

LET'S TALK

Julia Gabriel
EDUCATION



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**DRAMATICALLY
DIFFERENT...**

Let's talk about outdoor play!

JULIA GABRIEL EDUCATION

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Positive Impact. Creating Confident Communicators. That's Why I'm Here. Shaping Beginnings. Dramatically Different. What do these phrases mean to you? Where do these statements fit into your work, home and life experiences? This was just one of the fun yet challenging activities which staff from all corners of Julia Gabriel Education were asked to complete when they met on 2nd January for their annual start-of-the-year team building event. Everyone chose the phrase that resonated with them the most. Following some time for reflection and work in small groups, individual staff then shared with their colleagues their thoughts and feelings with reference to their choice. Some staff who have been with us for many years found themselves adapting the statements to reflect their employment longevity! Fiona McDonald, Head of Learning Support and Training, simply added one word to her's — That's Why I'm [Still] Here! (See the Editorial, P3, for insight into some of the responses.)

If you would like to share with us what one, or more, of these phrases mean to you, we would love to hear from you. Please write to us at gaynor@juliagabriel.com and indicate if you are happy for us to include your response in an upcoming issue of *Let's Talk*.

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JULIA GABRIEL EDUCATION RECOMMENDS....

In a world that is prone to harsh criticism of others, particularly those who are different from us or who voice conflicting opinions, let's make it our intention to spread a little kindness!

"It's not our job to play judge and jury, to determine who is worthy of our kindness and who is not. We just need to be kind, unconditionally and without ulterior motive, even — or rather, especially — when we'd prefer not to be."

—Josh Radnor, Actor/Director



EDITORIAL

I hope you have all had a happy and healthy start to the year.

As we do every year at Julia Gabriel Education, we started 2016 with a team building day for all our staff. This year we had a lot of fun making short videos with a variety of hashtags and one of these was *#that's why I am here*.

It was great to hear colleagues, some who have been with us for a short while and many who have been with us for many years, echo similar sentiments:

"The company culture of support, acceptance and growth inspires me."

"I feel valued as my ideas and feedback are always taken seriously by senior staff."

"I feel as though my strengths are identified and I am able to use them."

"There is a genuine feeling of happiness in the centres."

"The company is so flexible I can adapt my role as my life changes."

We know that it is not only the need to earn a salary that keeps someone in a job. Fair compensation is a must of course but *Time* magazine recently identified the top reason why people remain in their job as being enjoyment of the work they do!

We have gathered countless testimonials from parents and students over the last 25 years describing how much they have gained from our programmes; how the benefits have had a long lasting impact; and how much they enjoyed the work (or play) they were involved in our centres.

Like so many of our team members and students, I hope that you enjoy what you do here as part of the Julia Gabriel Education community. I hope you feel valued for who you are and know that your ideas and feedback are hugely valuable to us.

Happy New Year.
Gong Xi Fa Cai.

Fiona

Fiona Walker, Chief Executive Officer

STORIES ALIVE!

Julia Gabriel Centre

Enjoy the verve and vitality of performance storytelling with our educators from Julia Gabriel Centre and experience how they bring the written word to life!

27th February, 5.30 - 6.30pm
Julia Gabriel Centre Tampines Mall, Level 5

To register go to www.juliagabriel.com

PICNIC OF WORDS

Julia Gabriel Centre

We love to share our passion for words and language and one way we do this is through our Picnic of Words. Join us to see how we bring words alive through poetry, prose and drama. Enjoy some delicious edible treats afterwards and take the opportunity to meet our educators who will be happy to share tips with you about how you too can bring words alive with your children at home.

12th March, 6.00 - 7.00pm
Julia Gabriel Centre Forum, Level 4

To register go to www.juliagabriel.com

ADULT ACCOMPANIED PROGRAMMES OPEN HOUSE

Julia Gabriel Centre

Meet our early childhood specialists, learn more about our programmes for children aged 6 months to 4 years old, and enjoy a free trial class when you join us for our Open House.

14th March, 9.00am - 5.00pm

Call 6733 4322 for more details.

CHINESE CULTURAL EVENING

Chengzhu Mandarin Centre

Immerse yourself in a market place of traditional Chinese cultural activities including calligraphy painting, making glutinous rice balls and a variety of arts and crafts. There's also family games, as well as musical and drama performances to enjoy.

27th February, 6.00 - 7.30pm

Call 6737 5348 or go to www.chengzhu.net to register.

"Whether you and I and a few others will renew the world some day remains to be seen. But within ourselves we must renew it each day."

— Hermann Hesse

STUDENTS DO THE TALKING!

CHENGZHU MANDARIN CENTRE

Writing in Chinese is not easy! But, when inspired by passionate educators, nurtured within a fun, positive environment, encouraged to love learning, and with a few effective strategies up your sleeve, the challenges are well worth it. We'll let these stories by two of Chengzhu Mandarin Centre's Creative Writing students do the talking!



Keagan Soh Hong Han, Creative Writing, P3. Keagan has been at Chengzhu Mandarin Centre for 2 years.



Timothy Chek Jun Hou, Creative Writing, P6. Timothy has been at Chengzhu Mandarin Centre for 5 years.



姓名: 泓豪 日期: 七月十九日

还少一块钱

一天中午,风和日丽,小明觉得肚子饿就向爸爸要一块钱去拿钱买午餐。小明来到脚面馆的摊位前,和蔼可亲的叔叔问小明:“你要吃什么?”小明回答:“给我一碗虾面。”过了五分钟,叔叔端着一碗热乎乎、香喷喷的虾面,他伸出两根手指说:“小朋友,两块钱。”

小明听到了,可是他只从口袋里拿出一块钱。他觉得很尴尬。

多听多看多读多写·心到眼到口到手到

姓名: 泓豪 日期: 七月十九日

脸涨得通红。小明不好意思地对叔叔说:“我身上只有一块钱,我明天再给你一块钱,可以吗?”

叔叔说:“可以,你先去吃面吧!”

小明高高兴兴地端着面去吃。

第二天,小明又来到脚面馆家还叔叔一块钱。叔叔夸奖小明是一个守信用的好孩子。

多听多看多读多写·心到眼到口到手到

姓名: 程俊豪 日期: 一月二十三日

探访老人院

在家里,每当我看到照片里那脸上挂着灿烂笑容的老人,我就会想起那件令我既开心又伤感的事情。虽然事情已经过去很久了,但那件事却仍然牢牢地印在我的脑海里,无法忘记……

记得那一天中午,老师带着全班同学到老人院探访老人。到了老人院,老人院的院长已经笑容满面地站在门口迎接我们,并跟老师讲解老人院。在老师的带领下,我们鱼贯进入老人院。

我们一走进老人院,老人纷纷睁开眼睛,我们手里提着装满水果的篮子,把篮子递给老人。老人一接到,脸上的皱纹仿佛

14 x 18 = 252

姓名: 程俊豪 日期: 一月二十三日

很消失了,不停地感谢我们。

送了礼物后,我们又身为老人的清理他们的房间。我们三五成群,分工合作,有的把地板打扫干净,有的整理好老人的床铺,还有的提着水桶用抹布把窗户擦得干干净净。不一会儿,老人的房间就焕然一新!

接着,我们向老人们呈献精彩的表演。大家都表演不同的节目,有些同学边唱边跳舞,甚至有些同学还玩笑话,逗得大家哈哈大笑。房间里洋溢着欢乐的气氛,大家都高兴高采烈。

过了一个小时后,表演就结束了,我们都拿出自己准备的小礼物送给老人,并

14 x 18 = 252

姓名: 程俊豪 日期: 一月二十三日

跟老人们聊天,从聊天中,我们得知了老人的不足没有亲人了,就是子女到外国去了,没有时间探望老人,没有亲人陪伴他们,使他们孤单寂寞,而我们的到来给他们带来了许多快乐。

时间过得真快,转眼间,我们就离开了学校了。我们依依不舍地挥手,向老人们道别。在回程的旅途中,我们的脑海里不时浮现出老人们饱经沧桑的脸,眼睛射出对亲人渴望的目光,心里不禁感慨万分。一想到老人们笑咪咪的样子,一股暖流涌上了我的心头。

14 x 18 = 252

Meet...



Meng Zhao Ying, new Head of Chengzhu Mandarin Kindergarten



Fang Ping, new Head of Chengzhu Mandarin Centre

We look forward to welcoming you to our centre soon!

CHILTERN HOUSE PRESCHOOL

CHILTERN HOUSE ART SHOWS

Drum roll please...

We are delighted to report that the total sum raised from the Chiltern House Art Shows back in September 2015 was a whopping \$55,765.50! Thank you to everyone who contributed to this fantastic sum, which was donated to Very Special Arts Singapore.



FILMING WITH YOUNG PARENTS MAGAZINE

Last year Chiltern House Preschool welcomed *Young Parents* magazine into the classroom to film Julia Gabriel (Founder and Director) leading a session of mindfulness practice, accompanied by educators Maahes Chandiras and Azalea Birch. The resulting short videos illustrate the simple, easy to follow techniques used by the educators to help children develop a sense of awareness — of self and their environment.

In case you missed the videos posted on our Julia Gabriel Education Facebook pages, here they are again:

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dh5Hnphoh8E>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhavHGBimRE>

Part 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCGT15vIE-g>



K2 Celebrations 2015

We're so proud of our 2015 graduating students from every Chiltern House centre who put on a fantastic show during the K2 Celebrations in November last year. They danced, sang, played musical instruments and presented their way through a series of colourful and entertaining pieces in English and Mandarin. Congratulations to all the students and teachers at Chiltern House Preschool!



JULIA GABRIEL CENTRE

CREATING THE FUTURE TODAY

Senior Educator Trevor Rodrigues and Ahmad Sultanul Ariffin



When the fireworks and party poppers celebrating SG50 finally died down, we were interested to discover what the next generation of movers and shakers envisioned for Singapore's future. At the end of last year, *Let's Talk* invited Trevor Rodrigues, Senior Educator at Julia Gabriel Centre, to pose the following questions to some of his students: If you could become prime minister for a day, what would you do? What is your vision for Singapore in 50 years time? Trevor asked one of his Readers and Writers classes (all the students were 8 years old at the time) to think about these questions. The responses that came back revealed two things. Firstly, that young children today are strongly influenced by two inescapable realities, namely school and technology! And secondly, children's imagination and creative expression are strongly influenced by their present experiences.

When thinking about being prime minister, one student said that schools would only run from Monday to Thursday, with Friday being set aside for Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs). Another announced that all students would be allowed to use iPads instead of textbooks. While all the students agreed that they would abolish school uniform!

Asking the children to imagine what Singapore 100 would be like threw up a host of ideas largely based around the theme of speed!

One student imagined that his 'robot' car could 'transform' into a 'robot' - sound familiar? Another also envisioned a world with robots, this time robot pets, as well as flying cars. There was an optimistic outlook about Singapore's success in Formula 1, as one student declared, "Singapore will have its first F1 racing car driver and he'll drive on our own circuit...and speedboats will race around in our waters." And another student had Singapore soldiers sporting a newly designed uniform while using the latest high-tech weapons. The same student also foresaw a solution to a very topical environmental issue in the region, predicting, "There will be no more haze!" Hooray!

Continued on pg. 8

JULIA GABRIEL INTERNATIONAL

Julia Gabriel Centre and Chiltern House Preschool Kuala Lumpur reaches double figures!



Julia Gabriel Centre & Chiltern House Preschool Kuala Lumpur team



Pau Lee celebrates 10 years!

It is hard to believe that Julia Gabriel Centre and Chiltern House Preschool Kuala Lumpur recently celebrated its tenth birthday! The centre has grown enormously during those ten years and is now firmly established as a leading enrichment centre and preschool in the region, with currently two branches operating in the city. Head of Centre and Senior Educator in Citta Mall, Melissa

Fernandez (some of our readers may remember Melissa from her EduPlay days at Julia Gabriel Centre, Singapore) donned the role of Master of Ceremony during the centre's Vision Day (4th January), an event entitled *I Am, You Are, We Are*. Staff enjoyed a series of reflective and celebratory activities, and also heard Centre Director Wang Pau Lee reminisce about the early days of operations in Kuala Lumpur. Pau Lee told *Let's Talk*:

Reflecting upon a journey I took with my husband, Surachet a decade ago, it continues to amaze me seeing how far we have come. From our first PlayClub class in the Bangsar centre with just a handful of students to present day, I have been privileged to work alongside some of the most capable and inspiring colleagues who all share one common vision - that is, to continuously provide the best quality education to the students here in Kuala Lumpur. It has truly been the journey of a lifetime and a most deeply meaningful and enriching experience for me. Throughout the years, this has become our home, and most simply, where all my three children have enjoyed (with one still enjoying!) their preschool years. That was precisely what prompted me to start this journey a decade ago.

So I have to thank every one of you who has given us encouragement and support, helped us in any way possible, as we grow year by year. And to all colleagues of Julia Gabriel Centre and Chiltern House Preschool, locally and in overseas centres, thank you for sharing your best practices with us. But most of all, I would like to thank Julia for without you, we wouldn't be us today!

DRAMATICALLY DIFFERENT...

LET'S TALK ABOUT OUTDOOR PLAY!



Photo credit: *Let the Children Play*

From time to time we talk about the importance of outdoor play, a topic that often throws up concerns for parents here in Singapore: "Where can my child play safely?" "What is the most healthy outdoor environment for my child to play in?" "My child will get dirty!" "I don't have time to watch my child all the time if they play outside!" The fact is there are lots of fantastic outdoor environments on our little island to explore: the beach, rainforest walks, nature trails, gardens, wetland reserves, Pulau Ubin, to name a few; getting dirty is part and parcel of growing up (and half the fun); and since many of us are lucky enough to employ helpers or have retired relatives who live close at hand, keeping an eye on the little one really should not be an issue!

Singapore's weather allows for plenty of opportunities to be outside, to face the breeze, to soak up a little sun (be safe and ensure you and your child always wear sunblock) and to feel raindrops on your bare skin. We don't recommend getting drenched in a monsoon shower of course but let's not be over protective: every child should get to feel the sensation of rain on their face and experience the joy of jumping in a puddle at some point during childhood!

When children are allowed to play freely they learn more than we can possibly imagine, especially when they are able to explore and discover in an outdoor environment. Learning through play is a child's way of discovering, absorbing knowledge, making connections, computing, classifying, creating, questioning, understanding...the list of competencies gained and skills engaged is endless.

Children are masters at making things up for themselves as they go along when they are given the freedom to do so. Let them lie on their stomach on the ground or on the beach, investigating what's crawling between the blades of grass and grains of sand. Let them pick up loose objects to play with and turn them into something else, as they switch up their imaginations and search for the right words to describe their actions and feelings. Or simply give them a cardboard box and marvel at what it can become in the hands and mind of your child as they play with their

friends in the void deck. Try not to interfere, unless you see imminent danger on the horizon of course. Instead, keep in mind that even tumbles and scrapes, the odd bruise here, a little scratch there, become mementoes of a childhood full of the most meaningful learning experiences.

Do you allow your children to play outside whenever possible? Do you mind if your child comes home caked in mud? Where is your favourite go-to destination that gives your child the freedom to run, clamber and explore? Or do you feel that Singapore needs to develop more specific outdoor spaces for children? Do you have a particular family game you like to play outside? Or do you find yourself worrying if your child plays outside for too long? Perhaps you recognise yourself as being an over protective parent but would like to be able to let go a little bit more? Whatever your views about outdoor play, we would love to hear from you. Please write to us at gaynor@juliagabriel.com and let us know if you are happy for your views to be shared in the next issue of *Let's Talk*.

Continued from pg. 7, 'Creating the Future Today'

The children excitedly looked ahead, visualising the future as they would like to see it, but what this also illustrates is that it's actually very hard for young children to fully grasp the concept of future. 50 years hence is simply an inconceivably long way away when you are just 8 years old! Both questions elicited responses that actually indicate what the children would like to see now. More important than the answers however, is that the children were encouraged to imagine, to express their ideas coherently and fluently and to use language expressively. One of the tenets of Julia Gabriel Education's EduDrama methodology is to acknowledge every idea as valid and meaningful. It doesn't matter if an idea is fantastical or an action seemingly impossible; trees don't have to be green, the sky doesn't have to be blue, and who wouldn't like to take off in their car to outsmart the latest traffic jam! What matters is that we engage our children in ways that encourage their curiosity, allowing them to express themselves openly and confidently. And who knows - there may just be an F1 champ or inventor of flying cars among them!

Thank you to Trevor Rodrigues and to Liew Kai Yi, Gisele Ong, Toh Shuan Ee, Jayden Lin, Dylan Chew, Ahmad Sultanul Ariffin and Adam Hassim for contributing your ideas so enthusiastically!