Here’s to young achievers

THE red carpet was rolled out yesterday at the Istana, not for foreign dignitaries, but a group of young Singaporeans with big dreams and bigger achievements.

They were the winners of this year’s Singapore Youth Award.

Four individuals and a team of 12 counsellors received the awards from Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean at a ceremony attended by about 100.

The recipients were film-maker Boo Jun-feng, 27; entrepreneur Darius Cheung, 30; youth community leader Terence Chia, 31; and geneticist Teo Yik Ying, 33. Touch Cyber Wellness, a centre that helps students fight online risks like gaming addiction and cyber-bullying, won the team award.

Started in 1975, the award recognises people under 35 who have excelled both in their careers and in helping the community, for example, by mentoring others. Winners are categorised into areas like the arts, entrepreneurship, science, and community and youth services.

Mr Boo’s first feature film Sandcastle won several awards and was well-received at international film festivals.

Mr Chia, an industrial relations officer with the National Trades Union Congress, devotes his weekends to volunteer work like helping out at an orphanage and running youth camps.

Mr Cheung co-founded tenCube, a start-up offering high-tech applications, such as in mobile security.

Associate Professor Teo has notched several firsts in the growing area of genetic research. He found ways to overcome problems in identifying the genes involved in chronic ailments like diabetes and obesity – and still finds the time to teach and mentor students.

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