

# NEWSLETTER

December 2014



## EXCELLENCE FOR CHILDREN

The Learning Connections (TLC) is an arts-integrated learning organization dedicated to bringing young people together for multi-arts experiences involving creative exploration, group learning and inspiration for the imagination. Its aim is to bring arts to the lives of young people and to provide quality, authentic arts education programs in English and Chinese to preschool children to help develop children's full potential.

Looking back at what we have accomplished this year, TLC's success largely lies with our dedicated team of theatre arts practitioners and early childhood teachers who have devoted their time, skills and passion in using the arts to engage and benefit young people.

11<sup>th</sup> November marks our fifth year in delivering quality theatre arts education through our year-long process drama programs as well as educational theatre shows to preschool children. We are most grateful to our partners who value our partnerships and supported us during our journey to open the minds, educate and touch the hearts of the young children.

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**The arts help students develop the thinking, social, and motivational skills needed for success in school, work and life.**

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## WHAT HAVE WE DONE IN 2014!

### Ace! Festival for Children

Conducted workshops for children aged 4 – 9 years. Asian Spice Kids in English and Just Teddy in Chinese.



### Story Box (A Storytelling Performance)

The Learning Connections (TLC) launched its newest initiative **Story Box**, an interactive storytelling performance that tours to preschools to engage children aged 3-6 years old through active participation and provide them with a multi-sensorial experience.

Award winning author, Sarah Mounsey's **Purple Paw Prints** was brought to life through the creative direction of Candice de Rozario, TLC's Head of Educational Theatre, who is also a versatile award-winning stage performer.

**Purple Paw Prints** delighted, thrilled and engaged over a thousand children (including parents and educators) from various preschools and international schools.



Story Box "Purple Paw Prints" (a storytelling performance) – Sarah Mounsey with the producers and performers from TLC

## Performing at the Asia Festival of Children's Contents (AFCC) in May 2014

Storybook Theatre! Adapting and bringing to life Linn Shekinah's book "Asian Spice Kids – Star Anise Superstar!" Use of costumes, shadow puppetry, songs and story to engage the audience.



The performance "Water – Nectar of the Gods", directed by Candice de Rozario, was specially created by TLC to launch "World Water Day" at the Marina Barrage in March this year. TLC was invited to re-stage this show at the AFCC event. While the overarching message is one of conservation and sustainability, our show is about the celebration of the power, beauty and majesty of water, and how it is truly the lifeblood of our planet. Several books about water written by local and foreign authors were carefully selected to create this magical performance. These stories were told through acting, dance, movement, mask and puppetry, and peppered with excerpts from poems by both local and overseas writers, primarily from *WATER*, by Christopher Cheng and Susanna Goho-Quek

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**The best way to teach young children is through the arts. Top 10 skills children learn from the arts:**

1. Creativity
  2. Confidence
  3. Focus
  4. Problem Solving
  5. Perseverance
  6. Non-verbal Communication
  7. Receiving Constructive Feedback
  8. Dedication
  9. Collaboration
  10. Accountability
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### Dramatic Storytelling

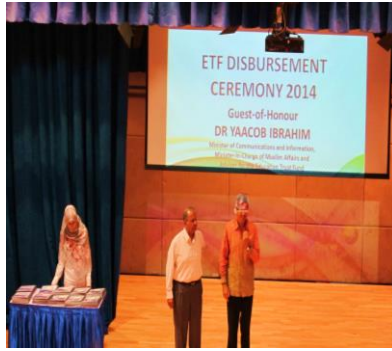
Engaging children with dramatic storytelling and finger puppetry at the book launch of "Tibby & Duckie" by celebrated children's author, Emily Lim.



### Storytelling Workshop with Tanya Batt

New Zealand's top storyteller, Ms Tanya Batt, had participants **moving**, **stretching**, **laughing**, **singing** and **grooving** in her workshops when she was in Singapore to conduct Imagined Worlds, Dance Upon A Time and The Story Sack workshops organized by The Learning Connections. Those who attended her 'lively' workshops were mainly early childhood educators, preschool leaders and parents. Tanya's smooth integration of drama, songs, dance/movements, and storytelling provides educators and parents inspiration, creative ideas and a platform on how to engage children using movement stories and a variety of techniques to give children a full bodied story experience.





### Performance at Mendaki's Education Trust Fund Disbursement Ceremony

TLC staged *The Hare and the Tortoise* at the ETF Disbursement Ceremony, attended by guest of honor Dr. Yaacob Ibrahim. The event was organized by Mendaki to give out school assistance scheme vouchers to students from low-income families.

### Pilot National Arts Council Arts Education Program (NAC-AEP) for Preschools



TLC is proud to have the **Children's Theatre Circle** and **Story Box** accepted for the pilot NAC-AEP for Preschools from July 2014 to March 2016. A full list of accepted programmes prepared by the National Arts Council (NAC) have been made available in a booklet and on the NAC-AEP website to raise awareness of a curated pool of quality arts education programmes that all childcare centres and kindergartens can refer to, when purchasing arts programmes for children.

### Storybook Theatre Holiday Workshops



TLC conducted English and Chinese holiday workshops for children (aged 3-6 years) at various preschools this November and December to bring books by award-winning children's book authors like Emily Lim, Sarah Mounsey and Linn Shekinah to life. The workshops took children on a dramatic journey that integrate and combine storytelling and drama techniques in multiple ways to support children's learning through the arts. Through drama, visual arts, music and movements, children will gain confidence as they explore new learning and internalization of language and skills in enjoyable and creative ways.

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**Arts education helps students with increased awareness of self (mind, body and voice) and others (collaboration and empathy); improved clarity and creativity in communication of ideas; and fosters a deep understanding of human behavior, motivation, diversity, culture and history.**

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## WHAT'S COMING UP IN EXCITING 2015!

### Ng Hui will be a member of TLC's team!



Ng Hui is a multi-talented artiste who acts and hosts on TV. She is effectively bilingual and is also actively involved in the theatre/stage circle. Ng Hui earned her first acting nomination at Star Awards '07 in the category of Best Supporting Actress for her role in **"The Greatest Love Of All"**. The thespian further proved her natural acting ability in 2009 when she snagged the Star Awards Best Supporting Actress Award and The New Paper Most Breakthrough Performance of the Year Award for her breakthrough performance as the long-suffering maid *Ah Tao* in the award-winning drama **"The Little Nyonya"**. She went on to garner another Best Supporting Actress Nomination for playing an evil, scheming woman in **"Kampung Ties"**. In addition to performing, Ng Hui was also the acting head of drama and teacher at NAFSA's School of Young Talents.

Ng Hui joins The Learning Connections (TLC) to develop and deliver English and Chinese theatre arts programs and educational theatre shows for preschool children.

## Story Box – The Naughty Mynah (A bilingual storytelling performance for 3-6 year olds)

Show direction by Ng Hui

Touring to preschools from April – July 2015!



Paul Jones, a visiting art teacher who has just arrived in Singapore befriends a clever mynah that can speak English and Mandarin. Agreeing to help Mr. Jones learn Mandarin, the mynah accompanies him to surprise his students on the first day of school. The mynah soon learns from the students and Mr. Jones that it is too clever for its own good. Or does it?

This fun, interactive and engaging bilingual story will help young children develop an appreciation for the diverse language environment they live in. The use of puppetry, drama, storytelling, songs and movements added with a dose of humor to bring this book to life will make this learning journey exciting and enjoyable!

### Integrated Arts Training for Preschool Teachers!

TLC will be offering arts training for preschool teachers in Drama, Music & Movement and Visual Arts to be integrated into the school curriculum. This 12-week program will be offered from July 2015!

*The best way to reach and teach young children is through the arts*

The training is designed to provide educators with the tools to use the arts as a medium to engage children. As the arts are introduced into the curriculum, the arts become a new way of teaching, learning and knowing.

Facilitators :

#### **ELAINE NG – DRAMA**

Elaine Ng, an early childhood practitioner with more than 20 years of experience, strongly believes that exposing young children to the arts at an early age is crucial to every child's development. She co-founded The Learning Connections (TLC), an arts integrated learning organization dedicated to bringing quality and authentic arts experiences to the lives of young people. Holding a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education from University of South Australia, Elaine is an associate lecturer for SEED Institute and Ngee Ann Polytechnic. In 2014, she joined the Wheelock faculty as an Associate Professor.

#### **LAVINA CHONG – MUSIC & MOVEMENT**

Lavina's work in the field of Early Childhood Education date back to 1990. She attained Masters in Science (Early Childhood Education) from Wheelock College, Boston in 2003 and has professional qualifications in Music, Yogakids, Speech and Drama and Storytelling. Lavina has worked in several reputable preschools in Singapore and specialises in areas such as Infant-Toddler Education, Language Arts for the young children, Music Movement and Drama for children. Lavina also ran Kids' Loft (a parent-toddler playschool) for 7 years (2003-2010). She is presently an adjunct lecturer with SEED Institute and Wheelock College, Singapore.

#### **WONG SEET FUN – VISUAL ARTS**

Wong Seet Fun is an artist and an early childhood educator. The founder of Art Loft, she is also an Adjunct Lecturer with SEED Institute, Nanyang Management, Ngee Ann Polytechnic and co-teaches "The Creative Arts" module. The objective of Art Loft is to help the child develop an awareness of the environment, nurture creativity and provide for an all rounded education.

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Through arts education, very young children can experience nontraditional modes of learning that develop intrapersonal, interpersonal, spatial, kinesthetic, and logic abilities, skills, and knowledge, as well as traditional modes of learning that develop mathematical and linguistic abilities, skills and knowledge. As children learn in multiple ways, activities should reflect these multiple ways of knowing and doing.

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Season's Greetings with all good wishes  
for the New Year!

Warmest Regards

**Juliet & Elaine**

Directors of The Learning Connections