our Chiltern House centres with his art and craft skills.

Sumathi Jayaram, Head of Centre, Chiltern House Turf Club, told *Let's TALK*: "Over 100 nursery and kindergarten students met Mister Maker when he visited on 29th August.

He showed them how to make a googly-eyed spider out of pompoms and pipe cleaners. Then, he went around the classrooms encouraging the children as they tried to do the same. The children were very excited to meet him. He's their superhero! Afterwards, Mister Maker autographed books and other toys the children had brought to show him. One of our students even invited him to their birthday party! It was a great thrill to host him. We hope he'll be able to visit again."

Though students who attend Chiltern House in the mornings were not able to meet Mister Maker on this occasion, they did make cards for him. Janis Pereira, Head of Centre at Chiltern House Mountbatten, spent some time chatting to the jovial entertainer, and reported that he was very touched to receive

the children's cards. Janis added: "According to his assistant, Mister Maker treasures every single art and craft piece children from all over the world make for him!"



Thank you Mister Maker – you made our day!

PEOPLE FEATURE: OUR STUDENTS!

Trinity Guildhall Assessments 2011

Congratulations to all our students at Julia Gabriel Centre, Chiltern House and in schools who took their Trinity Guildhall exams in August, and to all our teachers for their passion and hard work in preparing them.

Special congratulations to all those students who took Speech Communication Arts Levels 3, 5 and 6, Performance Arts group exams and Communications Skills Grade 5 group exams who achieved Distinction. Also, to their

teachers Karen Rowe, Desley O'Rourke, Meera George Harvey, William Royston and Mark Gabriel, who inspired them along the way.

For the first time, this year we presented students for the Trinity Guildhall Performance Arts exam. Stage Lights Senior Teacher William Royston told *Let's TALK*: "I am so proud of all my students. They all received Distinctions, well deserved because of their hard work. When the students presented their pieces on stage

in Forum at the end of last term, parents commented to me afterwards that they could clearly see the children's increased awareness of performance and collaboration with others. That was so rewarding!"

Performance Arts Grade 1- Distinctions

Animal Hullabaloo

Prabhpreet Kaur, Timothy Ong, Ramachandra Sharad, Suki Javen Justin, Delia Tan, Samantha Khoo, Kelly Khoo, Enzo Veloo, Yvette Low.

Happy Endings R Us

Dylan Jenkins, Kelsey Ngkoo, Payam Rastkar, Isaac Koh, Finlay Tear, James Grey, Om Buxani.

The Wild Things

Caitlin Chin Daily, Zachary Chong, Sarrah Rose, Mikhail Leung, Michael Liew Wensheng, Rahul Mohan Shamdasani, Dora Ang, Ryan Lim, Sng E-Lin, Amaris Tan, Teayan Ma Ka Ling, Eugene Yeo, Tyler Tay Junda.

A special mention for Alicia McGregor who joined the group after the Trinity Guildhall exam registrations but nonetheless participated in the final production of *The Wild Things* with verve, enthusiasm and skill.



Trinity Guildhall examiner Dr Margaret McAlliskey with Tina Abdullah and her EduDrama students

A message from Margaret McAlliskey, Trinity Guildhall Examiner

For two weeks in August, Dr Margaret McAlliskey, from Trinity Guildhall, London, visited Julia Gabriel Centre (JGC) to moderate students for a variety of Trinity Guildhall awards. Following her visit, Dr McAlliskey summarised for *Let's TALK* her observations during her Singapore tour:

"As an examiner for nearly twenty years it was particularly gratifying to see how excellence can be manifest across a wide range of speech and drama, performance and communication examinations in Singapore. Students were expertly prepared and their enthusiasm for the tasks was infectious. Young performers were engaging and vibrant. Their strong sense of confidence

and interactive skills were facilitated by some expert teaching and empathetic awareness to their individual needs. Without exception everyone who participated in the Young Performers Certificates [Kindergarten Two children in JGC and Chiltern House] displayed a sense of imagination and creativity to the highest level.

In the SCA Joint Assessment Scheme [students in JGC Primary 1 and above] evidence of in-depth preparation and impressive teaching skills were displayed throughout the session. The overall level of efficiency and professionalism was commendable on all levels. A special word of congratulations to the Performance Arts groups [StageLights].

The level of preparation, engagement with the story and delivery were superb for such a young group of people, well done!

Finally, the Communication Skills students presented relevant and thought-provoking presentations which were executed in a memorable manner. [More than 100 Secondary 3 students from Evergreen Secondary School sat for the Grade 5 Group exam]. Of these candidates, again, highly impressive and enjoyable work.

I hope that all these children will continue to explore and enjoy the world of drama, and that drama in its turn will continue to enrich and engage them in the years to come."

Dan Rather Reports visits Julia Gabriel Centre

For one afternoon in August, babies and toddlers in Winnie Khong's PlayNest programme at Julia Gabriel Centre (JGC), Evans Road, faced the camera, to become little movie stars! A team from *Dan Rather Reports* (a celebrated investigative journalism programme in the United States) was in Singapore to film a special piece examining education systems around the globe, and had selected both Chiltern House (Turf Club) and JGC as two places to visit. In the end, due to time constraints, the film crew only made it to JGC, where they spent time filming Winnie, the children and their parents as they continued with their activities.

Iris Lim, Vice Principal of Chiltern House, who helped set up the visit told *Let's TALK*: "I think at the beginning everyone was a bit nervous about being on camera, but once Rob [the cameraman] started filming, everyone behaved very naturally. Some of the children were very curious about the camera itself, and were allowed to explore and touch the lens. A few children watched the camera screen as their mummies were being filmed, and were thrilled, if a little perplexed, to see mummy on TV!"



Camera! Action! Snack time!