

The Outstanding SPED Teacher Award

Ms Linda Tan Mui Keng, Tanglin School

Linda started teaching in Tanglin School in 2004. She quickly established herself as a teacher who puts in tremendous effort in ensuring that her students get the best possible learning experience. She has also established a reputation for being a reliable worker who is resourceful and able to multi-task. She is now the Level 1 Numeracy Head at Tanglin School.

Linda has a strong passion for learning. She has attained the higher certificate in autism and attended specialised diploma courses in autism. She also attended professional development courses in areas such as music therapy, team building and counselling skills. Currently, Linda is pursuing a certificate in practical counselling and a Masters degree. All these are done using her personal time.

She spearheaded the Tanglin Business Entrepreneurship Project with the school's level 4 students. The aim of the project was to allow students to learn how to set up a profitable stall in a fun and active way. The project was a huge success and has benefited the students. Linda was also instrumental in setting up simulated Tanglin Bank services which provided students with the opportunity to practise saving.

Linda also volunteers at several non-profit organisations. In 2004, she provided assistance to tsunami victims in Aceh, Indonesia. She also volunteers at the Singapore Children's Society and Club Rainbow.

Ms Erni Noorhaidah Bte Ahmad, Woodlands Gardens School

In 1992, Erni began her career as a Teaching Assistant in Guillemard Gardens School. She began her 9-year teaching career with the special schools under the Movement for the Intellectually Disabled (MINDS), subsequently moving on to Delta Senior School under the Association for Persons with Special Needs (APSN). She returned to MINDS and is now teaching at the MINDS Woodlands Garden School. She teaches pre-vocational skills to Senior Level students to prepare them for employment upon graduation.

Driven by her strong interest and deep commitment to the job, she has obtained a Masters degree in Special Education and has the intention to go into research work. She would like to continue her studies at the PhD level in the near future.

This year, she was instrumental in the successful implementation of the pre-vocational programme in the school. As the pioneer pre-vocational teacher for Senior Level classes, she has put in extra time and effort in detailed planning

and scheduling for the smooth execution of the programme. In addition, she uses the knowledge obtained through workshops organised by the Workforce Development Authority (WDA) to refine the school's pre-vocational programme.

Erni is also talented in music and dance, and she choreographs and teaches her students dance. As an active staff member of the school, she often volunteers to help when colleagues encounter problems in their work. She was also the chairperson of Staff Welfare at MINDS Woodlands Gardens School last year.

Her commitment to Special Education extends beyond her school. She has been a regular volunteer for Special Olympics for the past 17 years. She was a member of the organising committee of Singapore's 7th National Special Olympics held in June 2009. Currently, she coaches floor hockey for Special Olympics on a weekly basis.

Mdm Jenny Lim Geok Hong, Lee Kong Chian Gardens School

Jenny started as a teacher with MINDS Yio Chu Kang Gardens School in 1988 and has not stepped out of the SPED field ever since. Her commitment to the school and complete dedication to her students saw her rise from Teacher to Senior Teacher in 1993 and eventually to Senior Assistant in 1996. She was seconded to the MINDS Curriculum Unit in 2002 as a curriculum developer and returned to teaching, her first passion, in 2007. Jenny currently not only teaches, but serves as a Senior Assistant and a Prefect Mistress in the school.

Jenny's pursuit of knowledge shows her passion for learning. Besides her basic degree, she went on to attain a Diploma in Disability Studies and is currently completing her Masters degree. She is a great role model. Teachers and volunteers who have worked with her said that they benefited from her mentoring. Parents of her students also hold her in great esteem.

Jenny can be described as patient, caring and positive. It was her patience that has helped her triumph over the learning difficulties of students in the lower functioning groups. It was her caring nature that has pushed her to go the extra mile in making her lessons interesting for all students. And it was her positive disposition, her belief that every child can learn, that has made her the excellent teacher that she is today.