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MAY - JULY 2010

Potent mix of passion, coffee and airplanes

The most outstanding student of Ngee Ann Polytechnic from the class of 2010 puts it all down to Lady Luck

Erica Rae Chong

Top scholar Tan Jun Liang attributes his shining success to Lady Luck but even she must agree that behind every success story is some oft-quoted factors.

Passion, perseverance, a sense of humour, close friends, supportive lecturers and caring family members... these reign supreme in the life of the Aerospace Technology graduate who was awarded the prestigious Ngee Ann Kongsi Gold Medal and

the Lee Kuan Yew Award.

The top award offers a bond-free scholarship to pursue any degree at any university of the scholar's choice.

A beaming Jun Liang, 20, says, "I've known since joining Ngee Ann Polytechnic that I wanted to further my education overseas. However, since I come from a poor family background, I knew that without a scholarship I couldn't do it."

Jun Liang will take up the Singapore Technologies Engineering scholarship and

pursue a degree in Aerospace Engineering at the Imperial College in London.

His passion for aerospace technology took flight from a childhood fascination.

"As a child, I was curious as to how something as big as a jumbo jet could take off," he said.

His passion for planes, all the success factors and copious amounts of coffee he calls his "brain food" carried him through many hours of rushing assignments at the Aerospace

Technology Hub.

He must be really good at it, judging from his list of extra-curricular activities that makes you pant just reading it.

As President of the Aerospace Technology Society, he organises outreach activities such as constructing radio-controlled planes. The Society even constructed a blimp to fly the national flag across campus on National Day.

Jun Liang is also a member of Ubin Volunteers and

TeamSeagrass, a marine conservation group. He occasionally joins them in their ventures to nearby islands, such as Pulau Semakau, to monitor the health of marine plants and reefs there.

He also works as a librarian at Bugis Library, gives tuition to primary, secondary and junior college students, and was part of the Ngee Ann Fencing team.

Making it to the top, according to him, is also all about knowing how to manage time.



Jun Liang sitting regal in the cockpit of the A-4 Skyhawk at NP's Aerospace Technology Hub.

HOW DID THE TOP GRADUATES A.C.H.I.E.V.E IT?

Be **ATTENTIVE** in lectures and tutorials - Wah Chia Ling

COMPANIONS are like armour, making us invincible - Janani Ramados

Stay **HYDRATED**, especially during the exam period - Jocelyn Tay

Nissan **INSTANT NOODLES** keeps me alert - Kenneth Chan

EXERCISE be it sports or e-sports - Tan Jun Liang

VOLUNTEER, because extra karma never hurts - Chong Hui Xian

Make **EFFICIENT** use of your limited time - Joyce Lee Ping



>>> CENTRESPREAD
Meet the other top graduates of 2010 (left)

>>> PAGES 17 & 18
Meet the pioneer graduates of Digital Visual Effects, Aerospace Electronics and Psychology & Community Services

SPOTLIGHT

Opening your eyes to water woes

Lien Aid collaborates with m:idea to raise awareness of the water sanitation crisis

Aaron Toh Ming Wei and Amala Kannan

The 6-km run that took place on Apr 18 was a breeze for most runners. But it was the steps they took into the exhibition booth to learn about the water story that made them stop in their tracks.

It was at the invitation of Lien Aid that m:idea, NP's very own youth-led media conglomerate, conceptualised an exhibition in conjunction with Dow Live Earth Run for Water. Lien Aid is a subsidiary of Lien Foundation, a philanthropic organisation founded by the late Dr. Lien Ying Chow.

The exhibition showcased compelling photographs of Lien Aid's many water and sanitation projects in Vietnam, Cambodia and China to provide clean water and sanitation facilities to schools, hospitals and rural villages.

The 20-metre by 10-metre exhibition booth was constructed out of purely recyclable and reusable materials, such as old fishnets being used as a photo board.

Ms Jane Tan, 35, Senior Rev Ops Specialist, who was drawn to the



Visitors to the Lien Aid booth were invited to pledge their support for clean water.

exhibition out of curiosity, says, "The exhibition is really eye-opening, especially the pictures – they really paint a clear picture of the state of the water crisis in other countries."

On Lien Aid's participation in the Run

for Water, Mr Sahari Ani, CEO of Lien Aid, says, "Our main purpose here is to create awareness of the problem. Some people came to the booth, some didn't, but what's important is that they have all learnt more about water issues."

RUN FOR WATER

The 6-km route was a symbolic number that represented the distance that the average water deprived person has to travel daily to get clean water. Four of 5000 participants attempted the run while carrying a 20-litre can of water.

Says civil servant Mohammed Aziz, 26, the first jerry can runner to cross the finish line, "I was already tired after 1 km, and my hands got badly cut. The people with no clean water have to go through this everyday."



Young boy tries his hand at lifting a 3-litre jerry can.

BOARD GAMES ARE MAKING A COMEBACK



Perhaps it's a case of e-fatigue but board games are making a comeback – at least at Ourspace@72.

Chang Jing Hui, 17, a first-year Biomedical Engineering student, feels that playing board games allows her to interact more with her friends whereas playing electronic games confines her to her own world.

According to Ms Tamilselvi, person-in-charge of the board games and TV room, the room is often packed to the brim. She says, "The number of students playing board games has definitely increased by 30 per cent compared to last year, especially from 11 am to 4 pm."

The Board Games Zone at Ourspace@72 has recently expanded its games collection to cater to varied interests.

Monopoly is played most at the students' favourite watering hole, followed by Taboo and Risk. - **DHEVARAJAN DEVADAS**

BUST A MOVE AND GLOW WITH THE FLOW



NP's first glow-in-the-dark party at the convention centre was a crowd-pleaser as more than 2,000 students turned up.

Unlike last year's freshmen dance, this year's party on Apr 23 was opened to the whole school.

It was organised by the NP Students' Union (NPSU) to bond freshmen with seniors.

"Usually there are two events planned every year, but there's no point in having a night just for freshmen when no one knows each other and they only mingle among themselves," says Lewis Zhuang Yuxuan, one of the event chairmen.

Renowned deejay Kzee from St James Power Station, who is popular for mixing a variety of music genres, played his regular fusion of contemporary hip-hop and rhythm and blues. He also played numbers from Lady Gaga and the Black Eyed Peas, the favourite of many students.

- **NUR HAZIRAH BTE SUKARJI**

SPCA DRIVES THE MESSAGE HOME WITH UNIQUE DISPLAY



Students who walked by the lift lobby at block 52 on Apr 26 were greeted with a peculiar sight – a trash bag with something wriggling and making faint meowing sounds.

Set up by marketing and communications firm, Young and Rubicam (Y&R) for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), the attention-grabbing display aims to educate students on responsible pet ownership.

Consisting of a motion-sensitive mechanical contraption hidden within an ordinary trash bag, the display is meant to be the recreation of an animal abandonment scenario.

"The SPCA needs to raise awareness of pet abandonment in Singapore, and what better way than to start from the ground up – with the impressionable minds of young students?" says Ms Prue Harrison, the Regional Account Director for Y&R. - **AARON TOH**

ALL EYES SET ON GREEN INNOVATION



NP's first innovation development hub, Ideawerkz, marked its launch with activities aimed at promoting green innovation among students.

Held from Apr 26 to 29, the event featured activities such as "Zero-Carbon Travel" and "Silent Movie Night".

Students tried out alternative modes of transport such as Segway machines and E-Bikes, and experienced an outdoor movie screening with the audio broadcasted from personal FM devices instead of large speakers, respectively.

Delphine Ow, the Director of Ideawerkz says, "We want to first inculcate a sense of interest in innovation by showing how it relates to issues students are passionate about, such as going green."

Located at Block 25, Ideawerkz also provides resources like books, videos, and meeting rooms. - **BIBEK GURUNG**

FRESHMEN DANCE THEIR WAY INTO CHAMPIONSHIP



The School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) danced their way into the top spot in a mass dance competition that marked the end of the four-week-long freshmen orientation programme.

Billed as Dance4Fun, the competition that attracted 11 groups was held at the Convention Centre in late April.

Switching from telematches in the previous years to the dance competition was the answer to the overwhelming response to last year's dance extravaganza Danzation.

Mr Andrew Choo, Student Development and Alumni Relations (SDAR) manager, says that about 50 per cent of the dancers were freshmen.

FMS won NP Co-op vouchers worth \$200, while first runner-up Electrical Engineering and second runner-up Life Sciences & Chemical Technology won vouchers worth \$150 and \$100 respectively. - **RENU BEGUM**

Through the looking glass, darkly

Challenge your sense of what vision is in this new social enterprise set up by the School of Humanities

Clare Isabel Ee

Dialogue in the Dark (DiD) in Singapore is the world's first large-scale social enterprise to be autonomously helmed by students.

Housed in NP, the enterprise challenged students from the School of Humanities (HMS) to manage administrative duties, interact with the public and manage 14 visually impaired guides - all on a professional level.

Most of the students are from the Business & Social Enterprise (BZSE) course.

"We designed Dialogue in the Dark for students to run as we wanted this social enterprise movement to be championed by the young people themselves. It is such an innovative platform for students to think of creative ideas," says Ms Choo-Yeo Cheh Hoon, Director of HMS.

During the one-hour tour, visitors to DiD walk through themed rooms in the complete absence of light. They are therefore compelled to trust and rely on their guides, hence facilitating positive interaction.

Shine Koh, 19, a final-year BZSE student, says, "It was so dark that there was no difference between opening and closing your eyes. I almost suffered a panic attack in the first few minutes."

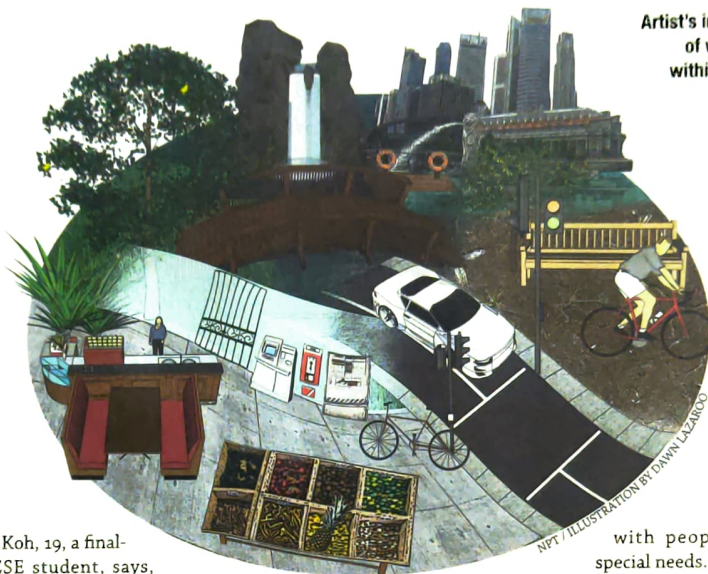
Says Mr Glen Ng, project manager of DiD, "There was no manual of any sort for us. We had to rely a lot on trial and error, and from there, implement a flexible system that we could tweak

along the way."

Apart from serving as a learning platform, DiD has also provided members of the local blind community with stable jobs.

This business model helps to integrate the visually impaired in the working world, and allows HMS students to learn to interact

Artist's impression of what lurks within the dark



with people with special needs.

This unique management system has garnered the full approval of Dr Andreas Heinecke, 40, founder of DiD.

"I think [that] the combination of an employment programme to have an occasion in social learning is a wonderful concept. I hope we can bring it to other places in the world as well," says Dr Heinecke at the

official launch of DiD in April.

Dr Heinecke first talked about DiD in Singapore to Mr Jack Sim, founder of the World Toilet Organisation. Mr Sim then approached the NP Principal, Mr Chia Mia Chiang, to consider hosting a permanent exhibition on campus.

Mr Chia was convinced that "as a training facility, Dialogue in the Dark [will be able to] inject a fresh and enriching perspective to the learning dimension" for HMS students, and gave the green light to the idea.

Since its soft launch in October last year, DiD has touched the lives of more than 2,500 primary and secondary school students, as well as more than 4,000 members of the public.

"Our students have benefitted tremendously from [DiD] and NP is proud to share this thought-provoking experience with everybody," says Mr Chia.

Who is the founder of Dialogue in the Dark? Email your answer to contest.nptribune@gmail.com and stand a chance to win a pair of tickets to the exhibition! Contest ends Aug 1.

Kelvin, the guiding star

Aaron Toh

A star shines in the dark.

That star is Kelvin Tan Wei Lian - a bona fide, homegrown music artiste who shot to fame after winning the first ever Project Superstar, MediaCorp's singing talent search competition in 2005.

The star continues to shed light on the world of the visually impaired that is depicted in Dialogue in the Dark, a social enterprise on NP campus that puts the average sighted person through the trials of the visually impaired.

Humble and unassuming, Kelvin, 26, is one of the 14 visually impaired guides who work at DiD Singapore, where he leads visitors through everyday situations such as grocery shopping in an hour-long exhibition that is meant to simulate the realities of complete blindness.

"I'm really proud to be a part of DiD, helping people to understand the visually handicapped," Kelvin says, breaking into his trademark awkward smile that has endeared him to millions of fans.

"Blind people are only just humans," Kelvin adds. "We [too] use Twitter, Facebook and SMS, the only difference being that we need special programmes to help us read what's on the screen."

DiD gives people who can see a great chance to heighten their sense of hearing, Kelvin explains.

"People think that the blind have great hearing skills. The truth is, we are all born with the same hearing capacity. The thing about sight is that it distracts you from being able to listen properly. In DiD, you are able to fully concentrate on voices and sounds to guide you."

Surrounded by other visually impaired guides and staff at DiD, Kelvin considers himself fortunate to be part of such a global programme. "I have made so many friends here, especially with the interns," he says. "Being in NP, surrounded by students - it really makes me feel younger!"

What are Kelvin's plans for the future? "I intend to concentrate on being a guide here, and let music take a back seat for awhile," he says.



"The thing about sight is that it distracts you from being able to listen properly."

Key notes for Dialogue in the Dark

- 1 Wear a unique material like silk or denim so that you can easily be identified by touch.
- 2 The way you perceive smells will be very different. You will be blown away by your newfound ability to accurately locate the relative positions of people and objects by their scent.
- 3 Be prepared for the possible onset of claustrophobia. Practise deep breathing exercises and alert your guide if you require any assistance.
- 4 You will be touched. Groping, accidental or otherwise, may also occur. If you have any personal space and/or touching issues, you may want to reconsider.
- 5 Come dressed in sensible shoes and clothes, as the tour spans an entire hour and involves plenty of walking across different terrains.

NEWS

NP first among local schools to offer course with Civil Service College

Yeong Kar Yan

The Civil Service College (CSC), a statutory board under the Public Service Division, Prime Minister's Office, signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with NP on Mar 2.

The two institutions are to jointly offer the Professional Certificate in New Media Communications (NMC), a programme that will serve to develop the public sector's competency in the field of new media.

During the MOU-signing ceremony, Mr Lionel Teo, the CEO and Dean of CSC called the partnership a "collaboration [that] could not be more timely", citing the National Heritage Board and Ministry of Health as examples of the government using new media effectively to engage the public.

"It is important that even as the Public Service as a whole starts leveraging on new media more to reach out to their stakeholders, we equip public officers with the proper training so that the integrity and professionalism of the Public Service continues to be upheld," says Mr Teo.

Primarily targeted at public officers who perform public affairs or corporate communication functions, the week-long programme will train participants in engaging the public through the effective use of new and social media and its platforms.

Mr Chia Mia Chiang, NP Principal, also believes the programme will be successful.

Referring to the trainers, NP staff Mr Robin Yee, Mr Preetam Rai and NP alumni Mr Melvin Yuan, Mr Chia says, "The combination of Melvin's PR and strategic strengths, Preetam's



Civil servants visiting Ngee Ann Polytechnic during Public Service Week had a chance to experience TV Production for one day.

understanding of technology and tools, and Robin's content skills makes for a balanced and exciting training programme."

As such, participants will undergo several hands-on

sessions to learn how to create videos, audio or photo essay content.

Mr Yee, who teaches Online Journalism in the School of Film & Media Studies (FMS), says, "It

was a tremendous experience to put this together with my other co-trainers and I think it speaks very well of the polytechnic that we are regarded as being able to lead the industry in this field."

Going beyond the ABCs of saving

The Lien Ying Chow Library has stepped up efforts to develop financial literacy among students

David Lim Hong Weng

Nine in 10 students recognise the importance of financial literacy, but only 57 per cent of those surveyed practise any form of wealth management.

The poll of 100 students by npTribune also revealed that most of them believe that making regular deposits into their savings account alone is adequate when it comes to money management.

On the findings of the poll, Mrs Choo Jin Yi, an academic manager from the School of Business & Accountancy (BA), says, "It is not enough just to put our money in a savings account. There are many financial instruments in the market, carrying various degrees of risks, which we can use. Understanding the risks and reward associated with those instruments, and our own risk tolerance, will help us to better manage our hard-earned money."

Recognising the importance of financial literacy among youth, the Lien Ying Chow Library has, in recent years, been collaborating with the BA Investment Club to organise monthly talks on financial literacy for NP students.

The talks, which cover investments and wealth management, are held at

Creation Infocentre on level 3 in the library.

Mrs Lim Bee Ang, the Reference and Information Services manager of the library, says that the library organises these talks to "help NP students become prudent and confident investors in time to come."

At the root of this misconception is an incomplete understanding of financial literacy, with seven in 10 respondents indicating that they have little to no knowledge on how to manage their assets.

Statistics from the DP Credit Bureau (DPCB) last year indicated that Singaporeans between the age of 21 to 29 years old are struggling with credit and debt management.

The rate of credit card defaults in this group is 126.89 per cent higher than the national average of 3.11 per cent, DPCB revealed in a Straits Times article titled 'Struggling with credit, debt' on May 19, 2010.

Says Mr Chong Kek Weng, a BA lecturer, "It puts students in good stead when they start working as they will need to undergird their future with the strong foundations of discipline, thrift, savings, spending within one's means and a long term stance to grow one's savings through investments."

Mylene Tan Gek Jia, 17, a first-year Pharmacy Science student, who has attended one such talk, was all praises for the talks' usefulness. She says, "I have learnt how to manage my finances in a smarter and more creative manner. I strongly encourage other students to attend such talks as they are enriching."

At the Wealth Creation Infocentre, students can also find books, periodicals, media, and even simulated games to enhance their learning experience.

The next financial talk will be held in June. To find out more about upcoming talks, visit <http://www.np.edu.sg/library/announcement/Pages/default.aspx>

Millionaire, or not

1) Diversification is the spreading out of investments to _____ risks by combining a wide variety of investments.
a) Eliminate, b) Transfer, c) Reduce

2) Albert Einstein once coined compounding as the 8th wonder of the world. What is an example of compounding?

a) Reinvesting your dividends or interest of your investment over a long period, b) Buying gold in anticipation of a rise in prices, c) Working longer hours and doing odd jobs to enhance your income.

3) 'The market has been bearish for the past few months but may correct soon.' What does bearish mean?

a) Prices stagnating, b) Prices falling, c) Prices rising

4) What is speculation?

a) Buying or selling an instrument for a very short period to make quick profits, b) Buying or selling an instrument and holding it for a long period to earn large profits, c) Buying or selling an instrument over either short or long periods with borrowed funds.

5) _____ is the act of borrowing money from a broker to purchase equities. It can generate great returns but the risk of incurring huge losses is also very high.

a) Share Leasing, b) Money Laundering, c) Margin Trading

What's your score? (1 point for each correct answer)
0: Take this as a wake up call. Mark that date for the next talk on financial literacy at the Library!

1 - 3: You get the point but you still have a long way to go.
4 - 5: Congratulations! Now, apply what you know into your daily life, and maybe, one day, you might just give Bill Gates a run for his money. Maybe.



QUIZ ANSWERS: 1) c, 2) a, 3) b, 4) c, 5) c

Embracing cultural diversity



The various activities held during NP Community Day to promote a greater understanding of local cultures, include competitions, performances and exhibitions.

Students walked down memory lane to revisit childhood games and received a deeper understanding of local culture at NP Community Day.

YEONG KAR YAN
reports

In an effort to reach out to international students and promote racial harmony, NP Community Day was held for the first time on campus.

Organised by the Student Services Office (SSO), the event was held on May 12 and 13.

Celebrating cultural diversity, the event also aimed to build students' understanding of Singapore culture.

Students were treated to a wide array of activities, which included five travelling exhibitions from the National Heritage Board as well as two show segments

featuring cultural performances from various CCA groups along with games, quizzes and a Best Ethnic Costume Competition.

Ms Annie Poon Suey Leun, Further Studies Liaison Officer says, "It's important to integrate the local and international students especially in a global city like Singapore. Such exhibitions will help international students to understand our way of life."

For second-year Nursing students from the School of Health Sciences (HS), Liu Xiaoming and Xia Rong, the exhibition was a fascinating and

insightful experience.

Their favourite exhibit was "Romance, Hopes & Dreams," which showcased miniature model representations of Chinese, Malay, Indian and Eurasian wedding ceremonies.

"It's so amazing," says Xia Rong, "because we don't get to meet so many different races in China and we have never attended such weddings before. Now we know what they dress like!"

CCA cultural groups such as Baracuda Batucada, Malay Cultural Club, Indian Cultural Society, and Japanese Tsubasa

Club gave entertaining performances while students from Myanmar joined in the fun by educating the audience on their culture, work, school, and even wedding ceremonies through their song and dance.

With several international students from Vietnam, Myanmar and China in his course, second-year Real Estate Business student, Muhd. Al Hafidz B. Abdullah, could see the event's importance.

"We should always reach out to them to make them feel more comfortable," he says.

'Journey At NP' gets the thumbs-up

NP uses a new approach to reach out to first-year students and their parents through informal dialogue sessions

Jonathan Chua

Friendly, approachable, and informative – these were the key impressions of NP that the Student Development & Alumni Relations Office (SDAR) wanted the audience to leave with, and succeed it did.

From videos showcasing the best of NP to engaging dialogue sessions with the directors and lecturers, "Journey At NP" is a new initiative launched by SDAR this year for the polytechnic to interact with both parents and students in a fresh way.

"I am very impressed with this dialogue session," says Mr Yahya Embi, 49, who attended the informal dialogue session with the Principal, Mr Chia

Mia Chiang, at the Convention Centre on Apr 17 along with 500 other first-year students and parents. Mr Yahya's youngest son is a first-year Biomedical Engineering student.

Mr Patrick Ng, 54, who has a 16-year-old daughter, adds, "The interaction period with the lecturers held during the lunch reception put everyone in a relaxed mood," says Mr Ng. "It seemed more like a lunch session among friends."

Curious first-year students got the chance to hear about the experiences of current students and learn about the different ways to achieve their goals.

Mr Lee Than Pau, 50, a lecturer from the School of Engineering, says, "The event offers people a new perspective as it is not



The informal dialogue with the Principal (centre) was a big hit.

often that our students get to share how NP has shaped their lives."

A panel comprising both staff and students discussed extensively issues like university admission, the Polytechnic versus Junior College debate, and the different avenues for parents to keep track of their child's progress.

The new students had suggestions for making the "journey" even better.

Jerome Chee, 16, a first-year Business

Studies student, says, "Our needs would have been further served if each academic school [had] its own dialogue sessions, [with] seniors from the relevant courses [sharing] their own experience."

Mr Chia says that the polytechnic will consider another forum to give second and final-year students and their parents an opportunity to find out more about the school as well.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CORPORA COMMUNICATIONS



SAY **NO** TO DOLPHINS IN CAPTIVITY

Dolphins are intelligent and social creatures that, in the wild, interact with hundreds of pod-mates, hunt communally, and have entire coastlines as their playground. In captivity, all of this is lost.

The SPCA is against the capture of these creatures from the wild. We oppose on ethical grounds the use, confinement, exhibition or performance by marine mammals.

www.sPCA.org.sg/animalwelfare.html



FRIENDS FOR LIFE

Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Getting to know Students Care Service

The S21 Sub-Committee encourages volunteerism among staff through working with volunteer welfare organisations

Erica Rae Chong

The Singapore 21 (S21) Sub-Committee visited Students Care Service (SCS) Clementi Centre on May 20 as part of their efforts to encourage volunteerism among staff.

Within the past year, the S21 committee has arranged for talks and visits to two other volunteer welfare organisations - St Joseph's Home and Hospice and the Association for People with Special Needs.

"We want to create awareness as well as build opportunities by bringing our colleagues to these organisations and providing them with an avenue to offer volunteer services," says Mrs Lim-Ek Ben Wai, 44, Chairperson of the S21 Sub-Committee.

Mrs Lim and 17 other S21 committee members were introduced to the services provided by SCS, and given a tour of the organisation's facilities. A sharing session by Mr Ler Soon Tian, 31, a volunteer with SCS for almost 12 years, was conducted as well.

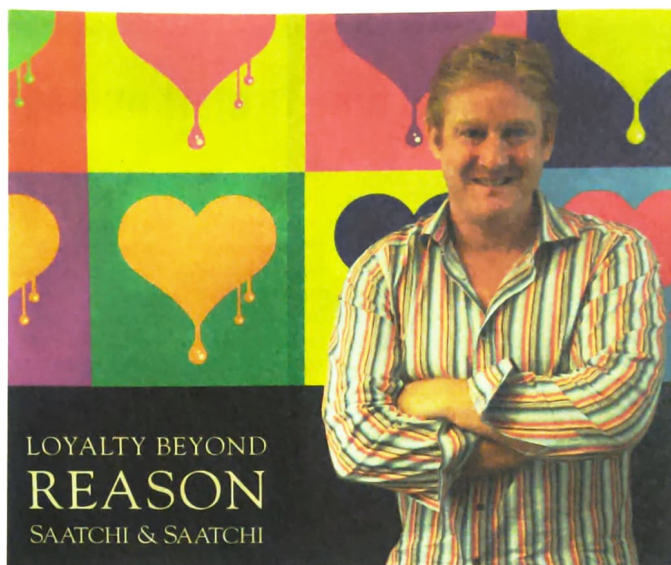
With his vast experience in volunteering, the S21 committee members wasted no time in fielding questions on the activities and difficulties of volunteering.

Suggestions on how the school could work with SCS were also discussed.

Mrs Wong Cher Ming, 48, Director of SCS, expressed interest in NP's career counselling programme.

"We hope to see if there is the opportunity to provide such a service for the children so that we can guide and train them from young to develop generic skills," says Mrs Wong.

While there is no fixed plan or programme, one thing is for certain. "We hope to inculcate a passion for volunteering and find an area that our staff are most comfortable in," says Mrs Lim.



“ Young people are the lifeblood of advertising. So, the more we can encourage young people to learn and be passionate about the business, the better the advertising industry will get.”

Dean Taylor
CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi
in Singapore and Malaysia

Hey, my lecturer is a CEO

Advertising and Public Relations head honchos turn teachers and give of their time to groom students for the industry

David Lim Hong Wee

As part of the learning experience in the Advertising & Public Relations (APR) diploma course, the School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) is collaborating with top agencies to offer agency-based modules, the first of its kind in Singapore.

Seven professionals from Saatchi & Saatchi and BMW, among others, will guest lecture at NP, as well as on-site at their respective agencies. All holding high-ranking positions, they will also help to co-develop the curriculum to ensure that the syllabus is both timely and relevant to the industry.

"All curriculum development is endorsed and validated by them," says Mr Ziggy Soh Yew Peng, Course Manager for APR.

The partnership is the key to setting apart the diploma's agency-based learning model from other diplomas, and takes the oft-touted polytechnic hands-on learning approach to a whole new level.

Second-year APR students will get to work on actual campaigns for real clients, and are expected to meet the rigours of the industry. For some students, there will also be opportunities to secure mentorships under the experts.

"The extent of such an industry tie-up is unprecedented. The majority of the domain modules are being co-taught by industry experts with some at a very high level.

"While other diplomas in NP have off-campus classes, the APR course is realising this to a huge extent due to



“ I was very surprised at how they managed to digest complicated concepts more quickly and enthusiastically than my own office staff. APR has developed very sharp students indeed.”

Vikram Bansal
Managing Director of ZenithOptimedia

the nature of the course," says Ms Anita Kuan, Director of FMS.

What is perhaps more remarkable is that these corporate high fliers are volunteering their time and expertise pro bono.

Mr Dean Taylor, 40, CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi in Singapore and Malaysia, and co-lecturer for the Advertising & Brand Management module, agreed to work with FMS because he wants to give something back to Singapore through education.

"Young people are the lifeblood of advertising. So, the more we can

encourage young people to learn and be passionate about the business, the better the advertising industry will get," says Mr Taylor.

Mr Vikram Bansal, 39, Managing Director of ZenithOptimedia in Singapore, says of the sense of personal fulfillment that drives his love for teaching, "It feels very good when you see your people blossoming and getting recognised."

He adds, "I was very surprised at how they managed to digest complicated concepts more quickly and enthusiastically than my own office staff. APR has developed very sharp students indeed."

Mr Soh says, "We owe them big time because they don't have to do this. They make more money than any of us, but because of their love for teaching, they are doing this for free."

This exposure also allows the partnering agencies to identify and nurture the crème de la crème of the APR crop, many of whom would eventually work for these agencies.

"It's a very natural progress. We are reserving a place two years ahead of time because by the time [the agencies] want to employ the students, there is already an established relationship," says Mr Soh.

Students who perform exceptionally well in their second year may also be able to get a letter of recommendation from these top honchos.

Siti Nameera Bte Abd Ghani, 18, a second-year APR student, says, "Being taught by the people who know the industry inside-out ensures that what we learn is current and real. It also gives us an added edge when searching for jobs in the future."

"One word - awesome," says Fadli Bin Jasmuri, 18, a second-year APR student, about the lineup of exciting developments.

VIEWS



Email your letters (no longer than 300 words) to nptribune@gmail.com

[editorial]

Given the amount of glitz and glamour swirling around the recently concluded Graduation 2010, it only makes sense that this issue of reason highlights the people who will go down in the annals of NP history as champions who have made us all proud.

Through our conversations with these seven top scholars, we uncover the grit beneath their glitter, and find out how these overachievers, who are not just all work and no play, have stoked our imaginations, and dare I say, inspired us onto greater heights.

I remember with no small amount of relish, my dreams upon entering NP of one day having my face adorn the school walls and clinching some fancy sounding scholarship to study at Stanford. Now, several Cs and a sobering D later, I have scaled down my ambitions to simply graduating with a moderately good GPA and gaining acceptance into a university – any university.

I still secretly harbour hopes of one day becoming a top scholar, something that my parents now dismiss as the inane ramblings of the patently delusional. Fortunately, our top scholars have very kindly agreed to share the secrets to their success.

As part of the graduation suite, trailblazers from the pioneer batch of the Digital Visual Effects, Aerospace Electronics

and Psychology & Community Services Diplomas also share how their three years at NP have left an indelible mark upon their dreams and hopes for the future.

On the topic of universities, we also boast the first of a two-part series on education, a subject that not only consumes billions of dollars every year, or just under 20 per cent of Singapore's annual national budget, but also produces untold hours of parental and student apprehension.

Just like any other student, I too worry about my further education prospects, an anxiety that is fanned in part by fretting seniors who debate ceaselessly over the pros and cons of staying local, or going abroad to popular education destinations such as Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

But as we will show you, options abound in this department, so fret not! Find out more about Dialogue in the Dark, youth apathy towards the arts, and learn how you can better manage your wealth. All these and more in this issue of npTribune. Enjoy the issue!

Ng Jian Yang
Editor

[forum letters]

* Forum letters may be edited for reasons of brevity and accuracy

It's time to start managing your money

Ask any student what the terms amortisation, asset bubble or a business cycle mean, and you are almost guaranteed to be greeted with expressions of profound bafflement.

Unfortunately, this is the reaction of both the business and non-business students. Wealth management is not a learning programme suited only for those in the financial faculty. It is a perennial tool that grows in significance as one goes through the up's and down's in life.

Whether it is having the funds to take advantage of an opportunity, the capital to start your own business, or simply enough money for a rainy day, wealth management is the heart and soul of every decision that concerns money.

Yet, it would seem that many NP students believe that one of the best ways to maintain one's wealth is to have it deposited in a bank. This is simplistic thinking.

A quick glance at OCBC's website shows that the interest rate on the first \$100,000 placed in a basic bank account, draws a measly return of only 0.125 per cent a year, i.e. \$125. This is a ridiculous figure considering that a student working over two weekends can easily earn \$140.

Inflation in economics is a measurement of price levels, and

when prices are inflated, it means that there has been an increase in the prices of goods and services across the board.

According to TradingEconomics.com, Singapore's inflation rate stands at 1.6 percent. This means that the cost of the Crumpler bag that every other NP student is carrying is actually, 1.6 per cent higher than its base price.

Weighing the prevailing inflation rate (1.6 per cent) against the interest yield from the bank (0.125 per cent), it is inevitable that you would see an erosion of your wealth and purchasing power if you were to manage your money in such a cavalier manner.

The point is, there are many students who receive income from their businesses (blogshops etc), part-time jobs or even through their allowances. However, unless you know how to manage this income, its value (relative to inflation) will only continue to depreciate over the years.

But if depositing your money in the bank is not the way to go, then the obvious question is: What should you do with your money?

This is where wealth management information and knowledge comes into play.

The Wealth Creation Information Centre located at level 3 of the Lien Ying Chow

Library offers a plethora of resources with which students can hone their financial management skills. From stock market investments to portfolio management, the information centre is a must-visit facility that staff and students should fully use to learn how to better manage and grow their assets.

It is better to start now and exercise the discipline that is mandatory in managing one's finances so that it becomes habitual over time.

Melvin Paul Singh

Final-year Business Studies Student

3 BOOKS TO GET YOU STARTED

- Financial Literacy for Schools**
By Christian TT Chua
- Make Money Make Sense with the 3 Bears and Goldlocks**
By Colin Cheong
- Rich dad, poor dad for teens: The secrets about money - that you don't learn in school!**
By Robert T. Kiyosaki

NP students do not seem to understand what financial literacy entails P4

[comic]



npTribune

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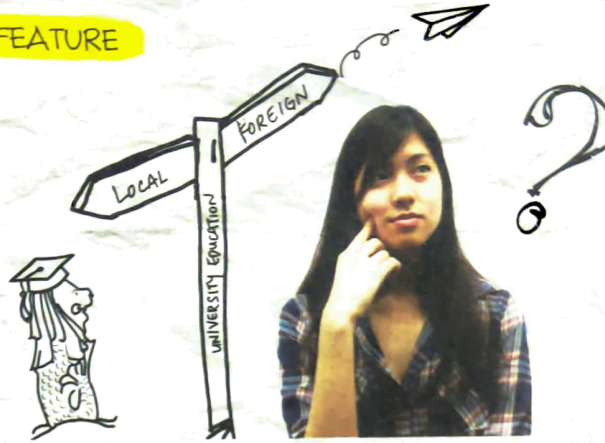
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TWO-PART UNIVERSITY FEATURE



At the crossroads of further education

npTribune looks at the pros and cons of studying in a local university versus one abroad

Ranon Yu & Yeung Ching Kit Joshua

She may only be a first-year Product Design & Innovation student, but Lim Jia Xuan, 18, already has in mind a university that she wants to enrol in after she graduates.

The aspiring teacher who has her sights set on entering Nanyang Technological University (NTU) says, "Everything is so competitive now, and everyone is getting a degree. If I don't get it too, I'll lose out to those who have [one]."

She is not alone.

In a Straits Times article on Apr 10, 2010, "Top grades & poly's our first choice", results

of an annual employment survey conducted in 2009 found that almost all of NP graduates polled indicated that they would head for university immediately after graduation or for the males, after national service.

Their university of choice? A local one.

The main reasons for not going overseas include the exorbitant tuition fees and living expenses, as well as the fear of being alone in an unfamiliar environment.

Mr Mick Chen Guanshen, 23, a second-year Biomedical Science at the National University of Singapore (NUS) and NP alumnus, says, "I would have to adapt again (in an unfamiliar environment) without my friends and family around me."

There is also the perception that

polytechnic students would be able to receive better advanced standing in local universities than in foreign universities.

In reality, the opposite is true. The fact is that at NTU and NUS, the maximum number of credits that can be given is 18 and 20 respectively, which is equivalent to one semester of advanced standing.

Mr Arthur Koh, 22, who graduated from Singapore Polytechnic with a diploma in Architecture, was exempted from five modules and now only has to complete two years of study for a three-year course.

This exemption has helped Mr Koh save at least \$31,100, as the three-year degree would have otherwise set him back by \$93,000, not including his

living expenses.

In a Straits Times article on Jun 15, 2008, titled 'Factor in living costs for overseas study', Alpha Financial Advisers Chief Executive Arthur Lim says that "a non-medical, four-year degree [inclusive of living expenses] at a local university will cost [around] \$60,000", while a similar degree in the United States will "cost substantially more at \$373,000".

An overseas education also gives students an invaluable chance to immerse themselves in another culture.

Mr Koh, who had to learn how to save money the hard way, says, "[When I first] came, I didn't know how much to put aside for food and other stuff so I ended up quite broke near the end of the month. With the

help of my friends, I managed to survive till the end of the month by scrimping and learning how to cook for myself."

For Mr Koh, who is currently in his second year of study at the University of Melbourne in Australia, going overseas may not have been his first choice, but he is glad that he had the courage to venture abroad.

"I've no regrets as I've learnt to be more adaptable."

Read the next issue of npTribune to find out what NP alumni have to say about studying for foreign university degrees in local private schools, and find out where and how you can get a study loan.

Quench your burning questions!

Cheryl Tay, 26, an advisor with the Singapore Education board, addresses your top three concerns about studying overseas.

Q: Why should I choose a foreign university over a local one, when it is so much more expensive to study abroad?

A: Going to an overseas university opens up opportunities to meet and work with different people. Although a local university is cheaper and more convenient, students who go overseas pick up skills like independence, and also have a harder attitude towards things, having survived by themselves.

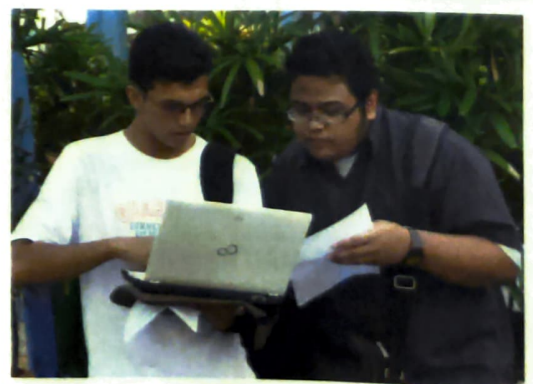
Q: There are so many universities available abroad, which university should I choose to go to?

A: While there are many choices available, make sure that the university you choose is a recognised one. To avoid getting cheated by "schools" offering fake degrees, choose a good agent to help you and make sure you do your research about the school first before making your choice. Try to get in contact with past graduates or current students studying there to learn more about the school's environment.

Q: What should I consider before making a decision to study abroad?

A: Going to an overseas university can be an expensive decision. Make certain that you and your family will not be burdened by your choice, so speak to a financial advisor if you need to. There are also many options available such as study loans that you can get if you are not able to afford an overseas university.

8.59 AM



Two freshmen comparing their timetables to see what classes they have in common.

This is how you differentiate freshmen from seniors on the first day of school – the ones with opened laptops, printed maps and timetables are always the new kids on the block.

GRADUATION SPECIAL

These tireless savants of indomitable spirit

CHONG HUI XIAN: RACE TO THE TOP

"AFTER FAILING ONCE, YOU NEVER WANT IT TO HAPPEN AGAIN"

Michael Jordan once said, "I've failed over and over and over again in my life and that is why I succeed."

This certainly holds true for Chong Hui Xian, whom at 23 years old, has been awarded the coveted Tay Eng Soon Gold Medal award.

However, her journey to success was fraught with disappointments and failures.

Back in primary school, Hui Xian would be disheartened by the seas of red markings she would find in her report cards and the relentless nagging of her father.

Despite this, she managed to go on to secondary school, where she resolved to devote her time to studying. Her efforts paid off when she found out that she had topped her class and it gave her an immense sense of satisfaction.

"After failing once, you never want it to happen again," says Hui Xian.

While that first taste of success may have sparked a determination in her to continue striving for the best, she has not forgotten her friends in her quest for success.

"Many top students get too caught up with their studies and end up neglecting their friends," says Hui Xian.

- Jill Toh

JOYCE LEE PING: MORE THAN CRUNCHING NUMBERS

"I NEED ALL THESE ACTIVITIES TO KEEP ME GOING."

Joyce Lee Ping is only 20 and she has met ministers, experienced the world and mastered several languages.

The only person in her secondary school class to opt for the polytechnic route, Joyce, an Accountancy graduate, was determined to work hard to get into a local university.

It looks like she made the correct choice, having bagged the Lien Ying Chow Gold Medal and the NP Outstanding Achievement Award at this year's graduation ceremony.

Passionate and diligent, Joyce's love for numbers and keeping busy has made her a high achiever in many areas.

Joyce and her friends created the Current Affairs Club. She is also a Junior REACH Ambassador (JRA), promoting active citizenry among youths to make them aware of the important role they play in the policy-making process.

JRAs attend tea sessions with government officials and conduct studies and reports that are presented to ministers like Dr Amy Khor.

"These experiences have made me a more independent and mature person," says Joyce.

Joyce is fluent in four languages, including French and Bahasa Melayu, and is planning to take up Japanese next.

On whether she has too much on her plate, she says, "I need all these activities to keep me going." - Jill Toh

JOCELYN TAY: LOOKS ARE DECEIVING

"I'VE BECOME SO MAD ABOUT RECYCLING [THAT] I EVEN EMAIL MY LECTURERS ABOUT IT!"

One wonders how Jocelyn Tay manages with only 24 hours in a day. Besides serving as the Chairperson of the Building & Environment Green Volunteers, she was also heavily involved in other co-curricular activities (CCA), such as Leo Club, Hi Club, and NP's Chinese Orchestra, in her second year.

At first glance, Jocelyn appears to be meek, almost timid. However, the easygoing Environmental & Water Technology graduate is actually very outspoken and does



From left: Joyce Lee Ping, Jocelyn Tay, Chong Hui Xian, Wah Chia Ling and Janani Ramadoss show that they can strut down the

not have "any reservations about leading", says Ms Mathew Mariam, a lecturer from the Building & Environment division who has taught her before.

Jocelyn also exudes compassion. She used to volunteer regularly at Care Singapore, offering free English tuition to primary school children, and once, even helped to paint an old folks home. Now, the spunky girl is championing yet another cause: recycling.

As a result of her six-month internship stint, where she helped to transform waste glass into building materials like tiles, the affable top scholar reveals, "I've become so mad about recycling [that] I even email my lecturers about it!"

It was no mean feat for Jocelyn to receive both the Lee Kuan Yew Award and NP Outstanding Achievement Award, while spending so much time giving back to the community.

Ms Mariam says proudly of Jocelyn, "She has been an all-rounder - focused, yet [making] time for non-academic matters. I don't think that's possible unless it comes from the heart." - Kon Xin Hua

JANANI RAMADOSS: TAPPING THE POWER OF MANY

"IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE FRIENDS WHO WILL HELP YOU THROUGH YOUR THREE YEARS."

History dictates that the heroine always gets the glory, but the truth is that Wonder Woman, Xena, and now, Janani Ramadoss would be nothing without the partners by their sides.

The driven 24-year-old graduated summa cum laude from her Biomedical Science diploma with a GPA of 3.9386. She was also heavily involved in NP Ambassadors, having helped organised Red Camp and NP Open House among many others.

For her achievements, Janani was presented with the coveted Lee Kuan Yew Award. The self-professed go-getter credits her success to her friends.

Says Janani of the driving force behind her success, "My friends were always very understanding of my

GRADUATION SPECIAL

rit are destined for nowhere but the top



KENNETH CHAN: HORRIBLE, AMAZING, COLOURFUL "I'M MORE OF A 'LIVING IN THE MOMENT' KIND OF GUY"

Kenneth Chan Kah Wai, 19, hates being asked about what his future plans are.

"The thing is, I'm not the kind of person who plans for the future. I'm more of a 'living in the moment' kind of guy, so if you ask me things like what university I'm going to go to, or which scholarships I'm interested in taking up, I'm not going to have an answer for you," he explains.

He stumbled into the Mass Communication course, after trying a three-week stint at Anglo Chinese Junior College (ACJC), and failing to get into NP's Accountancy course. The former editor of NP's entertainment magazine, HYPE, has apparently found his footing in journalism.

The winner of the NP Outstanding Achievement Award and various prizes for topping his class in online journalism, print journalism and media law actually loathes studying.

He says, "Especially those modules that require memorising, like media research methods and public relations."

Friendly and endearing, Kenneth is very active in the Debating Club and The Adventure Seekers. A devout Christian, he is also the youth leader in his church.

Kenneth is immensely grateful for the opportunities that NP has given him. He highlights Mrs Sng Poh Yoke, who taught him Newswriting, Feature Writing, and Print Journalism, as the lecturer who has impacted him most. However, he still shivers at his first encounter with her. "The first day she walked into class, I didn't dare to look at her because she was so scary."

Four semesters later, Kenneth graciously recalls, "I got to know her a lot better, through consultations and I also went to Wuhan on an immersion programme with her and 19 classmates. We talked about everything under the sun, and that was when she impacted me as a lecturer and media professional."

"As a lecturer, I think she strikes me as one who genuinely cares for her students. As a media professional, she follows her work ethics well, so we can still be on speaking terms even after she scolds us about our work. So I was really touched by that."

On his colourful poly life in NP, Kenneth beams as he says, "It has been everything from good to bad, to horrible, to amazing, but it is something that I wouldn't trade anything else for." - **Kon Xin Hua**

WAH CHIA LING: MODERN-DAY MARIA VON TRAPP "I CAME HERE TO LEARN, TO ENJOY THE COURSE"

In The Sound of Music, Maria sang like a lark while taking care of seven children. At Caterpillar Cove, the school's child development and study centre, Wah Chia Ling has 10 children under her watch - and still has energy left over to go for a karaoke session at the end of the day.

The Early Childhood Education graduate from the School of Humanities was awarded the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Outstanding Achievement Award for all-round excellence. This award was presented for the first time this year and grants the recipient \$2,000.

"I was shocked! It was very unexpected. I came here to learn, to enjoy the course and just have fun, so I wasn't expecting this," says the 24-year-old.

Besides working hard, Chia Ling also knows how to play hard. She is best known among her peers for her obsession with karaoke, and often drags her classmates out for spontaneous singing sessions.

"It's not going shopping, it's not going to the movies. It's always K-BOX!" says Joanne Tan, 20, a fellow graduate.

Chia Ling intends to read for the Degree of Science in Early Childhood Educational Studies and Leadership at Wheelock College. - **Erica Rae Chong**

Awards at a glance

Ngee Ann Kongsi Gold Medal: Awarded to the most outstanding graduate. The medal, first presented in 1980, is funded by Ngee Ann Kongsi, a foundation that is actively involved in educational, cultural and welfare activities in Singapore. The student receives a gold medal, \$10,000 cash and a bond-free scholarship that covers the full tuition fee of an undergraduate degree programme at any chosen local or overseas university.

Lee Kuan Yew Award: Awarded to the most outstanding graduate from a technology course. The award, first presented in 1992, is funded by the Minister Mentor, Mr Lee Kuan Yew. Mr Lee donated the honorarium that he received from various overseas speaking engagements and the funds raised from a special edition of his memoirs. The student receives a gold medal and \$400 cash.

Tay Eng Soon Gold Medal: Awarded to the most outstanding graduate formerly from an Institute of Technical Education. The Gold Medal, first awarded in 1994, is funded by the Tay Eng Soon Scholarship Fund set up in honour of the late Senior Minister of State for Education, Dr Tay Eng Soon. The student receives a gold medal and \$900 cash.

Lien Ying Chow Gold Medal: Awarded to the most outstanding graduate from a non-technology course. First awarded in 1998, it is funded by the late Dr Lien Ying Chow, Chairman of the Lien Foundation. Dr Lien was the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the then Ngee Ann College from 1962 to 1965. The student receives a gold medal and \$800 cash.

Ngee Ann Polytechnic Outstanding Achievement Award: A premier award for all-round excellence launched in 2010. It is presented to a select group of 5 to 10 top graduates. The student receives \$2000 cash.



way of success in both their academic and personal lives.

Ambassadors commitments, and would readily accommodate my hectic schedule, as well as pick up the slack whenever I couldn't give my 100 per cent. It is important to have friends who will help you through your three years [at NP]."

Mr Matthew Mak, School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology lecturer, and co-supervisor for Janani's final year project with MP Biomedicals Asia Pacific, can fully attest to her diligence and sense of responsibility.

"She is definitely helpful and would not decline any request for help from staff and students, so much so that I had to remind her to be careful in case her studies suffered. She can always be trusted to do a great job and give her best in anything she does."

Not one to rest on her laurels, Janani plans to pursue a degree in Life Sciences at Nanyang Technological University with the aid of a Nanyang scholarship.

The high flyer hopes to one day work in the cancer or stem cell field and fulfil her long-cherished dream to benefit mankind by finding a cure for cancer. - **Kon Xin Hua**

GLOBAL

Big hearts for little people

Students from the School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology join hands to reach out to the less fortunate in Batam orphanages

Siti Nafisah Bte Mohd Alias

Planting trees, creating landscapes and dressing wounds may not be a student's sense of holiday fun but for 55 students and four lecturers from the School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology (LSCT), the tasks were a source of joy.

Setting off for Batam in early March, the team visited the Khali Fatullah and St Theresa orphanages, where they completed 10 projects in a short span of three days.

Besides planting fruit trees, the students also helped to clean and dress wounds and put up mosquito nettings. Using the skills learnt in school, the team also delivered lessons on health and hygiene, English and creative arts and crafts.

Organised by the LSCT Community Service Interest Group (CSIG) set up last year, the trip gave students new insights. The stark living conditions were an eye-opener and brought tears to some of the student volunteers.

Calvin Chua, 19, Chairman of the LSCT CSIG and a second-year Pharmacy Science student, is grateful for the opportunity to meet the children. He says, "This is something that we'll never get to experience here in Singapore."

One of the most memorable

moments for the student volunteers was the birthday celebration they organised for the children, complete with balloons, snacks and a huge birthday cake.

Calvin says, "Even though the kids have so little... they don't live as though they are short of anything. They're still very happy and joyful."

Regarding how the team decides on the kind of work to be done, Ms Wu Siew See, lecturer and staff advisor of CSIG, says, "Other than looking at the needs of the organisations (we are helping), we also see what the students are trained in and then we get them to use their skills to serve."

An example would be the tree-planting project. Ms Wu adds, "The orphanage told us that the ground is barren and very hard; that they could not plant vegetation. We realised that we had Horticulture in Landscape Management (HLM) students, so we got these students to come and render their skills."

Project leader Chan Jin Ming, 18, also a second-year Pharmacy Science student, feels that Singaporeans, being too occupied with their work, often forget to appreciate the simple pleasures of life. He says, "If you think that Singapore is stressful, wait till you [observe the difficulties in] Batam."

On top of the poor living



Children from the orphanage proudly showing off their artwork.

“Even though the kids have so little... they don't live as though they are short of anything.”

Calvin Chua

Second-year Pharmacy Science student

conditions, the orphans there also have to cope with limited book resources, barely any clothes to wear, and certainly no fancy meals.

CSIG was set up in April 2009, and the visit to Khali Fatullah and St Theresa orphanages was CSIG's first overseas trip. To carry out the projects, the team organised a Charity Bazaar

and raised the targeted amount of \$2000.

The success of this service learning project has encouraged CSIG to expand their next project to involve not only LSCT, but students and lecturers from other schools as well.

"I'm sure there are a lot of big hearts here who want to help," Ms Wu says.



LSCT students teaching the children there how to wash their hands properly.



The kids at the orphanage giving their all during the SOULE football tournament.

Kicking out bullying

Student volunteers tackle bullying problems at orphanage by instilling values of friendship and sportsmanship at football tournament

Yeong Kar Yan & Melissa Tan

People walking by the Rumah Barkat orphanage on May 2 may be surprised as the usually empty football field is, for once, filled with children playing the game.

As the only orphanage in Johor Bahru, it is filled to the brim with 116 underprivileged children aged between 7 to 17 years old.

"All the children here are fatherless. Most of them still have some relatives alive. But because they can't or won't support the children anymore, they've been abandoned here," says Carylyne Chan, 18, Marketing Director of the NP Student Entrepreneurship Club (SEC).

However, spirits were high, if the children's smiles and cheers were anything to go by, with an on-site banner revealing that they were playing at the SOULE Football Tournament 2010.

The event organised to tackle the problem of bullying was initiated by Justine Lee, 19, President of the SEC, as well as one of the three youths running SOULE, an online social enterprise.

"We are not saying outright that it's an anti-bullying campaign, but we hope to subtly instil values like friendship and sportsmanship in these children," Justine

Iban insights

Students on Sarawak trip touched by hospitality of native people

Dhevarajan Devadas

For second-year Mass Communication (MCM) student Aisyah Puteri, 18, her trip to the remote jungles of Sarawak literally started with a bang.

"We had just travelled for over three hours from Kuching airport. When we arrived at the Iban village, it was pitch black. Suddenly there were bright flashes and bangs, as fireworks exploded all around us," she says.

"In the light we saw a large group of people approaching us. It was quite frightening," she adds.

Her fears soon dissipated as the group revealed themselves to be Iban villagers from the longhouse, a communal building where the NP students stayed during their nine-day trip.

Eleven students and one lecturer went on the trip in late February in lieu of their Interdisciplinary Studies module, Innovation and Enterprise in Action.

For the students who expected the longhouse to be a primitive wooden structure, the sight of a cement structure with electricity was a surprise.

"We really thought the Iban lived like voodoo headhunters," admits Aisyah.

They were warmly received by the Tuai Rumah, leader of the longhouse, who revealed that he was the one who had set off the fireworks.

The next few days went on to shatter their preconceptions of life in the remote



Dressed in traditional Iban costumes, the students are a sight to behold.

jungles, which the Iban called home.

The students helped with cleaning a river near the village, and in the process, learnt something about the river.

Benjamin Lai, 19, a second-year Film, Sound, and Video (FSV) student, says, "In the past, whenever two villagers had a dispute, they had to go down to the river bank, declare their grievances to the Tuai Rumah, and then jump into the river. The person who held his breath longest was then deemed the winner."

The villagers also took the students on a trip to a huge mountain nearby.

Iskandar Ruhaizat, 18, a second-year MCM student, remembers the "jungle lunch" they had on the way up.

He says, "They stuffed chicken and fish into bamboo tubes and then cooked them over a fire started with dried fruits. It really was a showcase of Iban ingenuity."

The Iban women, traditionally confined to the kitchen, surprised them by challenging them to a game of tug-of-war.

Ng Li Pin, 18, a second-year FSV student, says, "The battle was won by us after lots of struggling."

"One of the women later joked to us that we had won because they had shown us 'leniency' as we were guests," she adds. When it was time to bid farewell, the tears flowed freely.

Their accompanying lecturer, Mr Mark Lim, from the School of Interdisciplinary Studies, sums up the feelings of the group perfectly.

"We went to Sarawak to learn what it was like to live in a different culture. The warmth of the Iban and the generous hospitality they showered us with shows that they are not much different from us after all," he says.

"The warmth of the Iban and the generous hospitality they showered us with shows that they are not much different from us after all."

Mr Mark Lim
Lecturer

HEARD ON THE GRAPEVINE

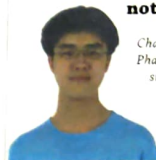
"The girls at the orphanage rarely talked to anyone and were very quiet. When we talked to them and interacted with them, it was the first time we saw them smiling."

Cheong Nian Ting, 18, a second-year Business & Social Enterprise (BZSE) student, on the orphans of Rumah Barkat, Johor Bahru.



"Despite the lack of technology, they're living such happy lives. We have all the technology in the world, but we're not happy."

Chan Jin Ming, 18, a second-year Pharmacy Science student, on the simple pleasures in life that the children of Batam enjoy.



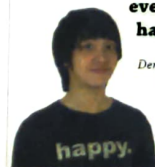
"I learnt that although the children's basic needs are provided for, they still need encouragement and a sense of purpose in life."

Lim Jing Ying, 18, a final-year Mass Communication (MCM) student, who helped out at the Rumah Barkat orphanage, Johor Bahru.



"I was touched by the love and enthusiasm they showered us with. They blessed us and tried their best to accommodate us even though they had nothing much."

Derek Lee, 18, a second-year BZSE student, on his overseas trip to the Philippines.



says. He cites Liverpool's motto, "You Will Never Walk Alone", as an example of how they hope to convey positive values through sports.

The idea of a football tournament was born when the younger orphans mentioned the occurrence of bullying incidents at the orphanage. However, looking at the teamwork displayed throughout the tournament, it was hard to imagine that there ever was a bullying problem.

Muhamad Syafiq Birosli, 16, who was crowned the "Top Scorer" for scoring 10 goals in three matches, says, "I feel very proud winning the trophy, and I'm very happy because this is the first time anybody has done something like this - playing with us and taking the time to know us."

Cheong Nian Ting, 17, a student volunteer from the Business & Social Enterprise (BZSE) course, was glad that she came for the trip. She says, "I think the event was quite meaningful because it incorporated fun and helped to solve the bullying problem at the same time."

And SEC intends to continue with the work here. Justine says, "We don't want this to be a one-shot event, where we just take a picture and go after it is done."

SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL PROJECTS

The football tournament served as a scope-out session, where the participants of the Young Social Entrepreneurs Competition 2010 surveyed the premises, and thought of ideas to take up a more active role in helping the community by introducing sustainable social projects.

Wholly student-initiated, the NP Student Entrepreneurship Club (SEC) came up with the Young Social Entrepreneurs Competition 2010 and the orphanage may be one of the first few beneficiaries.

"Some of the BZSE students may have ideas for social enterprises, (so we're giving them the opportunity) to put their ideas into action. The winning group will get the chance to implement their plans for (the betterment of) the Rumah Barkat orphanage," says Krystle Foo, 18, a second-year BZSE student.

soûle

A social enterprise with a "Buy one, give one free" concept; for every pair of shoes or slippers a customer buys, another pair is given away to needy children.

Soule consists of three youths, Justine Lee, Lim Jing Ying and John Tay, final-year students in BZSE, Mass Communication, and Business Studies respectively.

The trio will release "Baby Soule," their baby rompers series, between end of May and mid-June. Proceeds will go to the Shoes 2 School Fund to help underprivileged children in Singapore.

TAGLINE: A sole for every soul

WEBSITE: <http://www.selfless-shoe.blogspot.com/>

Taking flight on dreams

He was diagnosed with a severe form of muscle disease, but Jason Oh is not going to let that stop him from achieving his many goals

Jill Toh

Jason Oh is among the 38 in the pioneering batch of Psychology & Community Services students to graduate recently.

Like them, he will be studying at the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in August.

There, all similarities end.

Jason, 20, suffers from Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD), a rare disorder that results in the degeneration and weakening of muscles, for which there is no known cure.

The disease, however, has not stopped wheelchair-bound Jason from chasing his dreams.

Struggling to string his words together, he says, "I do question myself and ask 'why did it happen to me?' but there wasn't much to cope with because degeneration is a slow and gradual process; it wasn't a sudden

impairment like getting into an accident."

Jason's parents, however, did not accept the news as easily as he did. Jason encouraged them to be involved in the Muscular Dystrophy Association Singapore (MDAS).

"My parents got to see other people with the same disease and they went through workshops and talks to understand what I'm going through," he says.

His mother, Madam Lim Kwee Lan, 62, follows him to school every day and wheels him around campus.

"She quit her part-time job to take care of me full-time and I feel really grateful to her," says Jason.

Jason's support also comes from close friends whom he describes as "caring and understanding".

Mr Ng Wei-Cher, 38, a Psychology & Community Services lecturer, attests that Jason is a very hardworking and

determined student who takes pride in his work.

"He is more confident and he isn't shy to speak up. He takes the initiative and isn't afraid to be assertive when necessary," says Mr Ng.

For his perseverance and never-say-die attitude, Jason was awarded the inaugural Youth Aspiration Award launched by the Society for the Physically Disabled in January. This award provides a grant of up to \$5,000 for the development of a talent, and covers the cost of training sessions and equipment.

Passionate about music, Jason can now use this grant to enrol into the Lee Wei Song School of Music's Pop Composing Course. He hopes to cut his own album one day.

Of his future, Jason says, "I don't have any expectations of how long I will live, because it is better to not have any and live by the day."



"She quit her part-time job to take care of me full-time and I feel really grateful to her."

Jason Oh, a Psychology & Community Services graduate, on the sacrifices that his mother has made for him.



YourNP Photo Contest

They say that school is your second home. It is the place where you gain knowledge, make life-long friends, and of course, toil over assignments and examinations for that precious diploma.

What does NP mean to you? Take a photo that conveys your feelings and send it in to contest.nptribune@gmail.com! Selected entries will get published in the next issue of npTribune, and the winner will walk away with a Nikon Coolpix P6000 worth \$699!

Contest ends Jul 9.

Entries may be in full colour or black and white.
Each participant may send in a maximum of three entries.
Photo size should not be more than 400KB.

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and Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) – FT
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University of Wollongong, Australia

Bachelor of Computer Science (Digital Systems Security) – FT/PT
Bachelor of Computer Science (Multimedia & Game Development) – FT/PT
Bachelor of Information Technology (Computing) – PT

RMIT University, Australia

Bachelor of Applied Science (Construction Management) – PT
Bachelor of Business (Accountancy) – FT/PT
Bachelor of Business (Economics & Finance) – FT/PT
Bachelor of Business (Management) – FT/PT
Bachelor of Business (Marketing) – FT/PT
Bachelor of Communication (Mass Communication) – PT
Bachelor of Design (Communication Design) – FT

The University of Manchester, UK

Bachelor of Science (Hons) Management – PT

The University of Sydney, Australia

Bachelor of Nursing (Post-Registration) – FT/PT

University of London, UK

BSc (Hons) Accounting & Finance – FT/PT
BSc (Hons) Banking & Finance – FT/PT
BSc (Hons) Business – FT/PT
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BSc (Hons) Economics – FT
BSc (Hons) Economics & Finance – FT/PT
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How dreary thou art

npTribune sits down with a panel of 10 students to find out why Singaporean youths are apathetic towards the arts and what can be done to increase youth patronage of the arts

**Siti Nafisah Bte Mohd Alias,
Clare Isabel Ee,
Chong Si Min**

Bleak. Bland. Breathing its last. These are some of the responses used by a group of students to describe the local arts scene.

With the 33rd annual Singapore Arts Festival now on, it is inevitable that the same question surfaces yet again: Are youths apathetic towards the arts?

A Straits Times article on Jul 7, 2008, titled 'Stage Flight', suggested that the number of youth patrons for the Singapore Arts Festival had decreased. Specific figures were not released, but the National Arts Council confirmed that there was a dip in the sales of student concession tickets that year.

To understand the apparent disinterest in the arts among youths, npTribune gathered a panel of 10 students to discuss this trend.

REACHING OUT... NOT

When npTribune showed the programme for this year's Singapore Arts Festival, the panel was unanimous in their view that the line-up is "too niche", appealing more to adults.

Viki Chua, 19, a final-year Mass Communication student, says, "Most of them sound very abstract. The synopses say things

like 'manipulate musicality and digital technology'... What does that even mean?"

Zakee Teo, 19, a second-year Digital Visual Effects student and the Head of Administration for Stages2, agrees.

"I can't relate to the performances and the descriptions are difficult to understand," Zakee says. "It's not mainstream enough if you want to attract (more youth audiences)."

Publicity seems to be focused on specific arts venues, such as the Esplanade, restricting the reach to heartlanders.

The Vice President of the Song Composing Club and a final-year

Environment & Water Technology student, Priscilla Yeoh, 19, only knew of the Mosaic Music Festival because she happened to be hanging out at the Esplanade, where she saw the promotional banners.

Similarly, Kevin Lee, 19, a final-year Aerospace Engineering student, had only heard of Street Revolution JAM!, a programme in the Singapore Arts Festival line-up because he has friends performing in it.

THE PRICE IS NOT RIGHT

Price is also an important consideration – some ticketed shows can cost up to a whopping \$120, which puts it squarely out of most students' price range.

Ong Zhi Qiang, 19, a final-year Business Studies student, is only willing to pay for shows that interest him. On the other hand, Kevin and Zakee are not willing to pay anything more than \$50 for a performance, while Gayathrie Jeyaraj, 19, a final-year Nursing student, draws the line at anything above \$5.

The Singapore Arts Festival organisers had, in fact, set up a booth outside Makan Place last month to sell tickets at discounted prices to students.

While they have declined to reveal specific figures, Mr Aaron Goh, 25, manager of Marketing, Sales & Development for the festival says that the sales met their expectations, even though response on the first day was slow. He estimates that around 25 tickets were sold on the second day.

BLAME IT ON STUDIES & CCA

An article in The Straits Times titled 'Are We Dead Inside', published on Jun 18, 2009, argued that youths should not be blamed for their disinterest towards the arts, as they are expected to concentrate on their studies and CCAs.

Zhi Qiang points out that most Singaporeans do not see a future in pursuing the arts. Given our paper-chasing culture, getting a degree is the ultimate goal and the arts is only dismissed as recreation.

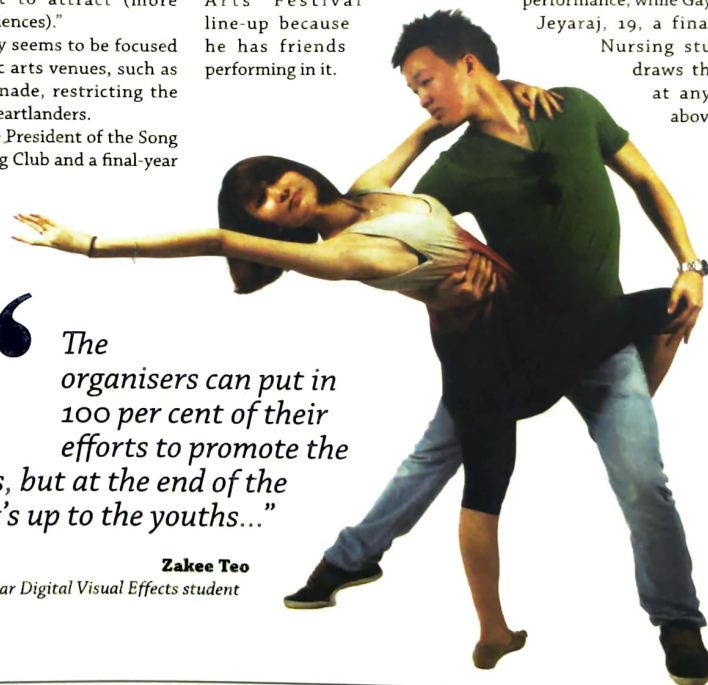
It seems an uphill battle for organisers trying to change youth apathy towards the arts.

As Zakee aptly puts it, "The organisers can put in 100 per cent of their efforts to promote the events, but at the end of the day, it's up to the youths if they want to attend them."

“ The organisers can put in 100 per cent of their efforts to promote the events, but at the end of the day, it's up to the youths... ”

Zakee Teo

Second-year Digital Visual Effects student



Succeeding through trial and error

Marinne Santiago

Coming from the pioneer batch of the Aerospace Electronics diploma course that did not have the luxury of guidance from seniors, they have more reason to be proud of their achievements.

Teo Huei and Tan Jen Kiat won awards from ST Aerospace and Eurocopter, two well-established aviation companies.

They are graduates of the Aerospace Electronics diploma course introduced three years ago.

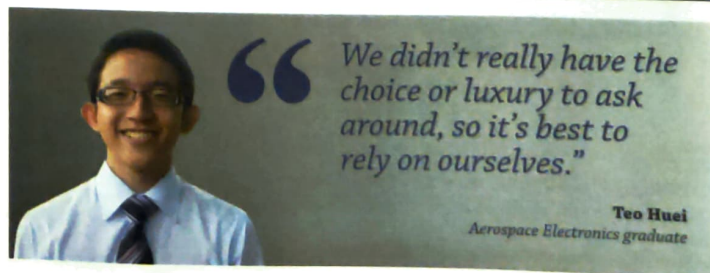
According to the course manager, Mr Yeo Chor Lee, Aerospace Technology students deal mainly with mechanics, such as, the engine and the aircraft structure, while Aerospace Electronics students

deal with the electronic, electrical, and computer systems for navigation and communications (or the intelligence aspect) of the aircraft.

"In Singapore, the Aerospace industry needs people with knowledge from both aspects – mechanical and electronics. Also, the Associate of Aerospace Industries in Singapore (AAIS) are pushing for schools to produce more of such people," says Mr Yeo.

For their final-year project, they had to design and build a circuit controller board to control a structure. Their models were eventually used for demonstrations to VIPs and guests of NP curious about what Aerospace Electronics students do.

Teo Huei said, "When I asked my lecturer for help, he would ask me to try out on my



“ We didn't really have the choice or luxury to ask around, so it's best to rely on ourselves. ”

Teo Huei
Aerospace Electronics graduate

own and get back to him in two weeks if I haven't figured out. But, I normally manage to find out on my own."

He adds, "We didn't really have the choice or luxury to ask around, so it's best to rely on ourselves. We learnt from our mistakes through trial and error."

Sharing the same view, Jen Kiat says, "Actually, as we go through the course, we realise that we don't really require the guidance of seniors."

Despite the intense competition in this specialised course, the bonds among the group of pioneer students are strong, and they do not hesitate to help each other out. Cooperation is crucial as students typically face the same problems, and by diagnosing one problem, everyone else can then also troubleshoot, accelerating work progress.

"So, to me, the most interesting aspect of this course is the friendships that I have forged," says Teo Huei.

ZEST

Glad to be guinea pigs

Zachary Neal
Wickeremasuriya

Forty students from the pioneering batch of Psychology and Community Services (PCS) are set to chart new paths with their newfound skills.

The course is the first of its kind among polytechnics, and focuses mainly on psychology, with modules such as lifespan psychology and social psychology.

The course manager, Ms Helen Ng, says, "The course was offered in 2007 in tandem with recognition of the potential application value of psychology, and the need for professionals trained in psychology and/or



Jessica Ann (bottom right) and her schoolmates interned at Dialogue in the Dark Singapore.

community services in both the public and private sectors."

Graduate Jessica Ann Vincent, 20, said that the course was an eye-opening one, as she "learnt to become more open to various communities such as migrant workers".

The course also offers its students an opportunity to intern at Dialogue in the Dark (DiD) Singapore, a collaboration between NP and DiD Germany. DiD offers visitors a first-hand experience of a day in the life of a visually impaired person.

On being part of the pioneer batch, she says, "Sure, it might have seemed like we were guinea pigs, but at the end of it all, we all benefited from it."

The lab, my home

Lydia Yap

The Digital FX Lab (or "the lab") was almost like her second home, during the final lap to complete final year projects for the Diploma in Digital Visual Effects (DVFX) course.

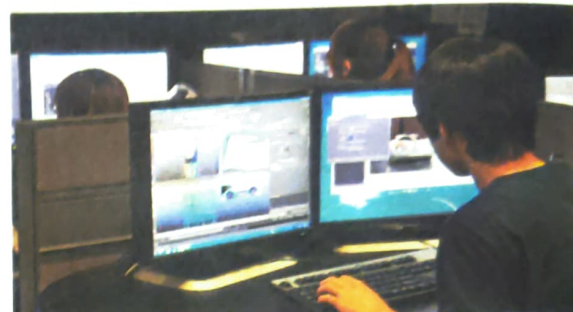
To Chee Hui Jin, 20, the students had a "love-hate" relationship with the course filled with moments of angst, frustration and triumph. But making the lab her second home was definitely an experience she could not have gotten anywhere else.

She adds, "Towards the end of the term, we had to stay back in the lab till 9 pm editing and rushing out our projects."

Hui Jin and her classmates are the pioneer graduates of the DVFX course.

"We really pushed them hard because we wanted them to bloom and develop their skills to their full potential, and we have seen it happen," says the course manager, Mr Marc Jonet.

Samantha Wong, another



DVFX students polishing up their animation skills in the lab.

graduate with warm memories of her experience in DVFX, says that the course affirmed her dreams, and she has decided to pursue a film degree at Chapman University.

She says, "I enjoyed all the time I spent with my classmates and my lecturers. Everyone helped each other and no one was alone."

DVFX delves into many aspects of film. Students get to learn the basics of aesthetics like 2D and 3D art, design and hardware modeling.

With unparalleled facilities and equipment fit for Avatar and Star

Wars, students have found that the sky is their limit.

However, achievement comes with a heavy price. "You really need a lot of patience in this course, because every minute of Computer Generated Imagery requires hours of hard work," says Samantha.

Releasing the first intake of students was an exciting and emotional experience for Mr Jonet, and like a proud parent, he has such confidence in his students that he advises people to look out for familiar names in film credits.

Sweet escape

Singapore just got hotter, but forget about brollies and sunscreens. Have an ice cream instead. **KON XIN HUA** checks out these hot (pun intended!) favourites among youths!

« MAO SHAN WANG DURIAN (literally King of Cat Mountain Durian) from u.d.d.e.r.s

\$5.30 (single scoop), \$8.40 (double scoop), \$15.90 (per pint)

Taste: This rich, creamy durian ice cream tastes just like the real thing, only frozen. With real durian bits in it, this is the real deal.

Verdict: This local delight is just so mindblowingly good that even the most hardcore durian fans can't say no.

Location: 17 Lorong Kilat, #01-08 Kilat Court

Operation Hours:

Sun - Thu 12 pm to 11 pm

Fri, Sat & eve of PH 12 pm to 12 am



« REVERSO from Island Creamery

\$2.80 (single scoop), \$4.50 (double scoop), \$9 (per pint)

Taste: An original concoction made up of dark chocolatey goodness mixed with Oreo bits, this sinful delight coupled with its creamy texture will leave you gasping for more.

Verdict: If you like your dark chocolate with Oreo bits in it, Reverso is just the one for you!

Location: 10 Jalan Serene #01-03 Serene Centre

Operation Hours: Daily 11 am to 10 pm

BUTTERSCOTCH PECAN from The Daily Scoop »

\$3 (single scoop), \$5.20 (double scoop), \$9.50 (per pint)

Taste: Creamy and smooth, this golden pairing of good old butterscotch mixed with nutty goodness leaves behind a sugary high that'll have you feeling like you're walking on sunshine.

Verdict: While the pecans could have been crunchier, this classic flavour is sure to find favour with Gramps.

Location: 41 Sunset Way, #01-04 Clementi Arcade

Operation Hours:

Mon - Thu 11 am to 9 pm

Fri & Sat 11 am to 10 pm

Sunday 2 pm to 9 pm



WILDBERRY from haato »

\$4 (single scoop), \$5 (double scoop), \$11 (500g)

Taste: This wildberry gelato is made from traditional Japanese recipes and is refreshingly light on the palate. Each mouthful bursts into berry-luscious fruitiness that is sweet, yet not cloyingly so.

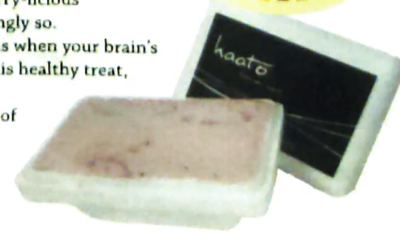
Verdict: Perfect for those occasions when your brain's been fried and you can't decide, this healthy treat, free from artificial colourings and preservatives, is sure to satisfy all of your cravings - minus the guilt.

Location: 5 Ridgewood Close Unit G1

Operation Hours:

Sun - Thu 11 am to 10.30 pm

Fri & Sat 11 am to 11 pm



Out of these four places featured, which one is your favourite? Send in your answers to contest.nptribune@gmail.com and stand the chance to win vouchers from your favourite ice cream parlours.

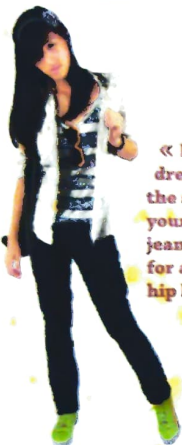
Contest ends Jul 1.



FEATURED PIECE

Safari Linen Shirt from Uniqlo, \$49.90

Who says shirts are only for men? With a little creativity, you can play it up or dress it down to suit any occasion.



« For those long dreary days, wear the shirt over your usual tee and jeans combination for a refreshingly hip look.

Stripe V-neck Tee from GAP, \$39 • Skinny Dark Jeans from GAP, \$99 • Lime Green Shoes from Leftfoot, \$159 • Chain Leather Bag from Egg3, \$129 • Headband, Shades and Bracelets, Stylist's own



« Channel your inner laid-back chick and you are bound to turn heads with this flirty summer outfit.

Floral Maxi Dress from GAP, \$159 • Fabric Sandals from GAP, \$49 • Flower hairband, Shades and Bracelets, Stylist's own

Dress to impress

Dressing up for school in the morning can be quite a hassle when you can't figure out what to wear. **MICHELLE NG** shows you how you can create four different outfits using one basic item, with the right accessories.



« For those days when you just want to dress down (not sloppy), a pair of neutral coloured shorts ought to do the trick.

Linen Shorts from Uniqlo, \$49.90 • Braided Belt from GAP, \$59 • Floral Reversible Tote from GAP, \$29 • Headband, Shades and Shoes, Stylist's own



« Pair this shirt with your trusty old denim shorts and a smart blazer, and you will be ready to take on the world - with attitude.

Tailored Blazer from Uniqlo, \$69.90 • Denim shorts from Uniqlo, \$39.90 • Lime Green Shoes from Leftfoot, \$159 • Headband, Studded Belt and Bracelets, Stylist's own

Tell us how you would wear the featured pieces in no more than 100 words and stand a chance to win a GAP Gift Card worth \$250! Send your entries to contest.nptribune@gmail.com. Contest ends Aug 1.

FEATURED PIECE

Crisp White Shirt from GAP, \$89

To some, a white shirt can be boring (think: politician) but if you wear it right, you can look just as hip and dapper.



Stand out from the usual shirt and berm crowd by layering with another shirt for added colour. »

Grey Linen Shirt from Uniqlo, \$49.90 • Navy Berm shorts from GAP, \$79 • Grey shoes from Egg3, \$89 • Belt, Stylist's own



Cuffing up your pants is a good way to add a casual touch to any outfit. Just make sure to find a pair that fits well. »

Chino Pants from GAP, \$79 • Shades, Belt and Shoes, Stylist's own



Wear the shirt over a basic tee and tuck them into a pair of straight cut jeans for the clean, schoolboy look. »

Basic Pocket Tee from GAP, \$29 • Dark Washed Jeans from GAP, \$139 • Grey High Cut Shoes from Leftfoot, \$109 • Shades, Backpack, Watch and Belt, Stylist's own



On those cold lecture days, keep yourself warm and toasty by pulling a sweater over the shirt. »

Stripe Pullover from Uniqlo, \$29.90 • Cropped Trousers from Uniqlo, \$49.90 • Canvas Bag from Egg3, \$89 • Leather Shoes from Egg3, \$115



Young, but not reckless

Gary Loo perfects the art of juggling both football and studies and doing great in both, as **JONATHAN CHUA** finds out



“His discipline and good learning attitude makes him a great role model for the team.”

Mr Stephen Ng

Coach of Ngee Ann Polytechnic Football Club

Not many people would have turned down the chance to enrol in the Singapore Sports School (SSS), but that was what Gary Loo did four years ago.

“I didn’t accept the offer because SSS focused more on sports than studies, and I didn’t want to give up on my studies,” says the tenacious 18-year-old.

His decision was vindicated when he was invited to join the National Football Academy (NFA) under 15s squad the following year.

Now in his fourth year with the National Youth squad, the second-year Business Studies student has already progressed to the under 18s squad and plays in the Prime League on Saturdays.

Describing himself as a player who is more adept at the defensive side of the game, Gary prefers to play it safe and not risk the chance of losing possession of the ball with fanciful skills.

“By doing so (cutting down on tricks), the chances of losing ball possession in the match will be reduced and that is a good thing for the team,” he says. The star footballer pauses for a while before sheepishly admitting that part of the reason is also because fancy footwork is not his strongest suit.

His practical thinking probably led to his appointment as team manager of the school’s football team.

Mr Stephen Ng, 40, the school’s football coach, praises Gary’s

maturity both on and off the field.

“Gary is very experienced compared to his teammates, due to his time with the NFA,” says Mr Ng. “His discipline and good learning attitude makes him a great role model for the team.”

From friendly matches with his friends to the Asia Football Championship qualifiers with the NFA, Gary lives the dream of many boys his age.

Gary’s success on the field is matched by his impressive performance in his studies - a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.84.

The key to the success of his juggling act? An iron-clad discipline honed from years of rigorous football training sessions.

The well-organised teenager wakes up early every morning to plan out a schedule, which he sticks to as closely as possible,

in order to fit in his lessons and training sessions.

A typical school day usually means reaching home at 11 pm. Even so, he makes sure that he finishes his assignments for the day before turning in.

Gary credits his current success to his father, who has always encouraged him to do his best in both sports and studies.

“I would not have had as much success without his constant encouragement,” he says.

While Gary might have enjoyed considerable success up till now, the high achieving lad shows no signs of slowing down.

“My main aim for now is to be able to get into a local university, as well as to be part of the national squad for as long as I can,” he says.

“At the end of the day, I want to strike a balance between my soccer career and my studies.”



PICT: JASMINE CHONG



PHOTO COURTESY OF MAGNUM FORCE

Magical Magnum Force

NP’s pride and joy defeats 107 teams in an international cheerleading competition in Jakarta to emerge champions, reports **SITI NAFISAH BTE MOHD ALIAS**

Already well-known on campus, the polytechnic’s cheerleading squad hit a new high when it emerged international champions in the third annual Indonesian National Cheerleading Championship held in Jakarta on Apr 25.

This is the first time the Indonesian competition is open to teams from other countries, which saw 107 teams competing, including six from Japan, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines.

Matthias Goh, 20, a final-year Multimedia & Animation student and Secretary of Magnum Force, says, “We didn’t expect to win when we saw big names from Japan and Thailand - they’re all fantastic teams.”

Magnum Force was picked to represent Singapore after defeating 40 other local teams from secondary schools, junior colleges and tertiary institutions at the National Cheerleading Championships (Singapore) in March this year.

They had less than a month to train, and the days when

the entire team was available to practise the complete routine were rare.

Says Gloria Wong, 19, President of Magnum Force, “Everyone did their part to get it right. We were willing to meet up on any day available to practise, even if it meant staying back as late as 10 pm.”

According to the team, it was sheer determination and passion for the sport that led Magnum Force to beat 13 other teams in the Open Division, including defending champions Crown All-Star A, from Bandung, Indonesia.

Gloria, who is a final-year Nursing student, recalls, “It was pretty hilarious the way we found out that we won. As the announcements were made in Bahasa Indonesia and only one of our members was Malay, we looked pretty confused when the other teams began cheering for us.”

The trip to Jakarta has also reinforced the bonds between team members.

“It really feels like a big family here,” Gloria says.