

# Model local cleaners get cash rewards

## Pasir Ris-Punggol scheme to help keep their services

■ BY ANDREA ONG

FIVE days a week, Madam Ong Ah Moi, 78, is up at the crack of dawn to report for work by 5.30am.

She is a part-time cleaner in Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC, where she also resides in an HDB home in Hougang Avenue 9.

But sometimes, her patience is worn thin by inconsiderate residents.

"Some residents like to leave their trash along the common corridor. It's challenging for me when I have to climb the stairs to remove it," said the grandma who intends to work well into her 80s.

Yesterday, she was among 32 local cleaners whose exemplary attitude and work were recognised with cash awards from the Pasir Ris-Punggol Town Council at its GRC Town Day get-together.

Full-time cleaners received \$200, while part-timers like Madam Ong got \$100.

The cash, given out twice a year since 2008, has proven "quite successful" in retaining the local cleaners in the GRC, said town council chairman Ahmad Magad. These 450 workers make up 70 per cent of its army of cleaners. Other ways it has used to coax them to stay include letting

them work flexible hours.

But residents can be a big help too in this effort if they change their ways, suggested Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean and Dr Magad, both MPs for the GRC.

Citing acts like parking bicycles along a narrow corridor or letting wet laundry drip on neighbours' clothes, Mr Teo said: "We don't want it to happen to us, so we shouldn't do it to our neighbours.

"All we need is a little care and consideration, just as we do within our own home. Then we would have a better living environment for all to enjoy."

Residents like Madam Yam Kiah Pang, 46, a purchasing executive, agreed.

Dr Magad also expressed the hope that

the Gracious Living theme of events, like yesterday's, will heighten residents' awareness of their role and lead to his town council getting better scores in the half-yearly government report card on town councils' performance in managing HDB estates.

The results released last week showed that Pasir Ris-Punggol Town Council did not improve on its June scores: Band 2 for cleanliness and Band 3 for maintenance. The top score is Band 1 and the worst, Band 5.

Commenting on the results, Dr Magad said the town is large, with a mix of old and new estates. "There are certain habits, like putting things along the common corridor, which will take a bit of time to

change," he said.

Meanwhile, 25 blocks in Dr Magad's Pasir Ris East ward will be upgraded under the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme but he did not give details.

The programme usually provides for, among other things, covered linkways and playgrounds.

More than 30 blocks in his ward and Mr Teo's Pasir Ris West ward will also get lift upgrading.

Next year, two projects in the GRC will be completed - the Pasir Ris Sports Complex, with swimming pools and dance studios, and a park connecting Sungei Serangoon to Punggol.

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