

OUR CAMPUS STORIES

Annual Report 2013

Our Campus Stories tells how the principals, teachers and education specialists of NTUC First Campus work hand-in-hand with our pre-schoolers, parents and the community to foster a joyful and inspiring early learning experience that fulfils the promise of each child. Each story speaks volumes of the dedication and perseverance of our staff as they pursue the journey of bringing smiles to our young children and their families.

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A MESSAGE FROM CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



MR KEE TECK KOON
CHAIRMAN

It was another rewarding year for NTUC First Campus Co-operative Limited (NFC). We continued to expand our services to bring quality and affordable early childhood care and education (ECCE) services to more Singapore families, and raised the bar in training and equipping ECCE professionals.

Worldwide, there is growing recognition that good quality pre-school is key to a child's development as a lifelong learner. At NFC, we continued to reach out to more children from all social backgrounds, to give them the opportunity to have a good start in life.

As at end 2013, NFC operated 125 centres, providing some 13,000 childcare places. The median fee of \$642 at My First Skool (MFS) was 23 per cent below the national median fee of \$830. Many parents benefited from additional Government subsidies and pay as little as \$3 every month to have their child in our childcare centres.

OUR CAMPUS STORIES

NFC's "Do Good" is best told through stories of how children have benefited from the dedication of our principals, teachers and staff.

We put in place more effort and resources to reach out to children from disadvantaged backgrounds and set aside 15 per cent of our places at MFS for children from less privileged families. Last year, we set up a Child Enabling Unit (CEU). Little Vani, whose parents are in jail, now attends an MFS centre in Bishan. Her story and many others like her could have been one of missed opportunities. Our teachers, principals and specialists worked hard to change their stories, to one of hope and possibilities.

It is often difficult for one to accept that his or her child may have developmental delays. NFC's team of Learning Support Educators (LSEs) work tirelessly with parents, teachers and therapy experts to provide early intervention through the Development Support Programme (DSP) – one child at a time. Last year, 225 children went through the programme and 99.6 per cent achieved their individualised goals and caught up with their peers.

Children do not just learn to read, write and count at pre-school. Character building is equally if not more important and we want our children to grow up as responsible individuals who are socially aware of the world in which they live. The Little Skool-House International build the foundation that helps children develop positive values and character building through their curriculum and community outreach programmes. The seeds are sown in these formative years to nurture confident learners and concerned citizens.

You will also read about the story of how our principal and teachers go beyond the call of duty, to make a difference to every child in their care. And how SEED Institute groomed 573 teachers for the sector, and supported many more through continuing professional development last year.

YEAR IN REVIEW

We entered into a first-of-its-kind partnership with philanthropic organisation Lien Foundation in a concerted effort to drive the quality, innovation and professionalism of the pre-school sector in Singapore. The \$6 million partnership saw the birth of a next-generation model childcare centre, aimed at being a forerunner for future pre-schools in terms of design, curriculum, practices and use of technology as well as parent-teacher engagement.

The partnership will also benefit pre-school educators, with the setting up of a second The Caterpillar's Cove located at the new Devan Nair Institute for Employment and Employability which will serve as a living classroom to allow early childhood education professionals to conduct research on curriculum and emulate best practices in an authentic childcare centre setting.

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MR CHAN TEE SENG
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

MFS continued to rise to the challenge of meeting Singapore's growing demands for quality childcare. It opened 11 new centres and expanded four existing centres, bringing the total number of MFS childcare centres to 103 centres in 2013.

As a Continuing Education and Training (CET) centre, SEED plays a vital role in growing the national pool of ECCE professionals and raising the level of professionalism across the sector. Last year, it achieved the top status of National CET Institute (NCI), being only one of four such Institutes in Singapore across all industries. It pioneered the first-of-its-kind mentoring starter toolkit for ECCE professionals to foster a mentoring culture in pre-schools; and launched the "Fun Games for Learning Mandarin" to strengthen the teaching of mother tongue in pre-schools. It also collaborated with the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) to introduce two new courses under the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) framework. These are the WSQ Advanced Certificate in Early Years (WSQ ACEY) and the WSQ Relief Staff Programme (Early Childhood Care and Education).

The building blocks to NFC's success are our people and we strive to ensure that our 2,558 staff are given the chance to grow with the organisation and to meet their aspirations.

DOING GOOD SUSTAINABLY

For the year ended 31 December 2013, the Group achieved total revenue and other operating income of \$152.4 million, 17 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 \$6.5 million, representing 4.2 per cent of total revenue and operating income.

The Board is recommending a final dividend of 4 cents per share for the financial year ended 31 December 2013.

IN APPRECIATION

We could not have achieved the success we did in the year without the commitment of all the staff in NFC, the support of the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) and NTUC Enterprise, our members, customers, corporate sponsors, community partners, business associates and our Board members. We look forward to their continued support in the years ahead.

On behalf of the Board and staff, we extend our deepest appreciation to Mr Bertie Cheng and Mr Liak Teng Lit who left the Board in 2013 after serving for 10 years. At the same time, we welcome to the Board Mr Tan Suee Chieh, who is the Group Chief Executive of NTUC Enterprise Co-operative Limited.

We are sure that 2014 will be an exciting journey for us and we are confident that we can meet the challenges and continue to deliver affordable and accessible quality early childhood care and education services to all our pre-school children. With the experience gained achievements attained this year, we look forward to doing even better in the years ahead.

“The building blocks to NFC’s success are our people and we strive to ensure that our 2,558 staff are given the chance to grow with the organisation and to meet their aspirations.”

Little Vani (not her real name) was a shy and reserved child who could neither read nor write at age four. But, what does one expect from a child with a complex background? Both her parents are in jail. Home is a one-room rental flat shared with four others and most of her days were spent at home with her grandmother, doing nothing particularly stimulating to develop her young mind.

At seven, Vani will attend Primary One as is mandatory. However, she will be lagging behind her peers and find it difficult to keep up. The odds will be stacked against her and most likely she will lose interest in her studies.

A PLACE AT MY FIRST SKOOL

But there is yet some hope. Vani's grandmother sought help from REACH Family Service Centre (FSC), to find a way for Vani to attend a quality childcare centre at an affordable price. The FSC in turn, referred Vani's grandmother to NTUC First Campus (NFC) which took pains to find a place for her in one of its centres near home. That was how she met her guardian angel, Ms Bobby Heidina, Principal at a My First Skool centre in Bishan.

Having grown up in a less privileged background herself, Bobby understood the hardships Vani and her family are going through. But what took her by surprise was Vani's sweet nature. Despite hailing from a complex home, she was cheerful and positive and did not display any anti-social tendencies often displayed by children from a disadvantaged background. Instead, Vani was an absolute joy to have around! While Vani was doted on by her teachers, she did not enjoy any form of favouritism and was expected to conduct herself in the same manner as her classmates.



Making A Difference

A young girl from a disadvantaged family background gets a chance at an equal headstart in life with NTUC's My First Skool.



BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION

Given Vani's lack of language and literacy skills, the first order of business was enrolling her in the Read-to-Reach programme under the Bright Horizons Fund. That was when the magic really began. Attending the intensive classes with four of her peers twice a week, Vani quickly started opening up to her teachers and fellow students. Soon, she could be heard happily chattering away and making jokes with her schoolmates. No longer the shy and reserved child she was, Vani now greets her Malay teachers with the traditional Muslim 'salam' and will hug her other teachers and classmates.

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These days, Vani practically races to school every morning. Even her grandmother is impressed, often beaming with pride at the young girl's rapidly improving vocabulary and social interaction skills. Vani, too, likes to show off by using 'big' words just to see the look of surprise on her grandmother's face. When asked about where she learned those words, Vani's reply would always be a witty: "Why, from school of course!", "Vani even has a knack for correcting her Primary Three cousin's English now," shared her grandmother with a wry smile.

Making A Difference



“Through the help and support of her passionate principal and teachers, Vani has progressed both socially and academically. Now, she is not only able to write her name but has become more vocal in class and is quick in picking up new knowledge.”

NO ONE IS LEFT OUT

While she enjoys her lessons, the active, inquisitive girl absolutely loves going on school excursions. Bobby, too, makes it a point for Vani to join her classmates for these outings. Understanding the anguish of being deprived of excursions in her youth, Bobby was determined to let Vani experience the joys she had not felt. So adamant is Bobby on having Vani join the school outings that she even once made the school bus wait for Vani when she was extremely late. Upon ensuring that the girl and her grandmother were indeed on the way to school

that day, Bobby sought the understanding of all teachers and children for the wait. And on seeing Vani arrive, Bobby grabbed her and made a mad dash for the waiting bus.

NO LONGER A SHY GIRL

Through the help and support of her passionate principal and teachers, Vani has progressed both socially and academically. Now, she is not only able to write her name but has become more vocal in class and is quick in picking up new knowledge. Vani has also shed her once shy and

GIVING EVERY CHILD AN EQUAL START IN LIFE

At NTUC First Campus (NFC), we believe in making early childhood care and education (ECCE) services affordable and accessible to all families.

Seeking to proactively reach out and provide quality pre-school education to children from low-income families, NFC set up the Child Enabling Unit in 2013 to work closely with Family Service Centres (FSCs) and various funding agencies to support the social and financial needs of these households. NFC reserves 15 per cent of its enrolment places at My First Skool (MFS) annually for these children.

In addition, NFC's **Bright Horizons Fund** helps children from less privileged families to benefit from quality pre-school programmes in MFS. With a broad range of programmes and initiatives ranging from co-funding of school fees to family outings, 833 beneficiaries benefitted from the Bright Horizons Fund in 2013.





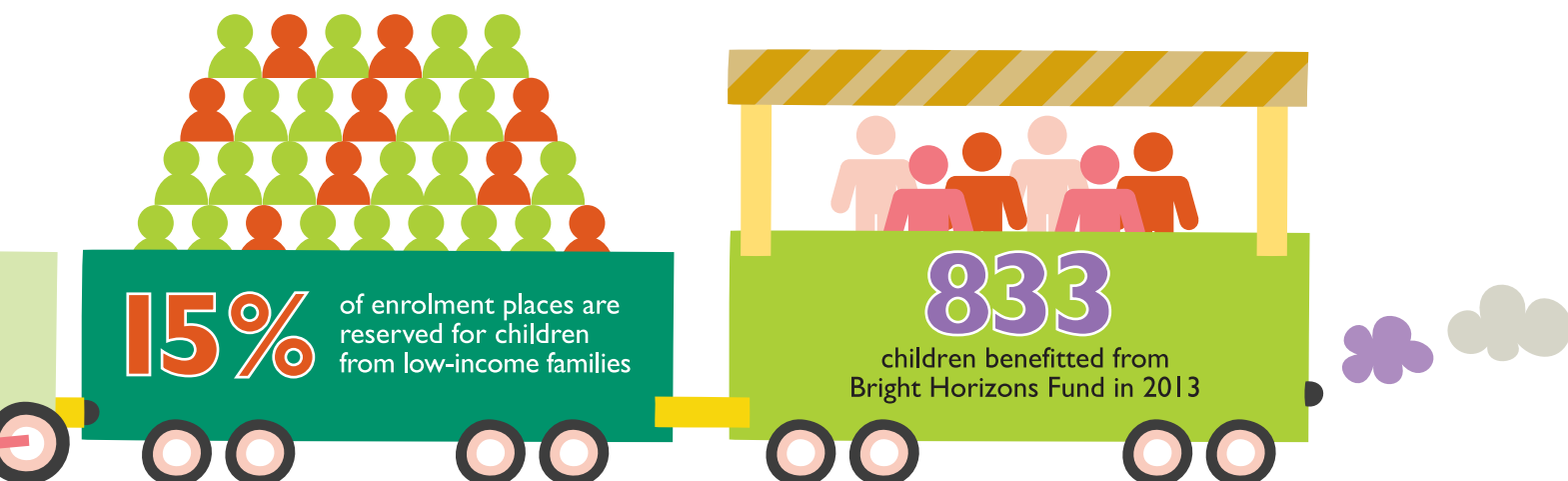
reserved exterior. Recently, she even volunteered to perform on stage in front of 200 people which included Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Ministry of Transport, Mrs Josephine Teo!

EVERY CHILD DESERVES A GOOD START IN LIFE

The most heart-warming fact is, little Vani is not the only child that Bobby and her team have helped. Another success story is a boy from a similarly complex background who was staying with his grandparents because his parents too were in jail. As his grandparents were fighting for his custody in court, they were unable to take him to school. With a grim conviction that the boy receives his education come hell or high water, Bobby took it upon herself to pick him up from home every day before school and bring him home afterwards.



With passionate leaders and educators such as Bobby, families and children have access to a reliable 'home-away-from-home' setting at NFC's network of childcare centres. "We strongly believe that school is the safest and most stable place for these disadvantaged kids and we go that extra mile to ensure it stays that way," says Bobby. "And when we see how motivated to learn the children are and witness their joy in discovering new knowledge, it makes our efforts all worthwhile."





Beyond Just Teaching

There are few careers that offer you the opportunities to make a positive difference in the lives of young children and their families. Learning Support Educators hold one of these meaningful jobs at NTUC First Campus. They provide learning support to children with mild developmental delays to prepare them for a smoother transition to primary school.

When the Development Support Programme (DSP) team first turned up at My First Skool centres, they were greeted with suspicion by teachers and parents alike. Who would have thought that, just two short years since the launch of DSP for Anchor Operator centres, teachers would be pestering their principals with the commonly heard plea: “When is the DSP team coming back?”!

AN UPHILL BATTLE

In the early days, with just one Learning Support Educator (LSEd), Ms Justine Felicita Ho, pioneering DSP, the programme was not so well understood. Teachers knew that Justine had been called in by the school to look at how some children displaying mild developmental delays are coping. Yet they were still apprehensive about this unknown presence in their classroom. “Is she blaming me for the developmental delays in this child?” was a natural thought. Teachers even began to second-guess their own abilities although they were, of course, well-trained. “Am I doing the right thing in my lessons?” came the doubts.

But the reality was that Justine was there just as much to support the teacher as she was the child. It just took some effort to get teachers to understand that. How, Justine wondered, was she going to gain their trust?

It was not all smooth-sailing with the parents too. Some understandably just could not accept that their child needed some extra help. “He’s only at kindergarten level. What’s the big fuss all about?”

lamented some parents. “Children develop at different times. Let him just enjoy himself!” While other parents were the polar opposite, panicking on hearing the news and imagining the worst.

PERSEVERANCE PAID OFF

But little by little, Justine was able to gain the trust of parents and teachers, especially as the DSP team grew. Before long, she was joined by ten other LSEds. As fellow LSEd Valerie Cheng explains: “These programmes don’t just teach the children how to apply the skills they have learnt but, more importantly, they help them acquire self-esteem. With boosted confidence, they can do so much more and naturally increase their social interaction.”

“Parents too began to accept that early intervention was just the thing to get their child back on track, especially when they learned of the strength of the programme, which is reinforced by a respected panel of experts in various child developmental and medical fields.”

GAINING ACCEPTANCE

It was not long before teachers began to realise that the DSP team was not there to criticise or blame, but to help the child. In fact, teachers are key allies in the DSP mission.

Parents too began to accept that early intervention was just the thing to get their child back on track, especially when they learned of the strength of the programme, which is reinforced by a respected panel of experts in various child developmental and medical fields.

Nevertheless, there were always some parents who were hesitant when the programme was first explained to them. “What difference can you make in just ten sessions?” was a common reaction. Their



Beyond Just Teaching



tune soon changed to: “What are you feeding my child in these sessions? You are working miracles!” as they began to see rapid progress just a few weeks into the programme!

Teachers were just as awed. Now that they had a sympathetic ear to bounce ideas off of, they relished the days that the DSP team was on the premises. Justine and her teammates began to see vast differences in the demeanour of the teachers and a marked increase in confidence in the classroom. What was really great to see was the way teachers could now identify the level of help and intervention that a child may best benefit from. “This child may need DSP support,” teachers will say, “but for this child, there is no need. He just needs to settle into the new environment and I can handle that.”

The teachers more experienced with the programme have so far been spot on. For the newer teachers, the DSP team is there to provide guidance. Some children with mild developmental delays may be withdrawn and lack social skills while, on the other end of the spectrum, there are those who act out in class and display unruly behaviour, frustrated because they are not able to handle the tasks given.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE, ONE CHILD AT A TIME

But before the DSP programme can commence, permission must be gained from the parents to bring their child’s case formally to the DSP panel of experts. The LSEs then present each case in detail to the panel, and have gained a lot from watching these professionals, among them paediatricians,

DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME

The Development Support Programme (DSP) serves as a platform for families, teachers and Learning Support Educators (LSEs) to co-operate and help children address and overcome their mild developmental delays.

Once the programme starts, an LSE will conduct weekly one-to-one pull-out sessions with the child for up to 10 weeks before attending classes with the child for the next few weeks. This teaches the child how to use the strategies learnt in the programme to enhance learning. In addition, weekly reports are sent to the parents to update them on their child’s progress. To ensure the effectiveness of DSP, the LSEs will also conduct consistent follow-up sessions with the child’s teachers.

225

My First Skool
children have gone
through DSP
in 2013

99.6%

of children
met their
individualised
goals

psychologists and representatives from welfare organisations relevant to the case, carefully discuss what is best for each child. After some discussion, the panel comes to a consensus and recommends the appropriate early intervention package that will help the child.

And then the truly worthwhile part starts – up to 10 one-to-one pull out sessions or group sessions. Coming to the end of the programme can be a heart-wrenching time for child and mentor, so the LSEs make sure they prepare the children for their departure well before the programme ends. But for Justine, her thoughts still stay with the child after her role in the intervention ends. She sneaks trips

back to the centre for updates from the teachers, unbeknownst to the child.

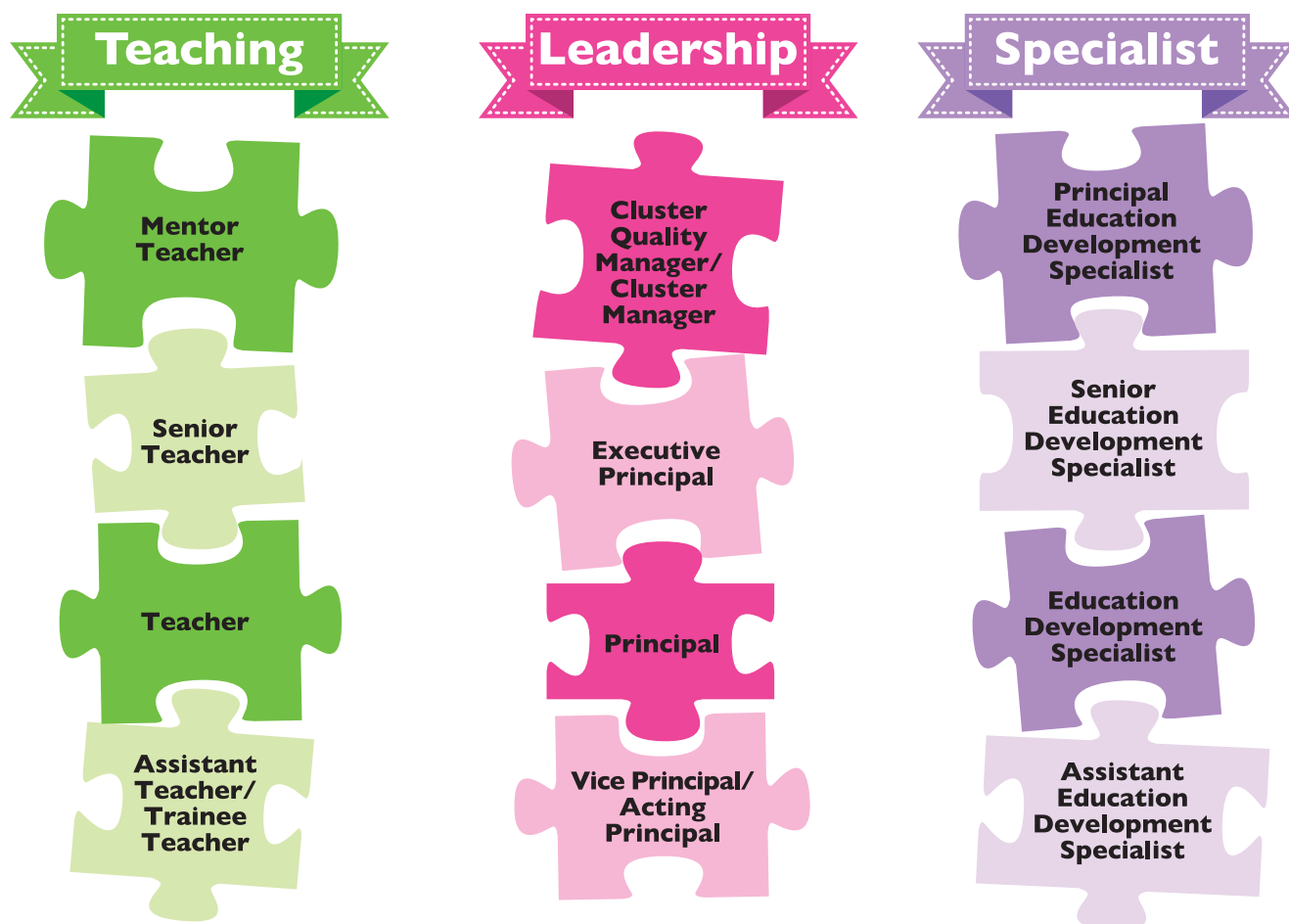
THE BIGGEST REWARD

But the reality is that everyone is helped through the programme – the children get to catch up with their peers, the teachers gain greater insights and get to share their challenges and joys with someone who understands and the DSP team have the satisfaction of a job well done.

“When we find out that they are doing great, it’s just the most rewarding feeling,” says Justine. “It’s great to know that we make a positive difference to both the children and their teachers.”

MULTI-TRACK CAREER DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS

Since 2010, NTUC First Campus started a ‘Career Theme Park’ offering ‘rides’ rich in experiences and opportunities. Our ‘Career Theme Park’ offers multiple avenues for our staff to improve and upgrade their skills. In this ‘theme park’, staff can take various ‘rides’ from different career tracks, namely, **Teaching**, **Leadership** and **Specialist**. From classroom educators, to a leadership role as principal, to curriculum development professionals, there is a role to meet all aspirations.







Little Kids, Big Hearts

Children from The Little-Skool House International By-The-Lake discover the joy of giving when the centre organises a Christmas party and invites a group of senior citizens.

It was a rainy day. The bus was filled with seniors from the Henderson Senior Citizens' Home. Many were left at the Home by their children who hardly visit them. A few have no families. You could see for some, the zest for life was gone.

WARM WELCOME FOR THE ELDERLY

But upon arriving at The Little-Skool House International (LSH) By-The-Lake, they lit up as children at the door greeted and welcomed them into the centre. "Look at these beautiful decorations around!" some even exclaimed. It was their first time entering a pre-school and was also the centre's first time hosting the elderly there.

The children had been practicing hard for the past months. This was the day that they looked forward to – a Christmas celebration with the grandpas and grandmas. There was singing and dancing. Some seniors even paraded, doing catwalks to show off the Christmas accessories put on them by the children. Very soon, the loudest music that could be heard was the laughter from the seniors and children. "I've never felt the warmth from my grandchildren. I don't get to see them at all. But I am very happy today." This was what Grandfather Raymond said of this day.

INSTILLING POSITIVE VALUES IN OUR CHILDREN

At The LSH By-The-Lake, Cluster Manager Eunice Tong and her teachers regularly organise community activities and programmes that teach the children values such as honesty, caring, generosity and responsibility, among others. These activities are often in line with the four unique themes of each school term: Child's World, People's World, Wonders of the World and Taking Care of the World. Through strong involvement in community

Little Kids, Big Hearts



activities and a robust curriculum, The LSH develops children to become social-minded young adults with a sense of belonging and a belief in their resiliency.

A few weeks earlier, teachers let children bring home letters appealing for food donations for the Senior Citizens' Home. One child's eagerness sparked his mother's enthusiasm and she went about getting her colleagues to contribute as well. "You've brought us more supplies than we've ever expected!", said Teacher Rina to the parent.

"We realised that there were so many other things they needed help with, such as having food donations. Many of these elderly don't have children to support them and they live alone," shared Rina. With more supplies collected than expected, Eunice and her teachers even delivered box loads of them to other senior centres. In a clear demonstration that good begets more good, they were offered free rides by a warm-hearted taxi driver after he found out about their mission while chatting with them in his cab.

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

Christmas is about giving and sharing love and joy. The celebration with the seniors made a strong impression on the children. Although the seniors who visited the centre were strangers to them, the children hugged them and shook their hands with open hearts. Having experienced first-

hand the joy of giving, they now share their things with each other more, and appreciate their grandparents at home. "I will always pour a glass of water for my grandpa and grandma when I wake up in the morning", said one of the children shyly. Another helps her grandfather to peel banana skin whenever she can. "I've noticed a great change in Brody. He now shares his toys with his siblings, and shows more empathy for the destitute", commented one of the parents.

"In a clear demonstration that good begets more good, they were offered free rides by a warm-hearted taxi driver after he found out about their mission while chatting with them in his cab."



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Understanding the importance of community outreach events to the children's all-round education, Eunice and her team have organised many other events to nurture positive qualities in the children. When the tsunami hit Japan, the centre involved the children in raising money for the victims and made 'Thank You' cards to give to those who donated. The centre organised canvas painting and clay magnet making so that the children's works could be sold to raise money for the Red Cross. On Earth Day last year, the centre brought the children to Pasir Ris Park to clean up litter and to teach them the importance of clearing up after themselves.

With globalisation and children from different nationalities enrolled in the centre, Eunice and her teachers also teach the children to embrace diversity by getting them to talk about their cultures during class and holding cultural evenings, where parents are invited to attend and introduce their culture.

"By working side-by-side with the children and providing them with the opportunity to experience first-hand the fruits of their contribution, we help them understand that each small contribution can make a big difference," shared Eunice. "In doing so, we instill the right values as they are growing up, to inspire and nurture them into better characters."



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~ Eunice Tong, Cluster Manager, LSH ~

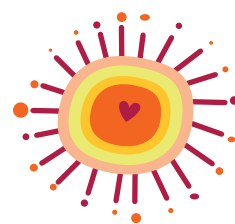
COMMUNITY OUTREACH

As a leading provider of pre-school education, NTUC First Campus (NFC) inspires children by nurturing a learning disposition that encourages children to reflect and make connections among themselves, others and the world. Through strong involvement in community activities and a robust curriculum, NFC develops children to become social-minded young adults with a sense of belonging and a belief in their resiliency.

On 23 May 2013, My First Skool partnered the National Environment Agency (NEA) and the Public Hygiene Council (PHC) to launch the **'I Am A Green Champ'** programme so that children would have basic awareness of environmental and public health issues.

In order to teach the children some basic concepts of enterprise and the importance of perseverance, The Caterpillar's Cove organised an annual fund raiser **Food Fiesta** in October last year, getting the children fully involved in every aspect of the fiesta, from making decisions on the kinds of food to prepare, to distributing flyers.

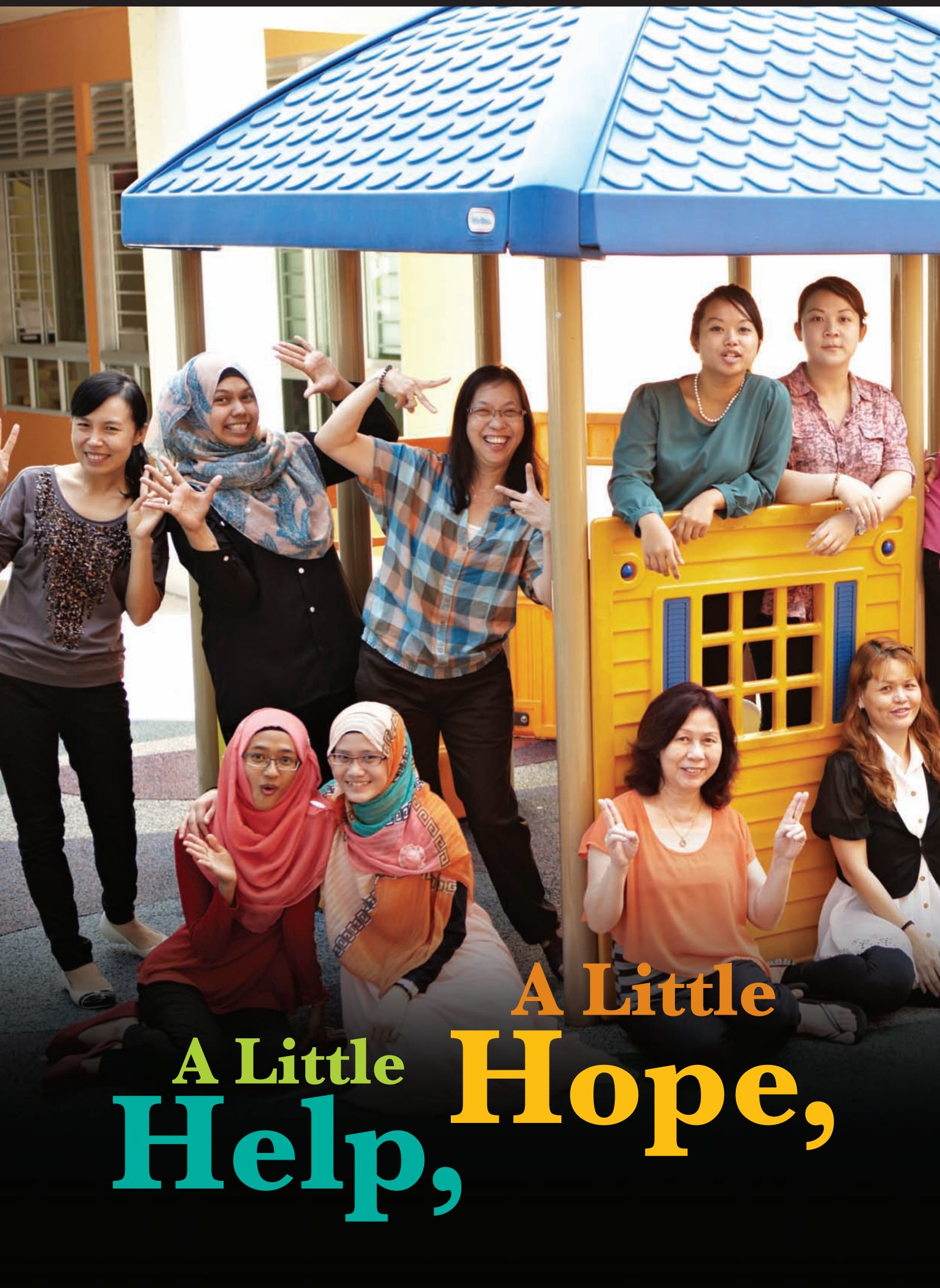
These initiatives go a long way to instilling our children with the right values that will serve them well for lifelong learning.



**I Am A
Green Champ
Programme**

**Food Fiesta
Fund Raiser**





A Little Help, A Little Hope,



A Little Belief

Discover the secrets behind an award-winning centre's success and find out how its staff go beyond the call of duty to give every child a little help, a little hope and a little belief.

A Little Help, A Little Hope, A Little Belief

Prepare to be greeted by a cacophony of sounds as you enter the great wooden doors of My First Skool (MFS) at Blk 803 Tampines. While you wander the brightly lit and colourful corridors, you will hear the laughter of little children intertwined with the firm yet gentle voices of the teachers. As you look around you cannot help but wish that your own childhood could have been spent in such a warm and delightful environment.

It does not come as a surprise then that we find out that two of the staff at this centre received national recognition for their efforts in 2013. Principal Suhana Binte Salleh, was awarded the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)'s Outstanding Early Childhood Leader Award, and Teacher Nurhamizah Binte Salehudin received ECDA's Outstanding Early Childhood Teacher Award.

A DEDICATED TEAM

Herein lays the secret to this award-winning centre's success: the dedication of the centre's teachers, commitment of its staff and NTUC First Campus' (NFC) focus on continuing development of its staff. Intensive training sessions and workshops are provided for both teachers and principals to upgrade their skills. The cream of the crop is selected to attend further continuing education and training programmes at SEED Institute, boosting their capabilities and confidence. The organisation even adopts a roadmap to chart each teacher's professional progress and career advancements with great success.

A GREAT PLACE TO WORK

NFC also offers a myriad of benefits to its staff. Besides enjoying very competitive salaries compared to counterparts in the early childhood care and



education (ECCE) industry, teachers are given subsidies when their child enrolls in any of the organisation's centres. There is even a further annual bonus to purchase the child's supplements. And to allow teachers to take the breaks they need and go for upgrading, NFC draws upon its extensive network

“When Suhana learnt that the single parent was facing financial difficulties, she dug into her own pockets to help. And when the child was involved in an accident one day, Suhana rallied her team to raise funds to support the mother, who had to quit her job to care for her son as he recuperated.”

“We believe that all children should be provided with an opportunity to learn, no matter what. Sometimes all a child needs is a little help, a little hope and somebody who believes in them. That’s why we’re here.”

*~ Suhana Binte Salleh, Principal,
MFS at Blk 803 Tampines ~*

developmental delays next to her office so she can step in and offer her experienced hand often.

But Suhana knows that she and her team can only do so much. She works to foster close relationships with the parents, giving them her mobile number and sacrificing her personal time to answer their doubts and concerns. Now, she is able to call upon them when required as well.

On one occasion, she noticed the poor attendance of a child with mild autism and called his mother to find out why. When she learnt that the single parent was facing financial difficulties, she dug into her own pockets to help. And when the child was involved in an accident one day, Suhana rallied her team to raise funds to support the mother, who had to quit her job to care for her son as he recuperated.

A GUIDING HAND

But Suhana’s guidance does not just extend to the families of the children at her centre. All her teachers have greatly benefitted from her tutelage. A case in point is Nurhamizah. Overwhelmed by the demands when she first joined, she was given welcome support by Suhana and training sessions by NFC. After this initial stumbling block, thanks to the training provided, she went on to collaborate with Suhana and the Learning Support Educators (LSEds) from the Development Support Programme (DSP) to revamp the curriculum structure to cater to all children, including the few with some learning delays.

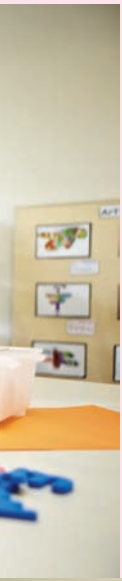
PROVIDING EVERY CHILD WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN

Besides the training and opportunities, and the dedicated and committed staff, what truly sets MFS at Blk 803 Tampines apart is its philosophy of treating everyone equally and with respect. From the children and teachers to the centre attendants and support staff, nobody is singled out for being different. “We believe that all children should be provided with an opportunity to learn, no matter what,” says Suhana. “Sometimes all a child needs is a little help, a little hope and somebody who believes in them. That’s why we’re here.”

of relief teachers to support the centres. Given the clearly defined career path, perks and opportunities, it is no wonder that the staff are motivated to go above and beyond their call of duty.

BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

Leading the pack is Suhana, who constantly goes the extra mile to ensure that the children are receiving the best education and care they can get. A hands-on leader, she has no qualms about getting her hands dirty as long as she is able to contribute to the centre’s success. In fact, shortly after joining MFS at Blk 803 Tampines, she single-handedly pioneered the centre’s development of the Malay Language programme for two years. She also placed classes where there are children with mild



OUR AWARD WINNERS

Educators at NTUC First Campus (NFC) often go above and beyond their call of duty to provide each child with access and opportunity to education. Through a differentiated learning experience and a team of dedicated teachers supported by committed staff, children are given an equal learning platform to make a positive difference to their lives.

In recognition of the efforts and dedication of the NFC network last year, the organisation received multiple industry awards. Many of our centres also acquired industry accreditation, endorsing the quality of our childcare services and programmes.



Singapore Pre-School Accreditation Framework (SPARK)

SPARK

Last year, 29 My First Skool centres attained SPARK certification, conferred by the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA), increasing the total number of SPARK-certified NFC pre-schools to 59. Our fast accreditation rate exceeds all other pre-school operators in Singapore.



ECDA Awards for Excellence in Early Childhood Development 2013

Outstanding Early Childhood Leader

Suhana Binte Salleh

Principal

My First Skool at Blk 803 Tampines

Outstanding Early Childhood Teacher

Nurhamizah Binte Salehudin

English Teacher

My First Skool at Blk 803 Tampines

Outstanding Early Childhood Educarer

Rajwant Kaur

English Infant Care Teacher

My First Skool at Blk 135 Simei

Early Childhood Innovation

Distinction

My First Skool at Blk 648C Jurong West

Merit

My First Skool at Blk 140
Serangoon North

Commendation

My First Skool at Blk 166 Punggol Central



Inaugural Outstanding Pre-school Mother Tongue Language Teacher Awards 2013

Outstanding Award

Lam Lee Lee

Chinese Teacher

The Caterpillar's Cove

Zhou Jie

Senior Chinese Teacher

The Little Skool-House International
On-The-Green

Merit Award

Jia Jing

Chinese Teacher

My First Skool at Blk 681A Jurong West

Tan Seng Siang

Chinese Teacher

My First Skool at Jurong Point Level 3

Wang Yu

Senior Chinese Teacher

The Little Skool-House International
At-Tampines-Junction



**10th Annual HRM
Awards 2013**

Frazer Jones Award for
Outstanding Contribution to HR

Geraldine Lee
Chief Human Resource Officer
NTUC First Campus



**SHRI's The Singapore
HR Awards 2013**

Leading HR Professional

Wendy Ng
Human Resource Manager (Staffing)
NTUC First Campus

As part of the customer-centric initiative to uplift the service quality of the organisation, NTUC First Campus presented the **CEO Service Awards** to staff who have gone the extra mile to make a significant impact to our children, families, colleagues and the community.

Five individuals and five teams were recognised for role modelling the behaviours of the G.R.E.A.T. service promise and touching the hearts of many with their perseverance, resilience, innovation and more importantly, their big hearts. These service heroes were selected after a rigorous process involving online voting from their colleagues and evaluation by a panel of judges.



G.R.E.A.T. Service – CEO Service Awards

Team Awards

Business Unit Support (BUS) Team

Human Resource (Staffing) Team

The Little Skool-House International At-Tampines-Junction

My First Skool at Blk 153 Bishan

My First Skool at Blk 409 Jurong West

Individual Awards

Nurhamizah Binte Salehudin

English Teacher

My First Skool at Blk 803 Tampines

Rina Lin Enjie

Senior English Teacher

The Little Skool-House International By-The-Lake

Shanthinayagi d/o Marimuthu

English Teacher

My First Skool at Blk 329 Ang Mo Kio

Suhana Binte Salleh

Principal

My First Skool at Blk 803 Tampines

Ng Wai Ling

Centre Attendant

The Little Skool-House International By-The-Vista

Setting The Bar In ECCE Training

In an interview with Dr Kok Siat Yeow (Ed.D), Deputy Director (Programmes – Office of Academic Affairs) of SEED Institute, we uncover an exclusive insider view of SEED Institute.

What role does SEED play in early childhood care and education?

Dr Kok: SEED Institute (SEED) was built upon the vision of giving all children the best headstart possible by equipping early childhood professionals to provide quality early childhood care and education (ECCE). Our ECCE learning hub which is an affiliate of NTUC First Campus (NFC) offers a range of comprehensive training courses at certificate, diploma, degree and master's levels, as well as programmes for continuing professional development (CPD). These courses and programmes aim to equip our students with professional knowledge and skills through a practice-oriented approach to learning that SEED upholds. Hence, it is evident that SEED champions raising the level of professionalism in ECCE and growing the pool of ECCE professionals in Singapore.

What was SEED's biggest achievement last year?

Dr Kok: Last year, we became the first Continuing Education and Training (CET) centre for the ECCE sector to be conferred National CET Institute (NCI) status by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA). This pinnacle status recognises our commitment to provide the highest quality education and training to ECCE professionals. By attaining the status, we receive grants that enable us to conduct research, develop programmes and initiate innovative programmes that will raise the quality of professionals and early years education and services to benefit our children.

We partner with WDA to offer more quality courses that are recognised by the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) framework. Through this partnership, two new courses were introduced last year – the WSQ Advanced Certificate in Early Years (WSQ ACEY) and the WSQ Relief Staff Programme (Early Childhood Care and Education). The WSQ ACEY provides early childhood educators

“Through our in-depth research activities, international collaborations, well-planned programmes and wealth of knowledge, SEED contributes to the growing number of quality ECCE professionals to best care for and educate the next generation of Singaporeans.”

*~ Dr Kok Siat Yeow (Ed.D), Deputy Director
(Programmes – Office of Academic Affairs), SEED Institute ~*

with in-depth understanding of the various domains and stages of development of children from birth to three years old. The WSQ Relief Staff Programme (Early Childhood Care and Education), on the other hand, equips trainees, who will eventually assume the role of relief staff, with the understanding of developmental characteristics of children.

Another remarkable achievement was the grant awarded to SEED by the Lee Kuan Yew Fund for Bilingualism to support projects which promote bilingualism among children. One such project was to develop a Chinese Teaching Aid “Fun Games for Learning Mandarin” in collaboration with the Singapore Centre for Chinese Language to promote the teaching of mother tongue.

What is the significance of the WSQ Relief Staff Programme? How does SEED support ECCE professionals?

Dr Kok: The WSQ Relief Staff Programme (Early Childhood Care and Education) has a dual role: to enable aspiring educators to assess their suitability for the profession and to equip them with professional



Setting The Bar In ECCE Training



qualification and confidence to stand in for full-time early childhood educators who need to attend upgrading courses or go on leave.

We also support our trainees in other ways including an online job portal which we launched in the year. This job portal serves to match trainees to childcare centres, allowing them to gain on-the-job-training by putting theories into practice. It is worth mentioning that many have been successfully hired upon completion of the programme.

Another form of support we extend to ECCE professionals is the Mentoring Starter Toolkit which was developed with WDA to help more experienced teachers guide their peers who are new to the profession to adapt to and learn on the job.

What other initiatives does SEED offer to help ECCE professionals in their career paths?

Dr Kok: SEED offers various courses leading to different career pathways for ECCE professionals to embark on in the sector. These include the *Diploma in Early Childhood*, developed in partnership with Ngee Ann Polytechnic, the *Bachelor of Early Childhood Education and Management*, with UniSIM, and the *Master of Science in Early Childhood Education*, in collaboration with Wheelock College from Boston, United States.

Providing courses is only part and parcel of our initiatives. It is vital to make learning accessible to all teachers. It is with this in mind that we piloted the ECCE sector's first On-Site-Bite-Sized (OSBS) Training Programme in March 2012 to deliver a range of WSQ CPD courses conducted in the vicinity of the centres for the teachers. This initiative was well-received as it enables practitioners to upgrade their knowledge and skills in the comfort of their working environment.

A further initiative was the launch of the first phase of SEED's e-learning curriculum in the year. This programme gives early childhood educators a more self-directed learning experience and the flexibility to study at any location, at any time, even during school holidays. The second phase, *Blended e-learning* that combines traditional classroom lessons with e-learning is in the pipeline.

What is the role of research in SEED? How has it helped to boost early childhood care and education in Singapore?

Dr Kok: As innovators, thought leaders and practice leaders in the field of ECCE, research is a critical thrust for SEED. Our research programmes boost the development of ECCE in Singapore by advocating our training practice, especially in the local setting. We embrace an action-research approach to address real problems and seek workable



solutions for the challenges encountered. These findings are then published as handbooks and made available for use by students in the course curricula. These resources are also shared on the global stage through international conferences.

How does SEED provide support to learning institutions in Singapore?

Dr Kok: We continue to put new learning into practice through courses and offer customised courses to cater to the specific needs of various learning institutions in both the public and private sectors. Our lecturers consult each institution to assess and understand their needs and interests, and will tailor the programme to fit. Our lecturers will continue to provide support to the institutions after the course to ensure that those who attended the course are able to apply their newly-acquired knowledge and skills. Such customised course

requests do not just come from educational establishments! Last year we developed a WSQ course for the cabin crew of Singapore Airlines (SIA).

This partnership is currently into its fifth intake. This highly popular programme equips cabin crew with skills to positively support and interact with children, and to enhance child-cabin crew-parent engagement. The feedback from the cabin crew has been very positive, with many identifying the course as having made a huge difference to their working environment and their abilities to cater to the needs of child passengers and their parents more adequately.

It is with much pride that I say we have set the industry standard in training ECCE professionals, and this is what sets SEED apart from the rest. Through our in-depth research activities, international collaborations, well-planned programmes and wealth of knowledge, SEED contributes to the growing number of quality ECCE professionals to best care for and educate the next generation of Singaporeans.

SETTING INDUSTRY STANDARDS

In recognition of its high quality training, SEED Institute (SEED) became the first Continuing Education and Training (CET) centre in the field of early childhood care and education (ECCE) to attain the National CET Institute (NCI) status, conferred by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA). This status enables SEED to lead the ECCE sector in the adoption of innovative training methods to bridge skill gaps and shortages, and the provision of specialised programmes.

Over the years, SEED has collaborated with WDA to introduce several initiatives to meet the varied needs of the ECCE sector. These include career counselling, professional training and assessment, as well as placement and post-placement services.

SEED has trained over

12,000

early childhood professionals since its set up in 1989



YEAR IN REVIEW

NTUC FIRST CAMPUS PARTNERS LIEN FOUNDATION TO BOOST PRE-SCHOOL SECTOR



NTUC First Campus entered a \$6-million partnership with Lien Foundation to drive quality, innovation and the professionalism of Singapore's pre-school sector. Through this partnership, a model childcare centre – My First Skool at Braddell Heights Community Hub and a second The Caterpillar's Cove Child Development and Study Centre will be opened. This first-ever collaboration for the pre-school sector will also fund much needed local research and a national campaign to raise the image and recognition of pre-school teachers.

BREAKING NEW GROUND WITH MY FIRST SKOOL MODEL CHILDCARE CENTRE FOR THE HEARTLANDS

My First Skool at Braddell Heights Community Hub opened its doors on 2 January 2014 as the 104th centre in the network. Incorporating innovative design elements in a purpose-built environment, this centre sets out to be a forerunner for future pre-schools in terms of its design, curriculum and practices aimed at heightening children's learning, improving engagement with parents and enhancing the well-being of teachers.



SEED INSTITUTE ATTAINS TOP NATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE STATUS

SEED Institute became the first Continuing Education and Training (CET) centre in the early childhood care and education (ECCE) sector to be appointed as a National CET Institute (NCI). SEED Institute will continue to lead the sector in developing the professionalism of ECCE professionals through providing training, career services, job placement, research and continuing professional development.



SEED INSTITUTE LAUNCHES MENTOR STARTER KIT

Supported by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency, SEED Institute launched a first-of-its-kind Mentoring Starter Toolkit targeted at promoting continuing professional development within the ECCE sector. A ground-up initiative that recognises the importance of mentoring to further enhance the quality of pre-school teachers, the kit was distributed to more than 16,000 registered pre-school teachers on Teachers' Day 2013.

FUN GAMES FOR LEARNING MANDARIN

Sponsored by the Lee Kuan Yew Fund for Bilingualism and jointly developed by SEED Institute and the Singapore Centre for Chinese Language, a new Chinese teaching aid “Fun Games for Learning Mandarin” was launched to promote the teaching of mother tongue through games designed in the Singapore context. The teaching aids were piloted at My First Skool at 505 Yung An Road and more than 3,000 sets were distributed to all local pre-schools.



OUR KINDERGARTEN TWO CHILDREN GRADUATES

In 2013, a total of 2,279 Kindergarten Two children graduated from My First Skool, The Little Skool-House International and The Caterpillar's Cove. In celebration of the momentous occasion, each centre staged their own concert so that families can celebrate the milestone together with their children.



My First Skool

At My First Skool, the children performed songs, rhymes and dance movements to an English language musical – “Jack’s Adventure”, as well as a Chinese language skit – “Ten Brothers”, much to the delight of the parents and guests.



The Little Skool-House International

At The Little Skool-House International, every concert storyline was different and usually scripted by the little ones based on their favourite stories or themes. Some parents even participated as actors or joined in the mass event.

STAFF GET-TOGETHER AT “COME LIVE INSPIRE”

More than 2,400 staff came together on 23 August 2013 at Orchid Country Club to celebrate NTUC First Campus’ very own learning carnival “COME LIVE INSPIRE”. It was also a day to appreciate everyone’s contributions, and share inspirational moments at work. Staff were treated to a myriad of activities from sumo wrestling to cupcake design. An inspiring drama performed by our very own Chief Executive Officer with staff completed the day.



The Caterpillar's Cove

The children from The Caterpillar's Cove put up a spectacular percussion-centred play adapted from the stories of “Swimmy”, “The Three Little Pigs” and “The Giant Turnip”. Titled “Swimmy and Friends”, the performance showcased the musical talents of the children and enabled them to express their feelings through the different percussion instruments.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(As at 30 April 2014)



KEE TECK KOON

*Chairman, NTUC First
Campus Co-operative Limited*

Mr Kee is currently Non-Executive Chairman of CapitaCommercial Trust Management Limited (the manager of Capita-Commercial Trust which is listed on the SGX-ST), Changi Airports International Private Limited, 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.



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. He is the Council Member in the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers since December 2010 and appointed as Vice-Chairman of International Chamber of Commerce, Malaysia in December 2013 amongst other positions.



ADELINE SUM WAI FUN

*Chief Executive Officer,
Singapore Labour Foundation
and 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 29 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 Treasurer of the NTUC Education and Training Fund Board (NETF Board of Trustees). He also serves on the board of Shell Thrift and Loan.



TAN SUEE CHIEH

*Group Chief Executive,
NTUC Enterprise
Co-operative Limited*

Mr Tan Suee Chieh joined the board in 2013. Mr Tan is the Group Chief Executive of NTUC Enterprise Co-operative Limited. He has been a Director of NTUC Income since 2003 and was its Chief Executive from 2007 to 2013. Mr Tan serves on the Boards of several NTUC social enterprises, the International Co-operative and Mutual Insurance Federation (UK) and Allnations (USA).

SENIOR MANAGEMENT

(As at 30 April 2014)





1. Chan Tee Seng

Chief Executive Officer

2. Kwek Kok Kwong

Deputy Chief Executive Officer

3. Ho Yin Fong

Chief Early Childhood Education Officer
Academic Director, SEED Institute

4. Daniel Chua

Group Customer Service and Operations Officer

5. Geraldine Lee

Chief Human Resource Officer

6. Adeline Tan

General Manager, My First Skool

7. Hor Fong Lin

Chief Financial Officer

8. Terence Chia

General Manager, The Little Skool-House International



OUR VISION AND MISSION



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.

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.

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 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 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.



ABOUT NTUC FIRST CAMPUS



NTUC First Campus Co-operative Limited

At NTUC First Campus Co-operative Limited (NFC), we believe that every child deserves a good start in life. We have been making a difference since 1977 by bringing affordable quality early childhood care and education to Singapore families. Our childcare centres include My First Skool, The Little Skool-House International and The Caterpillar's Cove. NFC also supports the development of the early childhood sector through SEED Institute. NFC is a community of parents and early childhood professionals working together to bring out the best in each child and to create inspiring moments for all.



My First Skool (MFS) is the pioneer childcare arm of NTUC First Campus Co-operative Limited. Established as NTUC Childcare in 1977, it aims to provide quality and affordable childcare service that is accessible to parents. MFS believes that no child should be denied the opportunity of early childhood care and education and empowers children to learn through a methodical approach called PETAL® – Playing, Exploring, Thinking, and Applying Learning.



The Little Skool-House International Private Limited was established as a wholly-owned subsidiary of the NTUC First Campus Co-operative Limited in 1994 to meet the growing demand of quality premium pre-school bilingual education. Operating at choice locations across Singapore, its pre-school programme utilises quality children's literature as a key medium to seed the growing process and enables children to develop lifelong learning skills.



The Caterpillar's Cove
Child Development and Study Centre

The Caterpillar's Cove brings together teachers of young children, researchers and students who are training to work with children. Being a child development and study centre, it provides a dynamic setting with highly qualified teachers who are familiar with the best internationally accepted practices in early childhood education to promote children's optimal learning and development.



An NTUC Training Institute

SEED Institute was set up by NTUC, in collaboration with the Bernard van Leer Foundation, to groom early childhood professionals so as to provide the best care and education to young children. As the pioneer in early childhood education training in Singapore, it is the only Continuing Education and Training (CET) centre for the early childhood care and education sector to be conferred National CET Institute (NCI) status by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency. SEED Institute has two campuses at the NTUC Trade Union House and the Devan Nair Institute for Employment and Employability.

