Appreciation from those you help makes it worthwhile

BY EPHRAIM LOY

I USED to think that youths these days are getting more selfish.

But the National Youth Council says that social participation here increased by 10 per cent from 2002 to 2005.

And the proportion of youths in leadership positions has risen by 8 per cent.

This is a good sign. Social participation is a great way in which to strengthen certain values — such as respect for elders.

I, however, have taken to another genre of volunteer work. For the past two years, I have been promoting “a sporting Singapore”.

I have been working with the Singapore Sports Council’s Team Singapore arm.

My work took me overseas where I had to lead a team of supporters for a day during the recent South-east Asia Games in Manila.

I have also been promoting the local arts scene by helping to distribute flyers for events.

It was tough standing for several hours at various locations, sometimes under the hot sun.

But when you see receptive faces and smiles, thoughts of how physically challenging the job is disappear.

Balancing such jobs with schoolwork is definitely a challenge. Proper time management is necessary.

I have learnt a lot from my work — including how to manage events, mentor my peers and take on a leadership role.

The sense of satisfaction I get, and words of appreciation from those who have benefited, spur me on to greater heights.

Some have come up to me to say they have enjoyed themselves. Others compliment my hard work.

It does not matter what type of volunteer work you do. What matters most is having an open mind and the right attitude.

Soon you will find your social circle growing and you also gain a vast amount of exposure.

The writer is a first-year social science student at Singapore Management University.