



## Following in the footsteps of teachers who inspired them

**Ang Qing**

On the morning of her 15th birthday, Miss Sharifah Nadia Syed Ameer Ali's father, then a taxi driver, crashed into a lamp post.

The April 2017 incident, which damaged his nervous system and left him temporarily paralysed, shook the Secondary 3 student.

"I struggled to comprehend the strongest figure in my life lying there," she said, recalling her father's condition in hospital.

"It was difficult to juggle studying for my examinations with looking after my younger brother."

Not wanting her parents to worry, the Crescent Girls' School student was determined to work harder to ease the financial burden on her family.

Despite initially lagging behind because of her father's accident, she did well in school with the support of her teachers and also in her co-curricular activity, hockey. She continued with her studies in Year 5 and 6 at Raffles Institution.

Now, the 19-year-old is set to follow in the footsteps of the teachers who inspired her.

The first-year National University of Singapore (NUS) student is

studying mathematics, and plans to teach the subject along with English in primary school.

Last Wednesday, she was one of 274 recipients of the Ministry of Education Teaching Scholarship and Award, given out at a virtual ceremony.

Undergraduates with a strong passion for teaching can receive the award to study at local universities, or the scholarship for studies in local or overseas universities. They will then enrol in the National Institute of Education to be trained as teachers.

Miss Sharifah is determined to impart a can-do spirit to her future pupils – just as her teachers at Tampines North Primary School had inspired her.

"My primary school gave me a good foundation in my education and in my attitude towards learning. This enabled me to join my secondary school, which shaped me to be who I am today."

Her 54-year-old father eventually recovered after surgery and about a year of physiotherapy. He now works as a courier.

Another recipient of the award was fourth-year NUS applied mathematics major See Wee Siang, 23, who intends to teach maths at secondary school level in



Mr See Wee Siang and Miss Sharifah Nadia Syed Ameer Ali are among 274 recipients of this year's Ministry of Education Teaching Scholarship and Award. Both were inspired to become teachers by the supportive educators they met on their own journeys through school life. ST PHOTOS: KEVIN LIM, LIM YAOHUI

the future.

During his secondary school days, his fear of addressing a crowd often left him stammering – which got in the way of his student councillor duties.

"I remember being so scared of getting tongue-tied in front of the school that I would try to avoid having to conduct pledge-taking during morning assembly," he said.

A turning point came in his second year at Temasek Junior College, when a teacher told an obviously stressed Mr See to enjoy the process of delivering his valedictorian speech.

"I realised that rather than see-

ing it as a task to complete, I could just deliver it from my heart," he said. "I think if my secondary school friends saw me give that 10-minute-long speech, they would have been surprised."

Mr See now hopes to use his experiences to inspire others when he becomes a teacher.

"My teachers encouraged me to keep trying and not give up despite my difficulty speaking in front of a crowd... School was a place for me to find this passion and I hope to help (my students) find that."

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