Scholarship winner was inspired by nurses during Sars epidemic

Back to school after almost 20 years

SHE left the workforce to look after her children, but returned to work at a hospital.

There, at KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital (KKH) in 2003, as a medical social work assistant, she encountered the Sars epidemic and saw for herself how nurses risked their lives to treat Sars patients.

“During this time, I was able to work closely with them. Their dedication to their jobs was just so inspiring,” said Mrs Aizuriah Mohamed Ali, 39.

It was enough for her to make a career switch to nursing.

Yesterday, Mrs Aizuriah received the Lee Kuan Yew Scholarship to Encourage Upgrading award, which acknowledged her efforts to upgrade herself.

She received a one-off $3,500 cash award.

She said: “I am extremely happy that I am receiving this award because it shows that my efforts have been worthwhile.”


The journey was not an easy one.

Armed with only two O-level passes, Mrs Aizuriah signed up with the Workforce Development Agency’s Place-And-Train programme to become a nurse.

In 2007, she enrolled for a National Institute of Technical Education Certificate (Nitec) in nursing at the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) College East.

Said Mrs Aizuriah: “I was quite nervous because that was my first time going through such a complicated interview process. Thank God that I succeeded and from there, I’ve always sought to improve myself in my profession.”

She spent three years at ITE and got her Higher Nitec in nursing.

Mrs Aizuriah then went to Nanyang Polytechnic to further her nursing studies.

She is now studying at the Singapore Institute of Technology.

Difficult

She said: “At first, it was difficult to adjust because it was the first time I was returning to studying after almost 20 years of taking care of my family and not studying.

“But I stuck to it and the sense of fulfillment I received when I was able to apply what I learn to everyday situations was something which gave me the strength to press on.”

“There were times I wanted to give up because juggling being a mother and student is not easy, but when I saw my exam results, it spurred me on,” she said.

She also said that she could not have done it without the support of her husband, Mr Sulliman Samad, 46, a broadcast technician.

Said Mr Sulliman: “We sat down and discussed how we were going to split the load of taking care of the house and the children.”

The mother of three also studied with her school-going children — her 16-year-old twin boys and her 14-year-old daughter.

Said her son, Mohammad Arqu Sulliman, the younger twin by five minutes: “I think it’s quite cool that we were able to study together. Also, we are quite proud of the fact that she was able to achieve so much after almost two decades of not studying.”

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— Mrs Aizuriah Mohamed Ali