

# Ready for Reading

For her work in getting parents to participate in their children's learning, Kartini Binte Sudirman was conferred a 2014 ECDA Outstanding Early Childhood Teacher Award.



Ms Kartini rehearsing with her students.

**A** S CLICHÉD AS it may sound, the phrase 'It takes a village to raise a child' is true. Indeed, it is this philosophy that helped Ms Kartini Binte Sudirman, K2 form teacher and Malay Language K1/K2 teacher at PCF Bukit Panjang Blk 254 Kindergarten, win a 2014 ECDA Outstanding Early Childhood Teacher Award.

"Parents are the first role models for their young ones and they are key to their children's development," says the 30 year-old who has been working in the early childhood sector for seven years. Embracing this philosophy, Ms Kartini is keen for parents to be involved. Not long after she joined the PCF centre three years ago, Ms Kartini initiated reading-awareness workshops for parents to promote early literacy in their children. Held in January at the beginning of each school year, these workshops equip parents — especially those of Nursery children who have just joined the centre — with tips on how to make reading more exciting for children, and thus foster the habit at home.

"The feedback from parents has been very positive," she says appreciatively. "Many of them have said that before attending the workshop, they did not know the difference between phonemic

awareness [using sounds to make spoken words] and phonics [applying the sounds to written language]."

## A Trip to Remember

In November 2014, Ms Kartini went on a week-long study trip to Osaka, Japan with other 2013 and 2014 ECDA Award winners and ECDA officials. They visited several pre-schools and the main highlight for her was seeing how Japanese teachers embraced the concept of play in their kindergartens and child care centres.

"Their focus is for young children to grow up filled with curiosity about the world and why things are the way they are," says Ms Kartini. "I was impressed by how they placed

great importance on outdoor activities, which allowed children to use their five senses such as smelling the air and touching the soil or sand."

She has proposed to her principal that she brings her students out for a short walk each day. "I believe this will improve their concentration and I can spend that time chatting and building positive relationships with them," she says.

Currently pursuing a part-time Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Care and Education at KLC International Institute, Ms Kartini says she is humbled to have won the award. She is grateful for the support of her family, centre principal and fellow teachers.

"My father, who recently passed away, was the one most excited when I said I wanted to be a teacher. So I dedicate this award to him," adds Ms Kartini. ♥

**I WAS IMPRESSED BY HOW TEACHERS IN JAPAN PLACED GREAT IMPORTANCE ON OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES.**

//Ms Kartini



**KARTINI BINTE SUDIRMAN**  
30, Teacher,  
PCF Bukit Panjang  
Blk 254

PHOTOS BY HONG CHEE YAN

## PARENTS, DO TAKE NOTE

How to develop your child's interest in reading? Children model themselves after you, so if he or she sees you reading at home regularly — be it a book, magazine or newspaper — or if you make it a practice to read to them, they will follow suit!

