Learning about campus life at SMU

The Day Out @ SMU held on 24 February 2006 was the fruition of ideas generated to keep the StarHub-SPD Learning & Development Centre programmes interesting and appealing.

Jointly organised by Singapore Management University (SMU) Peer Helpers and SPD, the event was organised to orientate students with disabilities to life in university, with the hope of inspiring them to greater heights of academic pursuit. The SMU Peer Helpers are full-time SMU students trained to help other students in the university.

"Having participated in this event, I feel more strongly that I should aim to get into university. It's something I definitely will try my best to pursue."
- Aaron Shui, Secondary 3 student with arthrogryposis congenita

"I really enjoyed this day out... I hope SPD organises more of such events. This was an opportunity for students to see what university life is all about. It can also play a part in the development of individuals who can contribute actively to society."
- Navin Nair, 2nd ITE student with cerebral palsy

The organisers wanted to bring the learning experience right into the university campus, to give the participants the opportunity to experience the "spirit" of campus life. SMU was thought to be the ideal place to conduct the orientation because of the institution's belief in inclusive education – the campus site is totally barrier free, allowing for universal access.

In a bid to inject fun and novelty to the usual orientation, the SMU Peer Helpers conceptualised the orientation in the form of an amazing race. The fun made the learning interesting and the participants enjoyed themselves, hoping that more of such events would be organised for them.

The event was pulled-off successfully with the commitment and dedication of the Peer Helpers events team. Wong Ci Xian, one of the team members, was glad for the opportunity to be involved in this meaningful effort, despite the apprehension and stress he faced in planning it.

At first, I did have some apprehension on the execution of the event as I had no prior contact with the participants. I didn't know their expectations. I didn't know how enthusiastic they would be. On the event day itself, I guess my apprehension was uncalled for as the SPD participants enjoyed themselves.

I hope that they gained from this event. I hope they would keep themselves motivated in life and try to meet the goals that they have set for themselves. I wish them all the best in all that they do."

The StarHub-SPD Learning & Development Centre creates learning opportunities beyond the confines of a school or seminar room, to bring learning to the outdoors. Activities organised include adventure camps, sports clinics, and recreational outings amongst others.

To find out more about the programme, you may call Ms Joyce Wong at 6236 6345 or email Joyce.Wong@spd.org.sg.

An informative session on courses offered at SMU and on the history of the school provides students with an insight into the many possibilities and options they can have at tertiary level.