

Lifeline for students in need

TAR UMT fund ensures no one is left behind in education

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PETALING JAYA: Back in 2020, Ngoo Li Si was a broken young woman, as the prospect of dropping out from her accounting degree studies was fast becoming a reality.

She kept staring at the subpar results of her exams and was dejected because the unimpressive marks made her lose her National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PIPTN) loan eligibility.

Her friends tried to comfort her and believed she could make it as long as she put more time into her studies, but she knew that was a mountain to climb as she needed to keep her part-time tuition teacher job to buy food.

As the eldest of seven siblings, her parents also told her to leave school since her results were bad and get a job to help support the family instead.

"At times, I would just stare into blank space before breaking down. On one hand, I wanted to continue my degree studies but I also didn't want to trouble my parents due to their financial difficulties," she said.

Ngoo, a student at the Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TAR UMT) Setapak campus, was then advised by a friend to apply for the university's student loan fund.

With nothing to lose, she did so. Her application was approved several weeks later to her great relief.

Ngoo, now 26, has since graduated with an accounting degree and works as an account executive at an architectural firm in Kuala Lumpur.

She said she would never forget her parents' smiles during her convocation ceremony last year.

"It was a proud moment for me



Helping bright young minds: Kong Choy (fourth from left) sharing a light moment with donors and recipients after the mock cheque presentation. With him are (from left) Tan, Lee, Xuan Kai, Wah Kiang, Ngoo, Lau, Chook and Wong. — KAMARUL ARIFFIN/The Star

as well as my parents. The student loan was a big stepping stone in helping me become who I am today," she added.

Ngoo's story is one of the many positive outcomes resulting from the university's student loan fund, where deserving recipients enjoy interest-free repayments over a period of six years.

Current recipient Chan Xuan Kai said the fund enabled him to continue his degree studies when all seemed lost.

"My father is a blue collar worker and my mother is a housewife. My mother was also recently diagnosed with an illness. There was so much financial stress in the family.

"It affected my studies and I failed some papers. My parents asked me to get a job to help the family instead. I don't blame them as I know they are struggling," said

the 22-year-old from Johor.

Chan then consulted a lecturer, who advised him to apply for the TAR UMT student loan, which was later approved.

"My family is still struggling, but the loan has kept me in university. I am very grateful," said the mechanical engineering student, who is set to graduate next year.

Ngoo and Chan were speaking at an event organised by TAR UMT to raise awareness on how the fund ensured that no one was left behind in education.

Present were TAR UMT Alumni Council chairman and Board of Governors member Tan Sri Chan Kong Choy, TAR UMT president Prof Lee Sze Wei, vice-president Assoc Prof Chook Ka Joo, and donors Datuk Chan Wah Kiang, Wong Cheng Siung, Tan Chee Kian and Datuk Seri KK Lau.

Wong, a long-time donor and TAR UMT alumnus, said he was inspired to donate as a form of gratitude to his parents.

"I know how expensive education is and the least I can do (now that I am financially able) is give back to the community.

"It is also a way to show gratitude and respect to my parents who worked so hard to help mould the person I am today," said the 55-year-old, who listed the two funds he started under his parents' names.

Currently, over 15,000 loans have been awarded since its inception in 1979, with more than RM57mil dispersed to sustain needy and underprivileged students' education fees.

Watch the video
TheStarTV.com

