

Our Pioneer

Mr Peng Tsu Ying

Mr Peng Tsu Ying, now in his 80s, is certainly the personification of the motto of the Singapore School for the Deaf - 'Success Through Determination'.

It was in the 1950s when Mr Peng first came to Singapore. Being deaf, he noticed that there were no schools for the deaf here. He decided he would approach the relevant authorities about starting one.

Unfortunately, the idea was not well received at that time but this did not deter him. He bravely went ahead and started the private deaf school in 1951 at his own home.

Mr Peng used Shanghaiese Sign Language as a medium of instruction and the teaching methodology he had learnt during his school years.

His main goal for starting the school was to educate deaf children so that they could become useful citizens of society.

Even though it was hard work, Mr Peng, did not shy away from adversity, despite the fact that people with disabilities were not well regarded at that point of time.

His dedication knew no boundaries. He gave up his dream of a University degree, to stay with his deaf students. He spent 35 years of his life teaching, inspiring and mentoring generations of deaf students. This humble and unassuming man, always with a ready smile for everyone, has opened doors and paved the way for many, with some of his students becoming prominent and successful pillars within the deaf community as well as in society.

Today, he spends his days looking after his wife and focusing on spiritual matters that bring him comfort and solace.



Prologue

Singapore Sign School for the Deaf

Educating the Deaf began as early as the 1950s when Peng Tsu Ying set up the Singapore Chinese Sign School for the Deaf. The school was situated along Charlton Road in the Serangoon area.

Being a graduate of the Hong Kong School for the Deaf and the Shanghai Chinese Association of the Deaf Teachers' Class, Mr Peng used Shanghaiese Sign Language as a medium of instruction. Chinese and other subjects were taught at Primary level at the school.



The early beginnings . . .



Mr Peng Tsu Ying taught Deaf children for 35 years. This picture was taken in 1956 when he was the Principal of Singapore's first Chinese School for the Deaf (established in 1954).

The history of the Singapore Association for the Deaf has its beginnings in August 1950. Mrs Elizabeth Goulden arrived in Singapore and enquired about a Deaf school for her son. The education authorities were unable to help as the concern then was to educate hearing children. Turning to the Social Welfare Department, she was again disappointed. •

Finally, the Red Cross Society provided a glimmer of hope. They agreed to support Mrs Goulden in starting some form of education for the Deaf. The Ministry of Education too chipped in to provide a classroom in a primary school. The following year, the first class started with 2 teachers and 9 Deaf children. Gradually, more and more children came forward and the classes developed into the Oral School for the Deaf.

Prologue

Oral School for the Deaf



During this time, the Red Cross Society also provided education for deaf children at primary level, at the Oral School for the Deaf.

But their medium of instruction was English and they used the oral method to teach their students. The Red Cross also started nursery classes for pre-school-going age children as well as counseling services at the Oral School.









Pioneers

DEAF Teachers









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