

Desire to help others sparks midlife career switch



Elsie Lim and Lee Tang Hwee (right).

PHOTOS: **ELSIE LIM, LEE TANG HWE**

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Ms Lee Tang Hwee, 40, quit a well-paying job to take up physiotherapy so that she can help the growing number of senior citizens with mobility issues.

"I had an urge to go to ground level to serve the elderly," said Ms Lee, who left her maritime post after eight years.

She is among 25 mid-career switchers who this week started an honours degree programme in physiotherapy jointly developed by Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) and Trinity College Dublin.

Now in its second year, the programme has 141 students, up 41 per cent from last year's cohort. It has received over 1,000 applications annually.

Programme director and SIT assistant professor Benjamin Soon, 40, said the demand

can be attributed to the increasing need for more physiotherapists to support Singapore's ageing population.

He added: "There are about 1,700 practising physiotherapists in Singapore, but there is always a growing demand."

This was one reason that spurred Ms Elsie Lim to join the SIT programme. The 42-year-old ex-national rower had benefited from physiotherapy herself while recovering from injury.

"All along, money has not been the only motivating factor for me in my career. It is more about the meaning of the job," said Ms Lee.

As part of World Physical Therapy Day today, the SIT physiotherapy faculty is having an open event from 9am-1pm at SIT @ Dover Sports Hall.

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