



US street entertainer Kenny Ahern teaching Pathlight students how to spin plates. He and Japan's Pepper Zero performed yesterday. ST PHOTO: RAJ NADARAJAN

District arts fest treat for Pathlight students

A PIECE of the Central Singapore District Arts Festival (DAF) came to the Pathlight School yesterday and thrilled the students there.

A class of a dozen students with autism, aged between 12 and 13, learnt from two professional street entertainers - Japan's Pep-

per Zero and the United States' Kenny Ahern - the fine art of spinning plates.

The visiting pair also put on an hour-long show for 400 children from the school, which included Pepper Zero's escape from a strait-jacket and Ahern balancing a

ladder on his chin.

The children were beside themselves with delight, jumping up to cheer the performers as well as their peers and teachers who had volunteered to perform.

The DAF programme, organised by the Central Singapore Community Development Council, is in its fourth year, but it was the first time it had come to Pathlight.

The DAF, which eschews conventional performance venues, puts local and international street entertainers in hawker centres, hospitals, shopping malls and schools to raise the people's level of participation in the arts and cultural events.

Besides Pathlight, performers will be seen at other public locations in the Central District until May 28.

Ms Denise Phua, president of the Autism Resource Centre and supervisor of the Pathlight School board, is glad the DAF stopped by at the school.

"Today's event is not just a simple workshop or a simple performance, but also sends a message that these children are included in our society," said Ms Phua, who is also an MP.

More details of this year's Central Singapore DAF programme can be found at <http://www.centuralsingaporecdc.org.sg/>

GOH KAI SHI