

3 students with disabilities get scholarships to fund uni studies

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Despite having dystonic cerebral palsy which causes a limp, computer science undergraduate Matthew Ng can be found in the gym three times a week training to get fitter.

The 21-year-old was first motivated to join a fitness centre in 2019 to prepare for his polytechnic studies, as having to move around campus by foot and keep up with his schoolmates posed a challenge.

Fitness became a big part of his life and, with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, Mr Ng's workout routines throughout the circuit breaker period became popular on social media such as TikTok. One of his current aspirations is to open an inclusive gym, where those with disabilities can feel safe and comfortable working out.

On Wednesday, Mr Ng was one of three students with disabilities to receive a scholarship that will help fund his studies for a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science in Interactive Media and Game Development at the Singapore Institute of Technology.

The Asia Pacific Breweries (APB) Foundation Scholarship for Persons with Disabilities gave out three \$12,000 scholarships this year, covering local university tuition fees. Into its 19th year, the scholarship has given out more than \$2 million to 55 recipients since 2004.

The scholarships, managed by charity SPD, were given out at the Metropolitan YMCA in Stevens Road.

Ms Nicolette Koh, 21, another scholarship recipient, was diagnosed with profound hearing loss at the age of three. After it was found that hearing aids did not work well for her, she underwent

three major operations during her childhood to get cochlear implants.

Her experience with many procedures and doctor visits at a young age sparked her passion for pharmaceutical science. She graduated from Ngee Ann Polytechnic with a near-perfect grade point average.

She will be studying towards a Bachelor of Pharmacy (Honours) degree at the National University of Singapore (NUS).

Mr William Tay, 22, was the third recipient of the scholarship on Wednesday.

Mr Tay has central auditory processing disorder, a condition that affects the brain's ability to process information. He faces challenges in processing speech in loud and noisy environments.

Currently a freshman at NUS pursuing a degree in chemistry, his dream is to become a research chemist.



APB Foundation scholarship recipients (from far left) Matthew Ng, Nicolette Koh and William Tay each get \$12,000 to cover their local university tuition fees.
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He said: "I wish to inspire the younger generation of kids who have similar disabilities, I want to encourage them to know that nothing is impossible. Your disabilities do not define you. Never let your disability stop you from chasing your dreams and never let anyone put you down."

Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Culture, Community and Youth Eric Chua, who was the guest of honour at the scholarship presentation, said that the importance of learning cannot be overstated.

He said: "With equal opportuni-

ty and access to learning, all individuals in Singapore, with or without disability, can realise their potential and fulfil their aspirations. We have made considerable progress over the years in our efforts to build a more inclusive education system, so that every child can have a good start."

Paralympians Yip Pin Xiu and Toh Wei Soong, who both competed at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, are past recipients of the scholarship.

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