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Youth Voices: “I want, and I will be the best that I can be”

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Xuan Qi works as a busser at IKEA Tampines Restaurant.

We share stories of three youths who show us what it means to be resilient in their special ways, and to live life to the full. This is the first story in a three-part series.

Han Xuan Qi is a 22-year-old with mild intellectual disability who has been working at IKEA Tampines restaurant as a busser, since 2017. She hopes to be a team leader in the future. As a graduate from Delta Senior School, she continues to hold fast to the school motto, 'I want and I will be the best that I can be'. She loves to go out with her friends and watch comedy movies. She also enjoys engaging in conversations with customers. If you see her around IKEA Tampines, do say 'Hello!' and share your favourite movie with her, too! For now, let's hear a little more from Xuan Qi about her work experiences.

What is your typical day like at work?

Before the restaurant opens, I start the daily preparations, such as operating the coffee machine and preparing various items for customers: chilli sauce, ketchup, sugar, creamer, salt, pepper and stirrers. During operating hours, I have various responsibilities: assisting customers, clearing and cleaning tables, bringing trolleys to the dishwashing station, topping up customer trolleys, topping up drinks, etc. After the restaurant closes, I assist with cleaning up, such as washing the coffee machine and dispensers. I am tired at the end of the day, but I enjoy my work.

What is the favourite part of your work?

I like assisting customers, such as clearing their tables and pushing trolleys to the trolley station. I am happy when I see customers having a good experience at IKEA! When I see my customers smile and say 'thank you', I feel happy.

What are some challenges that you have faced at work?

Carrying items like milk cartons can be physically tiring.

How do you cope with these challenges?

I ask my co-workers, like my team leader Edward, for help and they will help me. I also try to keep myself physically fit by going for an hour's run every other weekend.

What are some memorable experiences at work?

I like the Dinner & Dance celebrations and department outings every four months. During my days off, we sometimes watch a movie or have a meal at Orchard too.

What are some skills you have learned from work?

Asking questions to gain more knowledge. I learned to be more pro-active, to take the first step in helping customers and co-workers. I also learned to communicate and build relationships with my co-workers. My colleagues Sakina and Jacky were also my friends from school. We used to study together, and now we work in IKEA together.

How has your experience in Delta Senior School helped to prepare you for work?

I remember I started with on-site training for six months at a supermarket. That was followed by a work exchange programme for almost one year. Trainers were there to guide me, and I kept track of my progress to develop myself.

What have you learned in school that you find useful at work?

The school motto has given me confidence that 'I want and I will be the best that I can be'. I remind myself to always keep trying and never give up.

How did you come to know about this job?

I learned about this job through my job coaches. When I first heard about it, I was very excited and eager to learn as much as I could.

How did you prepare for the job interview?

I learned what I needed to do at work from my job coach, Mr Roger. After I got the job, Mr Roger accompanied me on my first day at work. He also kept in contact with my team leaders and managers to ensure I was coping well at work. I am still in contact with Mr Roger to this day.

What are some tips that you can share with other youths looking for work?

Don't be late for work. Learn to respect others. Don't gossip. Sleep early and be prepared for work.

What activities do you enjoy when you are not at work?

I like having dinners at home with my family. I also love going out with my friends and catching movies—my favourites are comedy and action movies! The last movie I watched was Spider Man.

What are your aspirations for the future?

I hope to continue working in IKEA, and hopefully I can take on a team leader role.

Check out the rest of the stories in this series: "[A zest for life and learning](#)" and "[Marching to his own beat](#)"