

---

---

# Track star adds special Sinda award to trophy haul

---

---

**Zhaki Abdullah**

---

---

Sprinter Dipna Lim Prasad is already a household name with her string of national records and 400m hurdles silver in this year's SEA Games on home soil.

Yesterday, she added another accolade. She was one of 19 young people recognised by Indian self-help group Sinda with the new "Special Mention of Outstanding Achievements" award.

One of four new awards introduced this year for the the Sinda Excellence awards, it honours youth who have made significant contributions to their fields.

A total of 414 awards were given out, including 64 for non-academic achievements, over a range of categories from GCE O levels to sports at a tertiary level.

Health Minister Gan Kim Yong, guest of honour for the ceremony, stressed the importance of recognising achievements in non-academic areas.

"There is no longer the notion that there is only a single path to success," he said at the ceremony, held yesterday at Nanyang Polytechnic.

He highlighted Ms Lim Prasad's previous Sinda awards for both her athletic and academic successes, adding that she was not always the fastest runner.

"She owes her success to never giving up, being very clear on what she wants and working hard towards her goals."

Citing the need to give back to the community, he highlighted the achievement of Chris Ganaesh Xavier, who won an award for his score of 267 in the Primary School Leaving Examination.

"Chris is not just all brains. He has a good heart, too," he said, adding that Chris aspired to be a doctor to serve the poor and needy.

Also present at the awards was Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam, chairman of Sinda, and its president, Senior Minister of State for Law and Education Indranee Rajah.

Coming from a neighbourhood school is not an obstacle to success, said second-time award recipient Mukkesh Kumar, who attained a first class honours degree in engineering from the Singapore Institute of Technology.

"As long as you have the determination to go forward, you can," said the former Fajar Secondary School student, who is currently a clinical data reviewer with A\*Star's Singapore Institute for Clinical Sciences.

Said Ms Indranee: "There are many, many ways in which you can do well, so I would encourage people to find their own strength and pursue the thing that works best for them."

---

azhaki@sph.com.sg