143 youths receive National Youth Achievement gold award

By Lynda Hong, Channel NewsAsia | Posted: 05 October 2007 0348 hrs

SINGAPORE: A total of 143 youths received the National Youth Achievement Gold Award on Thursday.

This is in recognition of their mental, physical and emotional endurance.

And it seems more young people are up to the challenge.

Organisers say starting this year, the awards will be given out annually instead of once in two years.

Rumya Ananthan, 20, admits she is not the sporty type, but the Nanyang Polytechnic graduate has completed an expedition at Mount Ophir.

Her biggest achievement, however, is being chosen to meet United Nations Chief Ban Ki Moon in New York later this month.

She is one of only four youth leaders from around the world picked for that meeting.

And that’s because she made quite an impression when she presented a health report on youth in India last year.

Rumya said: "Going through this NYAA journey has built up a lot of my confidence. I have a lot of confidence to speak to people - more now. In that aspect, NYAA has really, really helped me. Because if it was me last time, I would be really quiet in front of him."

Another gold recipient is 22-year-old Regina Oon.

The undergraduate from the Singapore Management University conquered her fear of heights to reach her research sites - 2,300 metres above sea level.

The climb was part of an Earth Watch Expedition in Sichuan.

Regina said: "Researchers have been doing this everyday, and when you go there, you don’t want to be a liability. You want to contribute. So it was really an internal struggle between what you are afraid of and what you believe in. So when people talk about motivation, perseverance, determination - that’s when I really felt it.

"You are not going there for a holiday. You are going there as a youth ambassador, Singapore. With my own passion to do something for the environment - that overcame my fear of heights."

A total of 143 participants received the gold award this year.

And each of them had undertaken a variety of voluntary and challenging activities for at least 18 months.

These activities are classified as - Service, Adventurous Journey, Skills, Physical Recreation and Residential Project. - CNA/de