

Winner and Finalists' Citations

Award	Name	Photo	Citation
Winner	Koh Seng Choon		<p>He lost \$1,000 a day in early years of enterprise that hires those with disabilities</p> <p>For four years, he lost \$1,000 a day propping up the social enterprise he started in 2010 to employ the disadvantaged.</p> <p>Mr Koh Seng Choon, 65, did not pay himself a salary in the first four years of running Dignity Kitchen, a food court that hires people with disabilities as cooks, cashiers and other staff.</p> <p>To make up for the losses and to support his two teenage sons, he juggled five jobs, including teaching, consultancy work and auditing.</p> <p>The former management consultant wanted to give back to society after he saw the plight of people who were poor and had disabilities while he was working in India, China and Britain.</p> <p>Mr Koh has also set up a Dignity Kitchen in Hong Kong, and now employs 189 people in Singapore and Hong Kong.</p>
Finalist 1	Dr Lim Hong Huay		<p>A mother who created a community to support caregivers of those with special needs</p> <p>After two of her three children were diagnosed with autism, Dr Lim Hong Huay left her demanding job as a paediatrician at KK Women's and Children's Hospital in 2017 to be there for them. That was when she realised the difficulties caregivers of people with special needs face.</p> <p>Overwhelmed by the challenge of finding a suitable school for her eldest daughter when she was diagnosed with special needs, Dr Lim joined a support group. She grew a network of friends and fellow caregivers who provided timely advice and help, and gave her hope in her parenting journey.</p> <p>That led Dr Lim, now 52, to start CaringSG in 2020 to provide comprehensive support to caregivers of people with special needs, and</p>

			connect them with agencies and ministries to ease their burdens.
Finalist 2	Daniel Yap		<p>He rescues 9,000kg of unwanted fruit and vegetables a week for those in need</p> <p>Mr Daniel Yap's food rescue journey started in 2017 after he saw people rummaging through trash from his minimart in Little India. Realising they were seeking edible produce, he felt guilty for throwing it away. This spurred him to join a group that rescued and distributed food to low-income families.</p> <p>His passion for reducing food wastage prompted him to start his own group in 2020, Fridge Restock Community. It began by going door to door to vendors in Pasir Panjang Wholesale Centre, collecting fruits and vegetables before they were discarded. Through years of hard work, overcoming rejection and building relationships, Mr Yap now leads a 50-strong volunteer team. They rescue some 9,000kg of produce weekly, distributing it to more than 44 community fridges and collection points, sharing Mr Yap's passion for reducing food wastage while helping those in need.</p>
Finalist 3	Marlina Yased		<p>Woman opened community fridge to help neighbours in rental flats get free groceries</p> <p>Living in a neighbourhood of highly subsidised Housing Board rental flats in Lengkok Bahru, Madam Marlina Yased has heard countless stories of how her neighbours sometimes go hungry while waiting for their next pay cheque. The mother of five has weathered storms of her own, and knows how it feels to not be able to feed her children. In May 2023, the 46-year-old opened a community fridge in her block to offer free groceries to needy neighbours.</p> <p>Every evening, families gather around the fridge at the void deck to get their hands on provisions like vegetables, frozen meat and bee hoon. Children also line up in the morning to get a free packet of Milo or milk before they go to school, as part of Madam Marlina's efforts to motivate them to attend school regularly. The fridge helps around</p>

			50 families a month.
Finalist 4	Maximilian Maeder		<p>Teenage Olympic medallist wants to make Max impact through kitefoiling</p> <p>It has been a stellar season for Singapore's Maximilian Maeder, who won nearly all the events on the international kitefoiling circuit in 2024, including the European and world championships.</p> <p>In August 2024, the 18-year-old became Singapore's youngest Olympic medallist when he claimed bronze at the Marseille Marina.</p> <p>With his accomplishments putting him in the spotlight, the teenager hopes to use his sport to contribute to society and positively impact those around him.</p>
Finalist 5	Sam Shu Qin		<p>Marine biologist dives into work to rally people to save seas</p> <p>While marine biologist Sam Shu Qin knew that the sea was full of mysteries, a washing machine was not what she expected to find on the sea floor while diving in Singapore's waters in 2017.</p> <p>Disturbed by how the washing machine was squashing a patch of corals, Ms Sam in 2017 co-founded Our Singapore Reefs, a community initiative that cleans up coral reefs and raises awareness about the country's marine biodiversity. Since then, the group's volunteer divers have removed from the sea about 12,000 pieces of rubbish, weighing more than 3,000kg.</p> <p>To bring the sea closer to people, Ms Sam wants to run creative programmes to enhance appreciation of marine life. She is doing this through Our Blue Spaces, a non-profit she started in March 2024 that also plans to partner coastal communities in the region for marine conservation efforts.</p>

Finalist 6	Nathania Ong		<p>Actress-singer bags coveted roles in top musicals in London’s West End</p> <p>From moving ballads to spirited anthems, Nathania Ong has aced them all – and even made it to one of the highest levels of commercial musical theatre in the English-speaking world.</p> <p>The 26-year-old actress-singer has put the Lion City on the map as the first Singaporean to clinch two coveted roles in London’s West End.</p> <p>In 2022, she began playing Eponine, a beloved and tragic street waif, in Les Miserables. Then, in June 2024, she put another feather in her cap, this time playing female lead Eliza, the devoted wife of American founding father Alexander Hamilton.</p> <p>In 2023, she also took the stage for charity fund-raising concert Spirit Of Giving: Nathania Ong – A Musical Homecoming Concert at the Esplanade Concert Hall, with proceeds going to The Business Times Budding Artists Fund, which supports artistically talented youth from less-privileged households.</p>
Finalist 7	Narasimman Tivasiha Mani and Joshua Tay		<p>They started charity to support young people who are struggling</p> <p>Mr Narasimman Tivasiha Mani, 40, and Mr Joshua Tay, 30, fell into the business of helping young people by chance.</p> <p>Mr Narasimman, who had dreams of becoming a doctor, joined the Singapore Boys’ Hostel after missing a medical school interview because of a naval deployment. Mr Tay took a different path from his Yale-NUS College schoolmates, who went into fields like management consultancy and technology. He did so after a social work stint showed him that young people in the community needed help.</p> <p>The two men came together to start non-profit Impart in 2019, targeted at helping young people face adversity like mental health struggles,</p>

			<p>domestic violence and neglect.</p> <p>The group has sent more than 1,000 volunteers into the community and helped more than 1,400 people so far. One of its latest initiatives involves reaching out to reclusive youngsters who are not in education, employment or training.</p>
Finalist 8	Yip Pin Xiu		<p>Olympic para-swimmer pushes for more inclusiveness in society</p> <p>Yip Pin Xiu, 33, was diagnosed at two years old with Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, which causes progressive weakening of the muscles, but the para-swimmer has not let the condition stop her from being a phenomenon in the pool.</p> <p>At the 2024 Paris Paralympics, she retained her women’s 50m and 100m backstroke S2 titles, extending her record haul to seven golds and a silver at five editions of the Games. Beyond her sporting talent, the former Nominated Member of Parliament is also a disability advocate and has pushed for more inclusiveness in Singapore society. In February 2024, she became the first para-athlete to have a wax figure at Madame Tussauds Singapore. In September 2024, Yip, who has used a wheelchair since her early teens, called for a kinder and more empathetic society as she highlighted the issues she has faced when using public transport and ride-hailing services.</p>