



# Outstanding Youth in Education Award

## FOOD FOR GOOD

By Ms Angela Ho Jiawen

Ms Angela Ho wants her students to develop a taste for helping others.

### Food beyond textbooks

When I was in secondary school, Food and Nutrition was my favourite subject. I was amazed at how different ingredients can complement one another to form a dish. When I heard that Temasek Polytechnic offered a diploma in Applied Food Science and Nutrition, I decided to check it out during their Open House. I was very sure I wanted to take it up.

However, family and peer pressure intervened, and I ended up enrolling in a junior college. Three months in, I felt out of place and became convinced that a polytechnic education would give me a more practical grounding and hands-on experience. I managed to persuade my parents to let me make the switch.

I am glad I did. At the polytechnic, I could apply the skills I learnt in class through projects with food companies. I remember working with a bakery to produce bread that could be eaten without increasing blood sugar levels significantly.

I thought it would be so wonderful if Food and Nutrition students in secondary school could also benefit from this kind of applied learning. They could go on short industry attachments to learn more about the jobs available, explore their interests and abilities, and gain experience in the real world.

Determined to make this a reality, I applied to the Ministry of Education to become a teacher.

### The chance of a lifetime

The opportunity came sooner than I expected. Barely two years into teaching, Marina Bay Sands and At-Sunrice Culinary Institute approached my school to explore a small-scale collaboration involving a few students. I knew this was too good to pass up. I wanted to get as many of my students involved as possible, especially since many of them came from disadvantaged backgrounds, and may never have set foot in an Integrated Resort.

I helped Marina Bay Sands and At-Sunrice develop learning materials, and managed to negotiate a much bigger scope for the collaboration. Our secondary three and four students got to work with them for two entire months a year, from October to December. Every week, they studied on-site in a classroom setting for three days, and worked in kitchens for another two. Although it was tough work, our students treasured this unique learning opportunity where they could pick up real-world skills.

It was well worth their time and effort. Through these internships, they learned about various career options, and got to hone life skills such as leadership, communication and teamwork. I am proud to say that this programme continues to run today. Other companies have heard about this collaboration and are interested in coming on board too to work with us.



**Angela Ho**  
Serangoon Garden Secondary School  
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## Open minds, caring hearts

Even as the internships open doors for my students, I want them to put their energies and talents to good use by giving back to society.



**Ms Ho showing students the joy of learning in Food and Nutrition**

One day, after showing my students a video on Singapore's kampong history, one of them asked me: 'Cher, why do we all close our doors nowadays?' I responded by challenging them to find a way to encourage neighbourliness.

They came up with the idea of organising a community event where they would prepare healthy salads and sandwiches for the residents and encourage them to eat healthily. They would come up with the recipes based on what they learned in their Food and Nutrition lessons, and distribute them from a food truck. They decided to request for funding from the Housing and Development Board's (HDB) Good Neighbours Project, and secured a grant to organise their event in Serangoon.

It was not without its hurdles. A food truck cannot operate without a certified food handler. However, my students could not get a Food Safety and Hygiene certificate from the National Environment Agency because they were too young. I saw that they had already put in so much effort, and I did not want them to be held back by this. So I took it upon myself to be their food handler. During the school holidays, on my own time and using my SkillsFuture credits, I undertook the Workforce Skills Qualification basic food hygiene course.

With me as their official food handler, my students could distribute the salads and sandwiches to the public in line with NEA requirements. This had an unexpected positive impact on my students. It showed them the importance of adopting an attitude of lifelong learning, as they had seen their teacher actively acquiring new skills to remain relevant in her work.

The event was very well-received by the community and my students were honoured for their good work. They received the Most Outstanding Youth Award from the Housing and Development Board for their Good Neighbours Project. The students were invited to share more about their project at the Volunteers Appreciation Ceremony at Tampines with Minister Heng Swee Keat and the public. 'It was tedious work liaising with different key partners, but I have never regretted doing it, because the work we do is so meaningful. The conversations exchanged and the smiles that we bring to the families are priceless,' I recalled a student telling Mr Heng.

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I strongly believe that the young are kind and compassionate, but may not know how to show they care. As teachers, we play an important role to help connect our youths to platforms where they can volunteer and serve the community. I hope that more youths can come forward to improve the lives of others, and I want to inspire those under my charge to do so.



**Ms Ho paving the way to help students achieve their aspirations**

