



Title : Disabilities not an issue for 4 handicapped who attempt scuba diving
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Dive participants with instructors and ANIC organisers

Four handicapped individuals are taking to the open waters to attempt scuba diving.

Organisers of this year's A Nation In Concert or ANIC have teamed up with Ocean Ambassador Diving Centre to conduct the first-ever Open Water Diving Training Programme for handicapped individuals in Singapore.

The four individuals are either deaf, blind, wheelchair-bound or with special needs.

For 22-year-old Jeffrey Soh, who lost 85 per-cent of his eyesight two years ago and experiences tunnel vision, being underwater makes it even more difficult for him to follow hand signals.

"It's very blur, I have very limited vision in the water, due to my tunnel vision as well. So basically I have to slowly, you know, search for whatever they are looking at, whatever they are pointing at, it's a bigger challenge then I thought."

But for the student who is awaiting entry into Singapore Management University, this is an experience he didn't want to miss.

"Before my eyesight runs out, you know whatever happens in the future, when I can see with whatever I have left, I'd just make full use of it."

ANIC is a musical involving professional actors and disabled individuals to showcase their talents and

embrace diversity.

Its organisers decided to conduct the scuba diving course for four of its participants, as a lead up to this year's marine-themed show.

Organiser Alvin Lim explained.

"Basically ANIC would like to empower, to educate and enrich this group of people who's out there, that's our primary objective. Idea behind it is to make them dive beyond their limits. The secondary objective is that they'd be putting up a concert that is of a marine theme, So by allowing them to scuba dive, they can experience what's it like to be in the ocean."

The participants first underwent a training session in a swimming pool.

They will then travel to Tioman for four dives over the weekend of August the 22nd to the 24th.

The deepest dive will take them to a depth of 18 metres.

When asked about safety precautions, diving instructor and founder of Ocean's Ambassador Diving Centre Eugene Yeo, reassured that his team of seven instructors was well certified to handle dive situations.

Moreover, a dive in shallow waters will be conducted first to assess the readiness of the participants.

The four participants joined the training programme for free.

Their fees of 560 dollars each were sponsored by the donors of ANIC.