

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping circles in various shades of blue (light, medium, and dark) and thin blue lines that intersect and cross the page. The circles are positioned in the upper right and lower right areas, while the lines run diagonally across the page.

Summarized Report of Together for a Better World for Differently Abled Children

Lecture series and Symposium

Among all the parts in the differently abled community, children are the most vulnerable group as they are dependent on their parents or a guardian. The Sri Lankan society has not come out of the belief that having a differently abled person in the family is bad luck or bundle of chaos. There must be an immediate attitudinal change towards Differently able children.

Department of Physiotherapy
2/11/2013

Together For A Better World For All Including **Differently Abled Children**

The term disability is defined as *any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being*. Disability is an umbrella term covering impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. An *impairment* is a problem in body function or structure; an *activity limitation* is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action and a *participation restriction* is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. For more acceptance in the emotional aspects the world community has come to use the term “differently abled” instead of “disabled” to describe this special part in our society.

Disability can be of several types such as physical, sensory, intellectual, mental and emotional, developmental or any combination of the above. Disability may be congenital or acquired. Congenital spinal cord injuries like spina bifida, cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophies are some of the causes which give rise to congenital disabilities while road traffic accidents, war, sports injuries are some acquired causes.

Statistics reveal that 500 million people all over the world are differently abled. They further described it as 17% of 250 million, almost one person in every five people is differently abled. As categorized statistics, it says that 120,000 people are totally blind, one out of every 250 people is wheel chair bounded (307,000 people below 44 years use wheel chairs), 6 million are mentally retarded and 1100 new incidents of spinal cord injuries per year is happening all over the world. But these statistics must be higher than that as all differently abled people are not reported for census.

Among all the parts in the differently abled community, children are the most vulnerable group as they are dependent on their parents or a guardian. The Sri Lankan society has not come out of the belief that having a differently abled person in the family is bad luck or bundle of chaos. But the Western community sees far more beyond that and always try to help them to lead a normal and independent life. That must be the attitude of the Sri Lankans as well. As we inspect the

differently abled community, the outstanding aspect we see in them is they are unbelievably courageous than the normal human beings. They can be successfully trained to face their life individually. Instead of being sorry for them, we should give them the helping hand to rise up among all the barriers and sorrows and help them to live their lives as all the human beings deserve. So they should be trained for this process from the very beginning-that means they should start facing their life in a stronger aspect from their childhood.

As we should pay more attention towards this topic, Department of Physiotherapy of Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya organized the 2nd annual symposium on the theme “Together for a Better World for All Including Differently Abled Children” parallel to the World Disability Day. Based on this topic, some events were held outside and inside the faculty premises.

With the hope of gaining the experience in the real world of the differently abled children community, the students paid a visit to the **Blue Rose Special School and Training Center** in Kandy on the 6th of February 2013.





The Blue Rose is a day school and a training center for mentally disabled students. Blue Rose had been established by Service Civil international, Sri Lanka in the year of 1981. As we got to know, today there are 40 registered students, six regular teachers and two part-time instructors for dancing and music in for the education of these students. Expert

foreign volunteers, particularly from Belgium, Spain, Germany, Slovenia, Finland, etc. have worked for periods ranging from 2 years to six weeks, for the benefit of these special need students.

We went there with the hopes to get to know these students, watch their talents and have a drawing competition for their enjoyment. They were much more talented than we thought. Some children sang songs and drew nice pictures as well. It was a very different but valuable experience to identify a part of our clinical carrier ahead of us. Some moments were very emotional but they proved us that they are also a valuable part in this society and they can be trained to provoke their inborn talents.



At the end of a successful and enjoyable day, the Blue Rose school was requested on behalf of the Department of Physiotherapy, to participate on the symposium which had been planned to be held on the 11th of February 2013.

The major event was held on the 11th of February 2013 with the above theme. As the key event, the students, teachers and the parents from the Blue Rose school were warmly welcome by the students from the Department of Physiotherapy.

The opening ceremony took place at 8.45 am at the new lecture hall of Faculty of Allied Health Sciences., University of Peradeniya.

Guests of Honour

Prof. Shantha K. Hennayaka -Chief Guest-The Deputy Vice chancellor of University of Peradeniya

Dr. H.J. Suraweera- Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon; Teaching hospital,Peradeniya

Dr. Mahinda Wickramarathne -Dean of the faculty of Allied Health Sciences-

Dr. B.M.S.H.K. Banneheka -Head of the Department of Physiotherapy ,Faculty of allied Health Sciences

Dr. Malka Mudalige-Head of the Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences; Faculty of Allied Health Sciences

Mr. M Azhar -Assistant register; Faculty of Allied Health Sciences

The principal of the Blue Rose Special School

Other resource persons

Dr. Wasana Kiridena- Consultant Pediatrician; Teaching Hospital, Peradeniya

Dr. Shavindra R. Dias, Senior lecturer and Consultant Psychiatrist, Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya

Mrs. Surangika wadugodapitiya- Lecturer, Department of Physiotherapy, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya

Guests of Participation

Differently abled students (19) from Blue Rose

Teachers and parents from Blue Rose

Students of the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences

Two students from the Physiotherapy Unit at University of Colombo

One student from the Faculty of Arts

Two members from the Equality based Community Support and Training (ESCAT) center

One member from the Foundation of Goodness Charity service

Four students from the Widdharthaya college Kandy

Six students from the Dharmaraja college Kandy

Six students from the St'Anthony's college Kandy

Six students from the St' Sylvester's college Kandy

Six Students from Mahamaya college Kandy

Honourable guests

The guest lecture series were held in the Sinhala medium as it seemed to be convenient for the condition of the gathering.

As its first event, lighting of the oil lamp took place. For this event, Prof. Shantha K. Hennayake, Chief Guest and the Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Peradeniya, Dr. H.J. Suraweera-Consultant Orthopedic Surgeon; Teaching Hospital, Peradeniya, Dr. Mahinda Wickramaratne, the Dean of the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, Dr. B.M.H.S.K. Banneheka-Head of the Department of Physiotherapy; Faculty of allied Health Sciences, Dr. Malka Mudalige-Head of the Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences; Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, Mr.

M.Azhar- Assistant Registrar; Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, the principal of the Blue Rose Special School, one student from the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences to represent all the undergraduate students, one student from the Blue Rose Special School to represent all the differently abled students, one student from a school representing all the school students participated.

Then the welcome speech was presented by Dr. B.M.H.S.K.Banneheka. In his speech, he warmly welcomed all distinguished guests, academic and non-academic staff members, students from the faculty, the students, teachers and parents from the Blue Rose Special School, students from schools . At the same time he emphasized the purpose of the event as it was organized with the hope of an attitude change in the society towards the differently abled children and to teach something new to the teachers and parents who deal with those children in the day to day life.

Then the next speech was delivered by the Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Peradeniya, Prof. Shantha K. Hennayake. In his valuable speech he mentioned that it's the responsibility of a university student to remind the society what the society has forgot. In addition he mentioned that it is very crucial to do something routinely on behalf of this theme instead of holding an event annually. He provided us with a valuable suggestion to help the faculty authorities to make all the buildings in the faculty to be accessible independently for any differently abled person. Moreover he emphasized the importance of doing something practically for the betterment of the differently abled people as the university community. He further asked the organizing committee to provide him with a full account on the event to be published in the university official website to spread this valuable message to the whole world.

Then a speech was delivered by the Dean of the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, Dr. Mahinda Wickramaratne. Mainly he used his opportunity to thank the Physiotherapy Department for organizing this event as it is a good example to impact on an attitudinal change in the society towards differently abled people. He also emphasized the importance of providing accessibility facilities to all the buildings in the university. In addition he also denoted the importance of continuing these types of programs in the practical aspects.

Then Dr.H.J.Suraweera addressed the gathering. His speech was more informative and it was themed as an introduction about disabilities. He described the difference among the terms

impairment, disability and handicap. He mentioned that about 2 million in Sri Lanka are differently abled and it is becoming a serious issue in the society. He pointed out a shocking fact that around 6000 people are becoming differently abled per year in Sri Lanka due to road traffic accidents and different other chaos.

In addition he mentioned the importance of handling the differently abled children with love and care. By describing about the world famous characters, he mentioned that it is always possible to rehabilitate differently abled people by the multi disciplinary approach in the health service. Moreover he emphasized the importance of “not labeling” the child due to any disability.

Latter part of his speech contained a description about “Sports and Disability”. He explained some world famous examples who won the world by defeating their disabilities. Moreover he pointed out the national need to establish facilities for the differently abled people to make their lives independent as in the Western countries.

He finished his speech by thanking the department for inviting him for the workshop and he appreciated the long way the department has come so far. Then memento was presented by Migara Madhuranga, representing the organizing committee of the symposium to Dr.Suraweera in appreciation of the service rendered by him.

The next moment was dedicated to a meaningful and attractive live presentation, rendered by Nuwani Chaturika, a student from the Department of Physiotherapy. By using the metaphor of a lotus bud to a differently abled child, she presented the audience that even the lotus bud can bloom richly and beautify the world with the proper sunlight and care as a differently abled child can win the world with the empathy, love and care provided by the society.

Then the next speech was delivered by Dr. Shavindra Dias; a consultant psychiatrist in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya. His speech was based on psychological aspects towards the care of differently abled children. During his speech he described about the basic aspects of psychological counseling and he emphasized that mostly the family members of the differently abled children need counseling the most. As a conclusion he pointed out the difficulty of individual counseling due to the lack of resources. As a solution for that finally he mentioned the concept of group counseling which gathers a group of people who have the same kind of problem and providing them with psychological counseling. At the end of his valuable speech, a

memento was presented by Dr.B.M.S.H.K. Banneheka to Dr.Shavindra Dias in appreciation of the service rendered by him.

Then the gathering got the opportunity to listen to another valuable speech presented by Dr.Wasana Kiridena; a Consultant pediatrician from Teaching Hospital, Peradeniya on the theme of medical management of child disability. She described the positive aspects of treating the differently abled infants. Her speech enlightened the audience with the positive attitudes towards treating the problematic children. In addition she informatively described the complications a child with mongolism face. She further mentioned how the physiotherapy treatments help the differently abled children. At the end of her lecture she provided the chance to the audience to ask questions about any problem they face with their kids and parents of the differently abled children took good use of this moment. Finally she thanked the organizing committee for organizing the event. At the end of her valuable speech, a memento was presented by Dr.B.M.S.H.K. Banneheka to Dr.Shavindra Dias in appreciation of the service rendered by her.

The gathering had the next valuable opportunity to listen to a greatly informative speech delivered by Mrs.Surangika Wadugodapitiya; a lecturer at the Department of Physiotherapy. She clearly described the relationship between physiotherapy treatments and differently abled people. She emphasized the importance of developmental mile stones a child should pass in the appropriate age and she demonstrated some basically used treatments methods on such children who are not showing the correct mile stones. She warned the audience not to perform those methods without the supervision of a physiotherapist or a medical practitioner. In addition to that she showed the correct postures a differently abled child should have in the day to day life. This speech was complete with many practical aspects of physiotherapy and the final feedback we took revealed that the audience gained a vast practical knowledge through this speech. At the end of her valuable speech, a memento was presented by Dr.B.M.S.H.K. Banneheka to Dr.Shavindra Dias in appreciation of the service rendered by her.

After a long series of speeches, it was time for the special flowers at Blue Rose school to show their talents to the audience. They took the maximum use of this time and showed their inborn talents and during some events, the gathering seemed to wonder whether these talented children are really differently abled. It showed that even though they didn't perform the cognitive skills as a normal kid does, their aesthetic skills were nearly same as them. Some moments were very

emotional and many people at the gathering seemed to shed a tear at the sight of these children's performances.

At the end of this memorable and enjoyable time, the special flowers received the certificates of appreciation for their performances. Prof. R. Hewamanne, the senior lecturer at the Department of Radiography joined with the distribution of certificates.

The next few minutes were spent to watch a video clip which showed the story of the famous people who reached the biggest steps in their lives even after being differently abled. The video clip contained the quotations from famous international characters like Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Ludvig Van Beethoven, Walt Disney, Stephen Hawking, Oscar Pistorius, Tom Cruise as well as the inspiring characters like Dr. Ajith C. Perera, Dr. Samitha Samanmali, Ms. Manique Gunarathne, Ms. Thilini Nimesha from Sri Lankan community.

The final moments at the guest lecture series were given for Mr. D.J.M. Pradeep Chathuranga Jayawickrama; a differently abled student who got the university entrance even without the ability to see the world with his own eyes. His speech was much more effective for the normal people and it was full of inspiration. Even though he is not an older person by age, his voice could have a great impact on the audience. In addition to pointing out the event in his own life for the knowledge of the gathering, he emphasized that all the human beings are responsible to make a contribution on behalf of the food he consumes otherwise he is in debt to the society. Finally he thanked the organizing committee for organizing such an appropriate event to the current society. At the end of his inspirational speech, he received the certificate of participation from Mrs. S.M. Palliyaguruge; the chief physiotherapist in the Preadeniya Teaching hospital.

With that event, the guest lecture series came to an end. The evening was allocated for the symposium. It was conducted in English medium.

As a start, a speech was delivered by one of the second year students in the Faculty of Arts. He is following Psychology as his stream. His name was M.G. Samitha Meegaskumbura. The theme of his speech was about a common complication seen in childhood. It is Dyslexia. In his valuable speech he described how to identify these type of students in the school environment. He also described the way he is involved in helping these type of children in the ways he can by joining with the medical practitioners. He clearly described how the world famous characters like Albert

Einstein, Walt Disney once suffered from this disease and how they overcame it after turning the age of 18. In appreciation for his time, the certificate was awarded to him by Prof.R.Hewamanne at the end of his speech.

Then it was time for the school participants. As they were notified before about the competition on the presentations they provide on the theme of a project they will conduct to make a difference in the differently abled community, first the students of St, Sylvester's College came for their presentation. M.A.M. Arshad presented his project on how they are going to implement their project. He explained about their 5W1H concept in how they are going to conduct a special education project combined with a concert. 5W1H stands for **What-Why-Who- When- Where- and How**. Prof. R. Hewamanne was the honorary judge on this competition.

Then the students of Dharmaraja College got the opportunity. D. Rajapakse and J.A. Weakkody delivered their presentation with the theme of "Souls on the Stage". Their plan was to conduct a talent show for the differently abled children.

As there were two presentations ready for the competition, the students from other schools use the next moment to deliver their idea about conducting a project for the differently abled children.

After calculating the marks Prof.R. Hewamanne presented the winner of the competition. As an advise she mentioned the students about keeping the eye contact with the audience while presenting something. She said that it was a close tie between the two schools but she declared that the winner is St'Sylvester College,Kandy.

Then the final certificate distribution was held. For this honourable moment, Prof.R.Heawamanne, Dr, B.M.S.H.K. Banneheka, Miss.Thusharika Dissanayake; a lecturer from the Department of Physiotherapy, Mrs.Isanka Weerasekara;a lecturer from the Department of Physiotherapy contributed. The winning school students and other participants received their certificates at this moment.

Then the final minutes of this educational and enjoyable symposium arrived. As the tradition, Mr. Migara Madhuranga delivered the Vote of thanks, appreciating the enormous guidance given by the Head of the department of Physiotherapy; Dr. B.M.S.H.K.Banneheka and other staff

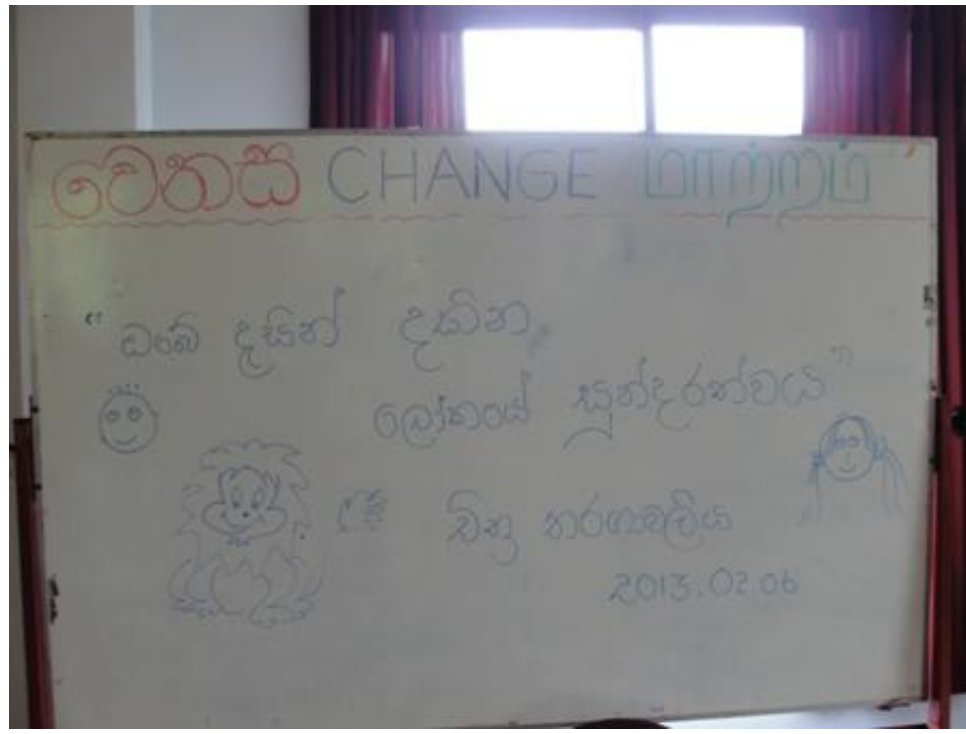
members of the department. In addition he mentioned all the students in the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, the academic and the non academic staff and thanked them for their great contribution towards the success of the event.

After the closure of formal activities of the symposium, Mr.Migara Madhuranga shared ideas on the theme of “World Café”. After this discussion the symposium which was organized by the Department of Physiotherapy, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya ended with an a positive note.

PICTURES

Blue Rose Special School









Moments of the Entertainment Program



Dr. H.J Suraweera



Mrs. Surangika Wadugodapitiya



Dr. Wasana Kiridena



Dr. Shavindra Dias