

# Part-time job, whole-hearted service

By **Belinda Wan**  
 bwan@sph.com.sg

Looking to earn extra income to save for retirement, this former housewife applied for a part-time position at a restaurant in 2002.

Into her 12th year of service as a food checker with Jumbo Seafood Gallery, Madam Ling Mee Ing, 55, is one of its longest-serving part-timers, working six days a week, from 5pm to midnight.

"The shift hours suit me as I can do housework at home and cook dinner for my family before my shift starts," she said.

Full-time staff work in split shifts and need to clock in nine hours per shift.

Hired as a permanent part-timer, Madam Ling enjoys staff benefits as well as perks such as discounts when she dines at all restaurants managed by Jumbo.

As a food checker, she is required to ensure there is consistency in the quality and presentation of the food and beverages served to diners. For example, the food served must be at the correct temperature, with the correct sauces or condiments and in the right order. These are details which add to the customer's dining comfort and satisfaction.

With the popularity of Jumbo Seafood Gallery, there is a constant stream of diners every evening, with bigger crowds on weekends.

### Fresh view of life

Work is hectic and fast-paced but Madam Ling relishes her work hours. When she first joined, she was apprehensive, unsure if she would be able to cope with the demands of working for a well-established company.

But with her family's encouragement and the help of colleagues, Madam Ling gained the confidence and motivation to do well at work.

"Being a full-time mother, my social life revolved largely around my family and neighbours I meet at the market. Over here, my perspective of the world has widened as I get to interact with my co-workers and I enjoy the camaraderie at work," she said.

"Having supportive colleagues helps to keep my spirits high and motivated to carry on doing my best. When my colleagues know that I am stressed out, they will tease me and make me laugh. Sometimes, they make funny faces or crack jokes to lighten my mood."

### Rewards beyond the paycheck

"I have learnt a lot on the job, such as how teamwork is crucial to delivering top-quality food and service to our customers. Every member on the staff plays a part in making the dining experience an enjoyable one so that the



customers will keep coming back," said Madam Ling.

"Working in a team has trained me to communicate better with my colleagues. At times during the peak hours when everyone is pressed for time, I learnt to manage my own stress, stay calm and exercise patience.

"Having been a housewife for so long, I feel proud to be part of the workforce and having the ability to earn my own income. It is satisfying to buy things for my husband and my children, treat them

to meals and have some extra money to go on tours."

As for job satisfaction, Madam Ling said: "When I see the empty plates and diners with happy smiles on their faces, I feel it is worth the effort my colleagues and I work hard to put in. It wasn't easy for someone like me who has been a full-time mother and housewife to return to work. But I want to encourage other housewives out there to consider taking up a job as it opens up your world to new possibilities and lets you discover your own hidden abilities."