



Ms Chua has been keen on a career in social work ever since she was in junior college. PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

Passionate about giving back

MOH Holdings scholar Tricia Chua aims to touch lives by serving in the healthcare sector after graduation

AUDRINA GAN

INSPIRED by a social work stint while studying at Anglo-Chinese Junior College, Ms Tricia Chua has been keen on a career in the field ever since.

"At that time, I had worked with students with autism at Pathlight School for six months, and had been volunteering at a Family Service Centre for about a year, so I knew in which general direction I wanted to go. When the door towards medical social work opened, I chose it as I knew that I could make a difference and improve lives there," she recalls.

The 21-year-old is currently pur-

suing a Bachelor of Social Sciences (Honours) degree at the National University of Singapore under a healthcare scholarship awarded by MOH Holdings (MOHH).

She was delighted when MOHH called her up for the Healthcare Merit Award scholarship interview for medical social work. Despite having some knowledge about medical social work, she researched the field more deeply, so that she could perform well during the interview.

"At that point, I really wanted a scholarship as university fees were not cheap and I wanted to lessen the financial strain on my parents," says Ms Chua.

Genuine passion

She recalls feeling nervous while waiting for her interview together with other applicants.

"Although I was nervous, the interviewers were really friendly and I felt like it was a conversation about my passion and interests," says Ms Chua.

"I believe they were looking for people who are caring, confident, and, most importantly, genuinely passionate about making a difference and contributing to the public healthcare sector," she adds.

At that time, I had worked with students with autism at Pathlight School for six months, and had been volunteering at a Family Service Centre for about a year, so I knew in which general direction I wanted to go. When the door towards medical social work opened, I chose it as I knew that I could make a difference and improve lives there.

”

MS TRICIA CHUA
undergraduate
National University of Singapore

Now in her third year at university, the Healthcare scholar is glad she made the right choice as she has learnt how to work with families, individuals and the community during her social work course.

She says: "I took a module on medical social work and we learned about certain types of long-term illnesses and their effects on the biological, psychological and social aspects of patients and their families.

"For example, a case of kidney failure will involve issues such as being able to afford dialysis, transportation arrangements and changes to the family roles. We also learned about palliative care, and inspiring hope and closure between patients and their families," she adds.

First-hand experience

Ms Chua enjoys the fact that social work allows her to get out of the classroom and see the world during field trips and projects.

"I have visited Family Service Centres, hospitals, nursing homes and schools. Once my group mates and I explored Woodlands on foot for two days to find out first-hand about the community," she says.

She was also grateful for her overseas exchange programme at the University of California, Santa Cruz, which enabled her to see how different economic systems work and how these systems can affect people in society.

"I loved every bit of it, from meeting friends from all over the world, to attending their community studies programme, which is similar to social work," says Ms Chua.

"School there is really different because discussions in class can get quite intense, whereas Singaporeans are sometimes shy to voice their opinions in class," she adds.

Meanwhile, Ms Chua advises aspiring scholars to do adequate research on what they wish to pursue in future.

"You can volunteer in an organisation that is related to the course you wish to take. It will help you know if you want to pursue it as a career," she says.