



NANYANG
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Gifts in Action

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gifts in action

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Yes, she can!

Gift from Lee Foundation bridged the last mile for NTU alumna Sophia Pang's expedition of a lifetime



The moment of arrival for at the Geographical South Pole for 37-year-old Sophia Pang, mother, IT consultant and fitness instructor, thanks to support from Lee Foundation and other organisations.

NTU alumna Sophia Pang (back row, first from right) making history with her team-mates from Britain, Cyprus, Ghana, India, Brunei and New Zealand.

Sophia Pang, the first Singaporean woman to conquer the South Pole, nearly became the Singaporean woman who didn't make it to the South Pole.

Her left knee had had surgery, and her right knee's ligament was partially torn. "My daughter said it would be a miracle for me to be selected," says the bemused mother of three. "So, apart from wanting to do something for myself, I went on the Kaspersky Commonwealth Antarctic Expedition because I wanted to help my children see life's possibilities."

She and other women from six Commonwealth countries braved temperatures of up to -40 deg C and skied across 900 km of freezing Antarctica terrain. Just 10 days from the destination, Pang felt weak and her team-mates decided to reshuffle the load they were carrying. "I was very worried - and angry with myself - but finally I took comfort from the realisation that what matters is not so much one person arriving, but the team making it there." She persevered and, on 30 Dec 2009, made history by planting the Singapore flag at the Geographic South Pole at latitude 90 degrees.

"I believe endeavours such as ours will have a profound impact on people's spirit and imagination, because they can open up our hearts and minds and, at the same time, make us appreciate and care for the environment," says Pang. Society needs to support such endeavours.

The expedition was supported by more than 60 organisations including NTU, and Pang says she is very grateful for the final gift of \$100,000 that came from Lee Foundation: "At the 11th hour, when we were still unable to raise all of the US\$600,000 we needed, Lee Foundation's gift came in and closed the gap, putting our minds at ease so we could concentrate on our training."

Before giving this Nanyang Business School alumna a hand in her quest to conquer the Antarctic, Lee Foundation had already been supporting a wide range of worthy causes at NTU, including professorships, scholarships, bursaries, and student activities.

Ms Pang, who graduated in 1994, also attributes her success to NTU. "I stayed in Hall 2, right in front of the tennis court. One of the things I learnt was how to get into a group and really blend in," she says.

"I took part in volley ball and taekwondo. University sports instilled a lot of discipline in me. I think I learnt to play well as a support member of the team, which helped my South Pole experience. In fact, we were selected for our ability to cope with the cold and to work as a team, rather than physical fitness," she says. "One of the most valuable things I learnt from the expedition was co-operation under extreme circumstances - if you can experience it, you will appreciate more."

南极只怕有心人!

李氏基金的捐赠, 让南大校友彭素翠完成毕生难忘的旅程

首位征服南极的新加坡女性的彭素翠, 差点儿便成了征服不了南极的新加坡女人。

右膝韧带撕裂, 左膝又曾经开过刀的素翠回忆道: "我女儿说, 要有奇迹出现, 我才可能入选。" 这位身为三个孩子的母亲, 又好气又好笑地说: "所以, 除了实现自己的理想和抱负之外, 我参加卡巴斯实验室英联邦南极探险队, 也是想让孩子们能够认识到生命中的各种可能。"

素翠与来自共和联邦国家的六名女队友冒着低达摄氏零下40度的严寒天气, 划着雪橇行走了900公里的南极冰原。距离目的地还有十天, 素翠便已经开始觉得体力不支。队友们于是决定减轻她的负担, 重新安排各人的负重。"那一刻, 我很担心, 也很自责。但是后来又想通了, 明白了最重要的不是我个人是否能到达目的地, 而是整个团队是否能完成这次的行程。" 之后, 她坚持不懈地继续前进, 终于在2009年12月30日那一天, 满心欢喜地把新加坡和南大的旗帜插到位于南纬90度的地理南极点。

"我相信, 像我们这样的努力, 不单会对人们的精神与想象力影响深远, 也会开敞我们的胸怀, 并促使大家爱护环境。" 素翠说。"社会应当支持这样的探险活动。"

连南大在内, 探险队得了超过60个机构的支持。素翠说她很感激来自李氏基金的十万新元捐赠。"在我们出发的最后时刻, 我们还是未能募得我们全部所须的60美元经费。就在这个时候, 李氏基金的捐赠填补了经费上的不足, 也让我们能够专心一志地接受训练。"

早在捐助这位南洋商学院校友完成征服南极壮举之前, 李氏基金已经一向给予南大广度的支持, 所捐助的南大项目包括了教授基金、奖学金、助学金、学生活动等等。

1994毕业的素翠说, 她的成功, 也应归功于母校南大。"当年我住二号宿舍, 前面便是一个大网球场。在那里, 我学到了如何在群体生活中与别人融洽相处。我也参加了排球与跆拳道运动, 明白了队友之间互的相扶持之道, 这对我日后的南极之行有着极大的帮助。事实上, 在探险队员的甄选过程中, 最着重的是我们耐寒的能力, 还有便是团队精神, 而非体能。"

素翠说: "我在南极之行中, 所学到的宝贵一课, 便是在艰苦之极的环境中同舟共济的合作精神。这样的经验, 会使你更加懂得欣赏人生中的美好。"

The team covered an immense distance in six 90-minute legs each day. Each member carried a load of 60 kg that included their own frozen waste until it could be properly disposed of.





Wee Kim Wee Legacy Fund enlightens journalism students on diverse viewpoints

Journalism students on Sojourn get to report from the ground - even from atop an elephant in Chiang Mai - thanks to the Wee Kim Wee Legacy Fund.

Tan Zi Jie remembers “basically hanging off the cliffs” in Sapa, Vietnam, clutching a walking stick in one hand and a 12-year-old H’mong girl in the other. “It felt like I was in a postcard, among the misty green hills and the gentle sway of the padi plants,” says the third year Communication Studies student at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (WKWSCI). She was among the 12 WKWSCI students selected for a Sojourn (Short Overseas Journalism Experience) trip to Sapa and Hanoi in September 2009.

“The Sapa trek was steep, muddy and slippery from recent rain, and while most of us definitely didn’t enjoy it at that time, it brings back fond memories today,” says Ms Tan. “What struck me about Vietnam was that what we believe to be ‘public’ or ‘private’ is so different in Hanoi. Lives are literally lived on the streets in Hanoi; a man having his hair cut, or a funeral plate being carved over the drain. I felt that the capital city’s essence could be captured just by taking a turn around the sidewalks for 24 hours.”

Ms Song Jia Jia, a final-year student who was on the same trip, says the experience has enriched her as a student of journalism: “Through my interaction with the tribal people along the way, I learnt much about their culture, for example how tribes of the Black H’mong and the Red Dzao live in virtual isolation, totally untouched by modernity.”

A travel journalism practicum programme made possible by the Wee Kim Wee Legacy Fund, Sojourn has so far enabled 31 students to go on practicums to Thailand, Vietnam, and a longer trip to Europe that was co-funded by the European Union.

Named in honour of the late journalist, diplomat and President, the Wee Kim Wee Legacy Fund was established in 2005 with gifts from many private donors to create an impact on

students, faculty, curricula and outreach. It supports a wide range of worthy causes at the School, including scholarships, bursaries, overseas internship grants, and innovative programmes such as film festivals organised by students. The fund also makes possible GO-FAR, an advanced journalism programme that allows WKWSCI students working in any medium - be it print, radio, video or photography - to carry out a major journalistic assignment overseas as a foreign correspondent.

Mr Andrew Duffy, the WKWSCI Lecturer in charge of the Sojourn, says the programme helps students on many levels. “Journalistically, it encourages them to write on behalf of the reader, and to travel, see, taste, experience all for the reader rather than for themselves. We also look at empathising with and understanding the people and the culture of the country we visit,” he says. “The School has a global vision, at the same time as being deeply connected to the local media industry. We believe it is important for students to see a bigger picture than can be offered within the confines of Singapore.”



On a Sapa bridge with a view: Tan Zi Jie holding her walking stick, and Song Jia Jia (in grey) next to her.



Tan Teo Scholar Glenn Ng Hong Kiat, who is pursuing a Computer Science degree, takes his game seriously - in or out of the virtual world.

n the mark

Tan Teo Scholars shoot for the moon

As a member of the NTU Archery Team, Glenn Ng Hong Kiat is used to visualising success. "It's a form of mental training - you visualise repeatedly in your mind your posture, how you shoot, and the arrow hitting the mark" says Mr Ng, who uses a 38-pound bow. "Archery has become a part of my life. It's actually a mentally demanding sport and I believe that, besides physical endurance, it has also improved my ability to focus mentally."

The second-year Computer Science student is one of eight NTU undergraduates to have been awarded the Tan Teo Scholarship, which has been supported by the Tan Teo Charitable Foundation since 2006.

The Scholarship is awarded each year to two deserving undergraduates (one from the School of Computer Engineering and one from any discipline) with outstanding academic records and ECA performance - favouring applicants who demonstrate strong creativity and a passionate concern for humanity. The Tan Teo Scholarship was made possible by NTU alumni Mr and Mrs Tan Chade Meng (both Class of 1994). Mr Tan, who graduated with a degree in Computer Engineering, now works for Google, USA.

Mr Ng says being awarded the Tan Teo Scholarship has given him a sense of achievement, much like the time when the NTU Archery Team took first prize at the Zhenghua Archery Championship in the recurve open short distance

category. "It was an unexpected win, and it boosted our confidence to strive for more," he says. When he graduates, he hopes to carve out a career in the multimedia and game development sectors in the IT industry - areas where creativity and a winning touch are key.

For Ms Audrey Teo Yi Chien, who was also awarded the Tan Teo Scholarship in FY 2009/10, the non-virtual world is her oyster. "I hold on to the dream of travelling around the world to broaden my horizons upon graduation because, as the saying goes, the world is a book and those who do not travel read only a page," says the freshman, who is pursuing a double degree in Information Engineering and Media & Economics.

"I yearn to partake in overseas community projects in less-developed countries. Through my schooling days I have been taking part in various local community projects. However, I believe monetary contributions could take such community projects to higher levels, thus not only do I want to put in time and effort to such projects, but I would also like to provide monetary support if I have the ability to do so in future."

"I would like to express my gratitude towards the Tan Teo Charitable Foundation. Being selected for the Scholarship is a dream come true and is indeed an honour," says Ms Teo.

Gift of hope & courage

Transverse Myelitis patient Shen Sihui perseveres at her studies, thanks to timely support, lots of confidence and huge doses of love

In 2007, Shen Sihui, a student at the School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, suddenly felt tired and out of breath as she was sitting for her first semester exams. She got home on her own and took a nap. When she woke up, she could feel no sensation in her lower limbs.

Ms Shen was hospitalised for two weeks, before she was diagnosed with Transverse Myelitis, a rare neurological disorder caused by inflammation in the spinal cord. She stayed in hospital for three months, and had to interrupt her studies for half a year.

“It was a huge shock at first because it happened overnight, and I found that I couldn’t walk or even move,” says the fourth year student matter-of-factly. “But I managed to overcome the shock and return to my studies, because of the support from my parents, my two older brothers and my boyfriend, who is also studying Mechanical Engineering at NTU. Other friends also help me catch up and get around campus,” she adds with a big smile.

She says she is grateful for the timely support she received from the Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple Student Emergency Aid Fund which paid for 15 Locomat (a special treadmill) therapy sessions that help her to walk. While still wheelchair bound, Ms Shen is now able to stand with a walking aid. Her prognosis is good.

The Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple Student Emergency Aid Fund was established with an endowed gift of S\$2 million made by the temple in 2008, to provide aid to the most deserving students facing sudden financial crisis, so as to help them complete their tertiary education. So far 20 NTU students have benefitted from this Fund.

“I’ve learnt that having confidence in yourself is very important in the recovery process,” says Ms Shen. “Since I became ill, I have come to understand better other people’s difficulties, and learnt to see things from another perspective. And I realised that my family and friends really love me!”

She hopes to pay it forward. “When I finish my studies and get well enough, I hope to help out at the hospital by sharing my experience with other Transverse Myelitis patients and their families,” she says. “I want to tell them it’s not the end of the world, because I think it’s very important for them to hear this from someone who has gone through the same thing.”

Ms Shen Sihui, one of 20 NTU students whom the Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple Student Emergency Aid Fund has benefited, is determined to complete her studies in Year 5 and join the aviation industry.

All the write moves



An audience of more than 1,400 attended the seminar on Chinese and English writing and translation by renowned poet Prof Yu Kwang-chung.

Legacy of Lien Shih Sheng paves way for budding writers



Wei Wei, first prize winner at 2009's Chinese essay competition supported by the Lien Shih Sheng Youth Chinese Literature Fund, shares her moment with Madam Chua Sewh Eng, Senior Teacher at Anglo-Chinese Junior College (centre) and Ms Grace Fu, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Education and Ministry of National Development (left).

Hemingway had his Paris. Young writers in Singapore are now beginning to get their own space to connect with one another and hone their craft, thanks to the thriving legacy of prominent literary figure Lien Shih Sheng.

The Lien Shih Sheng Youth Chinese Literature Fund (连士升青少年文学基金), established at Confucius Institute (CI) in 2007 in memory of Lien, has successfully reached out to Singapore students - by supporting an annual Chinese essay writing contest, the publication of winning entries, and seminars by master writers for this young audience. New editions of Lien's books are published and distributed to schools for free.

The schools are beginning to take notice. Last year, the essay writing contest (连士升杯青少年美文比赛) attracted more than 200 entries from Singapore schools, more than doubled the number of entries in the previous year. Writing seminars by renowned poet Yu Kwang-chung (余光中), songwriter Hou Dejian (侯德健), and writer Wu Dan-ru (吴淡如) drew wide media coverage. Says Assoc Prof Koh Hock Kiat, Director of Confucius Institute: "About 300 people turned up at our first event, but last year, Prof Yu Kwang-chung's seminar attracted more than 1,400 people. Interest is growing because we are plugging a gap in the promotion of Chinese literature among students between the ages of eight and 18. I think the schools are happy that someone is interested in doing this important work."

The man who inspired these efforts was himself a passionate advocate of Chinese culture and literature. Lien Shih Sheng (1907-1973) published more than 20 books in his lifetime, including *Letters from the Beach* (海滨寄简), for which he is best remembered. The endowed Lien Shih Sheng Youth Chinese Literature Fund at CI was set up with gifts of S\$200,000 from his family and supporters, not just to honour his literary legacy, but also to promote Chinese culture and Confucian ethos among Singapore's youths. "Working with the Lien family, I'm touched by their commitment, passion and imagination on the fund's possibilities," says Prof Koh. The family and close friends have recently renewed their support with top-up gifts of close to S\$200,000 towards the Fund.

Wei Wei, the Anglo-Chinese Junior College student who won first prize (pre-university category) at 2009's essay writing contest, says participating in the contest has deepened her understanding of Chinese writing and inspired her passion for it.

Her teacher, Madam Chua Sewh Eng, says: "The Fund is giving young people the platforms to engage in creative writing, and the access to writing seminars, which will inspire their interest in Chinese literature. It's doing important work now that may well produce the writers of tomorrow."

Character study

Yeung Ching Foundation fires student's passion to share her love for Chinese words

The teaching life beckons Yeung Ching Foundation Bursary holder Loh Pei Guat.

Loh Pei Guat, the first recipient of the Yeung Ching Foundation Bursary at NTU, was curious. What did the name Yeung Ching stand for and who was her benefactor? She googled for an answer but could find none on the vast Internet.

The bursary has nonetheless made a huge difference to her life, she says. "My family resources are limited. Before I was awarded the bursary, I had to tutor five students to make ends meet. Now, I make do with just two students. I am very grateful that the bursary came in my second year, when school projects become more demanding," says Ms Loh.

Yeung Ching Foundation Bursary was established at NTU in 2009 with a gift from the Foundation during NTU's Campaign for Accessibility to Higher Education - a campaign inspired by Prof Lim Chong Yah to raise funds for student bursaries.

Ms Loh, who is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Chinese at NTU's School of Humanities & Social Sciences, grew up reading The Three Character Classic (三字经) instead of fairy tales like Sleeping Beauty. "I love the Chinese language, which has always been easy for me. My parents are Chinese educated, so I guess you could say I had some learning advantage."

She realises it's not an advantage that most Singapore children enjoy, and her dream is to be a Chinese-language teacher. "Nowadays kids are taught *pinyin* first, and when they encounter Chinese characters further on in the curriculum, they find the language to be very difficult. To spark their interest, I would like to show them how Chinese characters have evolved from pictures," says Ms Loh.

The aspiring teacher is moved to hear that Yeung Ching was the name of a Chinese-stream primary school supported by the Cantonese community and that it had educated generations of students from 1906 to the late 1980s. When the private school finally closed, its patrons set up the Yeung Ching Foundation so they could continue to help further education.

The Foundation has benefited many schools, including Yangzheng Primary School, the present day government school that bears Yeung Ching's Chinese name (养正). It also gives to support children and the elderly, as well as restoration projects and other causes.

Says Ms Loh: "I'm very thankful for the bursary. I also feel really inspired by Yeung Ching Foundation's unwavering commitment to education. That's the spirit I hope to pass on to my students when I become a teacher."

