

THE STRAITS TIMES

Free arts lessons for kids from charities



All in, 200 children sang, danced and acted yesterday in a display of the arts skills they acquired over the past two months. The Tan Chin Tuan Foundation sponsored their lessons and organised the performance. ST PHOTO: CAROLINE CHIA

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More than 600 children trained in dance, music, drama and story-telling



Lester Hio (mailto:lesterh@sph.com.sg)

For an hour, 200 children from underprivileged backgrounds took centre stage for the first time yesterday to showcase the fruits of arts workshops they have attended over the past two months.

They sang, danced and acted at the finale of the More Than Words programme, an initiative set up by philanthropic group Tan Chin Tuan Foundation to introduce them to arts activities such as theatre, speech and drama.

The audience of more than 1,000 people, comprising other children from charities, volunteers and staff, were treated to an opening skit about the tale of an elephant and his adventures in a small town.

This was followed by a dance performance and rendition of popular Malay song Chan Mali Chan played on the angklung, a traditional Indonesian percussion instrument. It ended with an original song and a Star Wars-inspired dance number.

Under the More Than Words programme, more than 600 children from charities, such as Morning Star Community Services, Life Community Services and the Down Syndrome Association, were trained by arts practitioners in areas such as dance, music, drama and story-telling.

LEARNING THROUGH THE ARTS

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All these, whether drama, music, dance, are all avenues for creative expression.

MS YAP SU-YIN, Tan Chin Tuan Foundation's chief executive



Trainers were hired from performance companies such as The Little Arts Academy and the Singapore Repertory Theatre, who held workshops for the children which started in July.

The foundation's chief executive, Ms Yap Su-Yin, said: "Through the arts, they learn teamwork, how to communicate with one another and to express themselves constructively. All these, whether drama, music, dance, are all avenues for creative expression."

The costs for the programme, which includes the hiring of arts trainers and teachers and the concert, were all funded by the foundation. Ms Yap declined to say how much it cost, but said it was a "five-figure sum".

Staff from the charities were also trained how to use the arts to teach children under their care.

Primary 1 pupil Tristan Lim, seven, who was part of the angklung performance, said the experience of playing such an instrument had been "good and fun", adding: "When the song comes on, it just feels good."

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