



ANNIVERSARY

1964 - 2019



NCPD Connection

Vol.13 • December 2019

Message from the Chief Executive Officer



“Celebrating a Milestone” 55 years of Continuous Service to PWDs

It is an honour and with a sense of pride and joy that I extend heartfelt Congratulations to the entire NCPD family as we commemorated a momentous milestone, our 55th Anniversary on December 5th 2019.

Over these years we have joined hands in lobbying for the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs), providing services and opportunities for them, through education, certified skills training, vocational rehabilitative training, employment and community outreach. Indeed, this has required immense team work, dedication and determination to promote human dignity, independent living, equality and most importantly, inclusion for the community of persons with disabilities.

I take pleasure in acknowledging all the founding members whose

foresight has established this Organisation for which we have been able to build upon. I also want to express my sincere gratitude to the voluntary Board of Directors of NCPD, dedicated and committed members of staff, our parent support group, corporate sponsors, volunteers, clients and people we serve. NCPD would not have achieved this level of success without your valuable contributions and for that you should feel proud to have played a major role in supporting this remarkable Organisation.

I take this time to highlight International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) which was observed on December 3rd. The 2019 theme for IDPD is: ‘promoting the participation of persons with disabilities and their leadership: taking action on the 2030 Development Agenda’

In doing so, I commend all our trainees and even staff members with disabilities who continue to prosper, despite having a disability. They have been persistent in achieving their goals as we remain committed to supporting their endeavours. We also empower them to feel a sense of belonging and inclusion because at NCPD, there is something for everyone.

There is an overwhelming feeling of joy and satisfaction when we see their success stories emerging. Earlier this year, the National Special Olympics Team which included NCPD athletes excelled tremendously in various Sporting areas such as track and field, swimming, bocce etc. These

talented athletes made their families and by extension, the entire country of Trinidad and Tobago very proud. They were victorious in obtaining a vast number of gold, silver and bronze medals at the Special Olympics World Games held in Abu Dhabi. I applaud and commend their bravery, commitment, sacrifice and hard work they have put in as they continue to represent our nation. I strongly believe this has led them to significantly progress and improve their competencies, skills and abilities.

At NCPD, we have also been innovative in establishing and developing partnerships and collaborations in order to sustain and advance our work for persons with disabilities. We are entirely grateful to all individuals and Corporations who have supported our work and efforts.

National Centre for Persons with Disabilities has achieved 55 tremendous years of continued success, adding human value and hope in the lives of PWDs. Once again, I say a huge thank you and congratulations to the entire team and family at NCPD. I take this opportunity to extend Seasons Greetings and best wishes for a bright and prosperous New Year.

In closing, I wish to provide these words of encouragement “see the person, not the disability”.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beverly Beckles".

Beverly Beckles, PhD
Chief Executive Officer

EDITOR'S NOTE

December 5th, 2019 marked a significant milestone achievement for National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD). On this day, the Organisation commemorated 55 years of continuous service to persons with disabilities. As such, it is with great pride that we present, our Anniversary Special Newsletter- Volume 13.

This special edition includes:-

- Our featured article on NCPD
- An article on Cerebral Palsy as World Cerebral Palsy Day (WCPD) was observed on October 6th.
- New faces at NCPD
- An article on Mental Health entitled “Confessions of a Secret Mind”
- NCPD’s recent events and activities- (September-December, 2019)
- NCPD’s Upcoming events
- Wellness Tips

The year 2019 has been a remarkable one for NCPD. We do hope you take pleasure in reading through the pages as we have enjoyed these special moments, creating treasured memories. The Editor and team wish to extend Seasons Greetings and best wishes for the prosperous year, 2020!



Niala Deonarine

Editor

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES FROM THEN TO NOW

National Centre for Persons with Disabilities formerly known as the Rehab Centre began as an offshoot of the orthopedic Ward at the San Fernando General Hospital. It was meant to be a pilot project to be replicated in Port of Spain and Tobago. Orthopedic surgeons Dr. E.L.S “Buster” Robertson, Dr. Harry Collymore and medical practitioner, Dr Robert Guinness were some of the key persons that lobbied for its creation. The idea was to provide vocational rehabilitation training for people with physical disabilities to help them re-enter society after they left the hospital wards. This was also due to the Polio outbreak which occurred during the 1950’s.

On December 5th 1964 Governor General, Sir Solomon Hochoy cut the ribbon to open The Rehabilitation Centre. The International Labour Organization provided technical assistance and a vocational rehabilitation specialist named Norman Cooper to help set up the first work shop which was named in his honour. Beginning with seven “rehabiltees” that were trained to repair soft drink crates, the rehabilitation centre grew far beyond expectations.

In 1982 Rotary Club of San Fernando adopted the Centre as a 3-year project to coincide with the international year of the disabled and a brave new manager named Beverly Beckles was recruited. At twenty-seven years old she brought energy and a fresh outlook with funding from the Inter-American Development Bank. She was able to hire professional staff and expanded the services of the Rehabilitation Centre.

Through the prudent management of these resources, The Rehabilitation Centre expanded its programmes and service offerings, developed a portfolio of entrepreneurial activities centered on the skill sets of the trainees and expanded its role in local and regional advocacy for the equalization of opportunities, rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities.

Today, the Centre is known as National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD). It is 55 years old and as the years have progressed, it has blossomed and evolved tremendously. NCPD offers certified skills training by National Examination Council (NEC) and National Training Agency (NTA), in the areas of WoodWork, Beauty Culture, Agriculture/Horticulture, Bookbinding, Garment Construction, Welding, Information Technology, Office Administration and Food Preparation. In order to offer holistic development, NCPD also offers Remedial (Mathematics, English, Science, Social Studies), Music, Art & Craft, Character Education, Soap and Candle Making, Copper Making, Jewellery Making and Sports.

With the rapidly increasing advancements in the technological world we live in today, NCPD has incorporated the use of assistive devices and gadgets that aid and assist persons with various types of disabilities. These assistive devices enable persons with disabilities to better carry out their daily functions and enhance their everyday learning and coping skills. They are made accessible to the trainees and apprentices in NCPD’s IT Department. There is also a Play Attention Software which is a computer-based,

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attention-training system that measures brain activity using an arm band. It provides visual and auditory feedback in a game-like environment designed to hone certain skills.

The Centre is also known for its many community outreach programmes/projects, workshops and advocacy campaigns. More recently, NCPD has embarked on a “Small act, Big Impact” Campaign which allows persons to contribute donations via an online portal. NCPD wishes to encourage the general public to consider random acts of kindness and generosity through giving. This will go a long way to serve the needs of persons with disabilities and improve their quality of life.

Additionally, there is a social enterprise component that allows for NCPD to achieve sustainable status. These are business services in the areas of Food Catering, Customization and Restoration of Furniture, Welding, Wood Work, Printing, Bookbinding, Beauty Culture, Garment Construction, Agriculture, and Transportation. The social enterprise aspect offers training and development opportunities for apprentices and persons with disabilities. It also provides opportunities for employment. These business services and employment opportunities allow persons with disabilities to feel included and be a part of the NCPD family. They help to foster independent living amongst persons with disabilities

and allow for human dignity to be achieved.

From 1964 to this day, National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) has truly been a pillar of strength and a beacon of hope for thousands of persons with disabilities. As this year marked the Organisation’s 55th Anniversary, NCPD remains entirely committed to serving and improving the lives of PWDs thus ensuring that no one feels left behind.



On Sunday 8th October, 2019 we celebrated International Cerebral Palsy Awareness Day. We also celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities on the 3rd December, 2019. Cerebral Palsy is a group of disorders that affect movement and muscle tone or posture. It is caused by damage that occurs to the immature brain as it develops.

What is so remarkable of persons with disabilities is their determination to push toward an inclusive society amidst the numerous challenges they face. Their drive for success and achievement is imperishable. Today we chat with a remarkable young man who is motivated by his passion to make a difference in his life and the life of others, Sunderlal Sunny. Sunderlal was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy at birth but his diagnosis failed to stop him from achieving and believing in himself. Sunderlal Sunny moved from being completely dependent to now using the strength he gained from overcoming his challenges over the years to motivate others. This is Sunderlal's view on his disability and his aspirations.

SUNDERLAL SUNNY DETERMINED TO SUCCEED

Q&A With Sunderlal Sunny

Q: What can you tell us about yourself?

A: I am 20 years old and I have a disability which is called Cerebral Palsy. I am studying Office Administration at the National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD). I also like to write stories about myself telling about my disability and what I can do and sharing what I can achieve in life.

Q: Who/What is your greatest motivator? Why so?

A: My greatest motivator in the whole world is my mother because she was the one who never lost that faith and confidence in me. She worked with me from birth. When times were really difficult, my mother always found a way to work out her problems. She never lost that faith in God.

Q: What are some of your goals and aspirations?

A: One of my goals in life is to travel all around world, and being motivational speaker show people that there is a way and it will

Q: What are some of your most treasured achievements? Why?

A: One of my achievements is being able to read and write as a decent individual and being able to communicate with people in society as an adult. Another achievement is my ability to walk. I was not always able to do these things, however perseverance is the key to success. With my mother at my side and the Princess Elizabeth Home to support, I began walking at age seven and subsequently was able to read and write by age fifteen. I am proud of these achievements because even though I believed I never thought it was possible.

Q: What does inclusion mean to you?

A: To me inclusion means to be included in society. To be part of it and strive towards a common goal.

Q: How does Cerebral Palsy affect you?

A: It affects my speed because I am not able to move as fast as others will move at, but that doesn't stop me from achieving my goals in life I just learned to take it one step at a time.

Q: How has Cerebral Palsy helped you to identify your abilities and define your strengths?

A: It has helped me to build my own self confidence and trust that no matter how much times you fall down in life, you always get back up on your feet and you continue with your battles, to never give up on your hopes and dreams.

Q: What are some of the challenges you face as someone with Cerebral Palsy?

A: Some of my challenges are not being able to walk properly, speak fluently, learning how to read and write back then, but now I stand strong in GOD's presence.

Q: If given the opportunity to highlight the best aspects of your life what would you highlight? Why?

A: I would highlight the best aspect of my life as the moment I started the fellowship with the LORD JESUS. This changed my life a lot. I would also highlight the fact that "I can" I can do anything I put my mind to. I started off walking, gradually learning to read and write as well as speaking clearly and this was achievable because I believed it was.

Q: Where do you see yourself five (5) years from now?

A: I see myself as being a peer motivator, standing on multiple platforms speaking about what the good Lord has done in my life.

Q: Do you have any pet peeves? Share them with us.

A: Yes, I do. I do not like when people put others down because opportunity gives us the chance to showcase our skills, talents and abilities. When you put others down they become afraid to show their abilities as well as it lowers their self-esteem.

Q: What advice would you give to others with Cerebral Palsy?

A: I would tell them that whatever goal you have in mind for the future, no matter how hard it is or if you fail, never give up on it and keep trying and put faith in God to help you achieve it because you will never know what He has in store for you after down the road.

Q: Do you have any messages you would you like to share?

A: Have complete trust and confidence in God and no matter what do not lose that hope because He will help you in your time of need when the time is right.

New Faces at NCPD



Annalicia Tang

The NCPD family warmly welcomes Ms. Annalicia Semoy Tang, who is our new Remedial Teacher's Assistant. As an on the Job Trainee, she began her first day on September 2nd, 2019. Ms. Tang holds a Bachelors of Education Degree with a specialisation in Language and Literature from the University of Trinidad and Tobago.

In future, she would like to further her career in Education. She expressed that teaching at NCPD thus far has sparked her interest in the field of Special Education. Ms. Tang intends to positively impact the lives of persons with disabilities by encouraging and inspiring them to improve their rudimentary skills. She strongly believes that academic learning is crucial in society and no one should feel "left behind".



Aryanna Gayadeen

NCPD is pleased to warmly welcome another On the Job Trainee, Ms. Aryanna Gayadeen who is also a Remedial Teacher's Assistant. Ms. Gayadeen joined the Organisation on September 2nd 2019. She obtained a Bachelors of Arts in Literature, with a minor in Linguistics at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. Currently, Ms. Gayadeen is at the near-end of completing a Masters of Arts degree in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) at U.W.I.

Her passion has always been to assist others in the sphere of education, specifically, but not limited to English language. She strongly believes learning should be fun to encourage optimum learning. Therefore, teaching should be eclectic and innovative to facilitate different disabilities and proficiencies. At NCPD, Ms. Gayadeen hopes to not only share her knowledge but also to show trainees that learning can be an enjoyable experience.

New Faces at NCPD



Kadesh de Gannes

NCPD extends a warm welcome to Ms. Kadesh de Gannes who is our new Special Education Teacher at the Unit. Ms. De Gannes holds a Bachelors Degree in Psychology (Special) from the University of the West Indies. On September 2nd, 2019 she joined the NCPD family, materializing her passion for working with persons with special needs. Her hopes are to further assist with the noble initiatives; promote awareness, solidarity and the rights of persons with disabilities. Ms. De Gannes also plans to have a positive impact on all trainees she encounters, to enhance their abilities, self worth and train them to attain new heights with their learning objectives.



Kiah Richards

NCPD takes pleasure in welcoming Ms. Kiah Richards who is our new Teacher's Aide at the Unit. Ms. Richards joined the Organisation on 2nd September 2019. She has a keen interest in business as she attained her outstanding grades at the A-levels stage. Ms. Richard's goal is to travel to the United States to further her knowledge in business studies.

Her new found experience at NCPD has sparked another interest to continue working with persons with disabilities. Ms. Richards hopes to impact NCPD by maintaining a positive attitude and also express her kindness and willingness to help others.

CONFESSIONS OF A SECRET MIND

In recent times, Mental Health in Trinidad and Tobago has become a real “Talk of the Town”. A few weeks ago, the country received disturbing news of a Rehabilitative Centre designed to “care for and transform the mentally ill”. This news brought about a whirlwind of chaos and uproar in the media. Many described this institution to be one of exploitation and abuse whereas some referred to it as “modern slavery”.

Despite the downtrodden and repressive nature attached to this special facility, one may not safely agree that our own health care systems adequately provide for the desperate and direct needs of the mentally ill. In one way or another, our hospitals and health care institutions lack expertise as well as the physical and financial resources to manage the rapidly increasing cases of mental health patients seeking treatment. This devastating phenomenon poses critical questions that ought to be answered by health authorities. Are the general hospitals and health care institutions any better? What effective measures are undertaken to deal with such crises?

While our government and policy makers struggle to offer ample solutions, more cases of mental health are plaguing the nation. It was published in the newspapers that more than a hundred mentally ill patients were checking into

the psychiatric unit at the San Fernando General Hospital on a monthly basis. The numbers must have doubled over the past weeks.

In addition, the hospital at St. Anns is at its maximum capacity and patients are dispatched after a two week period. It does not take rocket science to know that it requires more than on average two weeks to treat with mental illness. One can only imagine the rate of undiagnosed cases amongst the mix. The kind of uncertainty that comes with treating mental illness in Trinidad and Tobago is worse than predicting forex stock exchange. It is always a state of limbo. No one really knows what they are doing, and someone is bound to face the consequences.

Mental illness is indeed rampant in the country. There are growing statistics of mentally-challenged people being shot and killed by police officers on our streets and even in their own homes. Most times, these numbers are dominated by males. Unfortunately, these are extremely disturbing, depressing cases, mixed with issues of neglect, discrimination or abuse of power. If only our police officers considered proper training and handling measures to better deal with these complicated scenarios, it will serve a much better outcome for these vulnerable individuals. What is needed is simply a greater level of understanding, care

and consideration from police authorities. No one truly values the individual who is severely affected with mental illness. All they see is their next target.

As we speak, more people today are on the brink of committing suicide. It is not too long ago, a 31 year old mother of three carried her children to a park and while they were busy playing, she consumed a poisonous substance to end her life. Fortunately, a group of villagers rushed to her rescue and contacted an ambulance, saving the mother from a gruesome and tragic demise. No one knew what her story was or why she decided to take that step; however, as a people of strong culture and religion, we must not allow for this to continue.

The country has reached at an all time low where Citizens feel the need to take their own lives. This means that some important things are lacking or somewhere, somehow, some things are not in the right order. Therefore, our duty still remains to look out for our families, our friends and even strangers. Sometimes, all it takes is someone to listen, someone to genuinely care and most importantly, powerful words of faith, hope and prayer!

NCPD's Activities

September - December 2019

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Basic First Aid Workshop

On September 14th 2019, a group of trainees along with their parents and instructors from the Centre were educated and trained in basic first aid practices and procedures. Each of the participants through role play got an opportunity to demonstrate what was taught to them. They were also sensitised on cardiac emergencies, how to recognise and respond to it effectively. This training was conducted by the Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society.



PUBLIC EDUCATION

Reasonable Accommodation for Persons with Disabilities in Employment Workshop

National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) hosted a one-day workshop on “Employment of Persons with Disabilities” on 19th September 2019 at the Hilton Hotel, Trinidad and Tobago.

The training workshop focused on assisting employers in their efforts to employ and retain persons with disabilities. It also familiarised participants with the United Nations’ relevant Conventions and other policy documents concerning education, training, employment and inclusive workplace policies for persons with disabilities.



MUSICAL PERFORMANCES

Antilles Episcopal Conference

The Centre of Excellence became alive with the sweet music of the NCPD Ensemble at the Antilles Episcopal Conference on September 19th 2019. The NCPD Ensemble wooed the audience with their redemption of gospel music including 'How Great Thou Art'. The Conference presented an opportunity for the band that is headed by music instructor, Mr. Carlyle Burroughs to show off their musical talents. The event was a success and the band members totally enjoyed their performance.

SPORTING ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Special Olympics Trinidad and Tobago National Cricket Games 2019

The annual Special Olympics Trinidad and Tobago (SOTT) National Cricket Games was held on September 28th 2019 at the Constantine Park, Macoya. NCPD's cricket players comprising of twenty (20) players participated at the games. The NCPD's cricket team retained their Championship Title and was victorious in winning the overall match. The team walked away with fourteen (14) gold medals, four (4) silver medals, one (1) 4th place ribbon and one (1) 5th place ribbon. The team along with their instructors were very pleased with their performance and look forward to defending their championship in 2020.



Special Olympics Trinidad and Tobago National Beach Games

On October 20th 2019, the Las Cuevas Beach in the North Coast of the island of Trinidad became alive with the Special Olympics Trinidad and Tobago (SOTT) National Beach Games. Twenty four (24) trainees along with four (4) instructors from NCPD made the journey to the games. NCPD's athletes participated in open water swimming, beach volleyball, beach football, beach bocce, power lifting and track and field. At the end of an exciting day, NCPD walked away with nine (9) gold medals, sixteen (16) silver medals, nineteen (19) bronze medals, two (2) 4th place ribbons and one (1) ribbon of participation. The NCPD contingent looks forward to next year's games.



UNESCO-UNEVOC Centre Trinidad and Tobago

The first UNESCO – UNEVOC Centre in Trinidad and Tobago was officially opened on October 15th 2019. The National Training Agency (NTA) in Trinidad and Tobago is responsible for the coordination and regulation of the National Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system. In June 2019, the NTA was accepted as a member of the UNEVOC Network and as such, the NTA is now an approved UNEVOC Centre, the first of its kind in Trinidad and Tobago.

The three strategic objectives of the UNEVOC Network are:

- to improve TVET in Member States by promoting and fostering international collaboration and partnerships and cooperation among TVET practitioners, civil society, local communities, researchers and policymakers,
- to develop the capacities of UNEVOC Centres and associated TVET practitioners by providing various forms of technical assistance, and
- To share promising practices and innovations in TVET, through the promotion of research and practice based evidence.

The UNEVOC Network (which is coordinated by the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre) consists of approximately 250 UNEVOC Centres. These Centres serve as focal points for the provision of services and platforms for international and regional cooperation in TVET. The overarching mission of all UNEVOC Centres is to contribute to the improvement in the standards and quality of TVET in their countries.

Diwali Time at NCPD

On October 25th 2019, NCPD hosted its annual Diwali Celebrations, the Hindu festival of light over darkness and good over evil. The program was chaired by Ms. Niala Deonarine and there were a number of entertainment items performed by NCPD trainees and apprentices. These included bhajans (Hindu songs), East Indian dances, Bollywood acts and the story of Diwali was shared. There was a showcase of religious prayers, music and decor. The main highlight of the program was the Cultural/East Indian fashion show as trainees got an opportunity to model in their radiant and colourful, traditional East Indian wear. At the end of the program, everyone indulged in traditional East Indian sweets. It was indeed a very joyous and festive occasion at NCPD and the trainees and instructors look forward to next year celebrations.



Tea by the Sea

National Centre for Persons with Disabilities hosted its annual Fundraiser Tea by the Sea event which was held on November 2nd 2019. This year, patrons were treated to live entertainment performed by T&TEC Luces Brilliantes & Added Attractions.

Patrons indulged in the various delicious teas on display, coffee, juices and mouth watering refreshments such as cupcakes, pastries, saheena balls, chicken/ fish pies, muffins and croissants. There were also NCPD products on sale which included food items such as cakes and sweet bread, wood work items, upholstery cushions, handmade jewellery, copper craft pieces and soaps.

The atmosphere was breezy and cheerful as everyone danced to their favourite parang tunes. The highlight of the evening was NCPD's Fashion Show, where trainees and apprentices modelled in trendy casual and formal clothing. This event was indeed a success and was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.



Black History Month

In many countries across the globe, Black History Month is observed in the month of November. On November 11th 2019, Black History was celebrated at the Centre. This event was hosted by the African History Month Committee, led by Mr. Wayne Perrot. The event featured documentaries of “I have A Dream” by Dr. Martin Luther King and “The Dream Continues” by Barrack Obama.

There were traditional African artifacts, famous History books, paintings, copper craft materials, accessories and jewellery on display. The trainees got an opportunity to dress in their traditional African wear. They engaged in informative discussions about African History and how it plays a major role in today’s society. NCPD felt honoured to have facilitated such a remarkable and historical event.



Christmas Celebration and Concert

On December 13th 2019, NCPD celebrated its annual Christmas concert which was chaired by Ms. Candice John. The concert featured the talents of the student population as trainees and apprentices graced the stage, re-enacting the story of the birth of Jesus Christ. They clapped and rejoiced as they enjoyed singing along to their favourite Christmas songs, Carols and Soca Parang. They even shared various messages of love, peace, and joy. Some of the parents of NCPD trainees attended the Christmas concert and took various pictures and videos of the performances. Ms. Shereen Baksh, Vice Chair of the Board of Directors was also present and joined in on the celebrations.

Excitement and enthusiasm circulated the atmosphere when “Santa Claus” made a surprise entrance, sharing gifts and bags of goodies. There were refreshments provided for everyone such as bread and ham, cheese paste sandwiches, apples, snacks and juices. It was indeed a very joyous, festive and exciting occasion. The members of staff, parents and trainees all had a wonderful time and look forward to 2020 events.





Seasons Greetings

Your kindness and generosity have enriched our work during this past year.

We thank you and wish you and your loved ones a joyful holiday season.

Sincere wishes for a successful and productive 2020.

On behalf of the Board & Management of National Centre for Persons with Disabilities

SAVE THE DATE

NCPD

**ALL INCLUSIVE
CHARITY FETE**

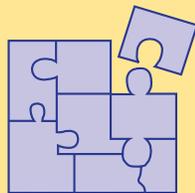
Sun. 9th Feb. 2020

@NCPD: 7-21 New Street,
San F'do.
from 4:00 pm - 11:00 pm

WELLNESS TIP OF THE DAY

Join us in moving toward balance every day

Start your Sunday simply and quietly. Wait 30 minutes before reaching for your phone, and instead focus on the beauty of morning.



**NATIONAL CENTRE
FOR PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES**

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YouTube: <https://bit.ly/20texm1>

Our Vision

To be a World Class Social Enterprise promoting social inclusion for persons with disabilities.

Our Mission

To enhance the quality of life of persons with disabilities, towards achieving an inclusive society.