

MILAD

JAN - MAR 2025

NEWSLETTER



Welcome to this edition of MILAD's newsletter, where we celebrate resilience, community, and the power of inclusion. From advocating for safer and more accessible public transport to training personal assistants who enable independent living, our work continues to push boundaries. We also share inspiring stories—of strength, perseverance, and hope—from our members. With the support of generous donors and dedicated allies, we move closer to a society where persons with disabilities are seen, heard, and empowered.

Together, we devise, establish and forge change for a better tomorrow!

www.miladmalaysia.org/



BREAKING BARRIERS: A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR SIA SIEW CHIN ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

When I was born in Melaka, my family didn't know I had Charcot-Marie-Tooth (CMT) disease—a condition that would gradually weaken my muscles over time. As I grew up, I struggled to keep up with other children. I fell often, and as my condition worsened, even simple things like climbing stairs became impossible. In a world that was not built for people like me, I learned early on that my life would always be an uphill battle.

Fighting to Be Seen and Heard

Being a woman with a disability came with double the challenges. Society often saw me as weak, dependent, or incapable. When I pursued theological studies, some people questioned whether I could even serve in ministry because of my condition. When I later became a disability rights advocate, I faced doubts about whether a person in a wheelchair could truly lead an organization.

But I refused to let my disability define me. I pushed forward, step by step—sometimes falling, sometimes failing, but always learning. I found strength in my faith and in the belief that every person, regardless of ability, deserves to live with dignity, independence, and respect.

Building a Future of Independent Living

When I founded the Malaysia Independent Living Association for Disabled (MILAD), my goal was simple: to help others find the independence I fought so hard to achieve. Through peer counseling, training, and advocacy, we empower persons with disabilities (PWDs) to take control of their own lives. We show them that they are not a burden, not invisible, but individuals with dreams, potential, and the ability to contribute to society.

One of my proudest moments has been seeing PWDs I have trained become leaders themselves. Some have gone on to secure jobs, others have become trainers, and many have learned to live independently, breaking free from the limitations society once placed on them.



BREAKING BARRIERS: A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR SIA SIEW CHIN ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

What Still Needs to Change

While we have made progress, many women with disabilities in Malaysia are still fighting to be seen, heard, and included. Too often, we face:

1. Limited access to education and employment
2. A lack of personal assistant services to support independent living
3. Barriers in healthcare and reproductive rights
4. Exclusion from leadership and decision-making roles

Women with disabilities do not need sympathy, we need opportunities. We need a society that believes in our potential rather than focusing on our limitations.

A Message to Women with Disabilities: You Are Not Alone

If you are a woman with a disability struggling to find your place in this world, I want you to know this: You are stronger than you think. Do not let society's expectations dictate your future. Seek out communities that uplift you, and if they do not exist, be bold enough to create them.

At MILAD, we are here for you. We will continue to fight for a Malaysia where women with disabilities are fully included in education, employment, leadership, and everyday life—not as an afterthought, but as equal and valued members of society.

On this International Women's Day, let's break barriers together.

Pastor Sia Siew Chin

President

Malaysia Independent Living Association for Disabled (MILAD)



MILAD NEW YEAR PARTY 2025



On January 19, 2025, the Malaysia Independent Living Association for Disabled (MILAD) welcomed the new year with a heartwarming celebration at the MILAD Centre. The New Year Party for Persons with Disabilities (OKU) was a joyous occasion, bringing together 60 participants, including members of the OKU community and dedicated volunteers.

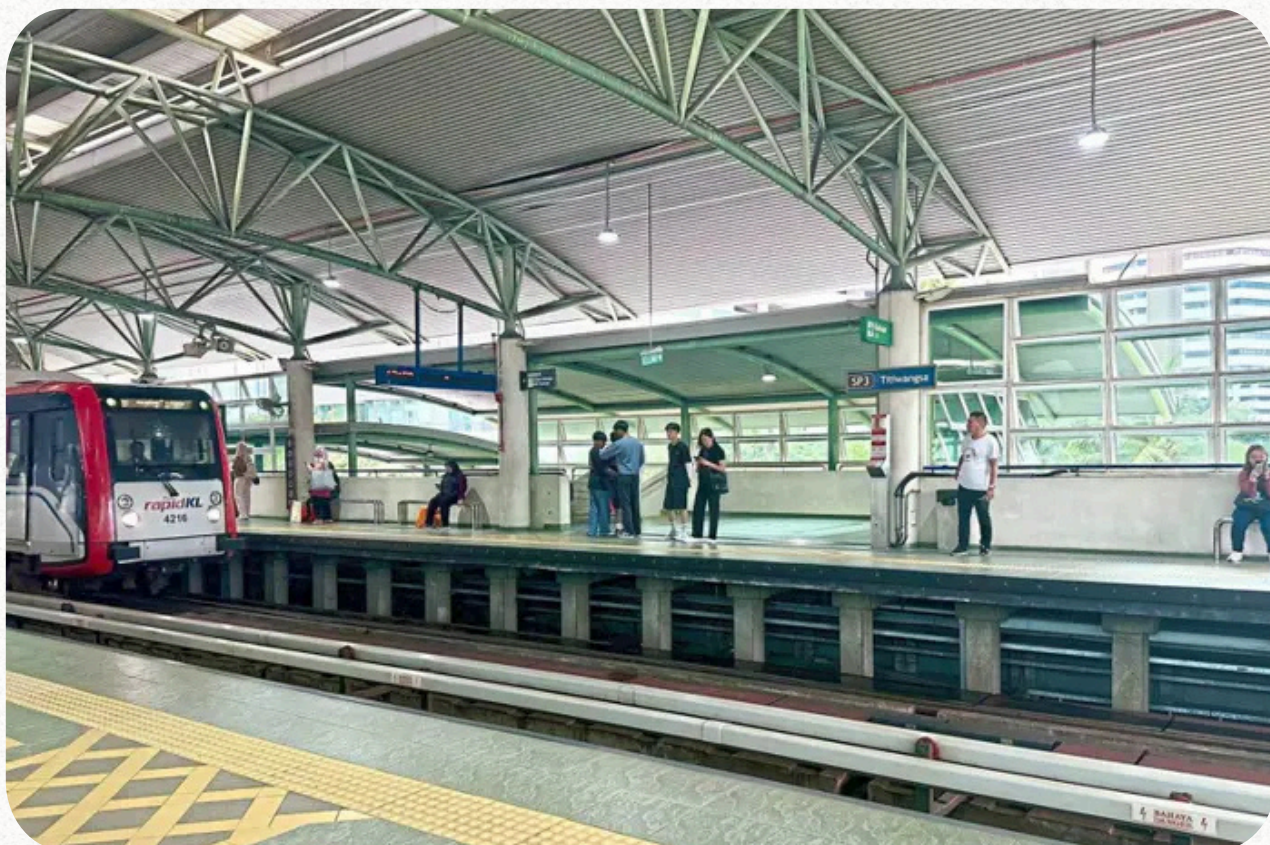
The event was graced by esteemed VIP guests, whose presence added to the warmth and significance of the gathering:

- ★ Erica, representative of YB Gobind Singh
- ★ Ong Yew Thai, MBPJ Councillor
- ★ Datuk Seri Jess Ling, Selangor TCM Lions Club

Throughout the evening, attendees shared laughter, camaraderie, and heartfelt moments. The generosity of donors, who contributed angpao and gift sets, made the celebration even more special, bringing smiles to the faces of our community members. Their kindness and support reflect the true spirit of togetherness and care that MILAD stands for.

The success of this event was made possible by the collective efforts of volunteers, supporters, and contributors. A big thank you to everyone who played a role in making this celebration memorable.

As we embark on a new year, MILAD remains committed to fostering an inclusive society where every individual, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to thrive. Here's to a year filled with empowerment, collaboration, and positivity!



URGENT CALL FOR USABILITY AUDITS TO ENHANCE ACCESSIBILITY AT TRAIN STATIONS

On February 19, 2025, a tragic incident at the Titiwangsa LRT station claimed the life of a visually impaired man, sparking a renewed call for usability audits at public transport stations. The incident revealed significant gaps in accessibility, particularly for persons with disabilities (OKU).

MILAD is urging authorities to implement improvements based on feedback from those who are directly impacted. As MILAD President Sia Siew Chin put it, “This audit, if carried out by a group of disabled individuals, will ensure that the improvements genuinely meet the practical needs of our community.”

MILAD calls for collaborative efforts to create safer, more inclusive spaces for all.



This audit, if carried out by a group of disabled individuals, will ensure that the improvements genuinely meet the practical needs of our community.





BUILDING INDEPENDENCE: MILAD'S PA TRAINING WORKSHOP

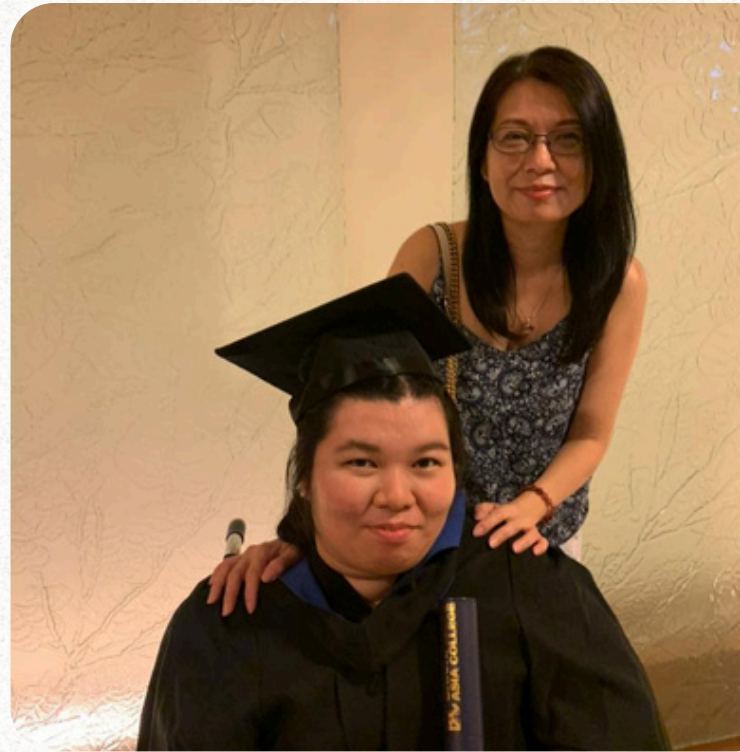


On March 1-2, 2025, MILAD hosted the Personal Assistant (PA) Training Workshop at our center, aiming to equip participants with crucial skills to assist persons with disabilities in their daily lives. With the generous support of Jabatan Pembangunan Oku (JPOKU), this hands-on workshop focused on practical learning and creating an inclusive space for knowledge exchange.

The workshop emphasized the importance of qualified personal assistants in fostering greater independence and accessibility within the disability community. By enhancing the skills of these individuals, we are taking crucial steps toward creating a more inclusive society.

A big thank you to our trainers, participants, and supporters for contributing to the success of this workshop. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of persons with disabilities.

A JOURNEY OF STRENGTH, RESILIENCE, AND INCLUSION



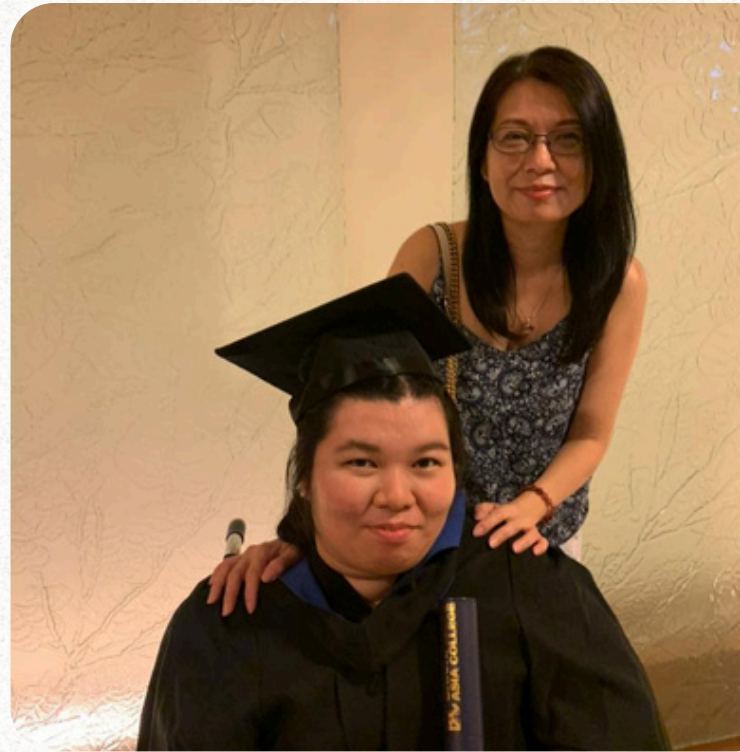
My name is Grace, and I was diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy type 2 when I was three years old. I don't remember a time when I could walk. From a young age, I watched other kids run, jump, and play, while I remained in my wheelchair, wondering why my body couldn't do the same. I didn't understand it then, but I could feel the difference. And as I grew older, that difference became more apparent, not just in what my body couldn't do, but in how the world saw me.

Living in Malaysia as a disabled person has never been easy. The world around me wasn't built for someone like me. Ramps were rare, public spaces were difficult to navigate, and even when accessibility features existed, they often weren't functional. But the hardest part wasn't the physical barriers, it was the way people treated me. Many assumed I couldn't do much on my own. They spoke to my family instead of me, made decisions for me without asking, and sometimes even pitied me. But I never wanted pity. I wanted to be seen for who I truly am, a person with dreams, ambitions, and the determination to live life fully.

Through all the challenges, my mother was my greatest supporter. She never saw my disability as a limitation. Instead, she pushed me to do my best, to study hard, and to believe in myself. There were moments when I felt like giving up, especially when the world made me feel small, but her encouragement kept me going. Thanks to her, I managed to complete my degree, despite the obstacles in my way.

But finishing my studies was only one part of the journey. The next challenge was finding a place in the working world, a world that often overlooks people like me. That's when I met Pastor Sia, a woman who changed my life. She didn't just offer me a job, she believed in me. She gave me opportunities to grow, to learn, and to prove to myself that I was capable. Under her mentorship, I found my confidence and my passion. She showed me that I wasn't limited by my disability, I was only limited by the barriers society placed in front of me.

A JOURNEY OF STRENGTH, RESILIENCE, AND INCLUSION



Now, I work in a field where I can help others with disabilities, and it's one of the things I'm most proud of. Every day, I get to support and uplift people who have faced struggles similar to mine. I've also had the incredible opportunity to travel, something I never imagined I could do when I was younger. Each journey reminds me that my wheelchair doesn't confine me. Instead, it carries me forward into new experiences, proving that my capabilities extend far beyond what many assume.

Even though I've come a long way, I know there's still so much that needs to change. Support for women with disabilities in Malaysia is lacking, not because there aren't efforts, but because these efforts often don't reflect our real needs. Too many decisions are made for us without including us in the conversation. True support means listening to our voices and understanding our struggles firsthand.

To every woman with a disability who feels unseen or unheard, don't give up. There is always hope, even in the darkest moments. The world may not always make room for us, but that doesn't mean we don't belong. Sometimes, what feels like an obstacle is actually an opportunity to prove just how strong we are.

I dream of a future where women like me are truly included, where accessibility isn't an afterthought, where our contributions are valued, and where we are given the same chances as everyone else. A future where we don't have to fight to be seen, but are recognized for who we are, capable, resilient, and worthy of every opportunity life has to offer.

Grace Sun Pei Xuan
Executive Secretary of MILAD



A GESTURE OF KINDNESS

At the Malaysia Independent Living Association for Disabled (MILAD), we believe that true inclusion starts with empathy, understanding, and meaningful action. On this journey towards empowering persons with disabilities, we are grateful for individuals who not only support our cause but also embody the values we stand for.

One such individual is Anthony Tong, whose generous contribution of RM5,000 will help MILAD provide a suitable wheelchair for a disabled individual, enabling them to live independently with dignity and mobility.

What touched us even more was not just Anthony's generosity, but his humility and respect towards the community. In a simple yet profound gesture, Anthony squatted down to take a photo with our members—an act that spoke volumes about his genuine solidarity with persons with disabilities. Sometimes, it's the smallest gestures that leave the biggest impact.

To Anthony, we extend our heartfelt thank you. Your support is not just a donation—it's a step toward a more inclusive society where everyone is valued and empowered. Together, let's continue building a world where respect, kindness, and accessibility go hand in hand.



THANK YOU, MDRT FOUNDATION & MS. TAM KIM FANG!

At Malaysia Independent Living Association for Disabled (MILAD), our mission is to empower persons with disabilities to live independently and thrive in society. This journey is made possible through the generosity and support of organizations and individuals who believe in our cause.

We are deeply grateful to the MDRT Foundation for awarding MILAD a \$5,000 grant, made possible through the nomination and support of Ms. Tam Kim Fang. This contribution will go a long way in helping us sustain and expand our initiatives, ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive the support, training, and opportunities they deserve.

If you're part of a nonprofit making a positive impact, consider applying for a grant from the MDRT Foundation! They actively support meaningful community initiatives that drive change and uplift lives. Follow @MDRTFoundation on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn or visit www.mdrtfoundation.org/en to learn more.

Together, we can build a more inclusive and empowered world!



A GENEROUS GIFT OF FRESHNESS AND CARE

MILAD extends heartfelt gratitude to 海鲜城 for their generous donation of fresh fish, bringing nourishment and joy to our members and the wider OKU (persons with disabilities) community. This thoughtful contribution not only provides essential food support but also reflects the spirit of kindness and inclusion.

Acts of generosity like this remind us that a strong community is built on compassion and shared responsibility. Thank you, 海鲜城, for making a difference in the lives of many!





HANDMADE WITH HEART, CRAFTED WITH HOPE: EMPOWERING ARTISANS WITH DISABILITIES

At the Malaysia Independent Living Association for Disabled (MILAD), we believe that empowerment begins with opportunity. That's why we're proud to introduce our beautiful handcrafted heart-shaped bead keychains—a symbol of resilience, creativity, and inclusion.

Each keychain is handmade with love by talented artisans with disabilities, showcasing not just intricate craftsmanship but also their determination to achieve economic independence. By purchasing these keychains, you're doing more than just adding a unique accessory to your collection—you're helping to build a more inclusive and supportive society.

WHY THESE KEYCHAINS MAKE A MEANINGFUL GIFT

- ☀️ Uniquely Handmade – Each piece is crafted with precision and care.
 - 💎 Vibrant & Intricate Beadwork – Designed to add a touch of elegance to your keys or bag.
 - 🔑 Versatile & Stylish – A perfect keychain or charm for any occasion.
 - 💪 Empowering Lives – Every purchase directly supports artisans with disabilities, helping them gain financial independence.
- By choosing these handcrafted keychains, you're spreading love, hope, and empowerment. Let's celebrate their artistry and advocate for a more inclusive world—one handcrafted heart at a time.

📍 Available Now! Place your order today at www.miladmalaysia.org/shop or contact us to support this meaningful initiative.



DONATION PLEDGE FORM

I (WE) WOULD LIKE TO PLEDGE TO MILAD

NAME(S) MAKING PLEDGE:

TOTAL AMOUNT OF PLEDGE:

ADDRESS:

.....

.....

PHONE:

EMAIL:

Bank Transfer via CIMB (Eligible for tax exemption)

- Account Name: Malaysia Independent Living Association for Disabled
- Account Number: 8011278630

Bank Transfer via Maybank

- Account Name: Malaysia Independent Living Association For Disabled
- Account Number: 512231410368
- Swift Code: MBBEMYKL

Important:

To receive an official receipt for tax exemption, kindly email a copy of your bank-in slip to:

✉ info@miladmalaysia.org or miladmalaysia@gmail.com

Important Note on Tax-Exemption Eligibility:

☀ Only donations made to the **Tabung Kebajikan dan Pendidikan MILAD** via the **CIMB Bank** account are eligible for tax exemption under LHDN guidelines.

🚫 Contributions directed to the Maybank account are **NOT** eligible for tax exemption benefits.

Thank you for your generous support in helping us empower lives! ❤️



Malaysia Independent Living Association for Disabled (“MILAD”) is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation run by a group of people with disabilities, to help people with disabilities toward Independent Living, regardless of their background, race and religion.

OUR VISION

It is our vision to establish a society that embraces the concept of Independent Living which promotes the disabled peoples full inclusion and participation in the community, wherein the disabled people are given the same life opportunities and the same choices in everyday life that the non-disabled people take for granted.



OUR GOAL

Our goal is to train, equip and empower the people with disabilities to live independently, and at the same time advocating for equal rights and opportunities for them. We strive toward creating awareness so that the general public will have the right perspective toward disability and people with disabilities, and hence able to help transform the society to allow full inclusion and participation at every possible level by the disabled people.

