



MEDIA RELEASE

Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities and the Singapore Institute of Technology Established the Nation's First Speech Therapy Student Clinic

Friday, 28 June 2024 – In a first-of-its-kind collaboration, Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities (**THKMC**) and the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT), the only autonomous university in Singapore to offer a Bachelor of Science with Honours in Speech-Language Therapy, have established the nation's first student-led clinic for Speech and Language Therapy. Jointly started as a pilot project by **THKMC** and SIT in June 2023, the clinic aims to provide affordable therapy for children with mild to moderate language learning difficulties while nurturing the next generation of speech language therapists.

Empowering Future Therapists While Providing Affordable Care

The **THKMC** SLT Student Clinic, currently located at **THK** Children's Therapy Space @ MacPherson, empowers SIT students to lead therapy sessions for children with mild to moderate communication challenges. Supervised by a team of **THKMC**'s Clinical Educators, these students gain invaluable hands-on experience while providing affordable, quality care services to the community.

Between June 2023 and April 2024, the clinic saw six SIT students complete their clinical placements, with one joining **THKMC** full-time after graduation. By the end of 2024, the Student Clinic will expand its services to **THK** Children's Therapy Space @ Queenstown, where **THKMC** can receive up to 12 students for training and enable the clinics to serve more clients.

For parents facing long wait times for public healthcare speech therapy appointments, the **THKMC** Student Clinic offers a beacon of hope. Here, children with mild to moderate language difficulties can receive therapy within two weeks, compared to the five-week waiting time in a public healthcare facility. This critical intervention during a child's most receptive learning window can significantly improve their communication skills and overall development.

The **THKMC** SLT Student Clinic also allows parents of children with mild to moderate developmental needs to enrol their children in therapy while waiting for a vacancy at the Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children (EIPIC) Centre. This ensures that their child benefits from the critical period of early intervention when neuroplasticity, or the ability of neural networks in the brain to change, is the highest.

The shorter wait time and cost savings of the therapy sessions have led to high demand for the Student Clinic, which has 35 children enrolled since June 2023.

A Success Story: Abner Finds His Voice

One of **THKMC** Student Clinic's clients is Abner Lee, a six-year-old boy who has been attending the Student Clinic weekly since January 2024. Abner could only communicate with single words and maximally 2-word phrases, and his articulation was very unintelligible for his age. After receiving therapy at the student clinic, Abner can interact with others using longer sentences of 4 - 5 words. His parents shared that they are very grateful for this programme as the intervention has improved Abner's speech clarity and taught him the skills to communicate his ideas and feelings. At Abner's recent paediatrician review at KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Mr and Mrs Lee were elated to hear that Abner could enrol in a mainstream school.

Ms Karen Lee, Assistant Divisional Director at **THK** Therapy Services and one of the Student Clinic's SIT appointed Clinical Educators, shares, "Having this Student Clinic with SIT is highly advantageous for many stakeholders, with the children and our future generation of therapists being the critical beneficiaries of all these efforts."

"This unique collaboration is an example of SIT's commitment to authentic applied learning. It not only ensures that children receive timely, quality care but also allows our students to gain confidence in their clinical skills. In addition, under the guidance of registered speech language therapists, our senior students have opportunities to mentor their juniors and further hone important skills such as professionalism and life-long learning. We see this initiative as one that addresses a critical need in the community and opens another avenue for training our future generations of speech therapists." says Associate Professor Valerie Lim, Programme Leader of Speech and Language Therapy at SIT.

Carine Yap was a Year 4 SIT Speech Language Therapy student who completed her final 7-week long placement under the **THKMC** Student Clinic from Jan to Feb 2024. She shared, "I am excited to join **THKMC** as a full-time Speech Language Therapist in August. The **THKMC** Student Clinic allows me to apply the skills and knowledge learnt from SIT in a supported and safe learning environment under the guidance of my Clinical Educators."

A Holistic Approach to Child Development

THKMC's vision for comprehensive care extends beyond speech therapy. The organisation plans to expand its Student Clinics to include physiotherapy and occupational therapy in 2025, offering a suite of services under one roof. This commitment to holistic care mirrors the focus of SIT as the only autonomous university in Singapore offering a suite of allied health programmes, including Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy, to prepare the next generation of healthcare professionals.

Parents of children or medical/allied health professionals requiring more information on the Student Clinic may contact **THKMC** at ctc@thkmc.org.sg.

About Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities (THKMC)

THKMC was incorporated on 13 October 2011 as a charity to provide multiple social and welfare services to the community at large, and achieved an Institute of Public Character (IPC) status on 18 November 2011. THKMC is the charitable arm of Thye Hua Kwan Moral Society, which lives by the mission of serving people with diverse needs by providing impactful community services. THKMC today serves more than 70,000 beneficiaries through more than 70 programmes across five Services, which include Disability, Early Intervention for Children, Family, Seniors' Community, and Therapy.

太和观慈善机构简介

太和观慈善机构成立于 2011 年 10 月 13 日，为广大社区提供多种社会和福利服务的慈善机构；并于 2011 年 11 月 18 日获得公益机构 (IPC) 认证。太和观慈善机构是德教太和观旗下的实体慈善企业之一，忠于为广大不同需求的人民提供具有影响力的社会援助服务。如今，太和观慈善机构通过五大服务部门，其中包括残疾、幼儿早期介入、家庭、乐龄社区、和治疗护理，提供 70 多个项目和活动为超过 70,000 名受益人提供服务。

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