

SINGAPORE

6 individuals win Honourable Mention Award at Healthcare Humanity Awards

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The annual event recognises inspirational role models who exemplify courage, compassion and selflessness.

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CAPTION

SINGAPORE: Six individuals took home the Honourable Mention Award at the Healthcare Humanity Awards on Monday (Apr 27), an annual event which recognises inspirational role models who exemplify courage, compassion and selflessness.

One of them is Dr Tan Lai Yong, who volunteers his time with non-profit organisation Healthserve. It is dedicated to serving the interests of migrants and the poor in the community.

The 54-year-old often attends to foreign workers who have sustained injuries. He counsels them on their medical condition and explains hospital procedures they are unsure of. He also goes a step further by bringing his medical students along.

As resident director at the College of Alice and Peter Tan at National University of Singapore, he teaches his students about marginalised communities, which often involves visiting the low-income at HDB estates and helping foreign workers at their dormitories.

Dr Tan hopes this will give his students a better understanding of their patients. He said visiting dormitories allows him to have a slightly different approach to the workers' rehabilitation or nutrition.

He said: "For example, for our students, we have a night walk in either Geylang or Little India and we ask them to look at things being sold in groceries, the vegetables, the fruits, the bread, it is all quite different. Then we ask them to design a balanced diet that has protein, enough vitamins based on a very tight budget.

"So in other words, if they understand that the groceries the foreign workers buy are slightly different from when we go to the supermarket, then they are better able to advise them about nutrition." Dr Tan

received an Honourable Mention Award for educating the younger generation about the less fortunate.

LONGER CONSULTATIONS TO REDUCE REPEAT VISITS

For Dr Dominique Phang, caring for patients is part of her duties as a family physician at the Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic. However, despite her hectic work, the 35-year-old readily counsels patients who feel distressed, even if it means skipping lunch or staying back after work.

She said: "It is not something I have had to give up or make a lot of sacrifices for. It makes me happy to see that they actually are empowered to manage their health better and they understand what is going on. Then I think each consultation becomes more productive and fruitful."

Dr Phang usually sees patients with chronic conditions and counsels them on treatment options and follow-up plans. Even though her consultations may take a little longer, she said it helps to reduce repeat visits at the polyclinic.

In the past five years, she has received more than 70 letters from patients or their families thanking her for her efforts.

- CNA/xk