



MS CAROLYN LIM: The wheelchair-bound lightning survivor hopes the public will respect facilities for the handicapped and that her son will grow up knowing a kind society. ST PHOTO: NURIA LING

Be considerate to the handicapped

WHEELCHAIR-BOUND lightning survivor Carolyn Lim, 31, is making a passionate plea to all Singaporeans this year: Please respect the facilities reserved for handicapped people.

"Even if a normal person uses the bathroom for just two minutes, he could be depriving a disabled person in urgent need of it," she says.

She has often come across toilet cubicles which are left sullied, and even used as smoking points by able-bodied people.

She wishes that more could be done to educate the public to be more sensitive to those with special needs.

The former English teacher was struck by lightning in 2006 when she was windsurfing with friends at the east coast of Singapore. When she awoke from a six-week coma, she was unable to speak, walk or write.

She fell into a deep depression, but with the support of her then boyfriend William Ng, 29, an army regular who is now her husband, and her parents, she found the courage to overcome her challenges. Ms Lim trained herself to speak by reading books aloud, one word at a time, and tried to regain the fine motor skills in her right hand by learning how to use a spoon, a fork, and then chopsticks.

In June 2009, she completed a master's degree in education at the National Institute of Education – only 34 months after her accident.

Determined to lead a normal life, Ms

Lim started a family last year.

Despite being wheelchair-bound, she carried baby Isaac for nine months like any other mother-to-be, and gave birth by caesarean section in September.

She has documented her journey towards recovery in her book *Making Pink Lemonade*, published in 2009. (www.makingpinklemonade.com)

In it, she laments the lack of public awareness about the needs of disabled people, but also records the kindness she has received from strangers – a side of society that she hopes her three-month-old baby will grow up to know.

"We named him 'Isaac' because it means laughter in Hebrew. We want him to bring laughter to the people around him, but we also want him to be surrounded by laughter in his life," she says.

CASSANDRA CHEW