Inspiring art

A student-led event brings joy to 100 beneficiaries from welfare organisations – and adds a splash of colour to the Youth Olympic Village.

About 100 beneficiaries from welfare organisations such as the Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore showcased their artistic flair at an event that aimed to challenge stereotypes associated with being physically and intellectually disabled.

Making music with customised clogs: Student volunteers from Xinmin Secondary School and the beneficiaries performing at CURL 2010

This year’s edition of Challenge Ur Limits (CURL), an annual project by the NTU Welfare Services Club, saw more than 200 volunteers from NTU and Xinmin Secondary School interacting with the beneficiaries at its flagship event, “Colouring Lives, Painting Futures”, at the National Library on 4 July.

“Creating personalised clogs requires the beneficiaries to explore their creativity, and symbolises our hope for the public to put themselves in the beneficiaries’ shoes to better understand their struggles,” said CURL Chairperson Edmund Kho from the Nanyang Business School.

Working together, the volunteers and beneficiaries created traditional Chinese clogs out of plain wooden blocks and colourful paints. They then put together a unique drumming performance with the clogs.

At the event, booths were also set up to teach skills such as balloon-sculpting, mosaic -tiling, origami-making and community drumming. All these activities aimed to bring across a simple message – that by learning a new skill and subsequently passing on the newly-acquired knowledge, one can put a smile on the faces of others.

Message for Youth Olympic Games athletes
The project took on a larger dimension this year through the Youth Olympic Games.

In his speech at the event, the Guest-of-Honour, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports, encouraged all youth to embrace volunteerism. He also touched on the role of cultural exchange and education in the lives of the young athletes during their stay at the Youth Olympic Village in NTU.

The event came to an exciting close with an engaging rhythmic performance involving the beneficiaries and volunteers from Xinmin Secondary School.

The exquisitely-decorated clogs are now displayed at the games village in a specially-designed rack. And the message for the sports prodigies? Look beyond the disabilities of the less fortunate and remember that they are a key part of society.