

MIE honours trailblazers

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THE Malaysia Influential Educators (MIE) programme celebrates exemplary educators who distinguished themselves with exceptional expertise and abilities.

These individuals serve as a benchmark for excellence, showcasing superior knowledge and skills while embodying the highest standards of educational practices.

After three years of nominations and selections, the Top 100 Malaysia Influential Educators were recently unveiled in a ceremony to recognise their selfless contributions to their respective industries.

MIE chairman Tiffany Tan Tian Yee, in her speech, said these 100 educators had demonstrated astuteness, competence and talent while upholding high standards, showcasing their knowledge, skills and adherence to the best practices.

"In various industries, mentors play a crucial role. They not only impart knowledge but also guide students in their careers. Whether it's in business, healthcare, engineering or other fields, mentors play a vital role in shaping the future of students.

"Experienced mentors not only guide students in avoiding pitfalls, but also share their experiences, assist them in planning their career paths, and support them in facing challenges."

On the screening process, Tan said it went beyond education background, and emphasised insights, leadership and influence in education.

"Integrity and reputation are essential, coupled with a dedication to social responsibility. This thorough review ensures a standout group dedicated to innovation, ethics and making a positive impact on society."

As those among the top 100 MIE award winners, Sunny Yap Kuen Chin, founder and owner of Namaste Yoga House Shala, said the award has encouraged him to do better in inspiring his students.

He wants them to gain a deeper understanding of yoga to promote physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing.

Yap, who is also the principal therapist of Namaste Physiotherapy Centre Melaka, started his yoga-teaching journey in 2004.

"I'm lucky as the patients and students are providing me a platform to grow with their feedback. "A yoga therapist is constantly evolving to adapt to a patient's needs and condition.

"An educator needs to impart high-quality knowledge and nurture students with continuous guidance," said Yap, who is the sole certified educator in the country to provide the Approved Professional Development (APD) programme on Back Pain and Scoliosis Manage-



MIE chairman Tiffany Tan Tian Yee (in white dress) with other guests in the launch of the '2022/2023 Biography of Malaysia Influential Educators', which details the life work of MIE award winners. PIX BY SAIFULLIZAN TAMADI

ment course accredited by the International Association of Yoga Therapists.

Yap said his students are not only from Malaysia but also Indonesia, Singapore, Japan and Northern Ireland.

Another recipient, Dr Irene Yip Kam Foong, said the recognition served as inspiration for her to increase her efforts and dedication in helping many more students learn music.

Yip, the founder, and director of Praise Music International (PMI), invented the "Touch System", which offers simple yet effective techniques for people between four and 80 years old to learn to play the piano.

"This Touch System allows you to learn to play the piano and sing the first song in just seven days and be a pianist in just nine months. Normal piano lessons take years to achieve this.

"Hence, this award means a lot to me. But it's not just about me, it's about everyone at PMI who worked hard to teach music.

"Together, we've taught over 10,000 students, and each one is proof of how music can change lives," she said, adding that teaching was more than just knowledge transfer but a process of mentoring and coaching.

For Dr Elaine Loo Yee Ling, she said the award provided a legacy to educators, letting the public know that there were people who hold a passion in shaping the next generation.

"I think educators seem to be taken for granted in this era. It is def-



Sunny Yap Kuen Chin



Dr Irene Yip Kam Foong



Dr Elaine Loo Yee Ling



Professor Steven Kok Boon Hong



Datin Tiew Lee Sin

initely an inspiring move to uplift this profession and keep passionate educators going."

She said there are many other occupations to choose from, such as social media influencers, who can earn a lot of money.

"But why do some people continue to be educators?" she asked.

"It is because they believe that nurturing young minds to reach their full potential will create a ripple effect on advancing humankind."

As a professional certificate holder in parenting education, which is recognised in the country and a prominent university, Loo said parents are actually their children's first educator.

Therefore, what she currently does, is to bridge the gap between educators and parents to help their children grow their potential.

Loo, who first founded ProMizzion, a transformational platform to help teenagers develop leadership and identify their life direction, is also the founder of De'Emcee, a platform for children

aged 5 to 8, with a mission to develop a strong speaking foundation.

Professor Steven Kok Boon Hong started his entrepreneurial journey to educate people about the science of health and beauty in 2013.

A managing director at i-Actions International, a revolutionary enterprise that focuses on the latest technology in beauty and health, Kok said the recognition had fuelled his commitment to continue advocating and sharing his knowledge.

"I always think of myself as a person who likes to share information because what we invent, we have to share it. At the same time, we have to educate others."

Datin Tiew Lee Sin said the recognition was not merely a reward for educators, but a validation and encouragement for their long-standing contributions to the field of education.

"This acknowledgement doesn't just come from fellow professionals, but also from the broader society and parents of students.

"It also inspires more individuals to join the educational sector, col-

lectively driving its development and progress," said the managing director of Artivo Education Sdn Bhd.

Tiew has successfully expanded the Artivo School of Creativity from a homegrown art studio to a licensing chain of 19 branches within five years.

"As a beneficiary of education myself, I aspire to assume the role of an educator, giving back to society, nurturing future leaders and constantly reminding myself to maintain an open-minded attitude, to continuously learn, impart knowledge, and ensure the continuity of education."

The guests-of-honour at the awards ceremony on Saturday included Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Mohd Sayuthi Bakar and retired Court of Appeal judge Datuk Wira Low Hop Bing.

During the event, the association also launched the 2022/2023 Biography of Malaysia Influential Educators, which included the biographies of all recognised educators in the awards.