

**Speech by Annabel Pennefather  
President, Singapore Hockey Federation and  
Vice President, Singapore National Olympic Council  
At Theresian Awards Day 2011  
On Friday, 8 April 2011.**

Mrs Pauline Wong, Principal, CHIJ St. Theresa's Convent

Sr Maria Lau, IJ Provincial

Sr Deirdre O'Loan, Supervisor IJ Schools

Members of the IJ Board of Management

Teachers, Students, Parents and Award Winners

Ladies and Gentlemen,

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Good evening. I am pleased and honoured to be part of Theresian Awards Day, 2011 to congratulate and to celebrate with all the deserving 205 recipients.
2. Theresian Awards Day celebrates the academic and co- curricular achievements of all students of the school over the past year as well as the contributions of long serving staff members.
3. Within this strongly bonded school community, which embodies the IJ mission to respect and develop the God-given talents of each person and to encourage each person to become a person for others, I have no doubts that there will never be a shortage of deserving candidates in all the Award categories every year.

**THEME- *GREATER HEIGHTS, BOLDER DREAMS***

4. The Theme for this year's Awards day is *Greater Heights, Bolder Dreams* signifying the school's aspirations to scale greater heights and reflecting its desire to be better prepared to meet the current challenges of Singapore as a global city.
5. Over the years, students of St. Theresa's Convent have done the school proud in both the academic and co-curricular areas, so I am sure that in fulfilling its aspirations to scale greater heights, the focus of the school will continue to be on both .

6. Sport, as some of you may know, has been and continues to be a significant feature of my life. It has given me some of the most fulfilling and some of the most frustrating experiences but overall I would say it has enriched my life greatly and taught me many lessons which I have been able to successfully apply to other undertakings and challenges. So I hope you won't be too surprised that I have chosen to highlight in my address today some of the key values and the power of sport which I feel should feature in any consideration of scaling greater heights and living bolder dreams.

7. Lessons which I learnt from my sport experiences have shown me that if you want to scale greater heights, you must be prepared to push yourself beyond your comfort zones, beyond limits or boundaries which you may place on yourself and more importantly, beyond the limits which others set for you based on their opinions and sometimes their own prejudices and poor judgements.

8. The drive and the belief, whether in sports or other pursuits, must come from within oneself and when that happens you will feel a great sense of fulfillment in what you do and achieve.

9. The Olympic motto *Citius, Altius, Fortius* – Faster, Higher, Stronger – is a call to athletes to give their best during competition. The Olympic Games celebrates the very best of our common humanity. The athletes who have the privilege of taking part in an Olympic Games, and more recently the inaugural Youth Olympic Games in Singapore, in which St Theresa's Convent contributed outstandingly both for the Closing Ceremony and the Cultural and Education Programmes, will tell you that the Games are never just about winning or losing. The scoreboard is not the only indication of a winner and champions are made of more than medals. It is ultimately the human spirit which defines a true champion. That is the most important victory at the Games.

10. As St. Theresa's Convent focuses on scaling greater heights, I hope that this same Olympic spirit and perspectives and the Olympic values of excellence, peace and openness to others will serve to enhance the brightness and the colour of the "Light on the Hill" as the school is often referred to.

## **POSITIVE BENEFITS OF SPORT**

11. The international landscape of the world of sport also presents a host of ideas for the school to draw on in fostering *Bolder Dreams*. Former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, said in a recent address and I quote - "*That the power of sport as a unifying force should be harnessed more than ever to improve social conditions*" - He also reviewed a whole range of examples where the power of sport had impacted the wider world – from the Ping-Pong diplomacy between the US and China in the 1970s, to the impact of staging the last Football World Cup in Africa, Afghanistan qualifying for the T20 Cricket World Cup and the morale lifting victory of the Iraq national team in the 2007 Football Asia Cup.

12. Only a few days ago we saw how India's victory in the Cricket World Cup united a nation and Indians around the world, in places such as the Middle East, England, Canada, the United States and here in Singapore, in support of Team India. Cricket also brought together the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan to watch the semi-final which featured the teams of those two nations where earlier diplomatic initiatives to get them to meet had failed.

13. It is clear that the positive benefits of sport can go much further than the physical and mental improvement of the individual. It is vital too for the health and strength of our societies.

14. Sport has a powerful ability to bring people together, break down racial and gender barriers, encourage cultural understanding, reintegrate refugees, heal mental trauma and encourage economic development. Any bold dream cannot afford to overlook these positive influences.

15. St. Theresa's Convent has enjoyed success in a number of sports as well as other co-curricular programmes but especially in the sport of Hockey in which it can boast a proud heritage. I am not sure how many of you are aware of the fact that when Singapore won its first ever Gold medal in Women's hockey at the 1993 SEA Games, 10 of the 16 member squad were from St. Theresa's Convent which included Melanie Martens who is the current Principal of St. Anthony's Convent and Florence Chua who is one of the highest ranking female Police Officers today holding the rank of Deputy Assistant Commissioner of Police. The supportive environment of St. Theresa's Convent and the school's dedicated and caring teachers, like those being recognized today, ensured the successful combination of sports and studies for these former students and undoubtedly will continue to do so for present and future generations of students.

16. With a new full sized artificial turf pitch, and niche development status for Hockey, St Theresa's Convent will be well placed when it returns to its upgraded school premises to not only regain much of its former glory in the sport of Hockey but also to contribute to the development pipeline for future national squads and teams.

## **CONCLUSION**

Congratulations once again to all the deserving award recipients and for the students don't forget to say a special thank you to all the teachers and family members who made this possible. It is due to their relentless support, guidance and encouragement that you are where you are today. All the very best in your future endeavours – I am confident they will continue to be positive and inspiring.