

ADDRESS BY MR BRUCE POH, DIRECTOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ITE, AT THE ITE STUDENT ACHIEVERS' AWARDS 2010 PRESENTATION CEREMONY, ON TUESDAY 25 MAY 2010, AT 1000 HOURS, AT AUDITORIUM, LEVEL 3, ITE COLLEGE EAST, 10, SIMEI AVENUE

Distinguished Guests

Parents

Award Recipients

Colleagues and Students

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

Good morning.

- 1 Whenever I find myself among a sea of happy faces and high-spirited individuals, like now, it never fails to give me positive vibes. I am always looking forward to such moments.
- 2 This morning, we are pleased to honour some **300** award recipients, for their achievements in their studies, co-curricular activities, sports and innovations. These students have demonstrated strong passion and resilience in the relentless pursuit of their goals.

Today's Talents, Tomorrow's Assets

- 3 These students stand as testaments of ITE's passion to educate and develop holistic students, not just technically-skilled ones. We believe that our unique brand of Hands-on, Minds-on and Hearts-on Education prepares our youths for life's challenges by giving them an all-rounded education. We aim to maximise our students' full potential – in both academic and non-academic pursuits.

- 4 Through our Holistic Student Development Framework, students have many opportunities to excel in various arenas. The challenges and diverse learning experiences provided through programmes under the Framework help to hone the leadership and social skills of students; build personal responsibility; and create cultural awareness – in essence, putting them in the best place possible to succeed and impact their worlds.
- 5 While all our students have access to these developmental programmes, a few stand out because they possess something extra. Passion, perseverance and purpose. These qualities set apart the very best, from the rest. I am pleased that each of you today is being honoured for these qualities of character and I'm sure that each of you will have a wonderful story to tell. Let me share with you three such stories, of students who have excelled in their studies while passionately contributing to their Colleges and community.

Yue Soon Lye – A Second Shot at Success

- 6 Yue Soon Lye, from ITE College Central, might not be here with us today, if not for a second chance in life. He first joined ITE seven years ago but did not graduate. After National Service, while working as a retail assistant, he was inspired by the story of an ITE graduate on television. He returned to ITE and this time, managed the perfect 4.0 GPA.
- 7 More world-wise after his experience, Soon Lye has also been an outstanding role model for his peers. Beyond leading the Photography Club as vice-president, he was also active in hosting exchange students at the ITE International Student Seminar 2009. Soon Lye is also very active in the grassroots in the MacPherson precinct and spends considerable helping the community. Soon Lye has achieved the distinction of being the only ITE student, in a team of 26 youths, selected to be part of the NextGen Leadership Programme (NGLP), to be groomed as one of Singapore's future grassroots leaders.

Alagappan Bhooja Thevar – Staying Positive Despite Hardships

- 8 Like Soon Lye, Alagappan Bhooja Thevar, also finds joy in helping others. Bhooja started with little direction or purpose in life. Even her family had given up on her because she did not do well in her studies. She tried a number of jobs but it was only when she did a stint as a Health Care Assistant at the Institute of Mental Health did she discover her passion. She enrolled for the *Nitec* in Nursing course at ITE College East and can be proud that she has achieved a GPA of 4.0. But it was perhaps more difficult for her. Unlike most of you, Bhooja enrolled in ITE, at a mature age of 32, and has had to juggle studies and family commitments.
- 9 Despite this, Bhooja found time to actively volunteer for numerous community activities organised by the Red Cross Humanitarian network, of which she is a member. She was also the leader of a Youth Expedition Project trip to Myanmar in December last year. Bhooja has indeed been an inspiration to her younger schoolmates.

Mark Aaron Lee Weng Tat – Never Giving Up

- 10 Mark Aaron Lee Weng Tat, another Student Achiever amongst us, had to leave school after Secondary 2 to take care of his blind and bedridden grandfather. His teenage years were difficult as his mother was also saddled with health problems. After his grandfather's passing, Mark decided to go back to school. Coming through the Geylang Serai Vocational Training Centre route, he has passed each level with flying colours. He scored a GPA of 4.0 in both *Nitec* in Service Skills (Tourism) and *Higher Nitec* in Business Studies (Administration).
- 11 His difficult journey has given him maturity beyond his years and a strong sense of self-confidence. As the General Manager of the Entrepreneurship Club, at ITE College West (Clementi Campus), he actively organised business field trips and experiential activities for members. He has also led a team at the Shell LiveWire – ITE Social Entrepreneurship Business Plan Challenge 2008, which won the top prize. It sounds like Mark has little time to spare, but

he still has the passion and the heart to make time to take care of children in a childcare centre and guide them in their homework.

Conclusion

- 12 These are but three stories. Indeed, most of our award winners today would have overcome various odds to succeed, and have their own stories to tell. While the stories are important, what is even more important is how we learn from these stories and how, in our own ways, each of us learns to become a better person.
- 13 I would also like to pay tribute to the families and lecturers, who have stood behind our students and paved the way for them to shine. We all owe a big thank you to you for your unwavering support and care, and your contributions and sacrifices.
- 14 To the award recipients, my challenge to you is to continue to have a clear sense of purpose, strive for excellence in all areas, and not to forget the paths you have travelled, as these will be inspirations for the next cohort of ITE students and the people you will get to meet. Your achievements today are but stepping stones for more successes tomorrow.
- 15 Congratulations and best wishes to one and all.