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Outstanding Social Worker Award winner Melissa Chew (third from left) with Promising Social Worker Award recipients (from left) Tay Yu Ping, from the Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore; Zoe Tee, from the Ministry of Social and Family Development, and Benjamin Yeo, from Fei Yue Community Services. ST PHOTO: KEVIN LIM

**Outstanding Social Worker Award**

**Winner took on job against mum's wishes**

**Hospital social worker's mother initially felt teaching offered better prospects**

**Theresa Tan**  
Senior Social Affairs Correspondent

If her mother had her way years ago, Ms Melissa Chew, 38, would not be a social worker today.

Her mother, a cleaner, wanted the younger of her two children to be a teacher as she felt teaching offered better prospects. But her father, a retired driver, supported her decision to study social work.

Said Ms Chew, a principal medical social worker at Tan Tock Seng Hospital: "I went against my mum's wishes for the first time in my life."

But the social worker of 15 years has gone on to make a difference in the lives of many and is the winner of the Outstanding Social Worker Award this year.

Ms Chew received the award – the highest honour for social workers – from President Halimah Yacob at the Istana yesterday.

Three others won the Promising Social Worker Award – Ms Tay Yu Ping, 28, acting senior social worker at the Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore (Minds) Woodlands Gardens School; Ms Zoe Tee, 26, senior pro-

bation officer at the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF); and Mr Benjamin Yeo, 31, senior social worker at Fei Yue Community Services.

Besides touching the lives of her patients, Ms Chew also spearheaded an initiative to reduce the waiting time for patients who are ready to be transferred from hospital to nursing home. The wait now takes fewer than 10 days, from two to three weeks previously.

Ms Chew and her colleagues streamlined work processes and roped in various partners, from doctors to staff at the Agency for Integrated Care, which facilitates the placement of patients in nursing homes, to do so. She said this initiative has since been adopted and customised by other hospitals.

Ms Chew said her mother is now very supportive of her work.

Among the patients Ms Chew has helped is an 82-year-old woman who suffered from respiratory failure. Afraid that her four children would be affected if they saw her die but also afraid of dying alone, she asked Ms Chew to be by her side as she breathed her last.

"I'm very glad I could fulfil that wish of hers," said Ms Chew, who had also counselled the woman's

family to help them cope with their mother's impending death.

The other winners also showed dedication in helping others.

Ms Tay, for instance, started a programme at Minds to help the siblings of children with intellectual disability learn more about the condition and cope with their feelings.

MSF's Ms Tee was lauded for her passion in helping youth offenders to change their behaviour and rebuild relationships with their families and others in the community.

Mr Yeo was commended for his zeal in reaching out to youth at risk.

He and his colleagues would befriend young people hanging out on the streets and work with them to resolve their problems.

He said: "Many of them come from very challenging family backgrounds like single-parent families, or there is abuse at home. They will not come to us when they face problems, so we need to go out onto the streets to reach out to them."

One person he has helped is a boy who had quit school and was involved in gangs. Mr Yeo eventually persuaded him to go back to school and he emerged as a top scorer in his school for the Nlevels.

Said Mr Yeo: "What keeps me going is that the youth share with us that our work is helpful and our work does matter."

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13th Christmas Warehouse Sale Now till 23rd Dec 2018

<p><b>Rent an artificial Decorated Christmas Tree for up to 45 days</b></p> <p>5ft (150cm) \$280 6ft (180cm) \$450 7ft (210cm) \$650 8ft (240cm) \$850</p> <p><b>SPECIAL PURCHASE</b></p> <p>5ft (150cm) \$400 6ft (180cm) \$600 7ft (210cm) \$800 8ft (240cm) \$1,000</p> <p>Hassle Free and let our professional teams do up everything for you.</p>	<p><b>Noble Green Pine Tree</b></p> <p><b>BEST SELLER</b></p> <p>6ft (180cm) \$25 7ft (210cm) \$45</p>	<p><b>Wall Mounted Half Volume Christmas Tree with LED Lights</b></p> <p>5ft - \$100 6ft - \$130</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Space Saver</li> <li>Decorative</li> <li>Cost Saver</li> <li>Time Saver</li> <li>Easy Set-Up</li> </ul> <p>Front view Side View</p>
<p><b>Norway Green Oregon Mixed Pine Tree</b></p> <p>4ft (120cm) - Original \$150 <b>Now \$70</b> 5ft (150cm) - Original \$230 <b>Now \$130</b> 6ft (180cm) - Original \$320 <b>Now \$190</b> 7ft (210cm) - Original \$430 <b>Now \$260</b> 8ft (240cm) - Original \$600 <b>Now \$380</b> 10ft (300cm) - Original \$850 <b>Now \$600</b></p>	<p><b>Portland Green Oregon Mixed Pine Tree</b></p> <p>4ft (120cm) - Original \$130 <b>Now \$80</b> 5ft (150cm) - Original \$200 <b>Now \$140</b> 6ft (180cm) - Original \$290 <b>Now \$200</b> 7ft (210cm) - Original \$380 <b>Now \$300</b> 8ft (240cm) - Original \$500 <b>Now \$400</b> 10ft (300cm) - Original \$680 <b>Now \$580</b></p>	
<p><b>Super Green Oregon Mixed Pines With LED Lights</b></p> <p>4ft (120cm) - Original \$150 <b>Now \$100</b> 5ft (150cm) - Original \$250 <b>Now \$150</b> 6ft (180cm) - Original \$360 <b>Now \$250</b> 7ft (210cm) - Original \$480 <b>Now \$350</b> 10ft (300cm) - Original \$850 <b>Now \$650</b></p>	<p><b>Green Cashmere Mixed Pine Tree (Cone Shape)</b></p> <p>5ft (150cm) - Original \$240 <b>Now \$160</b> 6ft (180cm) - Original \$320 <b>Now \$240</b></p>	

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