

## Children and adolescents under guardianship commended for perseverance in facing adversity

The Director of Social Welfare (DSW), Ms Carol Yip, and the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWGHs), Mr Vinci Wong, showed their care and concern for some 170 DSW wards as well as children and adolescents receiving residential care services from the TWGHs today (January 19) during a joyful reunion with them at the 2019 Award Presentation Ceremony for DSW wards co-organised by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and the TWGHs. Those who made remarkable achievements or showed great improvements in academic studies, conduct, sports, arts and serving others last year were commended at the ceremony today.

Speaking at the ceremony, Ms Yip expressed her appreciation to the awardees for being able to stay resilient in the face of adversity, overcome difficulties and rise to challenges in life with a positive attitude. She extended her gratitude to relatives, carers, volunteers and social workers who have been offering care and support to these children and adolescents. She also encouraged other children and adolescents to continue to work hard and strive to attain their higher goals.

Ms Yip also thanked the TWGHs for co-organising and sponsoring the event, which has offered great encouragement and best wishes for children and adolescents over the years.

At the ceremony today, a total of 44 children and adolescents were presented with either Best Achievement Awards or Best Improvement Awards.

Tsz-yin, a 10-year-old boy, was presented with a Best Achievement Award. Tsz-yin became a DSW ward and was admitted to a small group home as his parents passed away due to illness several years ago and his relatives could not take care of him in the long run. Despite some mishaps, Tsz-yin, at such a tender age, demonstrated great perseverance and managed to cope with challenges in daily life and studies. With his hard work and care and support from the staff of the small group home and his relatives, he not only managed to adapt quickly to the environment of the small group home, but also made outstanding achievements in academic and extra-curricular activities. Looking ahead, Tsz-yin would like to pursue a career as a firefighter to save lives and contribute to society.

Another awardee, Yuet (pseudonym), a 16-year-old girl, has spent her childhood in a foster family since she was 3 as her mother was unable to take care of her. The nurturance and support of the foster family has enabled Yuet to have a healthy upbringing and she also has had opportunities to develop her sports skills and leadership. She has excellent performance in inter-school athletics competitions and was elected as a house captain in school. Yuet also makes good use of her leisure time in volunteering to help the

needy in the community and has received commendation for her service. She aspires to make contributions to society by serving as a nurse.

Children and adolescents are made wards of the DSW in accordance with the court procedures stipulated in the Protection of Children and Juveniles Ordinance (Cap 213) for various reasons, such as death, loss, imprisonment, long-term hospitalisation or incapability of their parents, or their being unable or unsuitable to live with their family members. The SWD's case workers, according to the family conditions and needs of the wards, draw up appropriate long-term welfare plans for them, such as arranging for adoption or reunion with their families, or preparing them to live independently when they become grown-ups.

As at the end of November 2018, there were a total of 622 DSW wards. Among them, 46 per cent lived in foster care homes or small group homes. Thirty-two per cent lived in institutions while the rest lived on their own or with their parents, siblings or relatives.