

Carving a fulfilling career, silently



Charlene's resilience and tenacious spirit has helped her overcome many challenges in her life journey and has made her who she is today.

25-year-old Charlene Wong has realised her dream career, is happily married with a lovely 15-month-old son, and has visited some of the world's most beautiful beaches. All this she has achieved, despite the challenges she faced as a Deaf. Charlene is hearing impaired and a Community Outreach Executive at TOUCH Silent Club (TSC).

Both of Charlene's parents are hearing impaired. So is her husband. But the couple has a hearing son, Isaac. Charlene and her husband enjoy teaching him how to sign and to their delight, Isaac was able to communicate with them through signing as early as one year old.

Charlene has encountered many hurdles in life due to her hearing loss, primarily because hearing people are unable to understand her and therefore, unable to assimilate her into their community. However, she has never given up because she

believes that the community will eventually accept people with special needs such as hers.

In 1997, Charlene joined TSC as a client. It was through the support group programmes that she met other people from the Deaf community, whom later became her close friends.

In August 2006, Mrs Wee Bee Hong, Senior Manager of TSC, approached Charlene to fill in the position of Community Outreach Executive after seeing her passion and dedication in serving the Deaf community. Previously working in product sales management and website maintenance, Charlene was at first apprehensive about making the switch. However, it was her desire to bridge the gap between the Deaf and the hearing community that made her decide to take up the challenge.

Charlene's excitement at starting in this meaningful career was further boosted by her friendly colleagues at TSC. The fact that they understood sign language also made communication much easier. Charlene's main responsibility in this job is to organise outreach programmes to the Deaf community, manage volunteers, as well as develop potential Deaf volunteers as leaders. During the course of her work, Charlene was able to meet many hearing impaired acquaintances.

Said Charlene, "I am very happy that I am able to befriend these Deaf clients and provide them the support and encouragement that they need. The fact that I am also hearing impaired probably made them more receptive to me and we are able to share on a deeper level."

Charlene's story is a testimony to the fact that regardless of how difficult circumstances may be, remaining true to your passion will eventually lead you to find success and fulfilment in all that you do.



Charlene interacting with members of TOUCH Silent Club at the Cyber Centre for the Deaf Lounge.