Masonic Charitable Fund Nurture Young Talents at SIT to Advance Education

The Masonic Charitable Fund makes its first endowed gift for an Institute of Higher Learning to SIT

08 January 2021

On 10 December 2020, a signing and cheque presentation ceremony was held at the SIT@Gover campus to establish the Masonic Charitable Fund Endowment Bursary at SIT. Dr Yeoh Sin Hook, Assistant District Grand Master, District Grand Lodge of the Eastern Archipelago, presented an endowed gift to Prof Tan Thiam Soon, President, SIT, on behalf of the Masonic Charitable Fund.

The gift also marks the first endowed gift the Masonic Charitable Fund has made to an Institute of Higher Learning. It will enable SIT to support three Singaporean undergraduates with the Bursary (valued at $5,000 each) from Academic Year 2021/22 onwards, annually and in perpetuity. The Masonic Charitable Fund Endowment Bursary is one of the most inclusive bursaries, and it is applicable to financially disadvantaged students from all fields of study.

"SIT, with its unique positioning as the university of applied learning, gives Singaporeans access to a tertiary education that nurtures professionals who are highly relevant to the needs of the industry and the community. We are happy to support SIT in its mission and to see the Bursary enable students from less privileged backgrounds to make the most of their university education at SIT. We trust that this Bursary will help create a positive multiplier effect in our industry and our community," said Dr Brian Shegar, Chairman, Masonic Charitable Fund.

"The Masonic Charitable Fund was first established in Singapore in 2019, and it is very impressive how much support it has already provided to educational institutions in the past year. SIT is very proud to become one of your earliest beneficiaries, and we are especially honoured to be the first Institution to receive an endowment to support our SITizens," said Prof Tan Thiam Soon, President, SIT.
Nurturing Community-Minded SITizens for Service Leadership

Generous gifts from Mr Patrick Lee and the Yangzheng Foundation will enable SIT to establish a new Scholarship and Bursary, as well as a Community Leadership and Social Innovation Grant to nurture young leaders who have a heart for the community.

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Thanks to a $1-million endowed gift from Mr Patrick Lee, Chairman of Sing Lun Holdings Pte Ltd, the Singapore Institute of Technology will be able to award the Sing Lun Scholarships and Sing Lun Bursary to nurture undergraduates who are passionate about contributing to the community.

At steady state, five scholarships and five bursaries will be awarded annually and in perpetuity. The Sing Lun Scholarship (valued at $10,000 each) will nurture academically outstanding undergraduates at SIT, who have also made significant contributions to SIT or the community beyond their academic studies. The Sing Lun Bursary (valued at $5,000 each) will be awarded to financially disadvantaged students who have excellent community service records.

Bursary and Scholarship recipients are encouraged to volunteer for at least 12 days during the academic year, and to continue to participate in meaningful community projects in the key areas of need.

Said Prof Tan Thiam Soon, President, SIT, "We are thankful for the unswerving support from Mr Patrick Lee Kooi Kie to help SIT’s financially-disadvantaged undergraduates since 2013. His philanthropic leadership will greatly benefit our students, and support SIT’s projects and community initiatives."

Mr Lee’s friendship with SIT goes back to 2013 (in his capacity as President of the Yangzheng Foundation) – the year when the Foundation made possible the endowed Yangzheng Foundation Bursary for SIT students.

The Foundation’s latest gift of $150,000 makes possible the Yangzheng Foundation Community Leadership and Social Innovation Grant to support programmes and projects under SIT’s newly formed Community Leadership and Social Innovation Centre (CLASSIC). The Centre’s role is to nurture community leadership spirit among SIT students.

Formed in 1951, Sing Lun started as a textile trading company but has since successfully diversified into a privately-owned enterprise with a diverse range of business interests worldwide. The Group’s key business interests include industries, investments and real estate.
Going for the Gold

Recipients of The Ngee Ann Kongsi Gold Medal (For the Most Outstanding Graduating Student) tell SITizen Buzz about how they have progressed since graduating and receiving top honours

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Every year since 2017, The Ngee Ann Kongsi Gold Medal (For the Most Outstanding Graduating Student) has been conferred on one student from the graduating cohort who has not only achieved outstanding academic results in their chosen field of study, but has also demonstrated leadership qualities, and has made significant contributions beyond academic studies. The award, which comes with a $20,000 cash prize, has been made possible with a gift from The Ngee Ann Kongsi.

Here from the recipients themselves as they share more about their journey after SIT:

Chong Jun Hao
BEng (Hons) Sustainable Infrastructure Engineering (Building Services) (Class of 2020)

"I was overwhelmed when I heard that I received The Ngee Ann Kongsi Gold Medal. It really is the perfect way to graduate after working so hard for the past three years. I'm now a Mechanical Engineer and also doing my part-time Masters' Degree in Sustainable Infrastructure Engineering (Building Services) at SIT. I'm ambitious and I aim to start my own business in the construction field and digitalise the construction industry."

Wang Junfeng
B Accountancy (Hons) (Class of 2019)

"Words can't truly describe my excitement and happiness when I learnt that I received The Ngee Ann Kongsi Gold Medal - it is the highest achievement that I have ever received. I have been working at EY specialising in Audit since I graduated from SIT. If I could share with someone who is just starting university, I would say: "Treasure your time in school and make good use of it. Enjoy school while you still can and get yourself ready for the tough challenges ahead."

Sabrina Tan Chen Yin
BSc (Hons) Nursing (Class of 2018)

"I was very excited and thankful to be recognised as the most outstanding graduating student in my cohort and am hoping to use the prize to further my studies in the healthcare sector. I currently work in the Acute and Emergency Department in Khoo Teck Puat Hospital. The two years I spent in SIT have nurtured me to become a better nurse and advocate for my patients academically, and also taught me to be more outspoken in voicing out my ideas to initiate quality improvement projects in my workplace. I've gained more confidence when asked to take up certain leadership roles at work too. Apart from my work, I am also spending my days off by volunteering with the Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore (MINDS) and cultivating my personal interest in pottery."

Lee Jiyou
BEng (Hons) Aeronautical Engineering (Class of 2017)

"After graduating, I pursued a Master's Degree in Cranfield University, and the prize money from The Ngee Ann Kongsi Gold Medal helped support my expenses for my Master's Degree overseas. I have been serving as an Engineer in the Republic of Singapore Airforce after that. What I miss about being in SIT is the many opportunities I had as a student leader which enabled me to serve the community beyond the confines of the campus and to impact society. As Vice President of the Community Service Club, I helped organise events including those where we befriended the elderly."
Bubbling over with ‘CreativiTEA’!

Aaron Tan, Mechatronics alumnus and creator of card game Teabbles, shares the inspiration behind the game and how his SIT education helped him in the product development.

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Teabbles is the brainchild of Mechatronics alumnus Aaron Tan, and it was almost 1.5 years in the making due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Manufacturing engineer by day and card game enthusiast by night, Aaron long enjoyed the human interaction aspect of board and card games, an element that technology cannot replace. This led him to create a family-friendly yet competitive card game called Teabbles, inspired by his love for the drink.

Aaron first conceptualised the game prototype of Teabbles and upon good reviews from friends, he proceeded to the next stage for game play testing. The second prototype was created with the assistance of his partner, Jolene Yang, and it was refined further through many rounds of game testing across a range of age groups, before illustrator Ansley Toh was roped in to illustrate the card deck.

Teabbles offers three different game plays—Original Plan, Shuff and Rob the Builder—allowing players to choose an option that suits their liking, very much like their bubble tea orders. “The original gameplay was supposed to be the only way to play but COVID-19 happened and it pushed back the intended launch date much later. In the end, it turned out to be a blessing in disguise as I got to integrate other game ideas during the circuit breaker period to make the game value-for-money,” said Aaron.

Skills Aaron picked up and honed during his SIT education such as problem-solving, time and project management also came into play during the development stage of the card game as he was working at a full-time job. “My SIT journey has shaped me into an independent life-long learner. I have become more resourceful in finding out and learning about things such as the product life-cycle, basic marketing skills among many others, which helped make this game a reality,” said Aaron.

Happy that Teabbles had gained media coverage in Straits Times, Her World Online and on Seth Li.com, Aaron hopes the game will gain traction overseas too and find its place as a “Made in Singapore” game among the other popular games in the world. He also has a few game ideas up his sleeve and hopes to start the prototyping process for one of them soon. “I also have ideas for other products besides games, but I will take things one step at a time,” he added.

Teabbles retails for $30 and it is available for purchase.
Let’s Hit the Barre

SITizens get their muscles burning through Barre Fundamentals, a high-intensity fitness class combining ballet techniques, yoga and pilates, organised by the SIT Alumni Sports Network.

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Barre fitness classes have been gaining popularity among individuals looking for a well-rounded exercise regimen. Its benefits have been known to include improved posture, muscle definition and weight loss. SIT alumni experienced the invigorating workout at Barre Fundamentals, a barre fitness class led by Ms Cherina Ng from WelBarre studio.

The participants started with a five-minute warmup before diving into a unique workout combining ballet techniques, cardio and pilates in a 60-minute session. Besides engaging in high-intensity movements such as mountain climbers and tricep dips, they also worked out their thighs with pilates exercises. While ballet dancers normally do pilates exercises with a barre as support – hence the name – the participants used the back of a chair or a table instead.

Barre workouts look easy but are much more intense than they appear. Ms Hilary Lim, an Accounting graduate, felt the ache within 10 minutes of class. “I exercise regularly, but Barre is still difficult for me as it uses different muscles from the ones I’m used to,” she said. “The instructor also made sure to correct our posture so we could feel the stretch.”

In the spirit of Christmas, Ms Ng also threw in some Christmas-inspired cardio exercises such as “Rudolph Runs” and “Candy Cane Twists”, which had the participants sweating in no time. Mr Pang Yao Yi, who graduated from the Mechanical Design Engineering programme, felt he might have to prepare himself mentally before joining another class due to the surprising intensity. “I have not done ballet before, so it was interesting but very tiring. It’s different from normal HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training),” he said.

The workout incorporated Pilates exercises such as bicycle crunches, which focus on one’s upper core muscles.

Tired but happy faces after a satisfying workout! See you all again soon for the next sports fitness class in 2023!
Implementing Your Financial Plan

Save, Protect, Invest - SIT alumni learnt the principles for a good financial planning roadmap during a Zoom webinar in December

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Alumni can continue to gain valuable knowledge and practical insights through Zoom webinars organised under the SIT Alumni Career Network.

Financial planning is not just a single set of plans, but a long-term approach of wisely managing finances with a future-focused attitude. On 9 December, 42 SIT alumni learnt about all this and more during the Implementing Your Financial Plan Zoom webinar organised by the SIT Alumni Career Network.

One of the key principles explained during the talk was that a good financial plan covers three areas: Save, Protect, and Invest. By saving and managing one's existing resources well, protecting oneself with the right insurance coverage against unexpected events, and growing one's resources through investment, it is possible to establish and carry out a strong financial plan.

Said Ms Jasmine Wee, a Sustainable Infrastructure Engineering (Building Services) alumnus from the Class of 2019, "I've always had the misconception that I need to save at least six months of salary for a rainy day, but the class taught instead that it's ideal to save six to nine months of my expenditure, as having too much savings will potentially lock up investment opportunities. The workshop certainly helped to align my financial goals and plans, and gave me a better sense that I'm generally on the correct path."

The webinar was organised in collaboration with the Institute for Financial Literacy (IFL), and was led by Mr Lawrence Tan, an IFL speaker with over 25 years of experience in the banking industry having worked in Singapore as well as overseas with global banks. The talk also offered guidelines and addressed issues such as how much insurance coverage one should get, and general principles for making investment decisions.