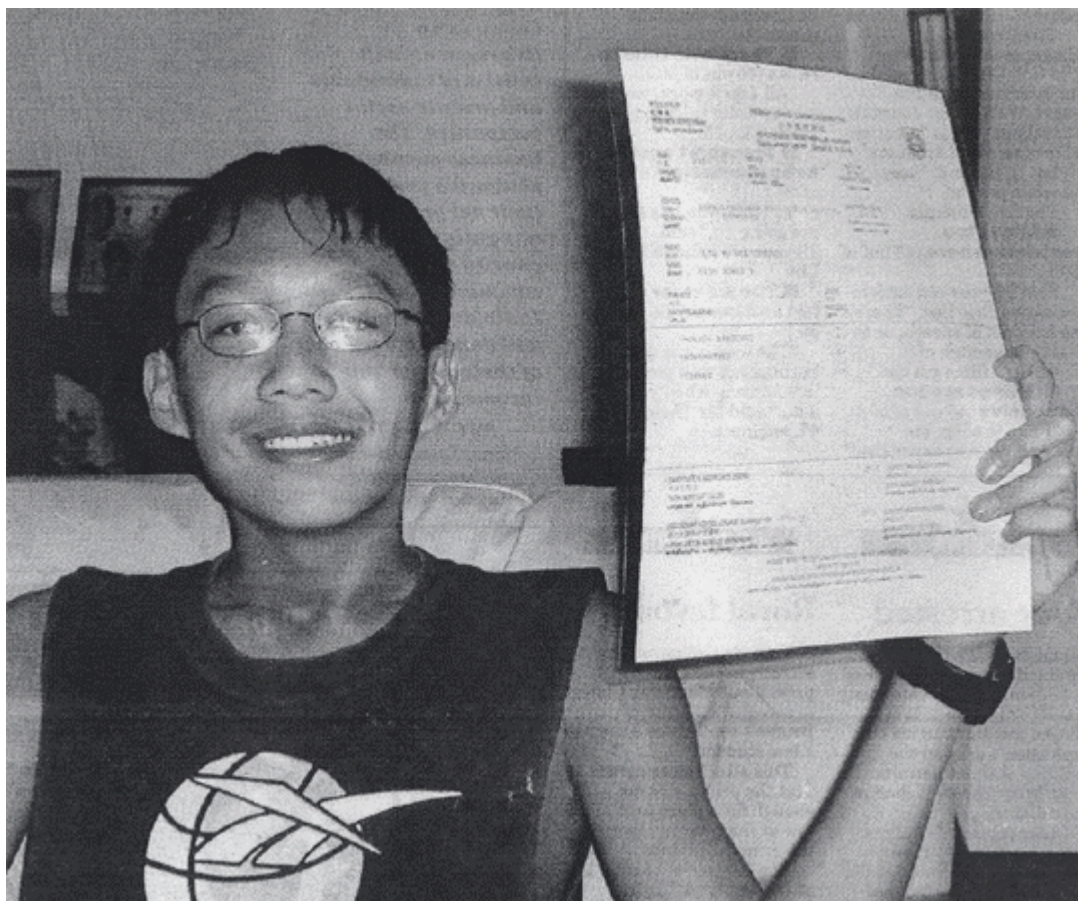


Extracted from The New Paper, Monday December 4 2000

## He can hear mum roar, all

**Edmund (left) was born deaf, but the hearing disability did not stop him from scoring 3 As in his PSLE**

**By ROSALYN LIM**

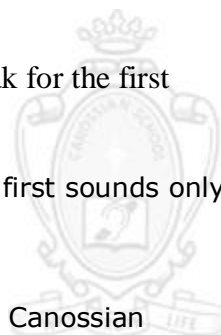


**NOT EASY:** Edmund, who was born deaf, with his PSLE results slip. —ROSALYN LIM

IT was just two years ago when Edmund Liu Yu Wei, 12, heard his mother speak for the first time.

And it sounded to him like a roar. Edmund was born deaf. And he heard his first sounds only after an operation that implanted a device in his ear. Then a decade later than his peers, he began learning to speak.

Now, the tall, tanned and healthy-looking boy has passed his PSLE from the Canossian School for the Hearing Impaired.



He managed to score two A stars for Mathematics and Science and an A for English.

He was exempted from taking a second language because of his disability. But his academic achievements did not come easy.

He had first tried a hearing aid, and that did not help much.

He then got a Cochlear Implant at Singapore General Hospital.

This is a device implanted in the inner ear. It allows deaf people to hear by bypassing damaged cells in the ear and directly stimulating the auditory nerve

Said Edmund, who can now carry on a simple conversation with other people: "When I first heard Mama's voice (after the operation), it was like a lion's roar."

He was like a baby learning to speak for the first time. He had to get used to sounds and found everyday noises like the flushing of the toilet very loud and frightening.

Said his mother, Mrs. Joanna Liu, 42: "Edmund's academic excellence should be credited solely to his school."

The Canossian School teaches students to tap on what little hearing they have to learn to talk, Mrs. Lu said. Sign Language is not emphasized, and more time is spent on teaching speech sounds.

From a very young age Edmund was also coached to lip-read.

His mother got him interested in reading. An avid reader, he spends hours with fantasy books like the Harry Potter series and even "adult reads" like Chicken Soup for the Soul, Newsweek magazine and Reader's Digest.

He also enjoys swimming, badminton and soccer, and likes playing computer games with his younger brother, Shaun, 11, a primary five student in the gifted programme at Nanyang Primary School.

When asked what he felt about his life, Edmund said: "I still lead a normal life. I'm no in any worse state than another handicapped person. I don't have any lost limbs and I treasure my life."

However, he feels uneasy when people stare at the device attached to the back of his head and asks questions (see other report.)

His father is his inspiration and source of motivation. Although often away on business trips, he stays in touch through e-mail.

Edmund said his father taught him to play basketball, and through the game the importance of concentration.

"Just concentrate on shooting, it doesn't matter whether you missed, " Edmund said.



Edmund applies this mantra of concentration to his studies. He took only two months to prepare for his PSLE, doing exercises, practicing what he had learnt in school, and reading widely.

He expects to start secondary school at St Joseph's Institution next year.

Asked whether he was ready to join a school that did not cater to the hearing impaired, he responded with determination: "I want to cope with problems." The PSLE posting will be out on Dec 21.

