The Star

‘Turning point’ for scholars

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Fresh beginnings: (From left) Tiun, Ashveinder, Chan, Najmi and Yong having a light moment after the ceremony. — AZMAN GHANI / The Star

FROM a young age, Tiun Hiew Gigg had a dream – to follow in his mother’s footsteps and become an accountant.

As the years passed, he realised that the road to achieving his dream was not as clear-cut as he had thought.

While he was pursuing his diploma in accounting at University of Wollongong Malaysia, his mother, who worked in a small firm in Kota Baru, Kelantan, covered his tuition fees.

However, due to the financial constraints of his single-parent family, he had to take on part-time work to cover his living expenses.

His financial burden significantly decreased when he was named a Star Education Fund scholarship recipient, enabling him to undertake a Bachelor of Accounting (Hons) at the same institution.

“Receiving this scholarship marked a turning point in my life, allowing me to focus entirely on my academics,” the 22-year-old told StarEdu.

Tiun, who was among 78 students awarded the Star Education Fund scholarship for the year 2023, said he became aware of the opportunity when he met a senior, a recipient in 2020, who encouraged him to submit his application.

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"His success, and my strong academic and extracurricular performance, motivated me to give it a try," he shared.

In addition to aiming for a good cumulative grade point average (CGPA), he hopes to become a well-rounded student, equipped with the knowledge and skills to address complex accounting issues, particularly in taxation and auditing.

"My goal is to work as an auditor in one of the Big Four accounting firms and eventually establish my own accounting company," he said.

Ashveinder Singh, who also comes from a single-parent family, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to embark on the Bachelor of Arts in Law Enforcement (Investigation) (Hons) at Saito University College.

"If it wasn't for this scholarship, I wouldn't be able to further my studies, especially with the increase in the cost of living and the cost of education.

"With this scholarship, I can now focus on studying without having to worry about how to pay for my semester fees," said the 24-year-old who has five siblings.

On his career goal, he said it has always been his dream to be a police officer to "uphold the righteous and protect the oppressed".

His interest to further his studies in law enforcement intensified during his four-month internship early last year at the Putrajaya District Police Headquarters, he shared.

"I was exposed to the daily duties and schedule of a police officer, and given the opportunity to observe how investigations were conducted," he said.

Living out their passions

Chan Kit Vern, who is commencing the Bachelor of Medical Science and Doctor of Medicine at Monash University Malaysia, is driven by a deep desire to give back to society.

“I want to help people. There is an abundance of knowledge and skills that I can’t wait to learn to enable me to take the right actions during critical moments between life and death,” the 20-year-old said.

Describing medicine as a lifelong journey, she added that she aspires to continue learning as long as she is in the healthcare field.

“I look forward to gaining my patients’ trust. I hope to be a doctor that prioritises my patients’ needs as much as my own,” she said.

Having secured a scholarship to engage in the Bachelor in Law and Commerce (Hons) at Management & Science University, Najmi Ad Khairul is living out his passion for legal education.

The 23-year-old said his passion blossomed at age 15 when he “kept digging into legal topics whenever an issue popped up”.

“Plus, I’m hooked to legal dramas like the Korean series Lawless Lawyer. They really got me interested in studying law,” he shared.

With an aim to have a fulfilling career that allows him to continuously learn and grow, he said he is mindful of the need to enhance his abilities in various aspects.

“I aim to gain experience where I can apply my legal expertise to address commercial challenges, provide advice to clients, and advance into leadership roles. I’m also open to exploring opportunities in alternative career paths such as entrepreneurship,” he said.

Yong Zi Cheng, who won a scholarship to enrol in the Foundation in Science leading to the MEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia, said he is eager to further his knowledge in areas such as technology to stay at the forefront of the industry.

“My future career aspirations revolve around my deep passion for contributing to technological advancements.

“I’m interested in pursuing the engineering course because I’m obsessed by the prospect of innovating, creating and problem-solving, which perfectly aligns with the jobs and responsibilities of engineers,” he said.

Launched in 1994 by the late Tan Sri Dr Sulaiman Daud – who was the education minister at the time – the Star Education Fund has benefited 4,439 scholarship recipients with a value of over RM164.3mil.

For the 2023 edition, a total of 78 scholarships valued at RM5.76mil were awarded. The 78 recipients were selected from 2,042 applications vying for a wide range of fields and disciplines, from pre-university and diploma to degree and master’s programmes.

Applications for the Star Education Fund Scholarship Awards 2024 are targeted to open this April. For enquiries, email edufund@thestar.com.my.

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