

npTribune

The Student Voice of
Ngee Ann Polytechnic
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More than words:

17 students spent eight hours at the New Horizon Centre (Bukit Batok) to interact with people with dementia

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YOUTH & VALUES PART II

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BEAT THE BLUES



LOOKING FOR WILDLIFE

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Youths Unmask Dementia

A pilot project to raise awareness about dementia among youths was held as part of the LF-NP SEED programme. **Hazel Tan** reports on the fruitful discussions and meaningful interactions that transpired over the three sessions

The pressing societal issue on how dementia will affect youths was brought up in a series of workshops organised by a group of final-year Mass Communication students.

The pilot programme was held in January this year in conjunction with the Lien Foundation-NP Social, Environmental & Educational Development (SEED) Capital programme. The three-part programme aimed to raise awareness of dementia.

Speakers at the workshops included experts from the Alzheimer's Disease Association (ADA) as well as James Cook University (JCU).

Students who attended the two workshops and field trip learnt how to communicate with people with dementia and also had the opportunity to hear the insightful

personal experiences from a long-time dementia caregiver.

Lastly, the students went on a field trip to the New Horizon Centre (Bukit Batok), where they could learn about dementia by interacting with the clients there.

Dementia is caused by many illnesses that cause irreversible decline of cognitive functions.

The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer's disease, where brain cells die without regenerating, particularly in parts where memory is involved.

It is also important to note that dementia is not just a part of normal ageing, but the risk increases as a person gets older.

Teo Chyi Hui, 19, a second-year Mass Communication student, who has had prior experiences with the condition of dementia due to her grandparents, says that the workshops gave her insight into what the condition is about.

"I used to hold the perception that you get dementia because you are getting old, but I learnt that it is not the case. I also learnt

about the causes and risk factors I never thought much about before," she says thoughtfully.

Dementia is a condition said to be the chronic illness of the 21st century.

According to the ADA, the number of people with dementia is expected to rise from 22,000 in 2005 to 187,000 in 2050 due to the rising ageing population.

This will not only impact taxes and health care professionals, but also affect the burden that is going to be placed on caregivers.

"As healthcare gets better, as

diseases are managed better, people live longer...and in the end, many people will own and die of diseases like dementia," explains Dr Paul Alexander Fisher, 31, a Clinical Psychologist from JCU who was the speaker of the final workshop.

"It is also important to note that even though they have dementia, we need to be genuine to them," says Lee Jia En, a 20-year-old final-year Electronic & Computer Engineering student on his experiences.

He adds that this condition should not be taken lightly at all.

"Many youths do not know about this condition, but they should attend such workshops to be equipped with all these knowledge, so that they will know how to take care of their parents or elderly in the future."

“Many youths do not know about this condition, but they should attend such workshops to be equipped with all these knowledge, so that they will know how to take care of their parents or elderly in the future.”

Lee Jia En, 20

Final-year Electronic & Computer Engineering student

SPOTLIGHT

Third Time's A Charm

The third m:idea Youth Choice Awards shows why the award show is to be reckoned with

Linnette Lau

With an extravagant new venue, the m:idea Youth Choice Awards 2012 (MYCA 2012) outdid itself once again on Jan 13 at 'Favourite Nightspot' and official venue sponsor, Zouk.

Currently in its third year, MYCA is the annual flagship event organised by m:idea, NP's very own media conglomerate run by final-year Film & Media Studies students.

Celebrating the local youths' favourite celebrities and brands, this year's MYCA saw over 400 youths in attendance, almost double the number for the previous event.

The event was on a high throughout the two-hour show, with performances by NP's very own percussion group, Baracuda Batucada, and Ukulele

Movement, the latter revealing the capacity of their creative juices by spoofing the lyrics of the well-known Jessie J pop song, "Price Tag", to pay tribute to the award winners of the night.

Celebrities such as Nat Ho, Felicia Chin, Irene Ang, West Grand Boulevard and the General Election's very own Mr Yam Ah Mee graced the night's festivities. Jack & Rai, winners of the 'Band I Wanna Throw Myself At' award for the past two years, returned to present the award to fellow local band West Grand Boulevard.

Mr Yam was presented with the 'Best OMG! Moment' award for his role as everyone's favourite Returning Officer.

He gamely played along with the audience during his speech after winning the 'Best OMG! Moment' award, quoting a modified version of his famous line in his iconic monotonous



Mr Yam Ah Mee and his posse with his 'Best OMG! Moment' award.

voice, "Pursuant to Section 49, Sub-section 7e, Paragraph A of the m:idea Youth Choice Awards 2012, I declare that all of you are the best tonight!"

Winners were selected by public voters on the MYCA website. More than 91,000 votes were cast during the voting campaign, the highest number yet.

In addition to the 12 quirky awards, m:idea had also created their very own lifetime achievement award, the 'Most Awesome Personality I Wanna Be BFFs With' award, conceived specifically for this year's MYCA.

Its first ever recipient was none

other than the multi-talented comedienne Irene Ang, who gave a heartfelt speech to the audience as her way of saying thanks.

"I think the youth of today are very inspiring because you are so gung-ho, you are so daring and you are talented."

The ever modest Nat Ho, who successfully brought home the 'Cutest Male Personality I Wanna Bring Home' award, had nothing but praise for the youth organisers of the event.

"Every year m:idea [outdoes] itself. I'm very proud of the kids, maybe next year, we'll fly to the moon," he adds cheekily.

THE WINNERS' LIST

Hottest Female Personality I Wanna Date
Felicia Chin

Cutest Male Personality I Wanna Bring Home
Nat Ho

Best OMG! Moment
Mr Yam Ah Mee 'Pursuant to Section 49...'

Band I Wanna Throw Myself At
West Grand Boulevard

Cooldest Comedian I Wanna LOL With
Michelle Chong

Celebrity Duo I Wanna Chill With
Michelle Chong & Alaric Tay

Favourite Nightspot
Zouk

Favourite Beauty Brand
The Body Shop

Favourite Tech Brand
Apple

Favourite Fashion Brand
Uniqlo

Favourite Dessert
Ben & Jerry's

Favourite Restaurant
Aston's

Most Awesome Personality I Wanna be BFFs With
Irene Ang

SCORING A WORLD RECORD

Coming in first place is already quite a feat, but Electronic & Computer Engineering lecturer Ng Beng Kiat took it one step further by breaking a world record.

Just last November, Mr Ng and his micromouse, 50, beat more than 80 competitors of all nationalities at the 32nd All Japan Micromouse Robot Competition in Tsukuba, Japan.

The micromouse completed the race in 3.921 seconds, breaking the previous record of 4.766 seconds achieved last year.

His award-winning automaton, Min7.1, weighs just 90 grams and is 10 cm long.

If that was not enough, Mr Ng also walked away with the second prize in the micromouse half-sized category.

"I hope to win the half-sized category at the All Japan Micromouse Robot competition this year. I walked away with the second prize last year and I hope to get the first prize in every category of the competition," says Mr Ng.

— IRIS KOH

SATISFYING THAT 'PANG' FOR THEATRE

Actor and director Adrian Pang, 46, opened up to the students of the School of Film & Media Studies about his experiences while promoting his latest production, *Spring Awakening*, on Nov 28.

The actor, who trained at the ARTTS International in Bubwith, East Riding of Yorkshire, shared that passion should be the main driving force of what they do.

"I would think that you guys are studying what you're studying because you believe in it [and] you're passionate about it," he says, "a place like Ngee Ann is fostering these talents and improving your skills technically and all that," says the actor.

The father of two counts himself lucky that he can get a job he likes.

"As I've said to people before and as I say to my two sons, if you find something that you're passionate about, that you love and can make a living out of it, you're the luckiest person in the world," he says.

— GWENDOLINE SIM

CELEBRATION OF EVERYTHING ART

A team of second-year Arts & Business Management students carried out their

first arts exhibition, Artistic Celebration in Diversity 2011, or better known as A.C.I.D 2011, on Dec 10 with great success at The Arts House.

"We were on a field trip (to The Arts House) when the Director came up to us and offered us 48 hours [to] 'fill it up'," says Ms Lynn Fong, a lecturer-in-charge.

There, various forms of arts ranging from live performances to artistic activities were featured during the event.

"I enjoyed the batik exhibition the most because I don't get to see much of it in Singapore... What was awesome was that I got to make [it] too," says Natalie Chi, 19, a final-year Business Studies student who participated in the event.

— JOSEPH MURRAY

Deciding how studies after

Minding the Gap

The rift in ideals between the young and old has steadily widened, and little is being done to help both sides come to terms with their differences

Carissa Abidin & Tan Qiu Ling

As Singapore continues to develop, her education system is being improved tremendously. However, while students are receiving a wealth of knowledge, they might be lacking immensely in character.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) recently announced the implementation of the Character and Citizenship Education curriculum (CCE) to enhance students' character development. The CCE is set to replace Civics Moral Education (CME) lessons, which is taught at both primary and secondary levels.

Teachers, in order to strengthen and inculcate values in students' characters, will enforce the CCE curriculum. They will be encouraged to use the '5-P Approach', which states that the family, school, and community have to work together and is of the "utmost importance in CCE".

It adds, "Parents are the ones who inculcate character and values in their children from a young age. When a child starts schooling, parents and teachers need to work hand in hand to reinforce the values taught, both at home and in school."

Unfortunately, youths today have missed the opportunity to attend CCE in school. What, then, shapes their values?

WHERE THEIR VALUES COME FROM

In a poll conducted by npTribune, 68 per cent of 112 students surveyed felt that family is the one that plays the most important role in shaping one's values.

Benjamin Tan Jun Yang, 21, a first-year Nanyang Technological University (NTU) student thinks that his family has had the greatest influence on the way he perceives the different values.

He shares the same view as his father, Tan Wei Teck, 48. "I think family is the main and most important source of [a child's] values. Other sources like friends are of less importance," he says.

He shares that growing up in a family will shape a person in the early stages of his life, because the early stages provide a mould for him to grow from. He adds that he is least influenced by the media.

"Although you [watch] TV every day, it's not close to you ... it's not real, unlike your family and friends," he says.

However, his brother Eugene Tan, 17, a first-year student at Singapore Polytechnic, says that the media has the biggest influence on his values instead.

The reason for this, he shares, is that he watches television every day, but interacts little with his family.

He says, "I get home quite late from school most of the time, and [there's] not much communication with them."

Brothers Chin Yan Zhang, 22, and Chin Yan Xun, 18, agree that their family has played a big part in shaping their values. The second-year NTU student and second-year Raffles Junior College student live with a big family and agree that it has contributed to shaping their value system.

Yan Zhang says, "I live in a huge household with nine people, each influencing me uniquely."

He adds, "We are all busy with our own school and work life, but we always make it a point to have dinner as a family and go on yearly trips together."

This shows that a person's values is shaped depending on who or what he spends most time with.

Another factor contributing to the differing values lies with the environment.

The parents of youths grew up in a different Singapore, where priorities and

activities in the country were different.

As a result, the parents who were interviewed placed discipline as their top value, followed by responsibility, but the youths did not mention any of these. In the same npTribune poll, NP students felt that respect was the most favourable value, followed by integrity, and lastly, modesty.

“ *In the past, friends used to be more important, but you will grow to appreciate your parents in time as you mature...* **”**

Benjamin Tan Jun Yang, 21,
First-year NTU student

THE DIFFERING VALUES

1. Respect

As seen above, the majority of youths in NP stated that they value respect above other values such as compassion, graciousness, loyalty, and integrity.

However, recent news reports and feedback from parents contradict that.

A 14-year-old girl who goes by the online alias Adelyn Hosehbo caused an uproar among netizens when she proudly proclaimed on social networking site, Facebook, that she slapped her mother in a shopping mall as she was a 'naggy dog'.

She then admitted to stealing \$10,000

worth of jewellery from her mother in order to buy a Louis Vuitton wallet.

While there were youth speaking among the angry netizens, it is impossible to ignore the fact that there are teenagers who find it acceptable to behave in such a disrespectful manner and feel no guilt.

While the older generation used to see respect as a command from their parents, it is a different story today.

Yan Zhang's younger sister, Chin Yan Ni, 15, a student at Cedar Girls' Secondary School, says, "Respect should be earned, definitely not demanded."

She adds, "However, everybody should respect one another even if you don't share the same values as someone else."

Her mother, Mrs Chin Tsiang Ti, believes that youths show different people varying levels of respect. "There seems to be a gap in the level of respect and trust that children show to their parents compared to their friends."

However, Yan Ni says youths respect both their elders and friends, but they will do so for different qualities, and will approach them for different reasons according to who it is.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



NP ILLUSTRATION: AMANDA LIM MINHUI

to further your
your diploma?

NEWS

FROM PAGE 3

Filling the Moral Crevice: A Gaping Hole Too Wide to Seal

2. Modesty

On Nov 2, 2011, The New Paper reported that several youths have been selling their bodies to buy branded goods. A young woman even posted an advertisement on an online classifieds that she would "spread [her] legs for cash". Another woman who claimed she was 22 years old and studying a business course admitted she sold her body to buy luxury goods.

Clinical psychologist Dr Carol Balhetchet attributes this to a slide in social values. She added that traditional values such as abstinence have become insignificant today.

Selling one's body for money is objectifying oneself, treating it as property to be sold. As youths view their own bodies as objects, they will lose respect for their

bodies and ultimately treat it as a quick solution to get money.

This is reflected in the poll, as youths ranked modesty as their least-treasured value.

Yan Ni says, "Modesty is important to a certain extent, but if everyone stays modest and not try things that are different, life gets kind of boring."

3. Frugality

From such issues mentioned above, not only is frugality absent, but the idea of working hard for one's money seems to have been forgotten as well.

Although these seem to be extreme cases, it is a reflection of the priorities the youths have.

"My parents grew up in a less sheltered environment, so their values tend to be wealth-centric, such as being thrifty," Yan Zhang believes.

When asked how his value system differed from that of his parents, he shared that because living conditions for his generation are more comfortable than his parents' when they were his age, youths tend to lose sight of being thrifty and hardworking.

4. Discipline

For Yan Ni, she strongly believes that discipline ends up stifling her passions.

"Discipline is important, but it [can prevent] people from doing what they love to do," she says.

However, her parents believe discipline is the most important value a person should possess.

It is interesting to note that this quality was not mentioned by any youth in the poll conducted.

This may be because of the older generations upbringing where parents often resort to corporal

punishment, like caning, to instil discipline. Back then, schools were also much stricter in terms of rule enforcement and meted out harsher punishments to deter bad behaviour.

According to a Straits Times report on Jan 13, 2009, schools have decreased the use of corporal punishment substantially.

The article also cites that, "where public caning used to be common, the MOE has ruled that only the school's senior management may now sanction such punishment".

WHAT NOW?

According to YOUTH.sg, *The State of Youth in Singapore 2010*, a handbook published by the National Youth Council (NYC), even though local teenagers aged from 15 to 34

have differing values from their parents, they are generally more family oriented and have spent significantly more time with their family since 2005.

Benjamin reflects, "In the past, friends used to be more important, but you will grow to appreciate your parents in time."

Change is also in the works, according to Education Minister, Mr Heng Swee Keat's first major policy address on Sep 22. It was also then that he announced the inauguration of the CCE.

The new curriculum will combine National Education, Civics and Moral Education, and Uniformed Group Co-Curricular Activities in order to provide students with a more streamlined and holistic approach to values and character building.

Voicing Out on Values

Gary Lim, Amrita Kaur & Aisya Junadi

npTribune brought together nine NP student respondents from all the different academic schools on Dec 6 to gather their opinions on the issue of values. The one-hour session brought forth many interesting findings.

Are the youth of today morally upright? A survey conducted with 112 NP students revealed the following:

1. Respect is the most important value to them, and Modesty is the least important.

2. 66 per cent believe that family plays the most important role in shaping values.

3. 68 per cent value the opinion of their families the most.

4. 70 per cent believe that youth have no morals.

Youth today want to fit in. They will adhere to a group's values just to be accepted. Their values may vary due to different upbringing.

At home, families focus on instilling respect and discipline, as these values are deemed most important.

Youths are exposed to a wide variety of media influence, leading them to become more liberal in terms of modesty.

The environment and community which a youth is exposed to affects the values that they will have.



“For me, it's the friends that I learn from. For example, if my friends don't like to speak vulgarities, I don't speak vulgarities. It's not really teachers or other people either, just friends.
”

James Ng
Second-year
Biomedical Engineering student



“Maybe it's because of media influences. There are more sex scenes in TV shows, dramas. Therefore, people will think that hey, that's normal, so they become less modest.
”

Henry Hermawan,
Final-year
Business Studies student



“I helped this guy from Dialogue In the Dark get to Clementi Mall as I happened to [be going] same way. If it's not convenient... I'll just help them get on the bus or cross the road.
”

Tan Siyuan,
Second-year
Biomedical Engineering student



“I like volunteering for art reach programmes. I find it very fun, because I can help these kids do art, and I'll see the smile on their faces. I like it when people are happy, when I can help them.
”

Ashley Khoo
First-year
Arts Business Management student

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- Peter Drucker



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NEWS

Paving the Way for Open Minds

The annual open house impressed students with its numerous interactive showcases

Lim Ying Ting

From experiencing the behind-the-scenes works of a game show to making icy treats with liquid nitrogen, the campus was buzzing with 'the Xtraordinary' during its annual open house from Jan 5 to 7.

Just like its tagline, 'Expect the Xtraordinary' suggests, the three-day open house was definitely not like any other.

Taking place from 10 am to 6 pm, NP saw all seven of its academic schools sparing no cost to excite students about the various diplomas offered here.

With a whole sea of choices for tertiary education out there, each school attempted to solve every student's post-secondary school dilemma by showcasing what life in that particular school is like.

Visitors were treated to a live studio production by the School

of Film & Media Studies (FMS) where they got to learn what goes on behind the scenes of a live variety show.

As they sat back to enjoy the variety show titled *The Projection Room*, in the FMS television studio, they saw for themselves how final-year Film, Sound and Video (FSV) students carried out their different roles as a television production team.

"This game show will better allow the secondary school students to see how the industry-standard equipment in FMS is utilised," says Cassandra Han, 19, a final-year FSV student.

Meanwhile, over at the School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology (LSCT), those who once held the opinion that science courses are dull and unexciting were proven wrong with their 'Xplore Atlantis: Life Under the Seal' exhibition.

The secrets of pharmaceutical science, such as the ingredients that go into lip balms, was



Health Sciences (above) and HMS (right) promoting their courses.

divulged by the Pharmacy Science students.

The Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering students put a new spin to a classic dessert as they defied convention by making an icy, edible treat with liquid nitrogen as a cooling agent.

"I must admit that this underwater theme makes all these 'sciencey' courses sound a whole lot more interesting," says Yeo Jie Yi, 16, a student from Yio Chu Kang Secondary School.

From the depths of the ocean to the heart of the forest, the open house adventure continued at the School of Humanities & Social Science (HMS).

A life-sized model of a tree,

aptly named the 'Tree of Life', was placed at the HMS foyer as the main centre for the numerous activities. Some of them included dance performances and engaging puppet shows.

The myriad of activities were not only entertaining to spectators, but also served to demonstrate to potential students just how unique an education in HMS could be.

"These activities are engaging in nature, and is congruent to what HMS is about - which is reaching out to people through its seven diplomas," says Chan Bi Xuan, 18, a second-year Chinese Studies student who was helping out at the event.



"I love how each academic school puts in so much effort to promote itself to us secondary school students!"

Nur Yasin bte Ameerudeen, 14
Fuchun Secondary School

"My favourite part would be the food, of course! How can anyone possibly resist free popcorn, doughnuts and Milo?"

Bethany Yeo, 17
Macpherson Secondary School

"The NP ambassadors were very friendly and really do know their stuff... be it directions or any information about the facilities or courses in NP!"

Fahmi Bin Ahmad, 16
Bukit Panjang Government High School

Breathe Easier with the Help of Mask-Aid

Poojaa Darshan

The once uncomfortable and stuffy N95 masks used during the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) period has now been improved by lecturers and staff from the School of Engineering (SoE).

Over a year's effort has paid off for a multidisciplinary team of lecturers and technical support officers (TSOs).

With the help of their relevant backgrounds and skills, they successfully created an improved version of the recognisable face mask.

The Mask Aid Project, headed by Dr Tan Ah Kat, Deputy Director of NP's School of Engineering, is designed to give users a constant supply of fresh air.

The desire to improve the suffocating face mask was the motivation behind the project, according to Dr Tan.

"The main aim of the project was to improve the breathing conditions for the mask users by supplying fresh filtered air into the mask continuously, so as to prevent deterioration of the users' health," explains Dr Tan.

With the Mask-Aid, users will be breathing in fresh, clean air from a 200g air-filtering unit, connected via a nozzle to the mask and strapped to the waist.

One of the advantages of the design is its light weight and portability.

The experiences from the project has enhanced the team's knowledge and skills in their respective fields.

Dr Tan believes that the students will be

able to share the success of the project by gaining experience from it.

"I hope it will inspire the students in design and technological innovation. The design and development process and the technical solutions in the project also make good case studies for teaching in related modules," he says.

"We are currently working together with a company, Inzign Pte. Ltd., to commercialise our product and we have also filed for patent and are awaiting the good news," says Dr Tan.

At the moment, the Mask-Aid is undergoing a six-month trial at the All Saints Home in Hougang.

Many of the healthcare workers have reported to be happy with the mask as most did not even feel like they had it on.



Dr Tan Ah Kat with the enhanced N95 mask.

(CCA) Points of Contention

Co-curricular activities (CCAs) are a familiar undertaking as the Singapore education system places an emphasis on it right from primary school. npTribune explores the issues concerning NP's CCA points allocation system

Koh Lee Mei Fanny

A good CCA certificate is supposed to signify a well-rounded student, but it appears that NP's CCA points allocation system may be attracting students for all the wrong reasons.

Following a June 2010 report by The Straits Times, it was mentioned that some of Singapore's brightest are choosing a polytechnic over a junior college, which makes competition for the 15 per cent of local university places allocated to polytechnic graduates stronger than ever.

This also means that students are clambering onto the CCA bandwagon in a bid to make their applications stand out from the other *crème de la crème* of polytechnic graduates.

NP follows the PEARLS system (view sidebar for details) where students are allocated either a bronze, silver or gold certificate that can be used to supplement their academic transcript when applying for a university placing after graduating.

With the plethora of CCAs that NP offers, it appears that students are spoilt for choice but are they joining for the right reasons?

Chen Li Hui, a 2011 Environmental & Water Technology graduate who is currently pursuing her degree in Environmental Engineering at Nanyang Technological University (NTU), says that she initially

joined for the sake of maintaining her polytechnic scholarship, which had a CCA requirement, but gradually developed a love for her CCA.

The 20-year-old, who was the president of the Building & Environment Green Volunteers (BEGV) during her time in NP, graduated with over 300 CCA points.

A CCA gold certificate requires 72 points, according to the NP Student Development & Alumni Relations (SDAR) website.

Though some may have joined for practical reasons before developing a love for it, there are some who join purely for practical reasons and leave the moment they get that coveted gold.

Muhammad Hatib bin Abdul Aziz, 22, a second-year Information Technology student, believes, "The focus is not on the activities but whether the CCA can give them the points they need."

The vice-president of NP's Computer Club adds that they often get e-mails asking whether it is easy to get a gold award if they join the club.

Echoing his sentiments is Li Hui, who shares that there were such people throughout her three years in NP who did the same thing. Furthermore, she does not think it has stopped.

However, there are some who do it with zeal and enthusiasm for their CCA.

"I joined out of passion so the points do not really matter," says Eunice Teng, 18, a second-year Molecular Biotechnology

student who also serves as the captain of the Canoe Polo team.

Stating that though she acknowledges that there are students who join CCAs mainly for the points, she says that many of her teammates in her sports-based CCA are often there because they love what they do and because the training inculcates team spirit and teaches them to be resilient.

"NP has started to see character development as a key criteria... so [this means we] need to create a more holistic student," says Mr Wilson Ang, 40, Deputy Director of SDAR.

He adds that while he understands why students join CCAs solely because of the points, he admits that it is difficult to sieve them out or to stop them, especially when

they are doing it for university applications.

To that, former Deputy Director of SDAR, Mr Alan Thng, 47, currently the deputy director for the Estate Management Office says, "You must do well in your studies [before] you do well in your CCA [because the latter] only adds value to your diploma and not the other way around."

This is a logical explanation considering that since the 2007/2008 Academic Year, CCA PEARLS points are no longer recognised when students apply to the National University of Singapore.

While their motives are unclear, one thing should be reiterated for the students who are only in it for the sake of their university applications: make sure your grades make the cut.

CCA CERTIFICATE AWARD

Criteria for students who joined NP from 06/07

Criteria	Bronze (Points)	Silver (Points)	Gold (Points)
Minimum points for all CCA activities	36	48	72
Minimum points for the Achievement (A), Representation (R), Leadership (L) and Service (S) categories	12	24	48

The CCA Grading Scheme, PEARLS awards CCA points in the 6 categories: Participation, Enrichment, Achievement, Representation, Leadership and Service.

Drawn Towards a Common Goal

Edmund Ong

A group of Humanities and Social Science (HMS) students embarked on the project YoU & I (YUI), which saw students piecing together a massive piece of art as a form of encouragement to the surviving victims of the 2011 earthquake in northeastern Japan.

Held on Dec 2 from 11.30 am to 2.30 pm at Block 53's foyer, the YUI exhibition displayed a collection of paintings done by Japanese artist, Miyazaki Kenzuke, 31, and victims of the natural disaster.

The project serves as a reminder that there are some still dealing with the trauma of the disaster.

It was also at YUI that *tanzaku* was carried out.

Tanzaku is a stiff, plain oval-shaped paper that participants are to fill with words of encouragement and hope before they decorate it.

"The aim of the workshop is to make the local version of the oval-shaped paintings as massive as possible and add them to those already made in Japan," says Grace Goh Hui Ern, 18, a second-year Business and Social Enterprise student.

These *tanzakus* will be pieced together as massive strips of art that will be proudly displayed at the Tanabata Festival in Japan.

With the intention to raise the awareness, YUI reminds us that a disaster does not end when the smoke clears or the tremors stop. Victims still live with the trauma and every effort can make a difference in their lives.



Compassionate students were brought together by their desire to deliver hope to a recovering Japan.

VIEWS

[editorial]



The impact of dementia will only grow heavier as the number of those afflicted continues to rise.

What do the youth of today know about dementia? More often than not, they associate this disease with forgetfulness, and Ellen Degeneres's lovable but absent-minded character Dory, from Pixar's *Finding Nemo* comes to mind.

However, dementia does not turn one into a good-hearted optimist like the little blue fish with short-term memory loss. Instead, it turns a once-familiar face distant and vacant.

Dubbed the chronic disease of the 21st Century, dementia is not just merely a memory problem, it is actually the degeneration of one's entire body.

A progressive disease, it not only affects memory but also thinking, language, judgment, and behavior. This chronic

disease affected 22,000 people in 2010 and is expected to affect 53,000 by 2020. With Singapore's rapidly greying population, more youths will eventually have to face this devastating situation.

Unlike most ailments, people who are suffering from dementia are subjected to gradual deterioration that can stretch up to years on end. These people require constant and ever vigilant care 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for the rest of their lives.

Currently, there are a lack of facilities meant for the aged and dementia sufferers. An article in *The Straits Times* on Nov 11 2010 reported that the average waiting time for a state-subsidised nursing home bed could take up to 60 days.

How then will today's youth prepare themselves to tackle this growing problem?

It is an old saying that the best defence is the best offence. Equipping our youth with the knowledge of dementia is the best way to tackle the disease's spread, as well as the complications it poses.

By exposing youth to real-life dementia cases, it will provide them with the skills and experiences as well as prepare them mentally for the tough years that are definitely ahead.

However, though youths are in dire need of a reality check, they should also be shown the lighter side of dementia.

Even though it seems like you have lost the person you once knew, you should not spare any effort to make them happy.

After all, they are still capable of not only feeling, but appreciating the love and care you have for them.

[forum letters]

Germany, I Love You So Much



Julia Bose sees greener pastures overseas.

At this point in my life, I cannot imagine myself living in Singapore as an adult.

I imagine that would make me extremely unhappy. Even though I really am thankful for what Singapore has done for me and for the person it has made me, I really want to live in Germany for a couple more years.

I spent six months in Nuremberg, Germany as an accounting & finance intern. To be entirely honest with you, it was the best six months of my life. I loved it so much that it didn't bother me one bit that I had to wake up at 6 am every morning to travel across town for work and I am not a morning person.

I took walks with my colleagues during our lunch breaks, and among other things, we spoke about how different growing up was for each of us. While I am aware that there is no perfect country, Germany seemed so much like heaven to me.

I grew up feeling so below average, it seemed that no amount of hard work was ever going to be enough. I was never going to be enough. I felt like I had to strive to be a certain way because people wanted me to be a certain way. While in Germany, I found that I was starting to consider that maybe, just maybe, I deserve to be happy too.

So many people ask me why I love Germany so much. The simple reason is that I have never felt so deliriously happy anywhere else in the world.

Julia Bose
Final-year Accountancy student

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

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Be a Climate Chameleon

Volatile weather demands a versatile wardrobe. npTribune unveils some ways that you can combat Singapore's unpredictable tropical weather, come rain or shine

Iskandar Ruhaizat

Singaporean weather is extremely temperamental. It can be rainy one minute and sweltering hot the next. While we acknowledge the cool aesthetic of outerwear, we risk being labelled 'crazy' by our peers if we put on a fur coat.

Alas, there are solutions where you can still be chic when it is chilly!

LAYER UP

Always make sure you have some kind of outerwear with you! The type of outerwear you pick matters too.

For days where you feel like your arms are on the verge of frost-bite, don a jacket. Be it a bad boy leather jacket or a suede camel one, it is sure to keep you warm.

The freezing lecture halls, on the other hand, call for a snuggly pullover. On top of being very comfy, they come in an array of snazzy designs and colours. Anything from 16-bit prints (all the rage amongst hipsters now) to colour-blocking.

For when you are only slightly nippy, it is best for you to summon the good ol' cardigan. It is easy to take off thanks to its open front, and hence can be worn on a balmy afternoon or windy morning.



With these outfits, you will have no trouble withstanding the erratic weather.

MATERIAL MATTERS

Wool is top on the list when it comes to dealing with Singaporean weather. Not only will it keep you toasty while your teeth are chattering, it also is perfect for stuffy weather. This is because wool allows your skin to breathe. However, when you do perspire, your sweat will evaporate quickly.

ICE CAPS

We lose the most heat from the top of our head, so pop on a sleek beret or lax-looking beanie to keep your temperature up. Should the weather start acting up and it gets a little warmer, you can take it off. Beware of hat hair though.

Battle the Morning Blues

Waking up in the morning has got to be one of a student's hardest battles. Iris Koh gives you some tips to help combat the urge to return to the soft comfort of your bed

Morning stretches

Take the extra minutes to loosen your body up by stretching. It is great way to ease away the tension and you do not even need to leave your sheets to do them! Simply lace your fingers together and raise them above your head. You will feel a stretch from your arms, to your spine and ribcage that is sure to snap your eyes wide open.



Make a Splash!

You should never leave cleansing your tired skin out of your morning. Not only does it leave you feeling clean and refreshed, it also is sure to snap your eyes open! Massage your skin with the aid of a gentle cleanser, before rinsing it off with lukewarm water. Try The Body Shop's Tea Tree Skin Clearing Facial Wash and pair it with their best-seller Tea Tree Oil to awaken your skin.



Energise with breakfast!

Nothing prepares you better for the day than a hearty and whole breakfast. The quintessential Singaporean breakfast of kaya toast, half-boiled eggs and a cup of Milo is sure to get you revved up. If you cannot afford the time, then a simple, meagre breakfast will do. You can still get an instant energy boost with granola or cereal bars.



Hydrate

As cliché as it sounds, the need to be hydrated is very important. Take two glasses of water before consuming any food in the morning, as the liquid helps to dilute acids in the stomach and mouth, and reduce the toxins present in the body. Squeeze a few drops of lemon or lime in to help reduce the acidity in the body too.



BOOK REVIEW

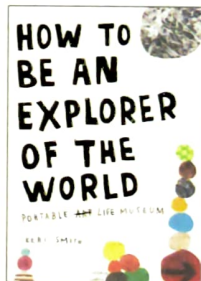
THE LEGEND BY MARIE LU



The debut work of first-time author, Marie Lu, *The Legend* tells a story of a country divided. This dystopian story tells the tale of two 15-year-olds: Day, the country's top wanted criminal, and June, a military prodigy loyal to her country. The two meet when

Day becomes the prime suspect for her brother's murder, and along the way, both of them discover the truth behind the façade put on by the Republic. Together, they seek to find a way out of the system. — GWENDOLINE SIM

HOW TO BE AN EXPLORER OF THE WORLD BY KERI SMITH



Fun, quirky, and a breath of fresh air, Keri Smith delivers another stunning book filled with beautiful illustrations, observations, and random pictures. This book takes a reader through his everyday life, creating a

universe of art and mystery in an otherwise mundane world. The book is divided into 59 explorations, each serving as a guide, allowing the reader to immerse himself in a new world wherever he is, leaving readers with a thirst to go out and look at the world differently.

— CARISSA ABIDIN

HAUNTING VIOLET BY ALYXANDRA HARVEY



Set in the late 1800s of Victorian England, *Haunting Violet* tells the story of Violet Willoughby and her mother, a fraudulent medium, whose cons see her and Violet welcomed into the world of high society. The tales take a twist when Violet is revealed to possess

the gift her mother pretends to have and is haunted by the ghost of a drowned girl, Rowena. Violet can no longer ignore her talents and finds herself investigating the mystery of Rowena's murder, at the cost of her own life.

— POOJAA DARSHAN

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Q: Name one key ingredient of The Body Shop Tea Tree Oil.
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Win Haunting Violet premiums!
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Contest ends 30 April.

SPECIAL



Time and attention go hand in hand when conducting activities that slow the progression of dementia. Some activities to consider: Simple exercise (1), arts and craft (3 and 5), preparing a meal (2 and 4) and constant communication during each activity (6).

A Gre

A rapidly ageing population brings challenges of coping with the consequences.

Tan Qiu Ling

Your dear, talkative grandmother rarely speaks nowadays and starts forgetting things. Eventually, she forgets who you are and scowls as she asks how you, a "stranger", managed to get into her house.

Our rapidly greying population means that more elders will be afflicted with the degenerative disease that those aged 65 and above are prone to. This chronic disease affected 22,000 people in 2010 alone and is expected to affect 53,000 by 2020.

Of the 156 students surveyed, 21.1 per cent of the respondents believe that the condition only affects the elderly.

Known as early-onset dementia, people below the age of 65 can also be struck with this degenerative disease.

Unfortunately, this claim is not unfounded as a report by The Straits Times on Mar 14, 2010 reveals that, "Almost 45 per cent of all dementia patients seen at NNI (National Neuroscience Institute) are below the age of 65..."

As this problem rises, youths may find themselves having to deal with dementia before they even know what it is.

In Chang Siye's case, alarm bells rang

" [Stimulating] the minds of people with dementia with games or exercise ... are actually effective in slowing down the onset of dementia.

Zaris Azira, 19

Second-year Mass Communication student

" From this visit... I learnt that people should not be looked at as diseased, but rather, be treated like any other human being.

Teo Chyi Hui, 19

Second-year Mass Communication student

" I enjoyed talking to my client as it allowed me to find out more about what goes on in the mind of someone with dementia.

Lee Jia En, 20

Final-year Electronics & Computer Engineering student

Caregiving: A First-Hand Experience

Lim Ying Ting

Instead of sleeping in like most youths would do on a Saturday morning, a group of 18 students volunteered their time at a dementia day care centre.

Held on Jan 7 at the New Horizon Centre (Bukit Batok), the Dementia Day Care Extension Programme comprised of morning exercise, a steamboat lunch, as well as a lantern-making session.

The meal, sponsored entirely by the Lien Foundation-NP Social, Environmental & Educational Development (LF-NP SEED) Capital programme, was meant to commemorate the Lunar New Year.

The visit allowed the student volunteers to step into the shoes of a caregiver for eight hours, where each student was attached to

a client (person with dementia) to befriend and look out for.

It is no easy feat as one has to be on heightened alert at all times when taking care of someone with dementia.

During the entire visit, Grace Chan, 19, a second-year Mass Communication student, kept an eye on her client's every move, hardly letting her out of her sight even for the slightest minute.

"I took note of the slightest details like water droplets on the floor and wiped them away as they may cause my client to slip and fall," explains Grace.

The students even experienced dealing with clients and their unique quirks.

Zaris Azira, 19, attested to how her client and her "ended up having the same conversation after awhile".

The second-year Mass Communication student explains, "I think one should be

mindful to not show any signs of boredom, or worse still, snap at them after the conversation gets repeated."

Contrary to popular belief, dementia does not only constitute memory loss. This condition can also affect various aspects of one's life, such as cognitive ability.

Lee Jia En, 20, a final-year Computer Engineering student, witnessed this first-hand during the steamboat lunch that was prepared by the students and the clients.

"I saw for myself how even simple things like eating become difficult for people with dementia," he says.

The sneak peek into the private world of a caregiver gave the students invaluable experience of what it would be like to care for someone with dementia in the future.

Says Jia En, "Unlike talks... I feel that such visits are more effective...as it allows us to get first-hand experience."

y Anatomy

about a meteoric rise in people with dementia, and the strain will not only be felt by their caregivers, but the youths as well

when the first-year Nursing student's grandfather forgot things like the day, even though he was told just moments ago.

The 19-year-old's grandfather, Chang Boon Cheng, 79, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease six months ago.

The most common form of dementia, Alzheimer's disease makes up 50 to 70 percent of dementia cases.

Mr Chang's forgetfulness gradually affects other aspects of his life.

"When he is cooking, he usually forgets that he has already added salt and will put it again," recounts Siye.

More dangerously, he often overdoses on his pills for hypertension and thyroid because he forgets that he has taken them.

Unlike Siye who is equipped with skills to care for such patients, an untrained person will find caring for a dementia patient extremely difficult to cope with.

"[A person] not trained in caregiving might find this very hard, because it involves cleaning them after they have passed motion, and it's not a pretty sight. It is like taking care of a baby," she says.

A progressive ailment, dementia causes an irreversible decline in cognitive function.

This causes people to turn to specialised homes for professional care. However, the increase in healthcare needs places a

humongous strain on our local resources.

A Straits Times article on Nov 11 2010 reports, "The average waiting time for a state-subsidised nursing home bed... inched up from roughly 50 days in 2008 to 60 days early this year [2010]."

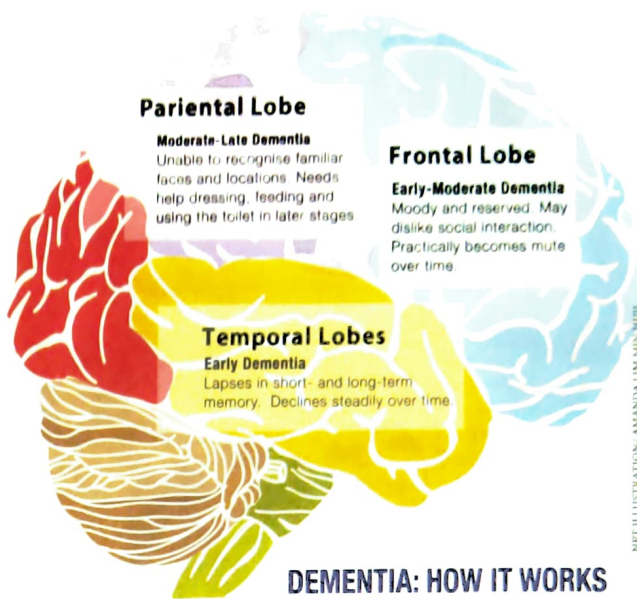
To combat the lack of facilities, Acting Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS), Mr Chan Chun Sing, announced in Nov 2011 that, "22 senior day-care centres under the MCYS will be equipped to look after [people with dementia] in the next five years."

Three such centres are already in place after the inauguration of the scheme in 2009. Facilities are also being upgraded to enhance safety and comfort of the patients, one such being Hougang's St Luke's ElderCare centre, which has locks fitted to keep dementia patients from wandering.

As of Jan 1, a patient may use up to \$400 from their Medisave accounts to subsidise treatment costs every year.

Meanwhile, what family members of people with dementia can do is to continue stimulating the patients' mind by playing games or interacting with them.

"We usually test him by asking him simple questions such as what is the day today and if he gets it right, we give him words of encouragement," says Siye.



DEMENTIA: HOW IT WORKS

"I couldn't understand why she was behaving like a fool..."

Hazel Tan

Ms Muthusamy Kaaveri, 58, has been caring for her 85-year-old dementia-stricken mother for the past nine years.

"She was not the type to socialise. She was very quiet and was always by herself," says Ms Kaaveri about her mother.

"One day I came back from work, I kept knocking at the door for about 15 minutes and she still didn't come [to the door]," Ms Kaaveri recounts clearly.

When her mother finally opened the door, she was looking tired and weak. It was then she started considering quitting her job to take care of her mother full time.

She was a yoga instructor at a gym then. As she was not an ambitious person she had no problems switching to a part-time job to look after her mother.

It was when her mother defecated into the pail next to the toilet bowl that she realised she had to take her to the doctor – and really quit her job.

"I couldn't... understand... why she was behaving like a fool... I was so mad at her."

Her mother's odd behaviour was finally explained when a geriatrics doctor confirmed she had dementia.

Attempting to explain the perplexing condition, she says, "Dementia is something that locks you in internally. You look very normal but actually there are a lot of things going on in your mind."

Now in the late stages of dementia, her mother hardly speaks and does not even recognise her due to failing memory.

"She sees me everyday and she knows I take care of her but she doesn't know who



Ms Kaaveri's love for her mother sustains her hopes and gives her the strength to see her mother through every day.

I am at all," she says matter-of-factly.

Despite the difficulties, Ms Kaaveri finds ways to lighten the load. The heavy financial burden is shared by her siblings.

"It is very important to not let your ego get in your way of getting help when you need it," she says.

"It requires a lot of emotion when dealing with dementia, you cannot apply logic to it. When you apply logic to it, it becomes very painful for you and the person."

She admits that it is tough to be a caregiver as it can be very frustrating. However, she believes that positivity is the only way to get through difficult times.

"It is a big blessing to be able to give back to your parents what they gave you when you were young."

BEING A CAREGIVER: WOULD YOU?

Imagine if you had a family member with dementia.

Would you...

Yes
No

5.6%



Feed him or her during meals?

94.4%

57.6%



Bathe him or her?

47.9%

42.4%

Change diapers and clean up his or her mess?



57.6%

75.0%

Reply to, "What day it is today?" up to 10 times in 5 minutes?

25.0%

80.6%

Help him or her to the toilet?



19.4%

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Love of a Lifetime

npTribune observes a different kind of love – one that goes beyond Feb 14. **Carissa Abidin** looks into all the other types of ties that bind and how it unifies all of those involved



PHOTO COURTESY OF MR JAMES SHARPE

Mr and Mrs Sharpe enjoy outdoor activities with their two sons.

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Mr James Sharpe, 32, a lecturer at the School of Film & Media Studies (FMS) and Mrs Hannah Sharpe, 36, a lecturer from the School of Business & Accountancy (BA), began a life in Singapore when their parents decided to live here, and have built their own family since.

With their two sons, Jacob, 4, and Frank, 2, a day in the Sharpe family is never short of fun.

A typical day sees the parents preparing their sons for school at The Caterpillar's Cove Child

Development and Study Centre.

With the boys settled down in school, the couple finally has a day to all to themselves.

The perks of working in the same institution, as Mr Sharpe mentions, is meeting his wife for lunch as often as possible.

If time permits, they even go down to their favourite eatery, Spinelli's at King Albert Park for lunch, located just down the road from the NP campus.

Mrs Sharpe says, "The weekends are all about the children."

Their favourite places include open areas like parks and fields,

such as Portsdown Road, because the boys enjoy outdoor activities like football and cycling.

Apart from the very active weekends they have with their two sons, the couple actually prefers intimate gatherings as compared to extravagant dinners.

Mrs Sharpe shares, "Even before we had kids, we used to go for dinner, but it was a very small affair, not a lavish dinner."

As such, the couple does not understand the fuss about Valentine's Day because they feel that every day is a good time to be together.

DOUBLE HAPPINESS

"I was quite naughty [when I was young]," recalls Mr Ong Chong Kit, 38, admin staff manager at the school of BA.

His sister, Ms Sharon Su Hui Ong, 36, admin staff manager at the School of FMS laughs in agreement, "I always tell on him!"

The brother-sister duo only started working together recently. Mr Ong had been working in the different sectors of NP for 12 years before his sister joined him just a year ago.

Leading individual lives, Ms Ong's arrival at NP came as a surprise to her brother. He says, "Frankly, I didn't even know she applied for NP!"

With different schedules, they hardly see each other. This is not necessarily a bad thing, because it becomes a pleasant surprise when they do bump into each other within the campus.

Ms Ong shares, "It'll be like a shock. If you meet your friends and go, 'Oh ya, that's my brother'."

Because of their positions in school, they sometimes attend the same meetings as well. "Sometimes I don't even know he's attending [the meetings]," says Ms Ong.

During the meetings, the siblings do exchange glances and signals with their eyes, something nobody else would understand. With more years of experience and familiarity with NP's systems,

Mr Ong is naturally Ms Ong's go-to man for advice regarding the school systems.

She says, "Every now and then I will check with my brother on system processes, how it's done in their school and why it can't be done in our school."

Besides helping each other improve their skills and knowledge, working together in NP has fostered a better relationship. Because they understand each other's job better, it is easier to talk about their problems and seek advice from one another.

Family is an important part in their lives, as Ms Ong shares, "Deep down inside you know you are siblings. You are family."



PHOTO COURTESY OF MS SHARON ONG

Call when you need me: the Ong siblings (extreme left, extreme right)

MUSIC RUNS IN THE BLOOD

Since his daughter, a second-year student from FMS, Insyairah bte Arifin, 19, began studying in NP in 2010, Mr Arifin Bin Ami, 46, has been acting as her human alarm by personally waking her up every morning.

The FMS technical support officer had already been working in NP for more than a decade when his daughter decided to enrol into NP.

Insyairah, or better known to her friends as Ira, says, "After 'O' Levels (GCE 'O' Level Examination), I didn't know what to do. And I had no idea what he was working as."

Her interest in pursuing a

Diploma in Mass Communication was sparked when she attended NP's annual open house upon her father's advice.

While her father gave her the space to do as she wished, she faced a different sort of obstacle in school – the expectations lecturers had of her.

"A lot of lecturers go, 'Oh, you're Arifin's daughter', so there's a certain level of expectation I have to adhere to," Ira says.

Besides being involved in radio, the father and daughter duo share between them an extreme passion for music and are heavily involved in making as well as producing it.

Raised by a parent who happens to be a musician, the member of Baracuda Batucada says, "We

appreciate music on a different level as compared to other people, this is where we bond."

Besides jamming on physical instruments, the two often work on musical projects together.

"He has been doing some projects with people from Suria. He's been in the industry for a while but he's very low profile," Ira proudly shares her father's story.

They have a studio at home, which includes a recording booth. However, Ira is not always allowed in the booth because the system is quite intricate.

The father and daughter remark that by being in the same school, they understand each other's work problems better.



PHOTO COURTESY OF INSYAIRAH BTE ARIFIN

A mutual love for music helps Ira and her dad build tighter bonds.



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Share Your Burdens

Lim Ying Ting

Every morning, Mrs Tay Pui Fan, and Ms Wu Xiulan Ashley make their way to the NP campus.

However, their destination is not one of the many classrooms around the campus, but the Student Services Office at Block 4, where they take up their roles as school counsellors.

Contrary to popular belief, seeking counselling services does not necessarily mean that you have major issues. No issue is too trivial to be discussed with the counsellors, be it academic, relationship or psychological issues.

“Witnessing students initiating changes and overcoming their issues themselves really means a lot to me.”

Mrs Tay Pui Fan
NP Student Counsellor

“For instance, if you are experiencing conflict with your classmates, and are unsure of how to solve it, try approaching the student counsellors,” suggests Mrs Tay who is in her fifties.

The counsellors stress that they do not judge or label the students who approach them, but instead attempt to understand where they are coming from.

“We always try to put ourselves in their shoes, and at the end of the day, we really only want the best for them,” says Ms Wu, who is in her twenties.

Mrs Tay reassures that the counsellors would ‘build rapport’ to help the students ease up and talk about their issues.

“Rather than merely dishing out advice, we counsellors ask the students questions. By doing that, we help to facilitate change.”

For Mrs Tay, who has been working with NP students for the past nine years, she derives great satisfaction every time a student she counsels changes positively.

“Witnessing students initiating changes and overcoming their issues themselves really means a lot to me,” she adds.

Talk With Your Hands

The members of the Hearing Impaired Club are a dedicated bunch sharing a common goal: to spread awareness about hearing impairment



The tightly knit HIE Club family aims to narrow the gap between hearing-impaired and non hearing-impaired students.

Hu Junwen

Imagine attending a lecture on a usual school day, except you are unable to hear what your lecturer is saying.

You have to lip-read for some semblance of understanding in class, and day-to-day spoken communication with your schoolmates is nigh impossible unless they are extremely close to you.

This is the world of a hearing-impaired student in NP. Such problems are commonplace for these students in all the courses throughout the school.

While most, if not all, hearing-impaired students face difficulties and frustrations in

conversing with their peers and lecturers, some of these students have found solace in the Hearing Impaired Club, which is the only club of its kind in NP.

The HIE Club, as it is often affectionately called, was founded in 1997 by a hearing-impaired student. From its humble origins, it has now grown to a huge membership of over 350 students, of which a small number (five students, to be exact) have a level of hearing impairment.

With the goal of uniting the hearing and the non-hearing, the HIE Club actively engages in events and activities aimed at raising awareness on “deaf culture”, as hearing-impaired student Jack Sim, 20,

explains, referring to the beliefs and life experiences that the deaf and hearing impaired community shares.

The Electronic & Computer Engineering student is also a member of the club’s main committee, and helps to teach its participants sign language.

In sign language, he says, “I joined HIE Club because I want to be friends with those who can hear and speak, so they’ll learn about deaf culture and get a chance to communicate with us.”

Indeed, the members of the HIE Club are dedicated to their common goals, and have nothing but memorable and touching experiences to share.

Ingenious Graduates

Koh Lee Mei Fanny

TINY BUT MIGHTY

“I am who I am today because I’ve seen the world,” says Mr David Kwok, 40, CEO of Tiny Island Productions and Managing Director of CG Protégé Animation School.

An Electronic & Computer Engineering (ECE) graduate from NP, Mr Kwok takes pride in his two establishments, both of which are centred entirely around computer graphics (CG).

Mr Kwok remembers stumbling upon his interest for CG while creating a screensaver like animation for his project.

“It [was] useless, but [it excited me] because it’s like, ‘Wah! This is good. I can see things move [on the screen],’” he says.

Ever humble, even with the accolades over the years, Mr Kwok will always remember his friends from his final year.



Frontman of The Observatory, Leslie Low (above), recalls fond times in FSV.



Mr Kwok of Tiny Island Productions (second from left) with his classmates.

“They are great friends who [have] gone through thick and thin with me. They are the ones that made my stay in NP worth remembering,” he says

MUSIC IN HIS BLOOD

While Mr Kwok transitioned from an engineering diploma to a creative career, Mr Leslie Low stuck to his guns and pushed through in his love for creating music.

A member of The Observatory, a local indie rock and electronica band, the 39-year-old adds how his years in Film,

Sound & Video (FSV) provided “a real breath of fresh air” to his otherwise routine educational journey where he had “a long run of jaded local teachers who mostly fall short of inspiring any passion”.

“I thoroughly enjoyed the experience in FSV. We had good lecturers, and it was a totally different experience,” says the ardent music composer.

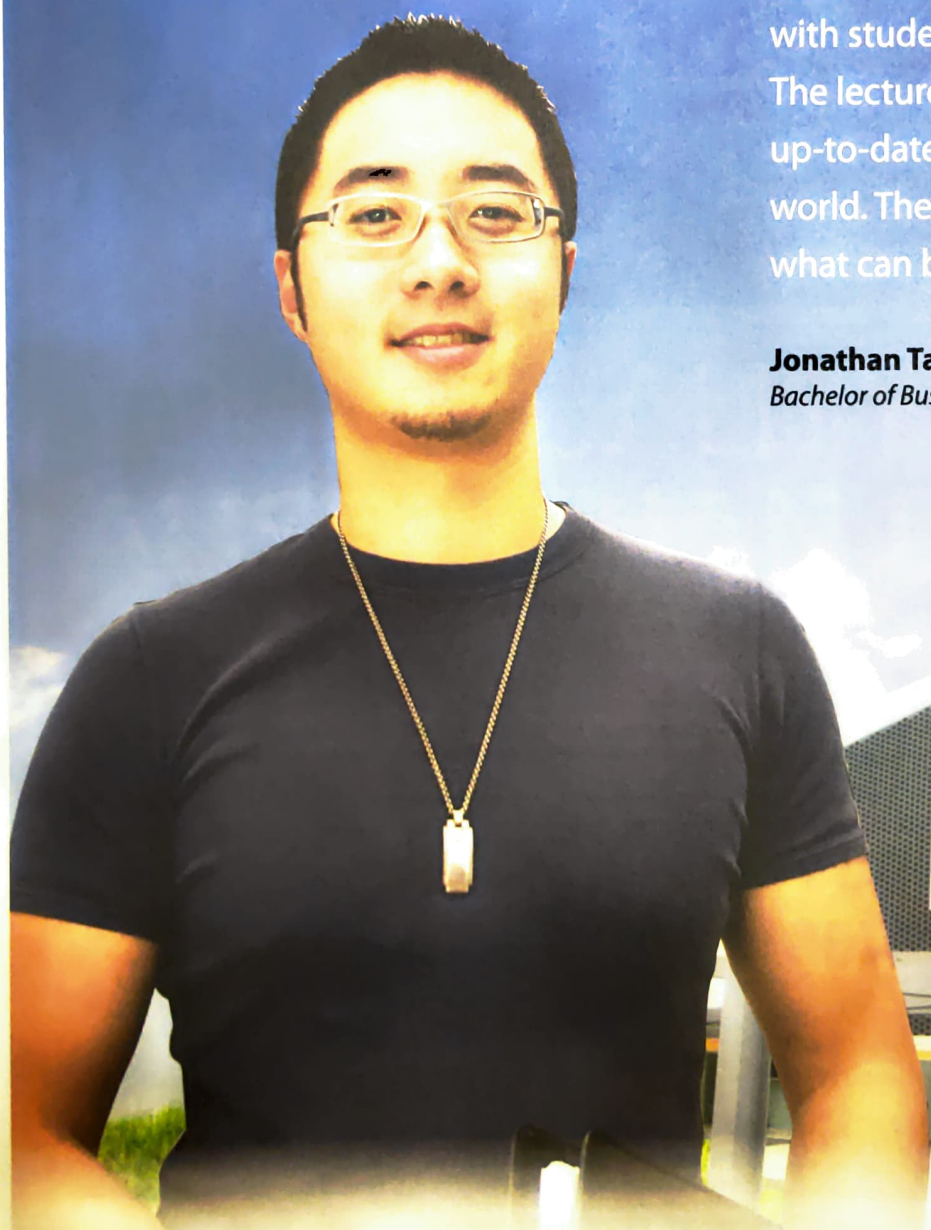
Whether this inspires him to come back to teach in the future, he whimsically says, “Perhaps one day I will find the courage to... when I overcome my fear of paperwork.”



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GLOBAL



Students from the School of LSCT were immersed in the flora and fauna of Sabah, visiting a proboscis monkey sanctuary (middle) and an orang utan rehabilitation centre (right).

Fawning Over Fauna

Veterinary Bioscience students took their lessons to the jungle with a four-day trip to Sabah

Hazel Tan

Early September 2011, 25 students from the School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology (LSCT) embarked on an eco-trip to Sandakan, Sabah, to observe the abundant Malayan ecosystem.

From Sep 9 to 12, the pioneer batch of Veterinary Bioscience (VBS) students was

there to immerse themselves in wildlife.

"Sandakan is well-known as a 'gateway' for studying conservation and biodiversity, so the trip tied in very nicely with the 'conservation and biodiversity' module in this course," says Dr Sara Zaman, the course manager of VBS who is in her thirties.

The students, accompanied by two lecturers, would wake up every morning at 5 am for a river cruise down Sabah's longest river, the Kinabatangan River, to watch and observe avian life along the river.

"The river cruise gave us the opportunity to see many species of birds, including hornbills and kingfishers," says Dr Zaman.

Buwaneswari D/O Dewarajan, 18, a second-year VBS student who went for the trip for the wildlife experience, says, "It was really interesting that the hornbills usually fly in pairs because once they set their eyes on another, they are soulmates forever."

During one of their river cruises, they managed to spot a herd of Borneo Pygmy Elephants, which was a very rare sighting.

"We had to stake out for about 30 minutes to an hour before they appeared," says Buwaneswari who took up the diploma due to her love for animals.

According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Malaysia, these elephants have a population of less than 1,500, and are listed under the International Union For Conservation and Nature as endangered.

Pamela Ho, 18, a second-year VBS student, recalls fondly, "We were all very excited when they finally appeared. The wait was worth it."

Other than river cruises, the group of animal lovers also visited the Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Centre. At the centre, they got to observe orang utans in their natural surroundings.

"We were asked to keep really quiet, and the orang utans would just come up to us, it was really nice," says Pamela who loved animals since she was a child.

They also visited the Labuk Bay Proboscis Monkey Sanctuary, which was situated in

the middle of a vast mangrove forest.

"Both these animal reserves allowed an up close and personal experience of these magnificent primates," says Dr Zaman.

Brenda Tan, 18, a second-year VBS student who wishes to work in the field of wildlife reserves in future, learnt that there was a way of differentiating the male and female proboscis monkeys.

The trip also took them to the Gomantong Caves – a group of massive limestone caves soaring up to 90 metres high, home to bats and birds called swiftlets.

"We were again very fortunate to arrive during the bird-nest harvesting season, so we got to see the harvesters climbing all the way up to the roof of the cave using rope ladders," recounts Buwaneswari.

She felt that the trip had helped her bond with her classmates.

"I thought this trip was an eye-opening experience for me because you can never get to do this (observe wildlife) in Singapore," says Brenda.

Learning American in China

Koh Lee Mei Fanny

Having been a volunteer at a health clinic located at a small mountain city in Peru, Mr Andrew Okon Usoro, 23, is no stranger to travelling to the far-flung ends of the world.

But what made his Overseas Immersion Programme (OIP) to Wuhan, China so fascinating would be the lack of spoken English around him.

"[It] was very residential... no tourists... so it gave me a much better experience of what living in China was like," says the Princeton University graduate who led a group of second-year Diploma in Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering (CBE) students to Wuhan University of Science and Technology from Sep 19 to Oct 8 last year.

Mr Lee Soo Seng, a fellow LSCT lecturer, was with the students from Sep 5 before Mr Andrew took over. They both taught the modules Petrol Chemical

Technology and Industrial Chemical Processes.

The International Fellow for the Princeton-in-Asia programme has been in Singapore since September 2010 and intends to pursue his graduate studies in medicine come fall in 2012.

Mr Andrew is one of the many International Fellows in NP, who are scattered all over the campus in the various schools.

Second-year CBE student Wee Wan Teng, 18, who went on the trip to Wuhan with Mr Andrew and 20 other course mates says that one of the things that struck her the most about Mr Andrew was his independent streak.

"It's hard for him to go out alone [since he can't speak Mandarin], but instead of relying on us to bring him [out], he would take the initiative to learn Chinese and go out [alone]," Wan Teng says.

Mr Andrew quips that it took the locals some time before they realised that he could not speak a smidgen of Mandarin. However, he managed to learn a few basic



A trip to China helped Mr. Usoro (back row, second from right) understand the importance of Mandarin.

phrases, such as "chao fan (fried rice)" and "tang bao (dumplings)".

About China, he says, "Interacting with the locals made me realise how important Chinese is to the world."

Unknown to him, it was this quiet determination of his that struck a chord with his students.

"[Mr Andrew] did not teach this module in LSCT, but because of this trip, he had to teach this module and so he was unsure of certain things [but instead of giving up], he would always spend his time at night to do research on everything we asked and he would give us a reply the next day," says

Lau Yi Qin Marion, 18, a second-year CBE student.

Though he raves about how he loves working with his students, he also shares the three things he misses most about home in the United States, "Mexican food, college football, and not sweating when I walk outside."

GLOBAL

Joy in the Land of Smiles

CCA leaders brought merriment to the needy in Thailand despite the lack of a common language

Khamnee Thrumalinggam

Co-curricular activity (CCA) leaders from the different Community Service CCAs came together for the first time for a community service trip to Chiang Mai, Thailand, from Mar 13 to 20.

Mr Kanaphat Kitratiprasan, 30, also known as Mr Dy, says that the main objective of this eight-day trip was to encourage the CCA leaders to support each other and also to expose them to some uncommon forms of community service.

The assistant student development manager says, "The Community Service clubs are made up of a small cluster of different community service related CCAs. We hope that the CCA leaders of the different CCAs will come back from this trip with a better understanding of what teamwork is about and help each other in their CCA activities and initiatives."

During the eight days, the students spent their time volunteering at various places.

One of the places that the team visited was the Chiang Mai University Demonstration School, where they conducted team-building games.

Second-year International Business student Olivia Ng, 18, of NP Boy's Brigade Primers says, "Initially we had difficulty communicating with the local children due to language barriers. However, we decided that speaking the same language is not

really important and we tried to gesture ... with the help of lots of pointing, we got the message across."

The students also learnt valuable lessons in a visit to the McKean Leprosy Rehabilitation Centre where they learnt about leprosy and experienced making natural soap for the first time.

"We came up with the soap-making activity as we wanted to introduce the concept of self-sustainability to the students. Many people think that lepers are useless, but what many do not know is that they make a living out of selling these handmade soaps," says Mr Dy.

Damien Chiang, 18, a second-year Tourism & Resort Management student shares, "I never thought much about leprosy and lepers, probably because I do not know anyone with this disease. In fact, I used to think that leprosy only occurred among the old folk."

The member of the NP Boy's Brigade Primers goes on to share more about his experience, "The trip to McKean Leprosy Rehabilitation Centre really opened my eyes and gave me a whole new perspective on this disease. I now understand the stigma attached to lepers, and upon seeing and being around them, I feel that I can relate more to them."

Students also visited an orphanage where they spent their time interacting and bonding with the local children.

"Though we only spent a day with the children, we really bonded with them. It was heartbreaking to see them running



The student leaders had a bubbly good time by improving the lives of the less fortunate.

behind the bus when we were leaving the orphanage," Olivia reminisces.

When asked if there was a fight for power among the leaders, Olivia laughs and says, "We are all actually really nice people; there was not much tension. We did learn one important lesson though, [which] was to explain the reason behind something instead of simply demanding for something to be done a certain way."

The trip to Chiang Mai presented the opportunity for CCA leaders of the various community service related CCAs to collaborate, bond and foster stronger ties with each other.

Not only did the students give back to the community, it gave them a chance to hone their leadership skills.

Damien says, "It was a good opportunity for us to be exposed to new things as well as interact and mingle with each other more - something that we did not do before."



In spite of their cultural barriers, the CCA leaders and orphans bonded closely.

Culture Down Under

Gary Lim

A joint-CCA trip to Perth, Western Australia, was held from Sep 4 to 9 to allow students to experience their art and culture.

This trip involved 29 student leaders from the various cultural and arts clubs. It was organised by the Student Development & Alumni Relations Office (SDAR).

The aim of the cultural exchange trip was to reward students who had shown great dedication in their respective groups, as well as to enhance their capabilities.

The students visited the University of Western Australia (UWA) and Curtin University where they were hit in the face by a culture shock.

Mr Ian Wong the student development manager of SDAR, who was the chaperone for the

trip, says, "For most of these students, it is their first time in Perth, and their general impression is that the people are very friendly, and that the lifestyle there is much slower than in Singapore."

Apart from visiting the universities, the students were taken to the Fremantle Dance & Music School for a dance workshop, where they learnt several dance styles that are unique to Australia.

They also got to try their hand at various Australian tribal instruments such as the *didgeridoo*, a long wooden tube native to Australia.

Pearlene Quek, 18, a second-year Early Childhood Education (ECE) student and president of the NP Voices Club comments on the experience, "We had a good time with the instruments ...



The trip was a well-deserved reward for dedicated members of NP's cultural and arts CCAs.

making the whole place resonate with our enthusiastic thumping!"

There, the students visited famous Australian tourist attractions like the Caversham Wildlife Park and King's Park.

"My favourite experience was the visit to the Swan Bell Tower. The [bell] ringers shared their cultural heritage and history with

us, after which I understood much more about the art culture here," says Chan Wai San, 19, a final year Audio-visual Technology student and a member of the Chinese Orchestra Club.

Aside from learning more about Australian art and culture, the students also used the trip as a chance to better know each other

President of the Chinese Dance Club, Yu Xinru, 17, who is also a second-year International Supply Chain Management student, is excited about the new ties made.

"We are happy that we made new friends with members who are from other clubs, and we also hope to conduct future performances with them."

A New Pool and a Snack Bar Too

npTribune gets an exclusive sneak peek at the newly refurbished Sports Complex

Koh Lee Mei Fanny

Following the new indoor Sports Hall and Seventy3 in 2011 comes the next jewel on campus – the new Sports Complex.

Here are some things you can look forward to in NP's latest Sports Hub.

1. POOLSIDE – THE BRAND NEW CANTEN TWO

Ravenous staff and students can now whet their appetites with the opening of Poolside, the newly named Canteen Two.

The younger sibling of Makan Place and Munch boasts a fully air-conditioned food court with seats spilling over to the open area by the swimming pool so that students can luxuriate in the pleasure of al fresco poolside dining without paying an arm, a leg, and a bomb for good measure.

2. MORE OPEN SPACES

The fences and old bridge that previously existed to cover up the pool have been torn down to create an open concept. In place of the fences is a lifeguard, who will be stationed at the swimming pool from 7 am to 10 pm, to ensure safety.

Additionally, the old snack bar and toilets have been replaced by a new water feature and open

spaces for students to hang out after their training sessions, and for orientation camps to be held at. The new snack bar will be run entirely by students.

3. HOT WATER

Water heaters are the newest addition to the ground floor toilets so that students that train at the Sports Complex can now soothe their aching muscles under warm water after a hard day's training.

4. EXPANSION OF THE GYM

A new performance gym has been added to Gymwerkz. The area allows for more cardio training. In addition, it also serves as a back-up location for National Physical Fitness Assessment (NAPFA), replacing the old karaoke room.

Staff can also look forward to their very own staff gym on the first floor of the complex.

5. ADDITIONS TO THE SPORTS HALL

Four martial art rooms now stand where the old CCA rooms used to be, allowing CCAs like *wushu* to have space more for training. The third floor is still under construction but after it is fully built, it will be an indoor sports hall where CCAs like the cheerleading team *Magnum Force* can safely practise without worrying about the rain.



With endless trainings and a superior strategy, the dragonboat team powered their way to first place at the 2011 November POL-ITE games, ending a 4-year drought for the gold. - LIM YING TING

Proving Their Mettle With A Medal



A dominant performance by the water polo boys ensured the gold medal stayed with NP for the fifth year.

Khamnee Thrumalinggam

At the recent POL-ITE games held in November 2011, NP's water polo team secured a gold medal for the fifth time in a row.

The POL-ITE games are an annual event that encourages the spirit of friendly competition between all polytechnics and Institutes of Technical Education (ITEs) in Singapore.

This gold medal is just one in a long list of awards attained by the water polo team over the years.

However, to the boys, the

POL-ITE games are just a warm up to their 'real' competition, the Institute Varsity Polytechnic (IVP) games, an event of much larger scale and importance compared to POL-ITE.

"We treat the POL-ITE games as a stepping stone to the IVP, which is considerably tougher as there are more experienced players involved," says vice-captain Joseph Tan, 19, a final-year Accountancy student.

The team's coach and mentor is Mr Alvin Lee, a former national water polo player.

"Recently in 2011, officials have

introduced an all star team... anyone who has ever studied in a polytechnic or university before are eligible. This really puts pressure on them," he explains.

Their intense trainings are held three times a week at NP's swimming pool.

Joseph agrees that a lot is expected from the players. However, personal time is granted only when it is crucial to their performance in the game.

"The last week before any big game is usually less intensive, giving players a chance to relax and become mentally prepared."



The brand new Sports Complex houses a newly renovated sports hall, snack bar (below) and a multitude of other facilities.



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