

Children and adolescents with outstanding achievements commended in 2024 Award Presentation Ceremony for DSW wards (with photos)

The Acting Director of Social Welfare (DSW), Ms Wong Yin-yee, joined the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWGHs), Mr Herman Wai, in a joyful reunion with over 180 DSW wards as well as children and adolescents receiving residential care services from the TWGHs today (March 16) at the 2024 Award Presentation Ceremony for DSW wards co-organised by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and the TWGHs. Those who showed great improvements or made remarkable achievements in the previous year were commended at the ceremony.

Speaking at the ceremony, Ms Wong expressed her appreciation to the awardees for their determination to strive for excellence, persistence in overcoming difficulties in their daily lives and studies as well as positive attitude in embracing challenges. She also extended her gratitude to the relatives, foster parents, carers, volunteers and social workers of the children and adolescents for their love and companionship which support the children in coping with different challenges along their growth journey.

She said that it is a common aspiration and responsibility of the whole society to create a healthy and happy environment for the children. The Government has been taking forward different measures to ensure that proper care and protection are provided for children and adolescents without adequate parental care or those with emergency care needs. These include the increase in the number of residential child care service places as well as a substantial increase in the incentive payment for foster parents starting from next month and the provision of additional support to foster families with children having special learning or care needs in order to encourage more willing individuals to become foster families.

Ms Wong also thanked the TWGHs for their continuous support for the event as well as the encouragement and blessings for the children and adolescents under guardianship all along.

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

Twenty-year-old Kai-ho is one of the recipients of the Best Achievement Award. Kai-ho has become a DSW ward and has been receiving residential services since 2018 when his father passed away due to illness and his ill-health mother could not take care of him. With the support and encouragement of social workers, Kai-ho showed great perseverance despite the challenges in his daily life and studies. Having completed a diploma course in Food and

Beverage Operations at the Vocational Training Council (VTC) in June 2023, Kai-ho has been selected by the VTC as a graduate trainee in light of his outstanding performance. Setting his sights on the motherland and the world, Kai-ho not only represented Hong Kong to participate in the China and Greater Bay Area KamCha Competition in Guangzhou last year, but has also recently become the winner in Restaurant Service in the WorldSkills Hong Kong Competition 2023. He will represent Hong Kong to compete in Finland and France this year.

Another awardee of the Best Achievement Award is Cherianne, a 17-year-old teenager who is receiving residential care services from the TWGHs. Cherianne, coming from a single-parent family, was found suffering from an illness which caused some difficulties in her physical mobility when she was still a young kid. Cherianne did not give up, but strived to undergo rehabilitation training persistently. Maintaining independence in her daily life, Cherianne is now a Secondary Six student sitting for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination this year. Cherianne remains positive despite the challenges in her daily life and she never hesitates to strive for excellence. As a member of the school's track and field team and football team as well as a representative of her school in different competitions, Cherianne has been awarded with various prizes and scholarships. She will also represent the youth of Hong Kong to participate in a youth forum in Australia this year and exchange views with young people from around the world.

With the prime concern on the best interests of children and adolescents, the SWD's caseworkers would, depending on individual case merits, consider applying for wardship for a case in accordance with the court procedures stipulated in the Protection of Children and Juveniles Ordinance (Cap. 213). Children and adolescents are made wards of the DSW 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 caseworkers would also draw up appropriate long-term welfare plans for them according to the family conditions and needs of the wards, such as arranging for adoption or reunion with their families, or preparing them to live independently when they become adults.

As at the end of December 2023, there were a total of 785 DSW wards. Among them, 48 per cent lived in foster care homes or small group homes. Thirty-three per cent lived in institutions while the rest may be subject to other arrangements, such as living with their relatives.

