

CURIOUS THOUGHTS GIVING

ANNUAL REPORT

1 Jan 2021 - 31 Dec 2021





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About Us

Our Purpose

Curious Thoughts Giving was established in 2017 as a charity to serve two groups in the community, centred on reading. As a charity, we seek to enhance the psycho-emotional well-being of less privileged children and elderly who are referred from Social Service Agencies.

Our two main initiatives are:

StoryTime (<https://storytime.sg>):

A community initiative that brings volunteers from the public (children and families) to read to the less privileged elderly from Senior Activity Centres. This aims to promote inter-generational community bonding.

CuriousTime@SSAs:

Free structured Literacy or MOE English programmes for children who are living in shelters or are clients of a Social Service Agency (SSA). This aims to increase the literacy level of beneficiaries through a structured programme that is run by professional teachers.

There are many programmes targeted at the young and the old in Singapore. However, we wanted to use reading and literacy to touch and impact lives. We were inspired to bring the young and the old together through the common activity of reading. That was how StoryTime developed.

When we interacted with many privileged children who can read and are well supported by their families, we could not forget about another group that was not able to participate in this community programme- underprivileged children often could not read, and their families were often too busy making ends meet to oversee their literacy development.


We were well aware of the many literacy programmes in the market. However we felt more could be done with the quality and consistency of the programmes that were run. We thus started CuriousTime@SSAs. Today, we are still the only non-profit charitable organization in Singapore that provides free quality literacy classes to children from less privileged backgrounds. We believe in empowering children from all walks of life with an equal and transparent access to quality education. All beneficiaries do not have to pay for our classes and no child will be denied admission.

We do not believe in compromising the quality of education we provide. Curious Thoughts is the only Jolly Phonics school with an in-house Jolly Phonics Trainer in Singapore. All programmes are conducted by full-time professional and experienced Phonics and English teachers who believe in levelling the playing field for children who need it most. All our literacy programmes are not volunteer-run to ensure commitment, dedication and the best learning outcomes for our children.

“

**LEARNING TO READ,
READING TO LEARN.**

We believe that a good education is the key to social mobility. Curious Thoughts is committed to ensuring that all students are not only literate, but that they have the opportunity to learn and grow from what they read.



Curious Thoughts Giving was set up on 4 July 2017 as a public company limited by guarantee. It was registered under the Charities Act (Chapter 37) on 8 February 2018. Curious Thoughts Giving has a Constitution as its governing instrument.

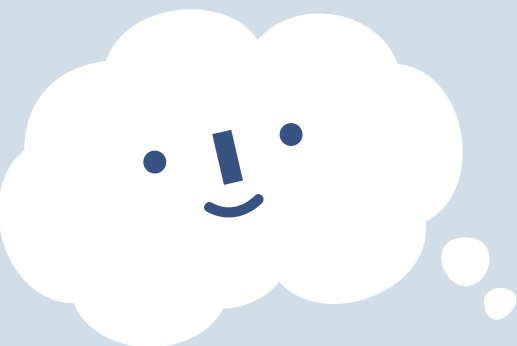
Unique Registration Number (UEN):
201718734C

Registered Address:
37 Middle Road #02-00, Singapore 188946

Related entities:
Curious Thoughts Academy Pte Ltd

Auditor:
LAW & LAW Assurance & Advisory Services,
114 Lavender Street, #02-52 CT-Hub 2,
Singapore 338729

Bankers:
DBS Bank Ltd, 12 Marina Boulevard,
DBS Asia Central, Marina Bay Financial Centre
Tower 3, Singapore 018982



Overview of Charity

Welcoming Message from the Executive Director

Patricky Overton wrote- “When you walk to the edge of all the light you have and take that first step into the darkness of the unknown, you must believe that one of two things will happen. There will be something solid for you to stand upon, or you will be taught to fly.”

We have lived with two years of the Covid-19 pandemic. While we thought the worst in 2020, 2021 showed us that if we overcome our fears, we will learn to fly and soar amidst the dark clouds. We learnt to be flexible and adapt quickly with the changing Covid-19 restrictions. We finally launched the Smalltalk programme in April this year- a parent accompanied 4-week course that combines basic Jolly Phonics curriculum and the SmallTalk pedagogy to help parents learn how to teach English and Phonics at home. Through this programme, we aim to improve the literacy skills (reading and writing) of the children involved, as well as to equip parents with the skills they need to improve their home learning environment.

It was a year of firsts. We partnered with 3 new partners this year- Fei Yue EIPIIC (Early Intervention Centre for Children), KidSTART (Ang Mo Kio Family Service Centre) and Singapore Children Society (Yishun Family Service Centre), launched our first Smalltalk programme, our first Zoom version of the Smalltalk programme, and kick-started our Technology Donation Drive.

With the encouraging feedback from our first SmallTalk run, we conducted the second run online via Zoom due to Covid-19 restrictions. This experience showed us that the digital platform allowed for even more participants to join in the programme as they could attend the sessions after work in the comfort

and convenience of their own homes. We saw an increase in the attendance with an average of 21 participants, from an average of 15 participants in the first run.

No man is an island. Likewise, for every successful charity, we need like-minded people who believe in our vision and mission. We also launched our Technology Donation drive this year where we sought to connect beneficiaries to the internet. We are thankful for the supportive donation of tablets and mobile devices from generous donors. With these donations, we were able to extend our Literacy programmes to beneficiaries who did not have internet access, by providing smart tablets and internet connection.

Riding on the wings of this momentum, we are proud to announce that we are now a Grantee under the Majority Trust’s Maybank Momentum Grant. We hope with this Grant to grow our Charity and programmes further in 2022. As the Charity passes its fourth year mark in a somewhat quiet manner, we are steadily expanding the organisation to impact more beneficiaries.

It is with keen anticipation that we enter 2022 and look forward to soaring to greater heights.

Sincerely,



Lydia Lok
Executive Director
Curious Thoughts Giving Limited



LEADERSHIP

Board of Directors



Reuben Tan

Current Chair of
Curious Thoughts
Giving Limited,
Senior Consultant,
Thoughtworks Singapore



Lydia Lok

Executive Director,
Curious Thoughts
Giving Limited



Yao Shuohan

Principal,
Curious Thoughts
Academy Pte Ltd



Lena Lok

Director,
Amazing Art Shuttle
Pte Ltd



Josiah Eng

Project Development
Manager,
Siemens Energy



Lam Yi Min

Entrepreneur

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

Summary Financial Performance

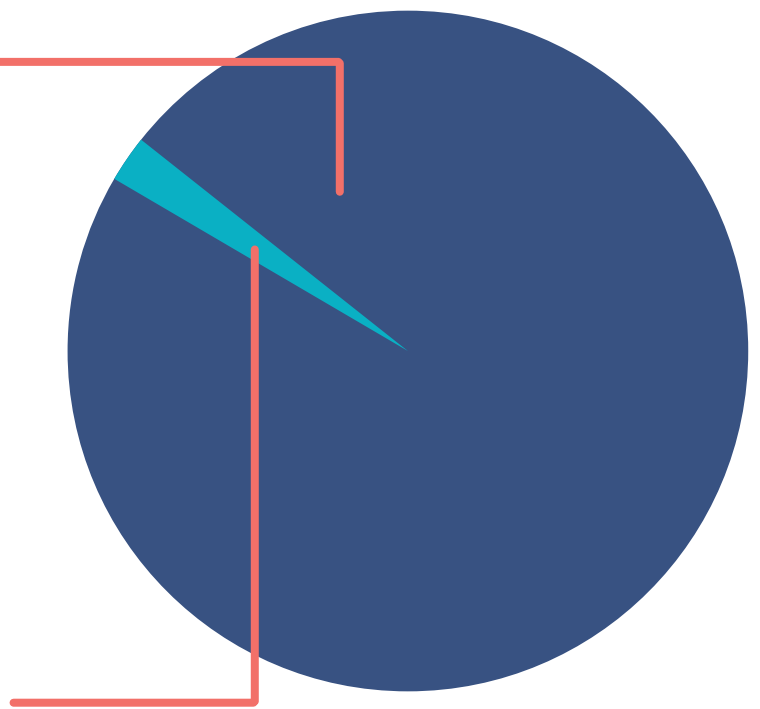
The charity is financially supported by the following:

Contributions (Donations)

\$5,417
(88.5%)

Other Income

\$700
(11.44%)



For the financial year 2020, the charity has a total fund of **\$6117** (other income of \$700 was a refund of Audit Fees).

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

	<u>NOTE</u>	<u>2021</u> S\$	<u>2020</u> S\$
INCOME			
Contributions		5,417	150
Programme Fees		-	7,563
Other income		700	1,000
		<u>6,117</u>	<u>8,713</u>
LESS: EXPENDITURE			
Audit Fee		1,500	1,500
Bank Charges		283	263
Programme Fee - CuriousTime@FSC		-	13,240
Depreciation		-	539
General Expenses		-	203
Subscriptions		481	506
Printing & stationery		20	30
Web hosting		507	503
		<u>2,791</u>	<u>16,785</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) representing total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year		<u>S\$ 3,326</u>	<u>S\$ (8,072)</u>





SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CREATOR

If you are looking to do something meaningful and are familiar with content creation in social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram,

BUILD A BETTER TOMORROW WITH US, ONE CHILD AT A TIME.

Social Media Content Creator Volunteer



by Curious Thoughts Giving Limited



Mon, 11 Oct 2021 to Thu, 31 Mar 2022



One day per week on weekday or weekend
4 hours per session



Virtual



Suitable for: Open to All

Sign up before 31 Oct 2021, 00:00 AM

VOLUNTEER NOW

Volunteer Campaign at https://www.giving.sg/volunteer-event?event_activity_id=67669504

Volunteer Management

As the pandemic brought our group-based activities to a temporary pause, Curious Thoughts Giving moved from events-based volunteering to long-term skills-based volunteering, so as to tap on the skills and expertise of professionals. We had 8 sign-ups for the role of “Social Media Content Creator Volunteer” on Giving.sg and thus, successfully launched our instagram page “@giving.curious” on 1st November 2021.

Volunteerism at our charity is a two-way exchange and is never a matter of “easy come, easy go”. Informal interviews over Zoom were conducted to share more about the charity, the role and to get to know the volunteers better. We strongly believe in the importance of aligning their duties to their interests, needs, passion and motivations, creating a win-win situation for all. To effectively engage our volunteers, we consistently review these 3 main questions:

What are some of the challenges that volunteers face when volunteering?

What do volunteers desire in their volunteer experience?

What can we do to promote and enhance volunteers' experiences?



As COVID safety measures forced the charity to rethink our volunteer engagement activities, we hold virtual meetings to acknowledge and celebrate their effort, impact and contributions. A more formal certificate of appreciation is presented to volunteers when they complete their 6-month-long volunteering experience.



Our Work: Programmes & Activities

Our two main initiatives are:

StoryTime (<https://storytime.sg>):

Bringing volunteers from the public (children and families) to read to the less privileged elderly from Senior Activity Centres. This aims to promote inter-generational community bonding.

CuriousTime@SSAs:

Free structured Literacy or MOE English programmes for children who are living in shelters or are clients of a Social Service Agency (SSA). This aims to increase the literacy level of beneficiaries through a structured programme that is run by professional teachers.

Due to Safe Management Measures and the high risk of infection among the elderly, we had to put StoryTime on hold as the various Senior Activity Centres were not open to volunteers.

Instead, we started two programmes under CuriousTime@SSAs:



Smalltalk

**Technology
Donation
Drive**

Smalltalk



SmallTalk is our 4-weeks parent-accompanied programme at CTG for families with special needs children and families from less-privileged backgrounds. This programme is targeted at children aged 4 to 6 years old. SmallTalk aims to empower parents with basic phonics and the teaching knowledge they need to teach English at home. Our goal is to give parents the skills and confidence they require to improve their home learning environment.

During SmallTalk, we teach Jolly Phonics and Smalltalk parenting strategies. SmallTalk strategies are also currently adopted by Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) [Singapore] and Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (Australia). The strategies are focused on improving everyday interactions with your child and how to make every moment a learning moment.

The programme is conducted by professional and experienced educators from our sister organisation, Curious Thoughts Academy.

In 2021, CTG collaborated with social service agencies such as Fei Yue EIPIC, Ang Mo Kio FSC and Singapore Children's Society to bring SmallTalk to a variety of different families around Singapore. We have managed to impact the lives of over 30 families to date!



After the difficult year of 2020, SmallTalk programme was finally able to resume in 2021. Curious Thoughts managed 2 runs of the SmallTalk programme. (April and Aug) In total, we managed to reach a total of 22 families, including a combined total of 26 children.

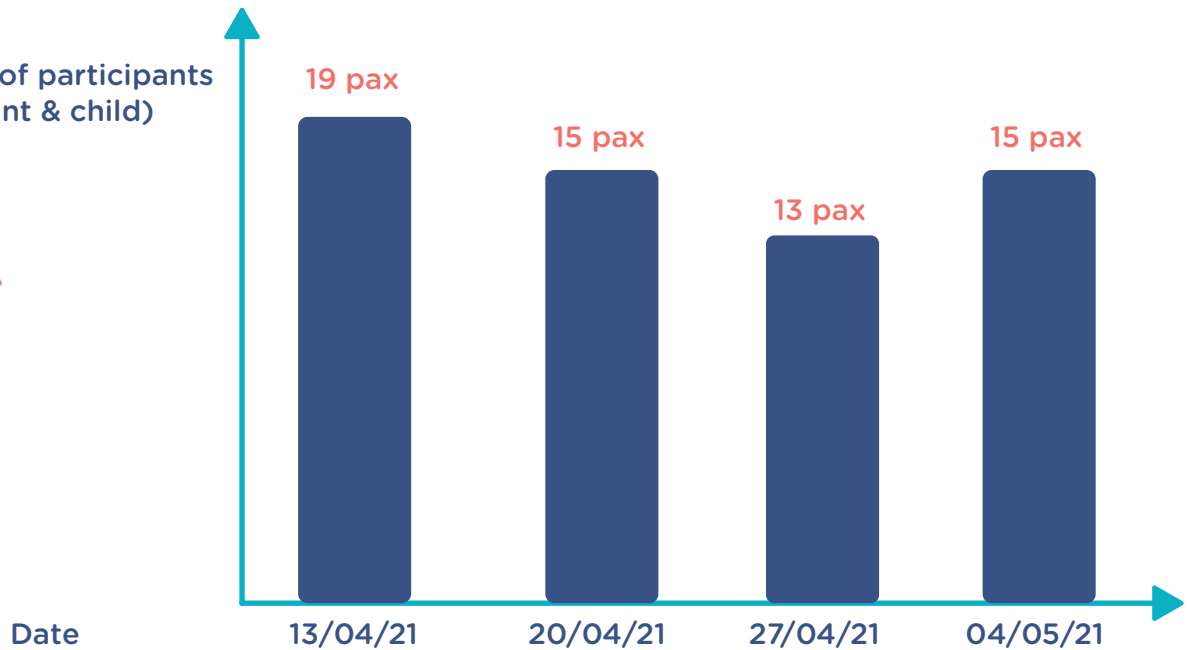
In April's run, Curious Thoughts collaborated with Fei Yue EIPIIC (Early Intervention Centre for Children). The families that attended had children with special needs and disabilities, including Autism, Global Development Delay, ADHD and Dyslexia. They were all receiving intervention services with Fei Yue EIPIIC at the time. They have also been identified as having weak literacy skills and required additional support in reading and writing. The children were between the ages of 4 to 8 years old.

In August, Curious Thoughts collaborated with 2 social service agencies, KidSTART (Ang Mo Kio Family Service Centre) and Singapore Children Society (Yishun Family Service Centre). The families that attended the programme were low income families. The children in the programme were also identified as poor readers by teachers and parents. SmallTalk Aug 2021 was also conducted online (Zoom) due to the COVID restrictions at the time.

b. Attendance of each session

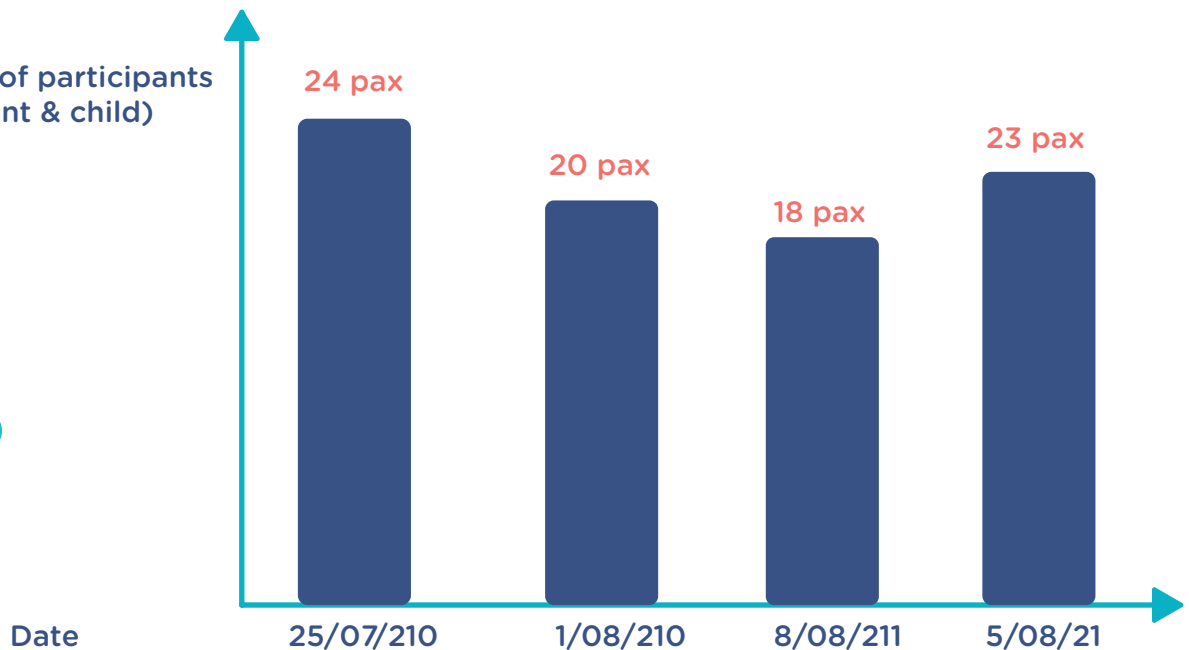
Smalltalk April

Total no. of participants
(Parent & child)



Smalltalk August (Online)

Total no. of participants
(Parent & child)



C. Summary of course curriculum

The SmallTalk programme is a parent accompanied 4-week course. The programme combines basic Jolly Phonics curriculum and the SmallTalk pedagogy to help parents learn how to teach English and Phonics at home.



The overall goals of the programme is to:

To **improve the literacy skills** (reading & writing) of the children involved.

To **equip parents** with the skills they need to **improve their home learning environment.**

The programme is designed for children aged **4 to 6 years old.**

The course curriculum is as follows:

Jolly Phonic Letter Sounds (Group 1 to 4)

Children and their parents will learn all the single letters and their respective sounds. The parents will also be able to learn useful teaching tips such as storytelling and how to make learning a multi-sensorial experience.



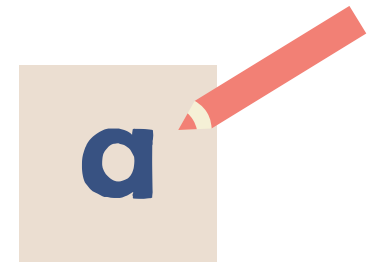
Blending

Blending is the ability to put letter sounds together to form words. This is the basis of reading. Children and their parents will learn the different techniques and methods we use to help grasp this difficult concept.



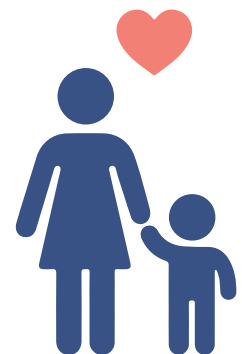
Writing and Spelling

Writing and spelling is an essential part of literacy. The course will show the parents how to do spelling effectively and the different methods we use to motivate the children and make writing a fun and enjoyable time.



SmallTalk Pedagogy and Teaching Tips

Parents will learn several important philosophies and guiding principles needed to help improve the learning environment in one's home. This includes "Following your Child's Lead", "Tuning In", "Listening and Talking More", "Warm and Gentle" and "Teachable Moments". These principles will help parents become more effective educators. Furthermore, additional time each session is spent getting to know each parent individually. Through this, we will be able to understand their difficulties and challenges and also recommend tips for them to try at home.





d. Beneficiaries' progress including emotional well-being of families & child

The SmallTalk programme focuses on the parent as much as the child. Hence, for progress, we track both the parents' and child's emotional well-being and literacy skills.

For the children, we have seen significant improvement in reading and writing skills. By understanding the basics of phonics, they are able to read more fluently. This especially benefited the children from Fei Yue EIPIC. Children with special needs often require phonics to read the English language. The conventional "whole word" approach taught in schools does not cater to their needs and disadvantages them. Furthermore, the children also found the classes incredibly engaging. Parents in programme have reported that the children are very motivated to come for classes at Curious Thoughts.

For the parents, we have also seen significant improvement in their knowledge of phonics. We have observed that the parents are more confident in delivering and teaching their children English. During each session, we always include segments for parents to try out different teaching techniques. E.g. Storytelling, sensorial play, spelling. Over the several weeks, there is significant change in the parents' level of confidence and enthusiasm.

Furthermore, during SmallTalk April, we also included a segment in our programme where parents are able to talk among each other and share tips and difficulties about their parenting journeys. It was incredibly heart-warming to observe parents creating bonds and helping each other. One notable moment was when the parents started to share tips on how to enrol a child with special needs into primary school. They shared their recommendations and procedures one might need to follow to ensure the best experience for their child.

e.

Whether programme objectives have been met (quantitative & qualitative)

Smalltalk had **2 main objectives**:

Improve the literacy skills (reading & writing) of the children involved.

To equip parents with the skills they need to improve their home learning environment.

Overall, we believe that we have managed to meet our objectives for all **22 families** involved. In our post programme survey, **100% of the parents** have reported that their child “found the programme enjoyable and educational”. This was reflected in the attendance of the programme, with over **80% of the families** managing over 75% attendance.

100% of the parents also agree with the statement that as a parent, they “found the programme useful and meaningful”.

It has allowed them to understand phonics better and hence, are able to teach their children more effectively at home. This is incredible as many of the parents had zero knowledge or experience with phonics prior to the start of the programme. Furthermore, the parents agreed that the parenting and teaching strategies taught in the programme are useful and relevant. Many have even shared that they have started to use these techniques at home to much success.

Lastly, after the completion of SmallTalk, a **total of 6 children** have continued their educational journey with us at Curious Thoughts Academy. They will be attending regular phonics and math classes with us. These classes are free of charge for low income families and are part of another programme at Curious Thoughts. These parents have gone the extra mile and are willing to commit to weekly classes. They are now part of the Curious Thoughts ecosystem where our teachers are able to monitor their children’s progress and ensure they are prepared for their primary school years.

In conclusion, SmallTalk has been a wonderful success. When the programme first started, many parents were incredibly motivated to teach and help their children but lack the necessary skills and knowledge to do so. Now, after 4 weeks with us, they have grown in confidence and have the tools they need to truly empower themselves and take control of their child’s educational journey.



2. Technology Donation Drive

We received a total of 8 tablets and 8 mobile phones during our Technology Donation Drive. We would like to convey our heartfelt appreciation towards Mr Wallace Shen for donating 8 Samsung Tab A7 lite 8.7. The SIM card version allowed us to provide households who did not have internet connection, to access our online Zoom literacy classes.

With the loaned Tablet, our beneficiaries are also able to revise their letter sounds and read decodable books which we downloaded onto the devices.

Thanks to the mobile phones, we were able to conduct hybrid classes where we had beneficiaries attend both online and physical classes. To bridge the two audiences, there were many interactive games used such as Kahoot! and Mentimeter. However as many beneficiaries do not have smart devices, they are often not able to participate in the interactive games. With the donated mobile phones, we were able to ensure that all students have the same experience in the classrooms no matter their background.

The Year Ahead



Smalltalk

With the success of our two Smalltalk sessions this year, Curious Thoughts Giving will be launching another two more runs of Smalltalk in 2022, with a creative twist! We present to you Jom Belajar English!

Jom Belajar English! (JBE) is a 4 week parent accompanied phonics programme that will run twice throughout the year. JBE is targeted at Malay families with children, aged 4 to 6 years old. It aims to empower parents with basic phonics and the teaching knowledge they need to teach English at home. Our goal is to give parents the skills and confidence they require to improve their home learning environment.

During JBE, we will teach both Jolly Phonics and Smalltalk parenting strategies. SmallTalk strategies are also currently adopted by Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) [Singapore] and Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (Australia). The strategies are focused on improving everyday interactions with your child and how to make every moment a learning moment.

The programme will be conducted by professional and experienced educators from our sister organization, Curious Thoughts Academy.

Lastly, JBE will feature classic stories from the Malay Annals such as Sang Nila Utama and Hang Nadim and use these stories to teach phonics and useful pedagogical skills!



CuriousTime@SSAs

CuriousTime@SSAs is a weekly hour-long phonic class conducted at various social service agencies. CuriousTime@SSAs specifically targets children from low income families, aged 3 to 8 years-old. Most children, from less privileged backgrounds, are often lagging behind their peers academically. Their parents often do not have the time or ability to teach their children how to read and write.

Furthermore, the programme also targets children that have been identified as poor or slow readers. These children might have underlying undiagnosed learning difficulties such as autism, dyslexia, ADHD, speech delay, global developmental delay etc. These parents simply do not have the financial resources to help their children receive the early intervention that they need.

CuriousTime@SSAs aims to help 80 children in 2022 and collaborate with 4 social service agencies.



StoryTime

We hope for Safe Management Measures to be relaxed in 2022. This will allow us to resume StoryTime where we bring multiple generations - the elderly and volunteer families- to read together. StoryTime aims to foster interactions between the elderly and young children, to reduce loneliness among the elderly and to nurture a love for reading in young children. More importantly, we want the Singapore Public at large to see that visiting the elderly can be a simple activity of reading and chatting.



Connect with us:



@giving.curious



giving.curiousthoughts.sg



37 Middle Road, Uweei Building,
#02-00, Singapore 188946



+65 6250 2595