

Our Growing Garden



Our Growing Garden

NTUC First Campus (NFC) is a growing garden filled with happy, curious children. Guided by dedicated, caring teachers, they constantly make new discoveries about the world they live in and learn new ways to express themselves.

Growing our garden encompasses sprouting new shoots and spreading out, strengthening the roots, equipping and empowering people, and breaking new ground. It is a labour of love that involves principals, teachers and education specialists, as well as pre-schoolers, parents and the community.

35 years on, our garden continues to flourish to touch even more families and fulfil the promise of each child.



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Joint Message by Chairman and Chief Executive Officer



On behalf of the Board of Directors, we are pleased to present the Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements of NTUC First Campus Co-operative Limited (NFC) and its subsidiaries for the financial year ended 31 December 2012.

The year 2012 was a special one because we celebrated the 35th anniversary of NTUC's childcare service. From our humble beginnings in 1977, NFC is today the largest provider of childcare services in Singapore.

Making an impact

As at end 2012, NFC operated 111 centres, providing some 12,000 childcare places, an increase of 11 per cent compared with the previous year. The median fee of \$642 at My First Skool (MFS), is 14 per cent below the national median fee of \$750. In addition, families in need are able to tap on the Government's Centre-Based Financial Assistance for Childcare (CFAC) scheme, as well as support from the Bright Horizons Fund managed by NFC. Some 1,000 children received subsidies from these schemes last year. Some of these families may even co-pay as little as \$5 a month in childcare fees.

Why do we do what we do? It is because we believe that every child, whatever his family background, deserves a good start in life. We know that good quality pre-school education and care has a lasting effect on children's development and learning. To this end, we continue to invest in improving our programmes and supporting innovative practices. It is this common sense of purpose that has driven the people at NFC for the last 35 years.



Kee Teck Koon
Chairman

Providing quality education and care

Project Eureka, an initiative to foster innovative practices in our childcare centres, rolled out its third centre at MFS at 505 Yung An Road. Children at this centre learn through relating to real-world topics and are exposed to literary activities such as drama, music and poetry.

Together with the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF, then known as Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports) and other community partners, we piloted the Development Support Programme (DSP) at 35 MFS centres. DSP provides learning support and therapy intervention to children with mild development delays. A resounding 98 per cent of the children in the programme achieved their individualised goals after intervention in 2012.

More of our centres achieved the Singapore Pre-school Accreditation Framework (SPARK) recognition. A total of 22 centres attained SPARK recognition from the Ministry of Education (MOE) in 2012, bringing our total number of SPARK centres to 31.

A great place to work

NFC had a total workforce of 2,300 as at the end of 2012. Our people are the bedrock of the organisation and we aim to provide them with a conducive work environment and opportunities to grow and develop.

We invest heavily in training and development of our staff. Last year, about \$1 million in scholarships and sponsorships was awarded to our staff. Our teachers also benefited from structured continuing professional development programmes and multiple career development opportunities.

NTUC First Campus was recognised as an exemplary Early Childhood Employer by MSF for our human resource and people management practices. We are also very proud that our teachers were recognised by MSF and MOE for their innovation and teaching excellence.



Growing the early childhood care and education sector

SEED Institute became only the fourth Continuing Education and Training (CET) Centre in Singapore to attain the National CET Institute status conferred by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA). It is a strong testimony to the contributions of SEED Institute in meeting the manpower needs of the early childhood care and education (ECCE) sector, and its commitment to quality. SEED Institute produced more than half of the qualified pre-school teachers in Singapore last year.

SEED Institute conducted a total of 11 action research projects, of which three secured grants from MSF and seven were published in international journals. Our research capabilities contribute significantly to raising curriculum quality and establishing standards and best practices in this field.

Looking ahead

The ECCE sector is poised for further growth and expansion. The Government announced a doubling of the budget for ECCE which will see 16,000 new childcare places created by the anchor operators by 2017. NFC plans to keep pace in growing our network in the coming years. We will be committing \$14.5 million in 2013 on setting up new centres, rejuvenating existing ones and investing in technology to help us deliver better quality service. Since 2009, the Group has invested over \$45 million on our childcare centres, people and organisational improvements.

Chan Tee Seng
Chief Executive Officer



In 2012, The Little Skool-House International (LSH) consolidated its operations locally and overseas, after several years of rapid expansion. This decision enables LSH to strengthen its foundation. LSH is poised to play a significant role in the Group's future expansion.

In the next couple of years, we will consolidate and strengthen our organisation by focusing on three key areas; extending our outreach to more Singapore families, raising the quality of our education and care, and enabling our people. Through SEED Institute, we will become a more influential sector enabler, raising the level of professionalism through education, research and advocacy.

Financial performance

For the year ended 31 December 2012, the Group achieved total revenue and other operating income of \$130.7 million, 25 per cent higher than the previous year. The surplus for the Group after contributions to the Central Co-operative Fund (CCF), the Singapore Labour Foundation (SLF), and taxation, was \$3.6 million, representing 2.8 per cent of total revenue and operating income.

The Board is recommending a final and special dividend of 2 cents and 1.5 cents respectively per share for the financial year ended 31 December 2012.

In closing

We thank Dr Tan Kim Song who left our Board in 2012 after being with us since 2003. At the same time, we welcome to the Board Mr Karthikeyan Krishnamurthy, who is the General Secretary of United Workers of Petroleum Industry, and a Vice-President of NTUC Central Committee.

We are grateful for the dedication shown by our NFC colleagues, and would like to express our appreciation to NTUC and NTUC Enterprise, our members, customers, corporate sponsors, community partners and business associates for their support. To members of our Board we thank them for their collaboration and tireless efforts in charting NFC's success and growth.

Board of Directors

Kee Teck Koon Chairman

Mr Kee is currently Non-Executive Chairman of CapitaCommercial Trust Management Limited (the manager of CapitaCommercial Trust which is listed on the SGX-ST), Changi Airports International Pte Ltd, Alexandra Health Endowment Fund and Lien AID Limited. He also holds directorship positions in NTUC Enterprise Co-operative Limited, NTUC LearningHub Private Limited, Raffles Medical Group Limited (listed on the SGX-ST) and Ascendas Private Limited.



Prior to Mr Kee's retirement as the Chief Investment Officer of CapitaLand Limited ("CapitaLand") on 1 July 2009, Mr Kee held several senior appointments within the CapitaLand Group and was responsible for overseeing the CapitaLand Group's financial advisory services, commercial real estate and retail real estate businesses. Mr Kee holds a Degree of Master of Arts from University of Oxford.

Bertie Cheng Shao Shiong Chairman, Telechoice International Limited

Mr Bertie Cheng has been on the Board since 2004. Mr Cheng is the Chairman of Telechoice International Limited and Non-Executive Chairman of TEE International Limited. He is also a Director of Hong Leong Finance Limited and Singapore Technologies Electronics Limited.



Liak Teng Lit Group Chief Executive Officer, Alexandra Health

Mr Liak Teng Lit has been on the Board since 2004. He is the Group Chief Executive Officer of Alexandra Health, which manages Khoo Teck Puat Hospital. He currently leads the planning and commissioning of a community hospital and a specialist centre. He also serves on the boards of NTUC Unity Healthcare, Pathlight School and NorthLight School.



Denise Phua Lay Peng President, Autism Resource Centre (Singapore)

Ms Denise Phua joined the Board in 2006. She is a Member of Parliament since 2006 and currently serves in the Moulmein-Kallang Group Representation Constituency. Ms Phua is the President of Autism Resource Centre (Singapore). She runs two special schools, the Eden School and Pathlight School, the first autism school in Singapore she co-founded.



Albert Cheng Yong Kim Group Executive Director, The Lion Group of companies

Tan Sri Albert Cheng joined the Board in 2007. He is the Group Executive Director of The Lion Group with more than 30 years of experience in the business operations. He also serves as Managing Director of both Lion Industries Corporation Berhad and Lion Diversified Holdings Berhad. He is also the President Director of P.T. Lion Metal Works Tbk, Indonesia.



Adeline Sum Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Labour Foundation Chief Development Officer, NTUC Enterprise Co-operative Limited

Ms Adeline Sum joined the Board in 2009. She is also a Member of the Establishment Committee. Ms Sum is currently the Chief Executive Officer of the Singapore Labour Foundation and NTUC Choice Homes Co-operative Limited. She is also Chief Development Officer of NTUC Enterprise Co-operative Limited.



Ronald Tan Hee Huan Executive Director, Singapore Institute of Management

Mr Ronald Tan joined the Board in 2010. Mr Tan is the Executive Director of the Singapore Institute of Management. Mr Tan has held several senior management appointments in both the public and private sectors.



Ng Chee Yuen Co-Chairman, Capella Hotel Group Asia Private Limited

Mr Ng Chee Yuen joined the Board in 2011. Mr Ng is the Co-Chairman of Capella Hotel Group Asia Private Limited and founder of SHENNING Investments Private Limited. Mr Ng has over 28 years of experience in businesses, consulting, private equity and government service.



Karthikeyan Krishnamurthy General Secretary, United Workers of Petroleum Industry

Mr Karthikeyan Krishnamurthy joined the Board in 2012. He is the General Secretary of the United Workers of Petroleum Industry and a Vice-President of the NTUC Central Committee. He is the Chairman of the Workplace Safety and Health Council (Chemical Industries) Committee and also serves on the board of NTUC Thrift and Loan and Shell Thrift and Loan.



Senior Management



Standing (left to right)

Adeline Tan

General Manager, My First Skool

Geraldine Lee

Chief Human Resource Officer
General Manager, Bright Horizons Fund
General Manager, The Little Skool-House International

Daniel Chua

Group Customer Service and Operations Officer

Hor Fong Lin

Chief Financial Officer

Seated (left to right)

Kwek Kok Kwong

Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Chan Tee Seng

Chief Executive Officer

Ho Yin Fong

Academic Director, SEED Institute

Our Vision

A joyful and inspiring early learning experience for all, that fulfils the promise of each child.

Our Mission

Making quality early childhood care and education services affordable and accessible to families.

Integrity

We build trust and credibility through honest communication, delivering what we promised, and having the courage to stand up to say and do the right thing.

Nurturing

We believe in fostering the long-term learning and development of ourselves and others, and in building and being a part of a learning and sharing culture.

Service

We deliver quality service with sincerity by understanding the needs and finding the best solutions for children, families, community and stakeholders.

Passion

We have a strong belief and sense of commitment to the profession and the organisation's mission and vision, and are dedicated to make a difference to children, families, community and stakeholders.

Innovation

We strive for continuous improvement to do things better with an open mindset, habit of learning, and pursuance of new ideas and practices.

Relationship

We build and maintain trusting and positive relationships with children, families, community and stakeholders by understanding their needs and aspirations.

Excellence

We set high standards and challenge ourselves to deliver quality results that exceed expectations in a sustainable manner.

Our Values

Our core values, **INSPIRE**, form the foundation of how we perform work and conduct ourselves at NTUC First Campus. These values remain constant and guide us through changing environments. It defines how we interact with one another, and what we do to realise our vision.



Established as NTUC Childcare in 1977, NTUC First Campus Co-operative Limited (NFC) became one of the nine co-operatives of the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) in 1992. With the mission of making quality early childhood care and education services affordable and accessible to families, we are a renowned and trusted early childhood care and education service provider in Singapore.

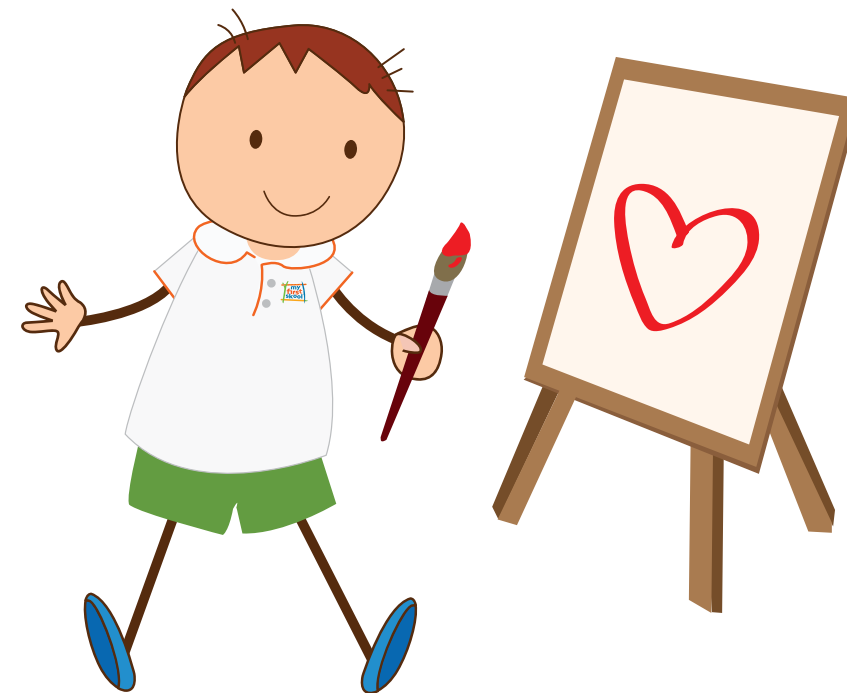
Our childcare centres include My First Skool, The Little Skool-House International and The Caterpillar's Cove. NFC is also a community of teachers, parents and early childhood care and education professionals working together to bring out the best in each child and create inspiring moments for all.



Cherish Each Child

My First Skool (MFS) is the pioneer childcare arm of NTUC First Campus Co-operative Limited. We were established as NTUC Childcare in 1977 and became a co-operative in 1992. Operating mainly at void decks of housing estates, we aim to provide quality and affordable childcare service that is accessible to parents. This is in line with our tagline, "Cherish Each Child", where no child should be denied the opportunity of early childhood care and education.

The MFS curriculum subscribes to experiential learning whereby the natural curiosity of the child is supported by a holistic process-oriented approach that will help young children develop positive dispositions that will put them in good stead for lifelong learning. MFS currently offers more than 9,000 childcare places in over 90 centres island-wide.





We don't just prepare them for school, we prepare them for life

The Little Skool-House International Private Limited (LSH) was established in 1994 as a wholly-owned subsidiary of the NTUC First Campus Co-operative Limited to meet the growing demand of quality premium pre-school education. Operating at choice locations such as community clubs, shopping malls, private residential estates and workplaces across Singapore, LSH has 17 centres offering more than 2,000 childcare places.

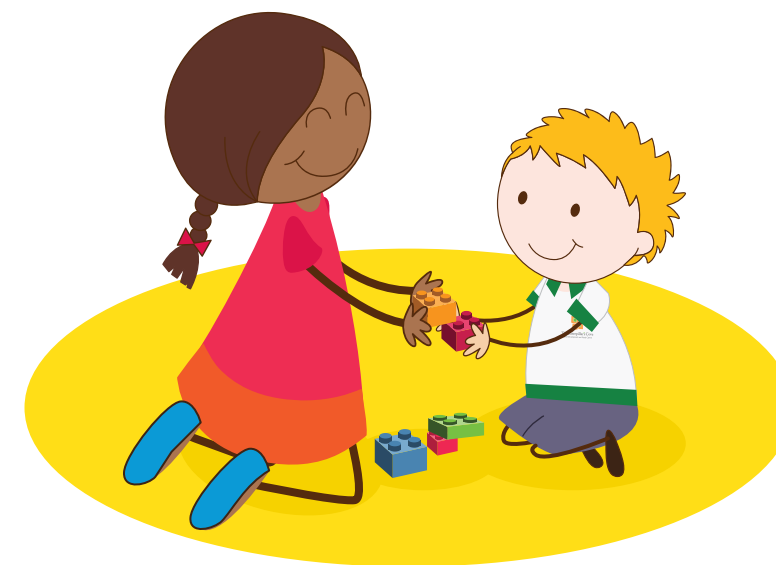
Our literature-based bilingual curriculum was designed and developed to meet the needs of our children. It uses meaningful children's literature as key medium to seed the learning process in children and help them develop lifelong learning skills; and expanded it with a project-based approach component that provides a platform for children to apply their skills and concepts in real life settings. Our commitment and track record in delivering quality early childhood education has made us the partner of choice to Government ministries, tertiary institutions, hospitals and private corporations.



The Caterpillar's Cove
Child Development and Study Centre

Growing Children in a Learning Community

The Caterpillar's Cove brings together teachers of young children, researchers and students who are training to work with children. We have a dynamic setting with highly qualified teachers who are familiar with the best internationally accepted practices in child development. Being a child development and study centre, we provide an outstanding pre-school setting where parents, teachers, researchers and student-teachers strive to discover and advocate best practices in early childhood education to promote children's optimal learning and development. Children thrive in this highly innovative, stimulating and purpose-built environment specially designed to bring out each child's potential.



SEED institute

An NTUC Training Institute

Seeding Early Education

SEED Institute (formerly known as RTRC Asia) is built upon a vision to give children the best head-start by grooming early childhood professionals to provide the best care and education to young children. We were set up in 1989 by NTUC, in collaboration with the Bernard van Leer Foundation, a Dutch private philanthropic foundation that funds and shares knowledge about work in early childhood development. Today, we are recognised as the pioneer in early childhood education training in Singapore. We have five Centres of Excellence that specialise in areas including research and best practices, continuous professional development, higher education, professional qualifications and regional partnership.



Our Network of Centres



represented by



represented by



The Caterpillar's Cove
Child Development and Study Centre

represented by



Marking 35 years of inspiring young lives

Celebrating this milestone with our pioneers

We celebrated our 35th Anniversary at a dinner attended by more than 2,300 staff and 100 special guests, including National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) Secretary-General Lim Swee Say.

NTUC First Campus' (NFC) achievements are built on the vision and foundation set by its pioneers and we took the opportunity to honour 35 of them at this event. These pioneers included Mrs Yu-Foo Yee Shoon who pioneered the childcare service at NTUC and Dr Khoo Kim Choo who led NTUC Childcare (now known as NFC) through its formative years.

A special treat was the sharing of treasured memories by key management personnel of how NTUC took up the challenge of providing quality childcare services to families, despite not knowing how to and with no resources.

Our Chief Executive Officer Mr Chan Tee Seng reflected on our tenfold growth from the 10 crèches that NTUC Childcare took over from the Government in 1977 to 111 centres 35 years later. NFC is now the largest childcare operator in Singapore.



Performances put up by our staff and children during the celebratory dinner

He outlined upcoming plans to support the next phase of Singapore's economic and social development and create even greater social impact. NFC will continue to grow its network and make quality childcare affordable and accessible to all, enabling children of different social backgrounds to have an equal start in their education journey, and in life.



NFC celebrated 35 years of providing quality and affordable childcare services to families in Singapore

All aboard *The NTUC Skool That Could*

A commemorative book was produced to tell the story of NFC through the words of its pioneers, former and existing staff, as well as partners.

Titled *The NTUC Skool That Could*, it was inspired by the classic children's story "The Little Engine That Could" which exemplifies our 'will do, can do' spirit. It told of how NFC overcame numerous challenges and obstacles to fulfil its promise, succeeding each time due to its people's passion, perseverance and belief in providing the best early childhood experiences to children.



A commemorative book, *The NTUC Skool That Could*, was produced for the event to tell the story of NFC over the past 35 years

Sprouting New Shoots, Spreading Out

Extending outreach to more Singapore families



Uplifting lives

The Bright Horizons Fund (BHF) has been providing meaningful assistance to children from low-income families who attend pre-school at My First Skool (MFS). This initiative has benefited over 3,000 children since its inception in 2007.



Various programmes and initiatives were introduced to help children from the lower-income families cope

BHF has made MFS programmes accessible to its beneficiaries and has provided equal opportunities for the children to develop to their potential. These programmes include Read-to-Reach (RTR) which helps reading-at-risk children in literacy skills, "You Are Special" which celebrates the children's birthdays at the centres with their peers when their families may not be able to, and "K2 Schoolbags" which provides them with the essentials for primary school.

A Classroom Support Programme (CSP) that enhances children's participation and quality of engagement in class was piloted at two MFS centres, benefiting 56 children. As part of the programme, a Classroom Co-Facilitator supports the work of the main teacher. Children, in turn, receive more attention and get to extend their learning and engagement opportunities.

To reach out to more low-income families and to strengthen family bonding, BHF recruited volunteers within NTUC First Campus to organise family outings to Sentosa Underwater World and movie screenings for close to 206 families.



Children were treated to an outing to Sentosa Underwater World

Providing extra support

The Development Support Programme (DSP) was piloted at 35 My First Skool centres in 2012. Funded by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and the National Council of Social Services (NCSS), our pioneering team of Learning Support Educators (LSeds) and community partners provided learning support and therapy intervention to 124 pre-schoolers with mild developmental delays.

Early intervention is key when addressing mild developmental conditions such as learning difficulties, speech and language delays and behavioural problems. DSP helps children overcome their mild developmental conditions early and allows them to make a smoother transition when they move on to primary school.

Our LSeds worked tirelessly with teachers, family members and therapy teams and engaged the children in one-to-one or small group settings within the pre-school. At the end, 98 per cent of the children in the programme met their individualised goals and caught up with their peers. The success of this pilot will see more government funding put in and DSP being rolled out to even more centres.



DSP provides help to children with mild developmental delays to prepare them for a smoother transition to primary school



Almost all the children saw improvements after the programme and were able to catch up with their peers

Reading together

Over 8,500 My First Skool (MFS) children and their family members joined forces with co-operators, their families and members of the public to set a record in mass reading for the Singapore Book of Records at the *Co-Opaliciouz* event held at Marina Barrage, in celebration of the 2012 International Year of Co-operatives (IYC).



Children, parents and co-operators came together for a fun-filled day at Marina Barrage



Guest of Honour, President Tony Tan Keng Yam, visiting the MFS exhibition booth showcasing various storybooks 'published' by MFS children

The chorus mass reading was based on *A Very Big Storm*, a children's storybook on co-operative values, published by the Singapore National Co-operative Federation. SEED Institute, in collaboration with the National Library Board jointly put up a music and movement activity based on the highlights of the storybook.



Children and parents joined hands to set a national mass-reading record

In preparation for this major event, MFS children familiarised themselves with *A Very Big Storm* through storytelling, playacting and creating crafts. In the spirit of co-operation, our children worked with one another to create works such as hats representing the animal characters in the story.

The event was flanked by a series of pre- and post-event activities at MFS centres to encourage greater interest in reading among our children and to teach them co-operative values like mutual-help and co-operation. Our children penned their thoughts on what they have experienced from co-operative activities on postcards. The postcards also came with commemorative stamps issued to celebrate the IYC.

Charity begins with us

Our pre-schoolers were the inspiration for "It Starts With Us", the altruism project by The Little Skool-House International (LSH) On-The-Hill.



Children along with their parents and teachers doing their part to help raise funds for needy families

Spurred by their constant eagerness to lend a helping hand, the centre embarked on the three-month project that imparted to our children a deeper understanding and empathy for the less privileged in our community. They were also exposed to the basics in money literacy and foster care.

Their journey culminated with the Kindergarten Two (K2) children holding a one-day fund-raising car wash event for the beneficiaries of the REACH Family Service Centre (FSC). Together with their parents and teachers, the K2 children

toiled from 9am to 6pm, taking on different tasks from washing cars to selling food and drinks. After the event, our young ones visited REACH FSC to learn more about its work in helping children and youths from needy families break out of the poverty cycle.

For their hard work, our LSH children raised close to \$3,000 and presented the cheque to the REACH FSC at their Year End Concert-cum-Graduation Ceremony. The centre's Vice-Principal Nur Elena shared the heartwarming story of "our little warriors" with the parents and families at the concert. Our children have benefited from a greater sense of giving back to the community and have nurtured positive dispositions of care, concern and love for one another.



Money raised was presented to REACH FSC

Little green thumbs

Green Wave is an annual global campaign that educates children and youths on the importance of biodiversity and is part of the worldwide celebrations of the International Day for Biological Diversity.



Children taking care of the tree they planted for the Green Wave project

Supported by the National Parks Board, 30 My First Skool (MFS) centres participated in the Green Wave 2012 programmes which included "Plant a Tree" where children planted an indigenous tree within their school compounds, or "Care for Tree" where they continued to look after a tree planted previously.

On 22 May, our MFS pre-schoolers joined students in Singapore and around the world to celebrate the Green Wave Movement by planting or caring for a tree at 10am local time. To make learning more meaningful, our children shared their experiences with their pre-school mates in various post-event activities.

Parents and members of the community turned up to lend support to our young gardeners at this intimate event. From digging holes in the ground to watering and caring for the planted tree samplings, our children were clearly developing their green thumbs early.



Children were able to learn the importance of loving and caring for the environment through various activities

It takes a village to raise a child

My First Skool centres partnered grassroots organisations in 54 community events and activities, and completed 81 projects and programmes with National Parks Board, People's Association, National Library Board and Community Development Councils in 2012.

These Community Partnership Programmes (CPP) enriched our children's learning through engagement with their community and access to a greater variety of resources within each neighbourhood. The myriad of activities conducted with various community groups and agencies included the setting up of gardens and excursions to HortPark, National Day and Children's Day celebrations, and community walks and visits to the Handicaps Welfare Association.



A CPP held at MFS at Blk 2 Tanjong Pagar in conjunction with National Day



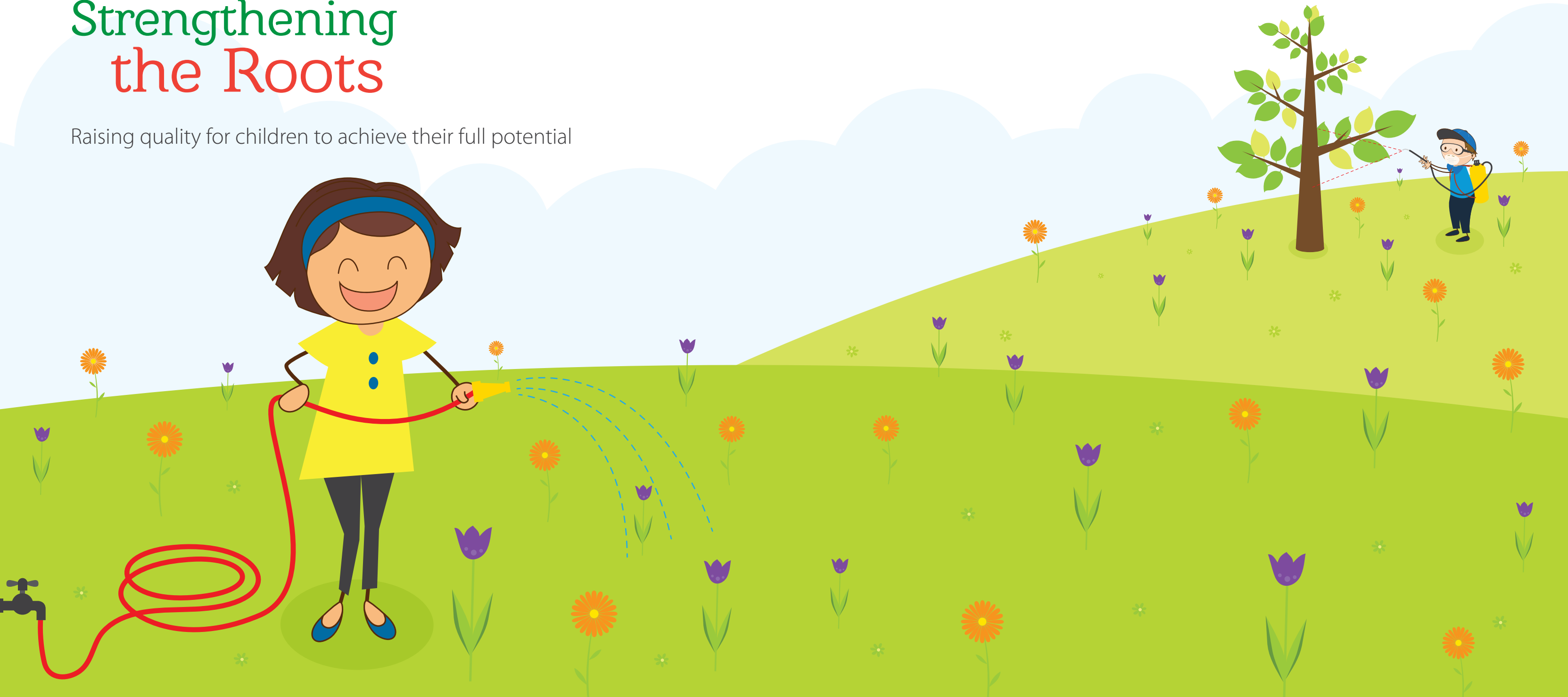
CPP held at MFS at Blk 55 Toa Payoh in conjunction with their K2 graduation ceremony



These partnerships allowed the children to learn through engagement with their community and gain access to resources that were not found in their classrooms

Strengthening the Roots

Raising quality for children to achieve their full potential



Nurturing the love for language and literature



NFC Chairman, Mr Kee Teck Koon (left) and Guest of Honour, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam (right) at the official opening of the third Project Eureka centre at MFS at 505 Yung An Road

The opening of My First Skool (MFS) at 505 Yung An Road marked the establishment of the third Project Eureka centre. An innovative teaching practice conceived by our education specialists, Project Eureka aims to inspire a culture of innovation within the network. Each Project Eureka centre adopted a different education theme, equipped with a dedicated space and "Eureka Studio" for creative teaching and learning.

Based on the theme of literary arts, Project Eureka at MFS at 505 Yung An Road focuses on the use of language arts to develop and deepen children's communication and critical thinking skills. The programme is delivered in a spacious and inspiring environment that comprises a Central Library, a Eureka Studio and a Gallery space.

Our children are exposed to drama, music and poetry, and learn to relate to real-world topics in creative ways. Beyond the centre's walls, they are taken on learning journeys around the neighbourhood to explore, discover and broaden their awareness of the community activities in Taman Jurong. Ultimately, they learn to translate their experiences into various art forms.

This was employed to great effect for the official opening of the centre by Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam. Our MFS pre-schoolers treated the Guest of Honour to a poetry recital and presented him with a book that they co-authored.



The third Project Eureka centre allows children to express what they have learnt through literary arts like drama, music and poetry

New horizon

We celebrated the official opening of The Little Skool-House International (LSH) At-Horizon-Cove, Zhuhai China, on 23 March 2012. The opening was officiated by Guest of Honour, Mr Lim Boon Heng (then Immediate Past Secretary-General of NTUC, now Chairman of NTUC Enterprise Co-operative Limited) and graced by Chinese Government officials.

Our guests were taken on a tour of the three-storey centre and treated to a performance by our children and trademark Singapore culinary delights.

Located in the Tangjiawan, Zhuhai's high-tech zone and university district, LSH At-Horizon-Cove boasts a site area of 4,300 square metres, and includes facilities such as sandpit, outdoor play area and swimming pool. It offers an enrolment capacity of 250 places for young children aged 18 months to six years old.

Since it started operations in September 2011, the centre has received much praise from parents and the community for its good teacher-child ratio, bilingual education and engagement of parents and families. The centre was nominated as 'model pre-school' of the district in 2012.



Our China based centre, LSH At-Horizon-Cove was officially opened in March 2012



Children, parents and teachers of LSH At-Horizon-Cove enjoying some bonding time

More smiles from our parents

We introduced our service promise, GREAT to build a trusting and positive relationship with our children, parents, colleagues and the community in early 2012. The results were resounding, with parent satisfaction improving by five per cent to 72 per cent and accolades increasing almost two-fold to 2,238.

These were the results of the Parent Satisfaction Survey 2012 conducted with the parents of My First Skool (MFS) and The Little Skool-House International (LSH). The survey was

extended to include parents' perception on the effectiveness of services in producing positive outcomes, particularly for Kindergarten Two (K2) children.

The key domains covered in the survey comprised the child's development, the parents' experience, physical environment, principals and teachers, programme, safety and hygiene practices, meals, and the child's readiness for primary school.

A total of 7,941 parents participated in the survey.

More sparks for our pre-schools

In 2012, The Caterpillar's Cove together with 17 MFS and four LSH centres attained the Singapore Pre-school Accreditation Framework (SPARK) recognition from the Ministry of Education (MOE). This brings the total number of SPARK-certified pre-schools across our network to 31. The rate at which we have attained SPARK exceeds all other network operators in Singapore.

A SPARK-certified pre-school has in place quality teaching and learning as well as administration and management processes that enhance the holistic development and well-being of young children.



With more centres being SPARK recognised, parents are assured of the quality of childcare programmes NFC delivers

Learning Chinese through play

The Mother Tongue Languages (MTL) Symposium is organised by the Ministry of Education (MOE) to promote the learning of Chinese, Malay and Tamil. The inaugural event showcased creative pedagogies, engaging programmes and unique initiatives used by schools and the community groups to encourage students in learning MTL.



The MTL Symposium showcased various creative methods used to encourage the learning of mother tongue in young children

My First Skool's (MFS) established Chinese curriculum and best practices were shared with professionals at this event. Generating much interest was our play-based curriculum that helps children appreciate and systematically learn the Chinese language with an emphasis on developing their listening, speaking and word recognition skills.

Visitors to the booths learnt how MFS builds children's confidence and fluency in using Chinese language through fun-filled activities such as word games, dramatisation, storytelling, poem recitals, songs and rhymes. They were treated to one of our teaching aids, "Story Stage", where children use puppet characters to dramatise and re-tell stories in their own creative ways. They saw how creating a play out of a story enables children to practise new vocabulary and learn new sentence structures.

With a strong turnout of 10,000 parents, students and teachers, the event was a success and consolidated the efforts of schools and MTL communities in fostering a social environment conducive for the learning of Chinese, Malay and Tamil.



The event received positive response from parents and the public and was considered a great success

Excellence in teaching Chinese

Seven of our Chinese teachers were recognised at the Ministry of Education (MOE) Pre-school Chinese Language Teachers Awards 2012, for achieving excellence in helping young children acquire a strong foundation in the language.

Outstanding Category

Ms Qian Yi Jun of The Caterpillar's Cove is known to many parents for her value-based teaching method and her use of varied learning materials to engage children. Taking a student-centric approach, she says, **"I encourage them to participate in discussions, express their thoughts actively and build a common language to communicate with their peers and teachers."**



Ms Qian Yi Jun encourages the children to speak their minds during lessons



Even students from non-Mandarin speaking background were interested in Mdm Peng Xia's classes

Mdm Peng Xia of My First Skool at Blk 796A Yishun is so inspiring that some Malay students have started to take her Chinese classes. She shares her strategy, **"We must seize the things that interest children and transform passive learning into active learning. If we get children to become curious and develop a desire to listen, they will be more keen to share their thoughts."**



Ms Su Yu uses creative teaching methods to engage and make students interested in her lessons

Ms Su Yu of The Little Skool-House International In-the-Treehouse is an advocate of creative thinking and oral presentation. She believes in creating a good language environment. **"Teachers must make use of interesting teaching methods and encourage children to listen more and speak more."**



Seven of our Chinese teachers clinched the MOE Chinese Teacher Awards with three achieving the outstanding awards

Words from our Merit Award Winners

"This award has spurred me to reflect on and review my teaching activities and methods. I have certainly grown through this process.**"**

Ms Hou Zhao Xia
The Little Skool-House International By-the-Vista

"I would like to share this honour with my centre mates and I also thank my colleagues at headquarters for the support.**"**

Ms Li Feng Yu
My First Skool at Blk 209 Ang Mo Kio

"I will keep upgrading myself, learn from the experiences and strong points of others, and I hope to go further in this sector.**"**

Ms Bi Cai Xia
My First Skool at Blk 347 Woodlands

"I want to thank the mentors who have guided me patiently through the years and my colleagues who work with me every day.**"**

Ms Pan Ya Shuang
Little Wings at Jurong Spring Blk 465



A bountiful yield

In what proved to be a fruitful year, NTUC First Campus (NFC) clinched the Exemplary Early Childhood Employer Award and won close to half of the 20 Childcare Awards, conferred by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS, now known as Ministry of Social and Family Development).

The MCYS awards included six Innovation Awards given to My First Skool, and individual honours for Ms Rohayu Nabebe for Outstanding Early Childhood Leader, and Ms Nur Fazelah Ahmad for Outstanding Childcare Teacher.

The harvest of awards at a glance:



Exemplary Early Childhood Employer



Outstanding Early Childhood Leader

Ms Rohayu Nabebe, Principal, My First Skool at Blk 677 Hougang



Outstanding Childcare Teacher

Ms Nur Fazelah Ahmad, English Teacher, The Little Skool-House International At-the-Hub

Early Childhood Innovation (Gold)

My First Skool at Blk 18 Marine Terrace ('Our Green City' Board Game)

Early Childhood Innovation (Silver)

My First Skool at Blk 612 Yishun
My First Skool at Blk 503 Bedok North

Early Childhood Innovation (Bronze)

My First Skool at Blk 183 Edgefield Plains

Early Childhood Innovation (Merit)

My First Skool at Blk 50 Havelock Road
My First Skool at Blk 677 Hougang

36 of our centres were also awarded the MCYS Innovation Grant with a total value of more than \$101,000.



NFC won nine out of the 20 childcare awards given out by MCYS



My First Skool at Blk 18 Marine Terrace took the Gold Early Childhood Innovation Award by wowing judges with a board game created by the Kindergarten Two (K2) children.

Called 'Our Green City', it was designed through a structured play approach and promotes the green movement. Moved by their enthusiasm and creativity, we produced 10,000 sets of 'Our Green City' as a Children's Day gift for all children at My First Skool. 'Our Green City' was also given to paediatric patients at the KK Women's and Children's Hospital, and the National University Hospital.

A board game 'Our Green City' was created to promote the green movement and won the MCYS innovation gold award

Going the extra mile

The NTUC Social Enterprises (SE) Care Ambassador Award was introduced to recognise SE staff who have consistently demonstrated care in an extraordinary way for customers or colleagues as they discharge their work responsibilities daily.



SE Care Ambassador Award recipients, Gillian and Christina, went the extra mile to help children who needed special care and attention

Two of our Principals from My First Skool (MFS) - Ms Gillian Neo of MFS at Blk 209 Ang Mo Kio, and Ms Christina Han of MFS at Blk 106 Henderson Crescent were among the 17 Care Ambassadors recognised at the inaugural award ceremony.

Gillian was a pre-school teacher when she helped a child who could only speak a few words, having lived in a silent world since birth due to his parents' hearing and speech disabilities. From personally bringing the child to school every morning, to learning sign language to communicate with his parent, Gillian went the extra mile to teach the child to express himself and relate to others with confidence.

Christina came to the aid of an unusually hyperactive and anti-social boy whose behaviour was extremely disruptive to his classmates. Instead of withdrawing him from the centre, as other private centres had previously done. She enrolled him in the Therapy Outreach Programme for pre-schoolers, and put in place special arrangements to help him develop social skills and a sense of belonging. Through Christina's efforts, the boy gradually transformed from an unruly presence to the lead in his graduation ceremony.

Raising productivity, upskill our workforce



Our BUS team provides administrative support to our entire network of centres island-wide

NTUC First Campus (NFC) was conferred the May Day Model Partnership Awards 2012 in the Institutional Category, in recognition of our efforts at improving productivity of the company and skills of our workers, and creating a more inclusive workforce. We were among the 39 institutions and 109 partners in the institutional category to receive this award.

The award was given to us for the setting up of the Business Unit Support (BUS), which helped to provide efficient centralised administrative support to the entire network of centres, thus improving service standards to our customers. Phone enquiries, registration and waitlist management is now handled by BUS, allowing principals and teachers to better focus on caring and educating our children and engaging parents and the community.

Clerical Officers from the childcare centres were re-deployed to BUS and training was provided to upgrade and guide them through the transition. Our staff took on the challenges with some promoted to leadership positions.

This exemplified our willingness to embrace change in order to increase organisational efficiency, provide better service, and improve the career opportunities for our staff.

“ This award is a tangible reminder about the power of a dream and the will to make it happen. It was an industry first which changed our fundamental mindset about how service is delivered. There were challenges but we persevered. I would like to acknowledge My First Skool management team for their unwavering commitment, without which this would not have been possible. Kudos to the Clerical Officers who boldly took on the challenge to upgrade their role from an admin support role to a customer service role. They are our service heroes. ”

Mr Daniel Chua
Group Customer Service and Operations Officer



NFC was conferred the May Day Model Partnership Award in recognition of our effort in improving productivity of the company and skills of our workers

Full blooms

Another year, another fine crop of Kindergarten Two (K2) children, and another series of spectacular concerts put up by our confident pre-schoolers from My First Skool, The Little Skool-House International and The Caterpillar's Cove.



Equipping and Empowering

Providing growth opportunities for our people



Connecting and inspiring

"COME LIVE INSPIRE", the theme for NTUC First Campus (NFC) Learning Day 2012, achieved exactly that. It was a journey that saw all staff come together to celebrate 35 years of inspiring young lives and to appreciate everyone's contributions in our achievements. Held at Republic Polytechnic, we visited three different zones, each designed for a distinct experience.



One of the 'positive' pit-stops in the *INSPIRATION Maze* where staff took some time to reflect and reignite their passion for teaching

The first stop was *CONNECTION Point*, where we participated in quizzes and contests that tested how well we knew NFC and our 35-year history. We also watched a video of the senior management team at a childcare centre assuming different principal, teacher and centre attendant roles for a day. The management team went onstage to share their experiences of the day at the centre and paid tribute to staff who give their all every day in these challenging yet fulfilling jobs.

Next was *LIVE Avenue*, where we were treated to food and drinks, craft activities, and pampering in the form of head and shoulder massages, manicures and more.

INSPIRATION Maze followed, where staff went through a maze with pit-stops that encouraged self-reflection and re-ignition of the passion for teaching. Each of us received a maze journal to pen our thoughts during the journey of self-discovery.

At the end of this journey, staff were encouraged to pledge in writing, their commitment on an act they would do daily at work to inspire young lives. The pledges went on paper butterflies which were pinned together to form a map of Singapore.



Staff were treated to a day of fun and pledged their actions to inspire young lives

We continued to strengthen our Employee Value Proposition in 2012, building on our principles of **Learn & Grow**, **Inspire & Be Inspired**, **Value & Be Valued** and lastly, **Enjoy** (in short, LIVE!).

Learn & Grow our enculturation programme, is a 5-day programme for new teachers and a 3-week attachment plus classroom sessions for new Principals. There are also leadership programmes for Assistant General Managers and Cluster Managers, and leadership development programmes for Principals.

Inspire & Be Inspired forges an emotional connection with our staff in various ways including heartfelt videos produced by our Management Team, company-wide events such as COME LIVE INSPIRE and new initiatives such as CEO LIVE.

Value & Be Valued is expressed in big ways and small. In our re-employment policy, our commendable practice of engaging staff even before they reach 60 years of age was reported in The Straits Times. In our Centre Attendant Inclusive Growth Programme, we enhanced kitchen sinks and provided equipment to ease the load of our attendants.

Enjoy team-bonding opportunities with allocated budget for each department.

CEO in the house

CEO LIVE was launched as a platform for staff to engage our CEO in open conversation on the organisation's directions and priorities. The lively and casual sessions were also attended by General Managers, Assistant General Managers, our Chief Human Resource Officer and Human Resource Business Partner teams.



CEO LIVE is a platform for the senior management to engage and motivate the graduating batch of trainee teachers

“CEO showed that he really cared about trainee teachers like us when he asked for our feedback. The management made us feel welcomed to the family and it felt good to know that the company actually took note of our graduating dates.”

Ms Eileen Boey

English Teacher, My First Skool at Blk 134 Potong Pasir

“I am proud and honoured to be able to share my experiences and journey with our newly graduated teachers. I feel that CEO LIVE is an excellent platform to engage and motivate one another because we all want to hear real-life stories. It can also allow us to reflect on and share our journeys thus far.”

Ms Ainul Farhana Bte Mohamed Bathurudin

Principal, My First Skool at Blk 4 Beach Road

Better staff care for better childcare

NTUC First Campus (NFC) is proud to be recognised as an exemplary Early Childhood Employer by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS, now known as the Ministry of Social and Family Development), the only recipient for this award in 2012.



Receiving the award reaffirmed our HR and manpower management practices

The MCYS Award for Exemplary Early Childhood Employer honours and recognises exemplary childcare employers for their commendable Human Resource and people management practices.

Attaining this award is an affirmation that we are heading in the right direction. Key manpower strategies have been put in place, geared towards raising the level of professionalism and developing core HR programmes that offer clear employee value propositions to staff. With staff strength almost doubling in just three years, from 1,300 in 2009 to 2,300 in 2012, the challenges have been great at times.

My First Skool (MFS) Senior Teacher Josephine Choo was one of the staff who wrote in support of nominating NFC as an exemplary employer. She joined the organisation six years ago as a fresh diploma graduate teacher. Josephine shared her difficulties in pursuing a degree in the early childhood care and education field due to financial constraints. “NFC offered me a no-interest loan plan for my degree course and further showed me clear career pathways within the organisation. I have been offered continuous training to keep up to date on latest developments within the sector. Whenever possible, we are given opportunities to go for seminars and workshops held externally to increase our exposure. What I learnt helped further my bonding with my colleagues and make connections with other pre-school teachers in the industry.”

“We would not have achieved this award without the strong support from our staff. At NFC, we believe strongly in investing in our people and creating learning opportunities for them in order to facilitate their career growth with us. We believe that only by caring for their well-being and development will it enable our staff to do their best for the children.”

Mr Chan Tee Seng

Chief Executive Officer, NFC



From good to GREAT

As the industry pacesetter in raising the quality standards of the childcare sector, NTUC First Campus embarked on a journey to map out our service promise.



Various activities were carried out during the cascading session to allow staff to understand the importance of customer service experience

The result was our GREAT service promise which was cascaded to all leaders in February 2012 and followed by the roll-out to all staff through a series of customised in-house training programmes.

Our staff now share a common understanding and expectation of what it means to deliver excellent service with GREAT as our service commitment. Post-training focus



group sessions show that we have become more effective in our work and have greater confidence in handling difficult situations. We were able to build stronger relationships with parents and colleagues through better communication skills, and this translates directly to more positive impact to our children in and out of the pre-school environment.

On-going dialogues and more activities have been put in place to reinforce and improve our customers' experiences.



Staff made their own GREAT palm and brought them back as a reminder of their service promise

Scaling new heights in service

The inaugural CEO Service Award celebrates our service heroes in NTUC First Campus (NFC) who have demonstrated excellence in providing service to both internal and external customers. This is part of the GREAT initiative.

A total of 10 service awards were presented; five to teams for outstanding team performance in demonstrating exemplary service, and five to individuals for excellent customer service.

Team awards

- Bright Horizons Fund Team
- Little Wings Team
- My First Skool at Blk 50 Havelock Road
- My First Skool at Blk 803 Tampines
- My First Skool at Blk 612 Yishun



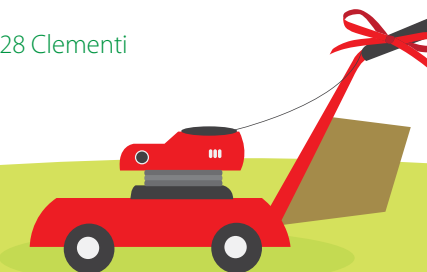
The representatives for the team awards alongside with CEO Mr Chan Tee Seng



Individual awards were presented to staff who provided excellent customer service

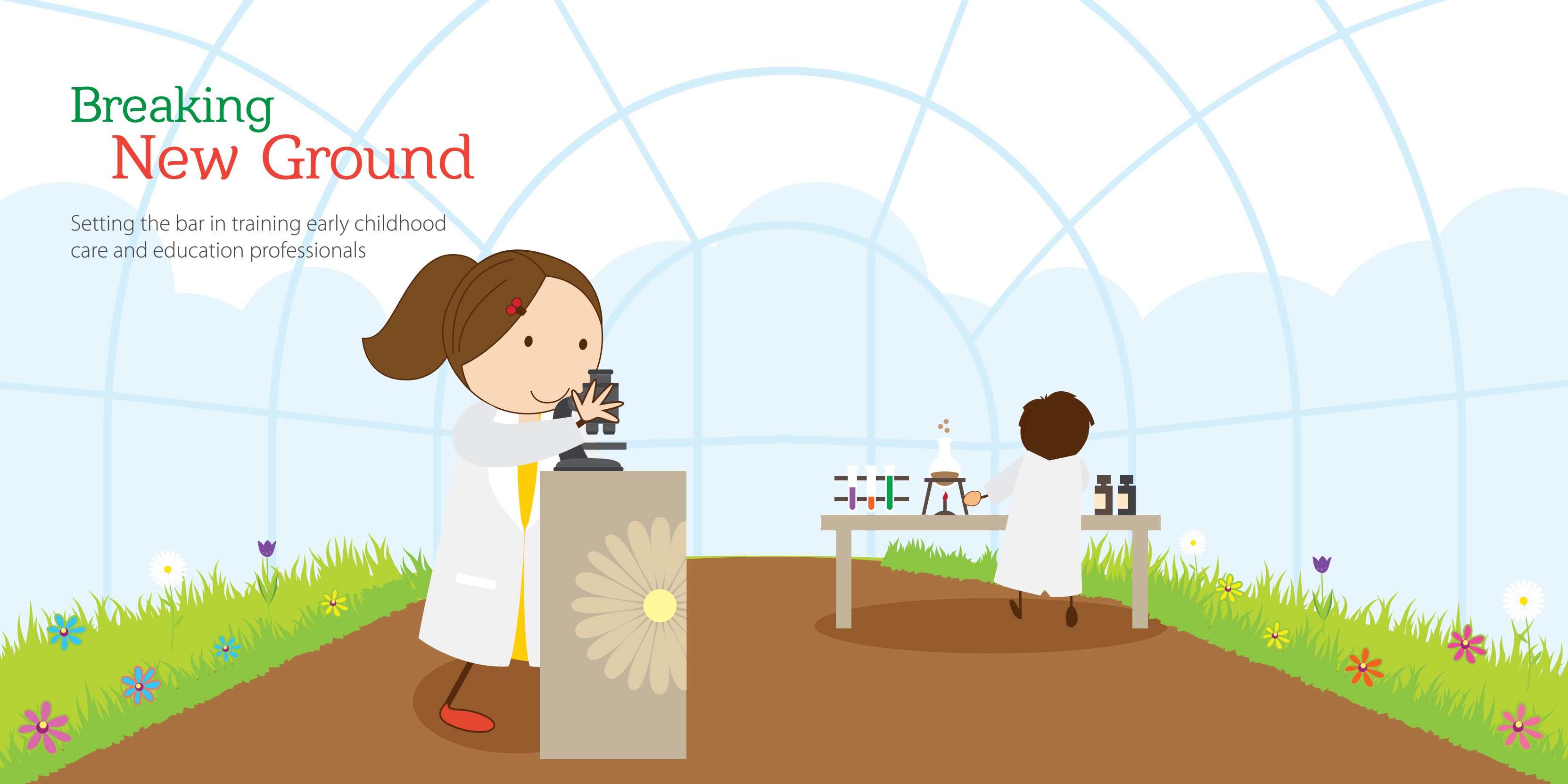
Individual awards

- Dawn Hu Huazhen, The Little Skool-House International By-the-Lake
- Esther Teo Lay Hoon, The Little Skool-House International At-Pandan-Gardens
- Nursuryati Bte Mohd Jasani, The Little Skool-House International At-Semb-Place
- Siti Baizurah Bte Kassim, My First Skool at Blk 236 Bishan
- Teo Sai Hong, My First Skool at Blk 428 Clementi



Breaking New Ground

Setting the bar in training early childhood
care and education professionals



Top seed

SEED Institute (SEED) became the first Continuing Education and Training (CET) Centre in the early childhood care and education (ECCE) sector to be appointed a National CET Institute (NCI).

This apex status was conferred by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) to Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) CET centres that demonstrate the highest quality training.

“SEED’s appointment as an NCI is an important step in WDA’s continued efforts to build an effective CET system with excellent and responsive training institutions to meet industry needs. It also marks a commitment in the Government’s efforts to improve the accessibility, quality and affordability of early childhood development programmes,” said Mr Wong Hong Kuan, Chief Executive of WDA.



CEO Mr Chan Tee Seng (left) receiving the official plaque from WDA Deputy Chief Executive, Mr Goh Eng Ghee (right)



Guest of Honour, Dr Lee Tung Jean (third from right), CEO, Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA), interacting with students at SEED

SEED will play an even greater role in the push to grow the national pool of ECCE professionals. In 2012, we produced more than half of the qualified pre-school teachers in Singapore.

Through the years, we have worked closely with WDA to roll out several initiatives to meet the rising needs of the ECCE sector. One of the most recent was the first on-site bite-sized training programme in 2012 that enabled more than 100 pre-school educators to be trained in the vicinity of their centres.

As an NCI, SEED will lead the ECCE sector in the adoption of innovative methods of adult training, quick response to skills gaps and shortages and the provision of a holistic solution to workforce development initiatives, such as market signalling, profiling, career counselling, training, assessment, placement and post-placement services.

“We know that any quality pre-school programme depends on having quality leaders and teachers. At SEED, we believe in nurturing professionals who are knowledgeable, who love their profession and who excel in practice. They are well sought after by the industry. Many of SEED’s graduates are leaders of the industry, and have gone on to obtain further higher degrees and qualifications,” said Ms Ho Yin Fong, Academic Director of SEED.

On-site bite-sized professional training

SEED Institute (SEED) introduced the early childhood care and education sector’s first ‘On-Site Bite-Sized (OSBS) Training Programme’ by bringing training right to the doorstep of pre-school teachers. In a concerted effort to enhance the professionalism of pre-school educators, SEED and the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) developed a range of Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) courses conducted in the vicinity of their centres. The programmes allow trainees to clock the same number of training hours and enable operators to sponsor more teachers for professional upgrading with Skills Redevelopment Programme (Absentee Payroll) funding.

Beginning in the Jurong constituency, the WSQ Teacher-Child Interaction and Classroom Management course attracted 12 pre-school operators from the Jurong cluster to enrol their teaching staff. It was conducted near their centres during weekdays, so teachers would spend less time commuting. Two additional OSBS courses were conducted in East and Central Singapore. The increased accessibility made pre-school educators more motivated to update themselves with the latest teaching practices.

SEED plans to double the reach of this programme to benefit at least 300 pre-school teachers in 2013.



OSBS training makes upgrading courses more accessible to teachers across Singapore

Cultivating the sector

In 2012, SEED Institute (SEED) conducted a total of 22 customised Continuing Professional Development (CPD) workshops for 673 participants from various corporate clients.

SEED also launched SeedingJobs, a dedicated online jobs portal to attract new entrants into the early childhood care and education (ECCE) sector. It shortlists relevant candidates in half the time compared to the industry norm, and commences the screening and deployment process faster as well.

Together with partners, SEED developed new capabilities in the ECCE sector, including the Early Years Development Framework (EYDF) commissioned by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports now known as the Ministry of Social and Family Development. EYDF aims to build a strong foundation for the holistic development of children from birth to three years of age, and eight EYDF workshops were conducted at SEED for more than 300 participants.

SEED was awarded the Lee Kuan Yew Bilingualism Fund for two projects in collaboration with the Singapore Centre for Chinese Language.

Carrying on the journey begun in 1999 with Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), SEED signed a Memorandum of Understanding with NP's School of Humanities and Social Studies to continue teaching the Diploma in Early Childhood Education programme for another five years.



The SeedingJobs portal helps new entrants look for career opportunities in the ECCE sector

Developing a research culture

2012 was a fruitful year for the Centre for Research & Best Practices of SEED Institute (SEED). A total of 11 action research projects were conducted, of which three secured grants from the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS, now known as the Ministry of Social and Family Development), and seven were published in international journals, most with a circulation exceeding 100,000 readers.

Our research capabilities contribute significantly to raising curriculum quality and establishing standards and best practices for the early childhood care and education sector. As the majority of research studies come from abroad, we fulfil a vital need in producing more practical resources based on local findings and suitable for the Singapore environment.

Keen to share these valuable research outcomes, our SEED faculty colleagues participated in international research conferences which included presentations at the Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC), the 2nd Global Conference on Childhood Probing the Boundaries at Mansfield College, Oxford University and the Korean Society for Early Childhood Education (KSECE) 7th International Conference.

At the Pacific Early Childhood Education Research Association (PECERA) Conference, 18 SEED staff presented papers – the highest number of participants from any organisation.

Much was also achieved at the local level with keynote lectures. Our academic faculty and staff from The Caterpillar's Cove presented at many seminars including the ARNEC International Conference, MCYS Child Care Seminar, Professional Learning Circle, SEED Learning Day, PAP Community Foundation Teachers' Convention and E2i Job Fair for Childcare Industry.



Research on early childhood-related issues published by SEED

Research published included:

Ebbeck, M., Winter, P., Russo, S., Yim, H.Y.B., Teo, G.L.C., & Goh, M. (2011). *Measuring children's involvement as an indicator of curriculum effectiveness: A curriculum evaluation of a selected Child Study Centre in Singapore. Early Child Development and Care*, 1-11.

Ebbeck, M., Chan, Y.Y., & Yim, H.Y.B. (2011). *Encouraging a culture of research in practicing teachers in Singapore. Early Childhood Education Journal*, 39(5), 355-364.

Chan, Y.Y. (2011). *Understanding and working with Chinese families in early childhood settings. Every Child*, 17(2), 26-27.

Chan, Y.Y. (2011). *Let the children learn: Celebrating learning in early childhood settings in Sydney. Every Child*, 17(4), 20.

Cheng, C. C. (2012). *Reconstructing transition knowledge in Taiwan. International Journal of Special Education*, 27(1).

Ebbeck, M., Saidon, S., Gunathilakan, R., & Teo, L.Y. (2012). *Children's Voices: Providing continuity in transition experiences in Singapore. Early Childhood Education Journal*. doi: 10.1007/s10643-012-0556-3

Yim, H. Y. B., Lee, M. W. L., & Ebbeck, M. (2012). *Preservation of Confucian values in early childhood education: A study of experts' and educators' views. Asia-Pacific Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education*, 7(1), 1-18.

Growing the pool of pre-school professionals

420 new pre-school professionals graduated from SEED Institute (SEED) in 2012, a five-fold increase compared to the previous year. This was testament to the institute's increased contribution as a sector enabler as it goes into its third year as a Continuing Education Training centre. Of all the new entrants into the early childhood care and education (ECCE) sector, more than half graduated from SEED.



More than half of the new entrants going into the ECCE sector were trained by SEED

The rise in interest and numbers is due in part to higher commitment by the Government towards ECCE scholarships, bursaries and teaching awards. Increased emphasis on career progression and professional development has also contributed to more diploma and degree holders choosing ECCE as a professional career.

Almost all of the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) ECCE Diploma graduates were supported by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) which provided them 90 per cent of course fee grants and further career development opportunities.

Despite this, the sector still requires a large influx of qualified teachers in order to meet the increasing demand. SEED's commitment to producing practice-oriented and work-ready teachers has never been more important.



SEED's largest graduating cohort since its establishment



An **ntuc** *Social Enterprise*

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