

Dear Team

12 mothers danced on stage as their children and everyone in the hall at the Lengkok Bahru Community Centre cheered them on. They did not get their moves right all the time but in the eyes of the audience, they could do no wrong. These mothers were not on stage to show their children that they could dance. They danced as a gesture of appreciation for their children's good effort in school. During a parents' meeting a couple of months ago, these mothers noted that their children tried their best at school so as to make them proud. Hence, they wanted to do something to thank their children. When one of them suggested performing at the neighbourhood's year-end graduation event, they all sportingly agreed.

We are very encouraged by the forthcoming support for our various graduation events to recognise the learning achievements of our children. The events have been well-attended and our community as a whole has been stepping forward to contribute. Last Saturday, by courtesy of the JTC Corporation, the Henderson neighbourhood had their graduation at the auditorium@Biopolis. Volunteers from the neighbourhood worked closely with those from elsewhere to make the event a success. Costs were defrayed by grassroots leaders and a husband & wife singing duo told us that they were most happy to perform as their neighbours were their "extended family."

Celebrations also reveal who's important in a community. Hence, we were glad that residents who have cared for children in their own way did not shy away when asked to present the awards. Our pre-school children were pleased to shake Taslim's hand as they received a small gift. Taslim is a 15 year old whose behaviour is exemplary on and off the football field and he always finds a way to make himself useful in the community. Mdm Mariyani was another resident who presented awards. She was greeted respectfully by the teenagers present as they recognised her as a caring adult who gave good advice without preaching or admonishing.

There will be another graduation this evening and another on Sunday and as we celebrate learning achievements, what really are the lessons learnt that matter most? On Wednesday, 14 children who had previously benefitted from a card-making workshop presented by the Esplanade, joined the workshop again when it was conducted at the NTUC Silver Aces Centre in their neighbourhood. They worked well with the elderly and produced several cards with the most delightful designs. However, what was most delightful was having a 9 year girl correct us when we asked her if she liked being with old people "No one likes to be called old. Please say elderly." Another 12 year old boy told the instructor not to use the word "deaf" and he preferred to guide his elderly friend by demonstration rather

than by raising his voice. He was responding to the instructor who had told him to speak louder because participants were a little deaf.

These children have shown us that as we try to promote a culture of learning, it is not just about books and school. We all need to learn to be a lot more respectful and appreciative of each other.

Enjoy your weekend.

Gerard

*A learned man has always riches in himself.*  
*Phaedrus*