

Special Hongbao

For NTUC Foodfare's Contract Cleaners



By Nicolette Yeo

As you read this, Madam Teo Chow Choon, 52, a contract plate cleaner under NTUC Foodfare Co-operative Limited, is spending her extra \$100 "bonus" buying more Lunar New Year goodies for her family and tucking into another plate of her favourite chicken rice.

Madam Teo and 159 other NTUC Foodfare contract cleaners received a special Lunar New Year "hongbao" from the company comprising \$100 cash, NTUC Foodfare vouchers, plus heartfelt appreciation

from Chief Executive Officer Perry Ong for their invaluable contributions.

Speaking at the appreciation event on 18 February 2010, Mr Ong said: "Unlike full-time or permanent staff, contract and casual workers may not be entitled to staff benefits such as year-end bonuses or other workplace benefits. As a responsible service buyer and caring employer, we stand here in support for better workplace benefits for these workers, especially those in the lower-wage bracket. They, too, need motivation, encouragement and a safety net to try to better their lives."

NTUC Foodfare will also be working with NTUC's Unit for Contract and Casual Workers to sign up all the 160 contract cleaners as members in order to better their welfare. Madam Teo's

colleague, cleaning supervisor Madam Gilder Fernandez, 62, is particularly grateful for the NTUC Income Life Insurance coverage of up to \$8,000 and is looking forward to the first social gathering with other contract and casual workers.

On the whole, workers will also be able to enjoy skills upgrading and employability enhancement assistance, opportunities for professional and personal growth as well as assistance to upgrade from casual and contract positions to permanent ones.

Taking its duty as a responsible service buyer to the next level, Mr Ong pledged: "As long as Foodfare continues to do well, all our contract and casual workers can look forward to receiving this bonus

annually to supplement their annual income. We will also pay the annual UCCW membership fee as long as our contract cleaners remain in employment with our appointed contracted company."

UCCW Director Zainudin Nordin praised NTUC Foodfare's goodwill gestures as being even more meaningful. "Even though these workers are not their direct employees, it is able to take care of them by giving them Lunar New Year bonuses as well as memberships for UCCW," he said.

