

FAMILY PEOPLE

# MIGHTY, MIGHTY *White* LODGE

by Deborah Goldman



Julia Heyes with her daughters and husband Jeremy

**P**ink Floyd’s “Another Brick in the Wall” was a protest against rigid schooling and featured a rebellious chorus of schoolchildren singing in unison: “Teachers! Leave those kids alone.”

At White Lodge, the children sing a very different song.

The **Expat Living** office was once located next door to the school in Loewen Gardens, and every so often we would hear the tiny tots proudly belting out their anthem as they marched around the playground:

“**ee** Everywhere we go-o,  
People want to know-o,  
Who we a-are,  
where we come from,  
So we tell them,  
We’re from White Lodge,  
Mighty, mighty  
White Lodge.”

It was quite catchy!

Mother-of-two Julia Heyes – a Lancashire lass from the UK – has been a parent-and-child facilitator at the school since August 2007, and she talks passionately about her role.

“It’s a joy to see the children and parents enjoying themselves,” she says. “As an expat myself, I understand the needs and difficulties of other expat parents. When grandparents come to visit from overseas, for instance, I am more than happy for them to drop into the classroom.”

Julia discovered White Lodge when she enrolled her daughter Beatrice (now 7) into the playgroup after moving from Hong Kong in 2005. She later introduced her youngest daughter Victoria (4) to White Lodge, by attending parent-and-child classes with her.

After building a strong relationship with the school and donating much of her time to volunteer work, she was offered the position of facilitator for the parent-and-child programme – a role she readily accepted.


“Even as a teenager,” Julia says, “I loved children and was always involved in some form of volunteering or baby-sitting activity. It’s amazing that, twenty years on, I’m doing the job I dreamed of doing back then.”

The curriculum focuses on the development of early speech, self-

help skills, and perceptual motor dexterity, and welcomes children from as young as six months of age. Julia says that it’s a great way for families to familiarise themselves with the school environment before progressing to the playgroup, since the developmental goals are tiered. The programme gives newcomers to Singapore a taste of White Lodge life.

“I can’t promise that there won’t be tears when the children do finally wave goodbye to their parents and join the playgroup,” she says, “but it certainly makes the transition easier.”

It’s been said in the movie industry, “Don’t work with animals or children.” Julia would disagree. “When you work with children, you don’t have to be afraid of being silly.”

By injecting her imaginative sense of fun into the parent-and-child sessions – using song, play, and even the occasional dress-up – she feels that she is able to capture the imagination of the whole class. 



The Parent and Child Programme has sessions every Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 11.00am, and accepts a maximum of 12 parents and 12 children aged between 6 months and 30 months. Each class includes Free Play, Circle Time, Art, Sensory, Go Out and Play, Come In for a Snack, Music Time, Story Time and Goodbye Time.

To learn more about the programme, drop by the school at 75E Loewen Road. Call 6475 7262, or visit [www.white-lodge.org](http://www.white-lodge.org).