1st expat group to get charity award

LONG before the Community Chest was started in 1983, expatriate women from the Japanese Association were volunteering and running charity bazaars.

This year, the association received ComChest's Pinnacle Award for significant long-term contributions – the first expatriate group to be so honoured.

The community has held a charity bazaar every year since 1988, and has raised more than $3 million in the past 24 years for ComChest.

Ms Kayoko Imasaki, who arrived in Singapore with her husband one-and-a-half years ago, is one of its 100 volunteers.

Every week, she spends four hours with special-needs children at Rainbow Centre – Margaret Drive School.

Another member, Ms Junko Nagawa, said through a translator: “We want to show appreciation to Singapore for providing the Japanese community with the comfortable, secure living we have enjoyed.”

Past winners of the Pinnacle Award have included the Public Utilities Board, the Central Provident Fund Board and Singapore Pools.

The 24th annual award ceremony was held yesterday at the Istana.

Other awards presented include the Special Events Platinum Award, which went to the National University of Singapore for raising over $444,400 in last year's Rag and Flag Day, and the Share Award for 20 years of staff participation, which went to the PSA Corporation.

For the financial year 2007-2008, ComChest raised $52 million.

This year, it needs to raise a further $52 million to fund 147 social service programmes and help an estimated 310,000 people.