



# CREAM OF THE CROP

EXEMPLARY EDUCARERS, TEACHERS, LEADERS AND CENTRES GOT THEIR MUCH-DESERVED RECOGNITION AT THE 2017 ECDA AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT.

Since its launch in 2013, the annual ECDA Awards for Excellence in Early Childhood Development has been the high point of the Early Childhood Conference year-on-year.

On 6 October 2017, at the 5<sup>th</sup> ECDA Awards, we celebrated the achievement of exemplary educators and centres for their professional excellence. Educarers, teachers and leaders cheered their winning peers enthusiastically as the latter's names were announced. Giving out the prestigious awards at the Suntec Convention Centre was Minister for Social and Family Development Mr Desmond Lee. Minister Lee congratulated the winners for excelling in their teaching and learning, and for innovative practices in the early childhood sector.

This year, two new categories — the 'Promising Awards' and the 'Roll of Honour for Early Childhood Innovation Mentor Centre' (see Page 10 on what the four Mentor Centres have to say) — were introduced. The 'Promising Awards' category was introduced to recognise and motivate early childhood professionals who show strong potential for professional excellence early in their careers. The winners had been chosen for their interactions and relationships with children, their curriculum and pedagogical practices,

their professional standards, as well as the efforts to partner and collaborate with families and the community (see box). Overall, 24 early childhood professionals and centres received the 2017 ECDA Awards (see sidebar for list of winners).

**OF POTENTIAL AND PROMISE**  
Winners of the inaugural Promising Awards category talk about their aspirations.



Ms Gerene Lee

Winning the Promising Early Childhood Educarer Award affirms my passion to teach and help children find joy in learning. To me, an educarer must have the ability to love and respect children as individuals with their unique strengths and interests. We all have moments when the day's activities don't go as planned, or when children don't respond well to certain classroom management techniques. When this happens, I try to do things in a different way or seek advice from my colleagues.

Gerene Lee, Learning Vision @ Work Pte Ltd (Nanyang Polytechnic) (Promising Early Childhood Educarer)



Ms Jazlyn Choo

## JOB WELL DONE!

Hearty congratulations to all the winners of the ECDA Awards 2017:

### PROMISING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCARER AWARD

► Lee Si Min Gerene  
Learning Vision @ Work Pte Ltd (Nanyang Polytechnic)

### PROMISING EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER AWARD

► Jazlyn Choo  
My First Skool at Blk 209 Ang Mo Kio

### PROMISING EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADER AWARD

► Dawn Chua  
My First Skool at Blk 55 Toa Payoh

### OUTSTANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCARER AWARD

► Nur Farhana Binte Abdul Razak  
E-Bridge Pre-School Pte Ltd (Yishun)

► Zhao Yilin  
The Ascension Kindergarten

### OUTSTANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER AWARD

► Jane Mayriel Singh  
The Little Skool-House International (Bu-The-Vista)

### OUTSTANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADER AWARD

► Neo You Xian Gillian  
My First Skool at Blk 209 Ang Mo Kio

► Doreen Lim Yen Lee  
PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Cashew

### OUTSTANDING CENTRE FOR TEACHING & LEARNING AWARD

► Living Sanctuary Kindergarten

► My First Skool at Blk 245 Bishan

### EARLY CHILDHOOD INNOVATION AWARD (DISTINCTION)

► PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Nanyang Blk 922  
Project Title: Speech Choir

► The Caterpillar's Cove Child Development and Study Centre @ Jurong East  
Project Title: Strategies for Thinking: Fostering Toddler Inquiry through Provocations

### EARLY CHILDHOOD INNOVATION AWARD (MERIT)

► Blossom Educare Centre  
Project Title: What's News?

► MY World @ Ang Mo Kio  
Project Title: 'I Spy with My Arty Eyes'

### EARLY CHILDHOOD INNOVATION AWARD (COMMENDATION)

► My First Skool at Blk 140 Serangoon North  
Project Title: "I feel, I show, I express": Promoting Socio Emotional Expressions through Dramatisation

► My First Skool at Blk 140 Serangoon North  
Project Title: Questioning Strategies to Promote Curiosity and Learning

► PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Whampoa Blk 85  
Project Title: Cookery

► PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Sembawang Blk 789  
Project Title: Our Young Explorers

► St. Paul's Church Kindergarten  
Project Title: Edible Plants in a Nostalgic Garden

► The Little Skool-House International Pte Ltd - At OCBC Centre  
Project Title: Children's Beautiful Dream Garden

### ROLL OF HONOUR FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD INNOVATION MENTOR CENTRE AWARD

► Odyssey, The Global Preschool (Fourth Avenue)

► Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Kindergarten

► St. James' Church Kindergarten (Harding)

► The Ascension Kindergarten

## BE INSPIRED

Interested to know what drives the ECDA Award winners to strive towards professional excellence? Be motivated and moved by their inspiring words in these videos at <http://bit.ly/ECDA-Awards2017-Video>.



Ms Dawn Chua

It is a great honour to be the recipient for the Promising Early Childhood Teacher Award. Winning this award motivates me to further enrich the experiences for both the children and their families, and also challenge my own professional boundaries. I find it important for teachers to be creative in exploring various strategies to help children learn. Having children work in groups will also develop their problem-solving skills. As teachers, we should always be willing to try over and over again.

Jazlyn Choo, My First Skool at Blk 209 Ang Mo Kio (Promising Early Childhood Teacher)

I believe strongly in instilling good morals in young children, and in respecting all cultures. Every child needs to be treated with love, affection and respect. I care more about developing the whole child than focusing solely on the academics. My aspiration is to continue building teams that are strong professionally, highly cohesive and competent. My wish is for all new leaders to persevere and pursue their passion in early childhood. Don't give up on what you really want to; until the day you realise your dreams.

Dawn Chua,  
My First Skool at Blk 55 Toa Payoh (Promising Early Childhood Leader)





# LEADING THE WAY

PAVING THE WAY FOR A CULTURE OF INNOVATION  
ACROSS THE EARLY CHILDHOOD FRATERNITY.



Odyssey, The Global Preschool  
(Fourth Avenue)



Ramakrishna Mission  
Sarada Kindergarten



St. James' Church  
Kindergarten (Harding)



The Ascension Kindergarten

Innovation is key to driving quality and achieving excellence in curriculum and pedagogical practices. For the next three years, Odyssey, The Global Preschool (Fourth Avenue), Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Kindergarten, St. James' Church Kindergarten (Harding) and The Ascension Kindergarten will partner ECDA to mentor and support other pre-schools under the Early Childhood Innovation Mentor Centre initiative.

These mentor centres have been exemplary in sustaining a culture of innovation and have clinched two or more prestigious early childhood (EC) innovation awards. The four centres were appointed to the Roll of Honour for EC Innovation Mentor Centres at the recent ECDA Awards 2017.

*Beanstalk* speaks with the four mentor centres about the niche areas they are championing.

## Odyssey, The Global Preschool (Fourth Avenue)

*Championing Environmental Awareness*

"Apart from raising our children to be global citizens, our teachers and parents are also encouraged to be advocates for the environment," says Ms Drizzle Hshieh, Odyssey's Curriculum Mentor. The centre seeks to minimise the carbon footprint of its daily operations, while teachers facilitate child-initiated projects where parents are also involved in activities such as maintaining an orchard garden for the centre's Green Club. We also collaborate with community partners such as the Singapore Zoo to enhance our environmental initiatives.

## Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Kindergarten

*Championing Children's Social-Emotional Development*

Our teachers adopt classroom-management strategies such as modelling and showing appreciation, encouraging

children to acknowledge and affirm one another's appropriate behaviours and actions, and empowering children to make choices. Through this collective energy, we help children to understand the consequences of their actions, look for possible solutions, and become competent and resilient. "Young children who develop a positive sense of self and strong social-emotional competencies will grow up confidently to meet challenges in life," says the centre's Principal, Ms N. Pushpavalli.

## St. James' Church Kindergarten (Harding)

*Championing Character and Values Development*

Class projects at St. James' Church Kindergarten (Harding) are intentionally linked to developing desirable character traits and values such as love, patience and kindness in children. For example, "From Me to We", the children are inspired to think about others, while "The Little Red Box" allows them to voice their dreams for Singapore's future. "Through each project, the children develop an appreciation for nature, their community and the world," explains the centre's Senior Principal and Academic Director, Dr Jacqueline Chung.

## The Ascension Kindergarten

*Championing Purposeful Play*

"Play comes naturally to young children. Through this, they explore, discover and learn. Purposeful play is when the educator intentionally selects resources and materials in order to achieve specific learning outcomes. Skilled teacher facilitation and choice of materials are the essence of purposeful play," says Mrs Dianne Seet-Swee, its Principal. Outdoor lessons at the centre's soundscape and playscape areas, as well as regular 'play days' in the timetable, bring out the children's curiosity, exploration, ability to make connections and creativity. ♥



Find out more about these inaugural batch of mentor centres at [bit.ly/Awards-ECInnovationMentorCentres](http://bit.ly/Awards-ECInnovationMentorCentres)