Top youth award for JJ Lin, 5 others

Singer and fellow recipients active in community projects

BY EISEN TEO

POPSTAR JJ Lin may be a hit here and in China and Taiwan for his melodic Mandopop hits, but few know that the 27-year-old musician visited victims of China's devastating earthquake in Sichuan province last year.

He even penned a song called Love And Hope.

All this was on top of his active involvement in charitable organisations such as the Make-A-Wish Foundation and the Children's Cancer Foundation in Singapore.

It was this ability to excel in community projects on top of his busy music career that landed him this year's Singapore Youth Award (SYA), together with five similar individual awards.

The award, the nation's highest youth accolade, honours Singapore citizens and permanent residents below the age of 35 with "outstanding" distinction in their fields of endeavour and contributions to society.

Administered by the National Youth Council, previous winners include Nominated MP Enice Ong, Singapore Idol Taulik Batuah and national swimmer Joyce Lin Yeo.

This year's recipients were unveiled yesterday at the Scape Youth Centre in Somerset Road.

Together with Mr Lin, artist and film-maker Ho Tze Nyen, 32, bagged the award for the Arts and Culture category, while Ms Lina Chong, 30, assistant manager in leadership and personal development at Nanyang Polytechnic, won in the Community and Youth Services category.

Mr Ho, whose work has earned him numerous awards both locally and internationally - the latest being a placing in the Directors' Fortnight showcase at the Cannes Film Festival for his film Here - made time to teach, lecture and mentor at schools and universities here.

Meanwhile, Ms Chong serves in more than 30 volunteer organisations, such as the People's Association Youth Movement, the Pasir Ris Family Service Centre, and self-help youth-at-risk programmes which mentor troubled youths.

The other winners included Mr Clinton Ang, 35, managing director of wine company Hock Teng Bee, who won in the Entrepreneurship category.

Mr Teng Joo Chuan, 31, principal investigator at the Institute for Infocomm Research, excelled in the Science and Technology category, while national sailor Koh Seng Leong, 25, came out on top in the Sports and Adventure category.

Mr Koh, who captained the national sailing team for the 2007 South-east Asia Games and the Beijing Olympics, still managed to initiate and organise a fund-raising event for the sailing community of Myanmar after Cyclone Nargis in May last year.

All the winners were lauded for their commitment to both their day jobs and community service, SYA panel chairman Edward D'Silva said.

"The winners were at the peak of their game," he said.

They will receive their honours from Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security, Professor S. Jayakumar, at the Istana on Sunday.

Medals of Commendation will also be given to 38-year-old operations manager Lee Hong Chuan and the National University of Singapore Students' Union Volunteer Action Committee.

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