

Sharing Credit To Reward And Retain Workers



By
Muneerah Bee Mohamed Iqbal

Last year's PSLE and GCE "O" Level results have been released. The students and parents are congratulated, the teachers are thanked.

There is another supporting group who almost always never get any credit for what they do – Teacher Assistants. Their employer, Educare Co-operative Limited, however, has not forgotten them and will be rewarding them.

Educare, like all other Singapore companies that hire Singapore citizens and contribute to their Central Provident Fund, has been receiving Jobs Credit from the government. As it has emerged out of 2009 in a relatively healthy position, the cooperative formed under the Singapore Teachers' Union, decided to pass on what it received to its employees.

At a Support Staff Gathering on 16 January 2010, the Educare announced that 88 employees will receive the payout in February. Staff who has been with Educare for at least a year can expect \$480, while those who have worked longer will be given \$640. This is the fourth year Educare is distributing payouts to its employees. STU President Mike Mariyappa Thiruman said that the payouts this year are tailored closely to the civil service bonus structure. This is also one of the incentive strategies to retain competent workers.

"Some of our staff has been with us for three to four years and they're doing a good job in the schools, so we want to reward them. Having good support staff will help ease our teachers' non-teaching workload. It is important for Educare to ensure we deploy good staff in schools to help the teachers," he said.



Singapore Teachers' Union President and Chief Executive Officer, Educare Co-operative Limited Mike Mariyappa Thiruman addressing the Teacher Assistants at the Support Staff Gathering.

Going Beyond Expectations

"We want to reward the staff for the work that they've done in 2009; to say that we appreciate the work that they're doing in the schools and to encourage them to continue to stay with us. The payout is an unexpected bonus for some of them as they do not have bonuses in their contracts with the school and for others, it's about 50 per cent of their monthly pay. This is something extra to build relationship and goodwill and to incentivise our employees."

Mike Mariyappa Thiruman, Singapore Teachers' Union President and Chief Executive Officer, Educare Co-operative Limited

Supplementing Stability

"I'm very excited about the payout. All this while, we've been receiving a very stable salary but an incentive like this gives us a boost in our jobs. I have two school-going daughters, so this little extra will benefit them."



Sheila Menon, 45, Teacher Assistant, White Sands Secondary School

More Reasons To Celebrate

"The payout is a blessing. After pay deductions, we only bring home about \$1,000, so this will at least help us in the coming Lunar New Year celebrations."



Lau Sok Han, 54, Teacher Assistant, Yishun Secondary School