Preparing the young ones for life’s challenges makes each day meaningful for Ms. Satiahkala Pakirisamy

MS SATIAHKALA Pakirisamy (below) takes pride in ensuring that students at her Cherie Hearts @Kim Keat daycare centre feel enriched and fulfilled.

The 31-year-old assistant principal, who joined Cherie Hearts four years ago, believes that she and her team play a major role in nurturing their young charges.

Other than care-giving, Ms. Satiahkala and her team teach children, who range from infants aged two months to 17 months, to pre-schoolers aged 18 months to six years, to be prepared for life’s challenges.

Ms. Satiahkala joined the early childhood sector seven years ago after discovering that she enjoyed working with young children.

“When I hear my students call out my name and run to give me a hug — that feeling is beyond anything that you can describe,” she says.

Family and friends were sceptical at first about her choice of vocation — in their opinion, an early childhood educator means “low pay and being a nanny”.

She is glad to have pursued her ideals, given the greater recognition her profession is gaining.

“With the increase in government support especially in terms of funding for upgrading, early childhood educators are able to earn a decent pay and are highly regarded in our field,” says Ms. Satiahkala, who has a Diploma in early childhood education from Modern Montessori International and is currently pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education with Management at UniSim.

Supportive environment

Her work is not deskbound. Administrative duties aside, she mentors her teachers on the curriculum execution and delivery, daily class management techniques and guides them in any new challenges faced in their jobs.

She also communicates regularly with parents to build good personal relationships.

With the knowledge she gained from attending workshops, such as dealing with children with special needs, she detected that one of her students had difficulties achieving his developmental milestones.

She alerted his parents and explained to them the benefits of an early intervention programme for their child.

To assist them further, she went the extra mile to source counsellors and the relevant agencies.

Luckily, the parents heeded her advice and the child is now in primary school and coping fairly well with his studies and social life.

Ms. Satiahkala says she is thankful for the constant support from her headquarters, manager’s guidance and the close ties among her colleagues, which contribute to the loving family culture.

Her team of 16 comprises a manager, English and Chinese teachers and support staff who take turns to work shifts during the centre’s operational hours from 7am to 7.30pm.

“There are ample opportunities for career growth and I would love to climb my professional ladder together with Cherie Hearts,” she says.