

# Injury a blessing in disguise for awardee

ANUSHA SELVAMANI

When Ms G. Suthershinii was in Crescent Girls' School, she was more interested in playing netball than hitting the books. But an anterior cruciate ligament tear in 2015 kept her out of court, so she decided to focus on her studies.

With the help of her teachers, Ms Suthershinii's academic performance started to improve and she performed "above expectations" in her O levels, earning a spot at Catholic Junior College, where she did her A levels.

She received offers from various international universities but she did not have the financial means to pursue her education overseas, so she did a double major in life sciences and psychology at the National University of Singapore.

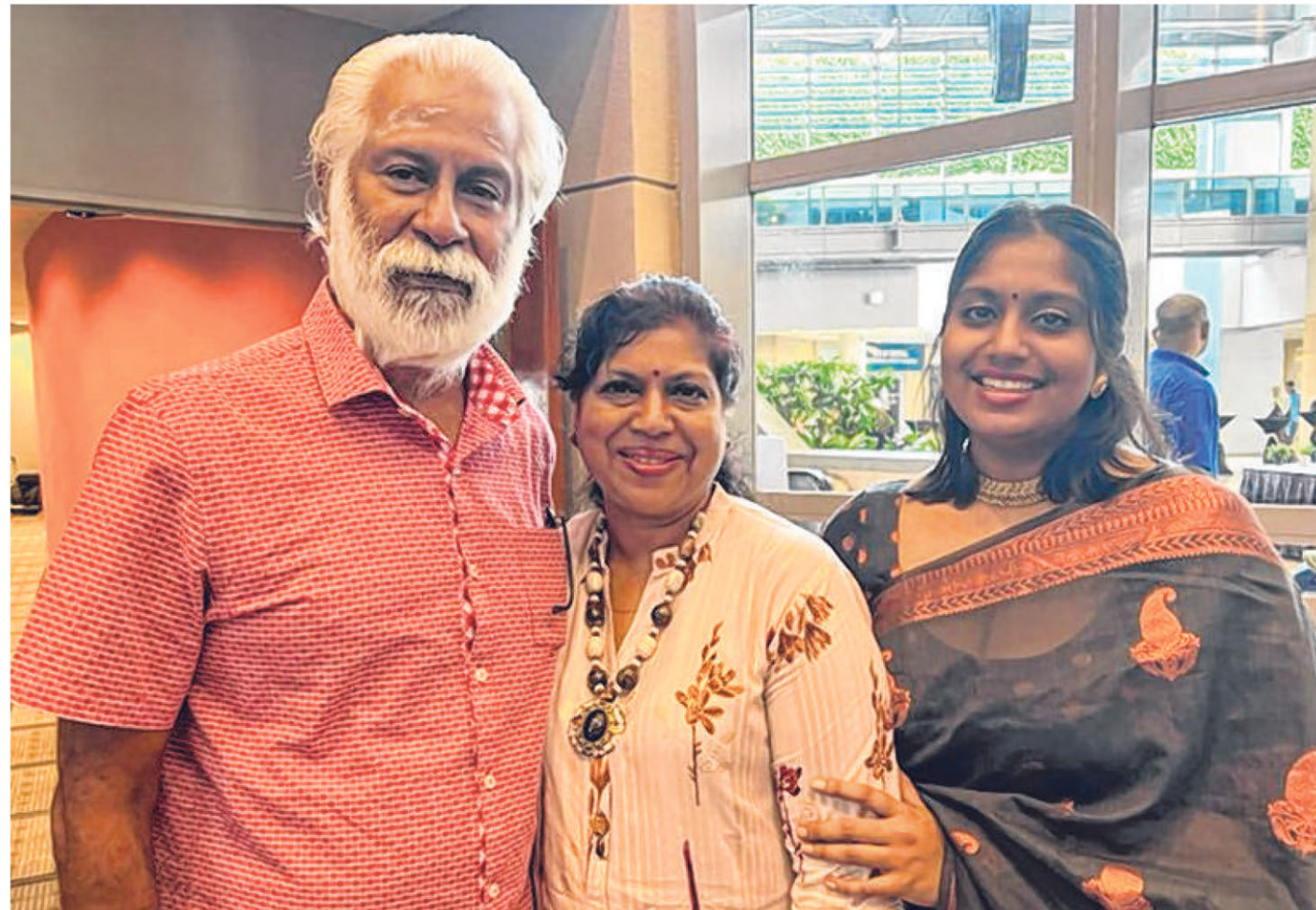
Last Saturday, the new graduate delivered the valedictory speech at the 32nd Sinda Excellence Awards at the Nanyang Polytechnic Auditorium.

"I feel immensely proud of my achievements today. If not for my hard work and support from my family, I would not be able to stand here and deliver a valedictory speech in front of students like me," she said.

She recalled how she was not always so motivated to study and told others feeling the same that education "is the only thing which you can always fall back on".

Ms Suthershinii, 24, was one of 851 awardees, making it the largest cohort of recipients since the self-help group's honours were launched in 1992. The annual awards are given to Indian students who excel in studies, sports or the arts.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for Education and Foreign Affairs Maliki Osman gave



Award winner G. Suthershinii with her parents. PHOTO: ANUSHA SELVAMANI

out the awards in the first session, while the honours were done by Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Finance and National Development and Sinda president Indranee Rajah in the second.

The recipients this year, ranging from PSLE students to local and overseas bachelor's degree graduates, received between \$150 and \$500.

"Students should not just stop excelling in academics after receiving this award," said Ms Indranee.

"They should show hunger for more opportunities and continue to learn new things and widen their horizons.

Apart from studies, I also encourage the students to join hands with Sinda and actively serve the community."

Sinda CEO Anbarasu Rajendran felt it was "a proud moment in the history of the award ceremony".

"The number of Indian students performing well makes me feel that Sinda has done its part to ensure no child is left behind in our programmes and initiatives," he said.

"It's even more heartening to see that 99 students from this year's cohort have been involved in one or more of Sinda programmes and initiatives."

Ms Suthershinii paid tribute to her

father, who she said was her biggest inspiration, prioritising the family members' needs and encouraging her to explore her full potential.

Ms Suthershinii, a research assistant in the Infectious Diseases Department at the Duke-NUS graduate medical school, is passionate about science and hopes to use it to benefit mankind.

Although she has quit competitive sports and plays only recreational badminton, she is active, doing voluntary work with the Children's Cancer Foundation, and is education director at the non-profit Grow Education.

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– Ms G. Suthershinii