



Community

## Celebrating Yale-NUS College's Inaugural Graduating Class

Text by Julian Low

Four years ago, Yale-NUS College welcomed its first cohort of students. From the temporary campus at Residential College 4 and pioneering runs of the Common Curriculum, to the vibrant residential life activities and co-curricular programmes on its new award-winning campus, Yale-NUS has grown within a short span of time. Now, it is time to celebrate the graduation of this intrepid group of students who took up the challenge of joining a brand-new College, experienced a new form of liberal arts education and played an integral role in creating a community of learning.

Under the proud gazes of their loved ones, 119 students were presented to Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam, President of the Republic of Singapore and Chancellor of National University of Singapore (NUS) who presided over the ceremony at the University Cultural Centre on 29 May 2017. The event was graced by more than 1000 distinguished guests, including Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) and Second Minister for Defence, Mr Ong Ye Kung, members from the NUS Board of Trustees, Yale Corporation and Yale-NUS

College Governing Board, faculty, students, parents, donors and industry partners.

The majority of students in the graduating cohort have secured jobs or university places to pursue graduate studies.

Those who had received job offers will be heading to a variety of industries, such as science and engineering, finance, technology and start-ups; communications; and consumer and lifestyle. They will be taking on roles in organisations in the public and private sectors, such as the National Arts Council, Ministry of Education, Oliver Wyman and SAP Innovation Centre amongst others.

Students who are pursuing graduate studies have been accepted into prestigious universities such as Cornell University, Harvard University, Tsinghua University, University College London and Yale University. Others will be taking up offers such as the Princeton in Asia Fellowship and the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme.

Professor Pericles Lewis, Founding President of Yale-NUS College, beamed with pride as he wished the Class of 2017 success for the future, "You have long and eventful lives ahead of you. I do not know what causes and

communities you will serve, but I hope you will associate your days at Yale-NUS with the responsibility to be of service and that you will bring the distinctive ethos of our College along with you as you join new communities and take on new responsibilities in your future life."

Minister Ong encouraged the students to achieve their goals and soar to greater heights. "Your graduation marks the coming of age of the College, as it does the turning of a chapter in your lives. Keep your sense of adventure, fearlessness, and perhaps even some of that youthful foolishness. Live life passionately, and be ready to make a difference. Leave that distinct Yale-NUS mark wherever you might venture," he said.

Graduation speaker Professor Richard C Levin, Chief Executive Officer of Coursera and President Emeritus of Yale University, congratulated the graduands and paid tribute to their parents for putting their faith in the faculty and the curriculum of the College. "You took a big risk in sending your brilliant and accomplished children to this entirely new enterprise when they had many other college choices. We thank you for your courage and we hope that your confidence in

this College has been amply repaid," he said.

Assistant Professor of Social Sciences Anju Mary Paul took to the stage and gave a moving speech on behalf of the College faculty.

In an age where many global issues and uncertainties are present, Dr Paul challenged the students to put the skills learnt during their time at the College to good use. "As you set off into the wider beyond, as you join other organisations, to work, to serve, to learn, to lead, I ask that you bring with you the values, knowledge and skills that you have learnt here," she said.

Anshuman Mohan, the Class of 2017 student speaker, brought much comedic relief to his peers as he took them down memory lane. He urged them to cherish the memories created and maintain the audacity, quirkiness and resilience they had displayed as the College's pioneer batch of students.

After the formal ceremony, there were plenty of selfies, warm hugs, tears and smiles. The students have indeed done Yale-NUS proud and will surely go on to become beacons of the College wherever they go.

## Graduates from Yale-NUS' First Class Receive Fellowships

Text by Valerie Yeo | Image by Aleithia Low

As the pioneer batch of Yale-NUS students consider various post-graduation options, some of them will be taking up prestigious fellowship offers from organisations around the world after graduating in May 2017. Isa Ho, Tara Dear and Ling Xi Min (all from the Class of 2017) are some of these recent fellowship recipients.

Isa has been accepted as a NYU Shanghai Writing and Speaking Fellow. A peer tutor with the Yale-NUS Writers' Centre, Isa held one-on-one consultations for her peers during her undergraduate days and found the experience to be extremely enriching. For this fellowship, Isa will be working in the NYU Shanghai Academic Resource Centre, where she will be providing academic support for students. Fellows conduct one-on-one writing consultations and deliver workshops that help students improve academic skills in close reading, public speaking and time management. In addition, she will be involved in organising workshops, events and Institutional Enrichment Projects which enable Fellows to work with other departments to fulfil a need of the university while matching their interests and skills.

"My experience working with the Yale-NUS Writers' Centre was very influential in my decision to apply; in just a semester of holding one-on-one consultations, I

have learned so much about teaching and greatly refined my own writing pedagogy. NYU Shanghai has so many similarities to Yale-NUS as a new liberal arts institution, but its origins and context also mean that there are a great many differences I would like to explore," shared Isa.

The fellowship also involves a chance to work on an extended creative or academic project. Isa, who is planning to work on a novel, remarked that a benefit of this ten-month fellowship is having the time to explore and figure out what her aspirations are going forward while simultaneously gaining valuable work experience.

Tara will be working in a social enterprise, Proximity Designs, in Myanmar for one year as a Princeton in Asia (PiA) Fellow. PiA is the oldest and largest organisation of its kind, offering fellowships and internships with Asian host organisations in areas such as education, public health, environmental sustainability and economic development. While Tara will be based in Yangon, she will be travelling throughout Myanmar to provide professional development in English language to the rural-based staff of this social enterprise which offers affordable, innovative technology to improve rural farmers' agricultural practice, such as solar lamps or water pumps powered by foot.

"Initially, I had my heart set on a teaching post in Kathmandu, but PiA specialises in pushing its Fellows outside their comfort zones. I've started reading up about the country and with every page of research, become more intrigued by Myanmar's unique and turbulent development. I'm particularly excited by the diversity of experience on offer: travel to the rural parts of Myanmar still requires an ox-drawn cart at times, to see life outside the more cosmopolitan, accessible capital, and try out farming firsthand," said Tara.

Xi Min is keen to build on his Yale-NUS experience where he had the opportunity to participate in Japan-related activities and academic interests such as a Learning Across Boundaries (LAB) in Kyoto for a week-long intensive study of Japanese Buddhist philosophy, society and culture. Xi Min has been accepted into the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme, and he will be working as an Assistant Language Teacher, teaching English and promoting international exchange alongside Japanese teachers in the public schools. Xi Min intends to pursue a career in academia and believes that the JET programme would enable him to gain some teaching experience while improving his grasp of the Japanese language, and understanding of the

Japanese work environment and society as a whole.

A History major, Xi Min is grateful for the resources and opportunities that the College has made available, including the close guidance and mentorship from the faculty and staff. He added, "By gradually deepening my knowledge about my field and areas of interest, my Yale-NUS experience has really allowed me to grow as an individual, to be resilient and well-prepared for the future, particularly for a possible academic career."

The Yale-NUS Centre for International & Professional Experience (CIPE) works with every student to craft an individualised portfolio of learning opportunities. For these fellowship applicants, the CIPE advisors worked closely with the students to identify their priorities, prepare their applications and practise for the interview rounds. Charlotte Evans, Programme Manager (Leadership and Global Citizenship), who has been advising Yale-NUS students on fellowship matters said, "Our liberal arts curriculum allows our students to thrive in the complexities of cross-cultural exchange. By participating in these unique experiential fellowship programmes, Yale-NUS students have the opportunity to implement positive social change while creating intellectual connections in these new communities."



## Making a Social Impact with the Liberal Arts

Text by Daryl Yang | Images provided by Aleithia Low and Daryl Tan

As the first class of Yale-NUS College prepares to graduate in a few weeks' time, some students have committed themselves to applying their liberal arts education to meaningful careers in the social services or healthcare sectors.

One such student is Daryl Tan (Class of 2017). A major in Psychology, he is also a scholarship holder of the Singapore Industry Scholarship administered by the National Council of Social Services (NCSS).

As a social service scholar, Daryl will embark on a career in the social services, playing various roles in different voluntary welfare organisations.

"When I was thinking about what role I could play in the social services with a degree in Psychology from a liberal arts college, my main interest was to do research in the behavioural sciences to understand how to develop and improve policies that encourage volunteerism and philanthropy in a meaningful way," Daryl shared, reflecting on how his interest in the social services developed.

"Our studies in the various disciplines helped me to situate the role of psychology within a larger structural framework, motivating me to not just understand behaviour from a study of the mind, but understanding how cultural, religious and socio-economic factors also play a part."

These interests culminated in Daryl's capstone project, where he focused on the question of how to increase volunteerism using technology.

"I was blessed with a grant from NCSS to do a research project on how to increase volunteerism, and my supervisor's research also had a slant towards the role of technology in relationships. Marrying these two factors, my capstone set out to look at how social media could be used to recruit volunteers by tapping on current volunteers," he explained.

Daryl's capstone supervisor is Assistant Professor of Social Sciences (Psychology) Jean Liu, whose secondary research focuses on how psychology can make sense of societal phenomenon, supporting the optimisation of public policy.

Over the course of his research, Daryl conducted experiments with university students to find an effective way to promote volunteerism. What he found was that traditional publicity and advertising by charity organisations were less effective than recommendations by existing volunteers.

Daryl will be using the findings from his capstone project to improve the social media engagement strategies in the social services sector.

"I'm planning to follow up and

look into how social media posts by volunteers affect those who view them, and to later present these findings to the social service sector to encourage using social media as a tool for recruitment more effectively," he shared.

Another student who will be embarking on a career that will be socially impactful is Sylvania Gan (Class of 2017). Sylvania will be joining the NHG-TTSH Management Associate Programme (MAP), a 2-year long programme aimed at grooming individuals for a career in the National Healthcare Group (NHG).

Sylvia first became interested in working at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) after doing a research internship with the organisation in the summer of her penultimate year. The internship was coordinated by the Yale-NUS Centre for International & Professional Experience (CIPE).

"I was struck by how much the people there really believed in their work. I also wanted to do something purposeful in my career after graduation," she shared.

"Being around people who care about creating change here at Yale-NUS has piqued my desire to work in organisations like TTSH in Singapore."

Another student who will be joining the healthcare sector is Ho Yan Lin (Class of 2017). Yan Lin will be joining the Institute of Mental Health

(IMH) as a Management Associate.

"Joining IMH makes the most sense for me since I am a psychology major and my prior experiences have a lot to do with mental health. The more I learned about this job, the more I realised how in line it is with what I'm interested in. I am keen to learn how institutions for vulnerable populations are managed," she shared.

Her academic experiences as a psychology major have helped Yan Lin develop useful skills as she begins her job with IMH.

"Yale-NUS College has exposed me to people who do not only offer criticisms, but try to suggest changes and build the solutions. This has really changed my perspective on how I should approach problems," she noted. One such example is a module titled 'Psychology and Public Policy' offered by Dr Jean Liu.

"We worked on projects with town councils and governmental ministries to improve systems using behavioural insights. This experience has taught me how to connect academic theories with real-life problems, such as how to communicate with policymakers and a non-academic audience," she said.



## Yale-NUS Students Embark on Careers in the Corporate World

Text by Daryl Yang | Image by Aleithia Low

Having completed their four-year liberal arts degree at Yale-NUS College, some graduates of the pioneer class will be diving straight into the working world.

While some such as Manas Punhani (Class of 2017) and May Tay (Class of 2017) will be joining multinational corporations such as global management consulting firm Oliver Wyman and clothing-retail company H&M respectively, others like Chua Yao Hui (Class of 2017) will be headed to local start-up Carousell.

Yao Hui, who majored in Mathematical, Computational and Statistical Sciences (MCS), will be joining Carousell as a Software Engineer on their Core Marketplace team. Just like how he chose to join the pioneer class at Yale-NUS College, the culture of innovation at the company attracted him.

“I chose to work at Carousell because I was attracted to its start-up culture and inspired by its social mission. This is an important time for the company as it is expanding into international markets and I’m excited about having to tackle the engineering challenges associated with such rapid growth,” he shared.

It was in junior year that Yao Hui discovered his passion in computer science and he switched majors from Economics to MCS.

“I started college with the intention of pursuing an economics degree and discovered late in my junior year that my real passion was in computer science. Thanks to the flexibility of Yale-NUS’ curriculum, I was able to switch majors and develop a sound grasp of algorithmic problem-solving and software engineering principles in time for graduation,” he shared.

An Environmental Studies major, May will be joining H&M as a Business Trainee.

“I’m really excited because I’ve been interested in sustainable value chains for a while, and I think this role is an incredible opportunity to learn about H&M’s vast supply chain and contribute to its industry-leading efforts to make fast fashion more sustainable,” she shared.

The Business Trainee programme will see May on rotation along H&M’s entire value chain, beginning in the global buying office in Stockholm, followed by a stint with a Production office in Asia, and then with a Sales office in Europe.

May shared that both her academic and extra-curricular experiences at Yale-NUS College have prepared her well as she transitions into her first job with H&M.

“Being part of the first class of Yale-NUS brought out the ‘do-er’ in me, as I had the opportunity to found clubs, pioneer initiatives

and actively support the ongoing project of Yale-NUS. My life really transformed as a result, and I continue to seek challenges and ways to reinvent myself for the better,” she reflected.

“Also, my classes in the Environmental Studies major at Yale-NUS have equipped me with invaluable skills of big picture thinking and problem solving. I learnt to step back and think effectively in terms of how systems frame issues and what the most effective solutions entail.”

Travel opportunities also helped to broaden May’s perspectives in preparation for a career with a global focus. For instance, she went on a semester abroad to Yale University where she attended more specialised graduate classes at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. She also subsequently did an internship with The Story of Stuff, a sustainability NGO based in San Francisco, California.

Another student who will be joining a multinational company is Manas, who will be headed to Oliver Wyman as a consultant in the Singapore office. A leading global management consulting firm that combines deep industry knowledge and expertise, Manas believes his new job will pose similar challenges to those he had experienced at the College.

“Today, more than ever before, the ‘half-life’ of knowledge is decreasing dramatically – skills that are relevant today, may not be in a few years’ time. In such an environment, I think that my liberal arts education at Yale-NUS College has given me the ability to adapt, be flexible and learn and absorb new ideas and skills quickly. Moreover, my experiences at the College as well as in China and the US, through study abroad programmes, have given me the ability to work and assimilate into diverse and dynamic environments,” Manas shared.

As an Economics major, Manas is equipped with the analytical skillset needed to break down large, undefined problems and use raw information and data to find solutions. “I feel that this maps well into the work I’ll be doing at Oliver Wyman, where I’ll be required to find innovative solutions to some of the most-pressing problems of our clients,” he shared.

Manas is also co-founder of SDI Academy, a social enterprise that empowers low-skilled migrant workers and refugees with language, vocational and computer skills.

## Advocating for Revolutionary Approaches in Science Education

Text by Wen Kin Lim | Images by Yasunari Watanabe

On 28 April 2017, Nobel laureate and renowned educator Professor Carl Wieman presented a public lecture as a part of the President's Speaker Series at Yale-NUS College. Prof Wieman is a physicist at Stanford University and was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2001 for producing the first Bose-Einstein condensate.

In his presentation, 'Taking a Scientific Approach to Science Education', Prof Wieman discussed new approaches for teaching and learning which can result in a more robust and relevant approach to science education in the 21st century.

Prof Wieman holds joint appointments as Professor of Physics and Professor of the Graduate School of Education in Stanford University. He completed his undergraduate studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and his PhD at Stanford University in 1977. In addition to receiving the Nobel Prize, Prof Wieman was named one of the United States Professors of the Year in 2004 for his work on the advancement of teaching.

During his lecture, Prof Wieman recounted how science has advanced rapidly due to new experimental practices and data whereas science education has remained largely outdated and inefficient. He advocated for an approach in which



scientists could think about their disciplines and pass it on to students.

Stressing the importance of teaching students how to think like a scientist, Prof Wieman said, "Meaningful science education is about gaining science knowledge to make decisions and choices, not just the memorisation of knowledge".

Bryan Penprase, Professor of Physics and Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning at Yale-NUS, said, "Prof Wieman has tirelessly researched ways to increase effectiveness of teaching and his work has created new curricula and methods of teaching in several leading US universities."

Prof Wieman advocated for a data-driven approach that incorporates major advances of the past two decades in multiple fields such as cognitive psychology, neuroscience and education studies to improve how science is taught to students. Citing multiple studies that he conducted

and studies from other researchers on classroom learning, Prof Wieman discussed the impact that his recommended initiatives have had in improving student engagement, satisfaction and attendance at Stanford University and other higher education institutions in the US.

Jerrick Wee (Class of 2019) was impressed by Prof Wieman's emphasis on the teacher to be a great motivator for students, even at the university level. He said, "I am surprised to learn that students who had scored well in school are clueless when they enter the workforce. I always thought having a strong theoretical grasp of an academic subject would naturally bring about detailed knowledge on its content and research proficiency, so that was quite interesting to hear."

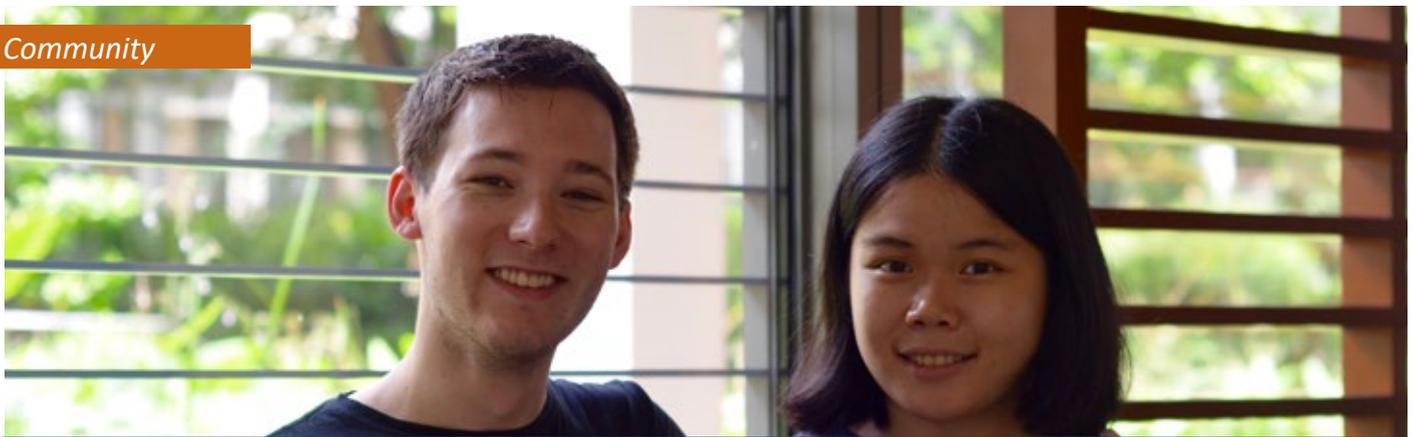
Drawing from his experience, Jerrick remarked that Yale-NUS, being a small college with less of a burden of tradition, is well positioned to take advantage of the

advances in pedagogical methods in the sciences. He added that Prof Wieman's insights could be particularly useful to the College's approach in teaching the sciences.

Speaking about the importance of having a new approach to science education, Prof Penprase said, "This will enable students to provide thoughtful and reasoned discourse that merges the sensitivity toward intercultural difference and nuances argument with rigorous scientific calculations and complex data. This type of breadth and rigour is sadly missing across the public debates in today's media and politics. A Yale-NUS education can help provide clarity, sensitivity and insight by drawing upon the multiple perspectives of humanities, social sciences and science."

In his closing remarks, Prof Wieman emphasised the benefits of a scientific approach to teaching, which greatly improves both student learning and faculty enjoyment of teaching.

Prof Wieman's speech was also the closing event for the STEM Singapore Innovation Symposium 2017, which aimed to enable educators to improve their teaching methods in order to prepare their students to engage with the complex problems of the 21st century.



## Yale-NUS and SUTD Students Team Up for Social Innovation Competition

Text by Julian Low | Images provided by Nicholas Carverhill

In early 2017, two students from Yale-NUS College and the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) collaborated on a joint project and emerged as one of the finalists in an international social innovation competition.

Nicholas Carverhill (Class of 2017) and Jezamine Chua, an Architecture and Sustainable Design undergraduate from SUTD, took part in the inaugural 'Place and Displacement – a Marketplace in Refugee Settlements' competition that challenged participants to design an operational marketplace for refugees in one of three refugee settlements in Jordan, Kenya or Germany.

There were over 300 submitted proposals from more than 700 participants in 34 countries and 150

Keen in submitting a proposal, Nicholas reached out to a friend from SUTD to seek out an SUTD design and architecture student to collaborate with. "I was introduced to Jezamine and we took it from there. It was clear from the beginning that we had a complementary skill set and a shared passion for this field," he said.

The duo spent three months conducting extensive research and drafting numerous designs before producing a concept for the refugees in Germany. Entitled 'The Gateway', their proposal critically addressed the economic, social and psychological needs of the refugees with an overlapping set of innovative solutions.

Nicholas explained further: "Our idea for the marketplace

job training and labour integration, mental health care and access to services. Ultimately, we wanted The Gateway to be perceived as a holistic space for these refugees to overcome challenges and rebuild their lives."

Although the duo did not win this competition, Nicholas was very proud of their efforts. "There were so many quality entries from all over the globe, so Jezamine and I are very proud that our proposal was good enough to have been shortlisted as one of the 26 finalists. In fact, our proposal even made it to the Top 9 rankings in the Berlin site category," he shared.

Feeling motivated, Nicholas and Jezamine have since worked on another project which has been submitted

An Urban Studies major, Nicholas intends to embark on a career in the field of international humanitarian aid after graduation. He cited the curriculum and projects in the major as key factors in formulating his post-graduation plans.

"It made me realise about the grim reality of current global issues and how they greatly affect people's way of living. I want to serve those who have been marginalised and help make a difference in their lives," he shared. He hopes to be involved in strategic and policy planning in this field at some point of his career.

Students who take Urban Studies as their major are exposed to the insights and approaches of a range of disciplines, including sociology, geography and environmental science, political science, anthropology, economics and history.



universities around the world. The competition was organised by Ideation Worldwide, a non-profit organisation that provides novel solutions to critical issues in the global social sector.

was to design an ecosystem of services for the refugees. These included educational facilities, community areas and recreational space. Our proposal addressed four tasks of societal integration – learning German as a second language, providing

for a competition organised by the Urban Redevelopment Authority in Singapore. This time round, the competition called for creative pop-up installations that could enliven public spaces in Singapore.

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"I want to serve those who have been marginalised and help make a difference in their lives."

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## Promoting Healthy Living at Health and Wellness Week

Text by Julian Low | Images by Weave for Yale-NUS College

Between 6 and 12 March 2017, the third edition of Health and Wellness Week took place with a myriad of activities organised all over Yale-NUS College.

Activities ranged from a sunrise yoga session, rock-climbing lessons, zumba dancing to neck, back and shoulder massages by members of the Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped (SAVH). The week culminated in a carnival held at the Saga Courtyard.

According to Ms Doris Yek, Health Coordinator from the Dean of Students Office, the activities were designed to promote healthy living as well as a means of stress alleviation for the students. "We know that there are many students who are

of the team, shared that the most challenging part of the planning process was identifying a suitable week

and soya bean drinks. At the same time, we had messages on the cart with useful information on managing

community to be more active and to adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle," she said.



when most students would be free to take part in the activities. "We want to try to ensure that as many students as possible could participate in the different activities," she explained.

one's diet and how choosing the right food could help to manage stress."

Based on the team's observation and students' positive feedback, the team

The team was further encouraged by the positive reception towards this year's activities. The highlight was undoubtedly the carnival where students pampered themselves over 'peer massage' sessions or duked it out at the 'gladiator dome'. Students also proposed some new and exciting activity ideas for next year's edition, such as a 'pet therapy' session to alleviate stress.

Doris added that the Health and Wellness team welcomes any students who are interested in joining the team on its projects. "Our ideas may become stale after three years, so it is always good to have fresh and innovative ways to promote health and wellness in the College," she said.



physically active. However, for those who are not, we hoped that the activities would pique their interest and encourage them to learn something new," she added.

Brea Baker, a Dean's Fellow at Saga College and a member

The concept of Health and Wellness Week started three years ago. Doris recalled with a laugh, "We came up with the idea of having a cart with free food to entice students! They could choose from a wide range of healthy snacks such as frozen yogurt, granola

applied the same concept the following year. However, they added a twist to it. They decided to introduce a rewards system where students could accumulate and exchange points for NTUC cash vouchers. "The idea was to encourage the student



## Creating Social Impact through Projects with Skillseed

Text by Michelle Soto | Images provided by Dianne Araral, Callysta Thony and Monica Kim

On 15 March 2017, three Yale-NUS students, Dianne Araral (Class of 2020), Callysta Thony (Class of 2018) and Monica Kim (Class of 2020) were featured on an episode of a local Chinese language show called 'Hello Singapore' for their work with Skillseed, a social enterprise that nurtures youth volunteers and empowers community partners through impactful learning journeys.

Founded by Phua Huijia and Wilson Chan, two Singaporean graduates of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, the objective of Skillseed is to nurture skilled volunteers and reshape the volunteering landscape of Singapore and beyond. "Skillseed aims to do so by educating and empowering youths and community partners. These volunteers will then serve



volunteers are knowledgeable by assigning them academic and contemporary readings to make sure they have a well-rounded understanding of the issues that they are working to tackle.

Callysta who has an interest in social entrepreneurship, was attracted to Skillseed's vision and philosophy. "I thought the programme was a good way for me to bridge what I have learnt at Yale-NUS and put it into practice," she said. She also mentioned how

'Hello Singapore', the students were featured for their work with the Society for the Physically Disabled where they served as facilitators and mentors to physically disabled social entrepreneurs. Working with the disabled community had been an eye-opening

"This has helped me to realise that I want to be involved in a career that helps people succeed in their goals. It makes me very happy knowing that I have played my part in doing so."

community faces, and how these could be alleviated.

All the participants found their internship experiences to be incredibly inspiring and insightful. "I want to be involved in the social impact space and this internship experience has given me a concrete opportunity to see what a programme could look like and what components go into it," said Callysta.

For Monica, this work helped her to identify a possible lifelong passion. "This has helped me to realise that I want to be involved in a career that helps people succeed in their goals. It makes me very happy knowing that I have played my part in doing so," she said.

They were unanimous in their praise about how inspiring Huijia and Wilson have been to all of them. "Due to the small size of the organisation, the three of us have been very fortunate to be able to work very closely with the founders. I'm very inspired by the standards that they and the enterprise hold themselves to," Callysta shared.



as 'seeds' that grow into sustainable, self-serving ecosystems," Dianne shared.

With this goal in mind, Skillseed ensures that their

Skillseed's vision of volunteer work had inspired her to think about what it meant to be socially responsible.

In this particular episode of

experience, enabling them to learn about accessibility issues that the disabled



## Graduates Reflect on Impact of Study Awards

Text by Yip Jie Ying | Images provided by Aleithia Low, Elson Ong and Natalie Tan

This year marks a significant milestone for Yale-NUS as the College celebrates the graduation of its inaugural cohort, the Class of 2017. In the midst of the celebrations, some graduating students have taken a step back to reflect on their time at Yale-NUS and the impact that philanthropy, particularly in the form of study awards, has had on their college experiences.

J Y Pillay Study Award recipients Elson Ong and Ho Yan Lin are two such students. The study awards were established by multiple individuals and corporations in honour of Professor J Y Pillay, an eminent policy-maker and corporate leader.

Yan Lin, a Psychology major, counts herself fortunate for the opportunities and exposure that the study award has endowed her with. Yan Lin will be joining the Institute of Mental Health as a Management Associate upon graduation.

“The J Y Pillay Study Award has brought me to Yale-NUS and exposed me to passionate and intelligent people and professors,” she shared. “Being here has prepared me to be sensitive to issues of justice and power, and has empowered me not only with knowledge, but soft skills in communicating my thoughts and treating people with kindness.”

She added, “My biggest takeaway is to think about



*Natalie (right) intends to work in the local arts industry before embarking on graduate school plans*

issues of power more critically and across disciplines. This has impacted the way I think about interpersonal interactions, as well as larger social affairs and institutions.”

Meanwhile, Urban Studies major Elson will join the banking sector in Hong Kong upon graduation. Like Yan Lin, he credits the J Y Pillay Study Award for enabling him to study at Yale-NUS, which he believes has prepared him for his future endeavours in the workplace.

“I believe my time in Yale-NUS has prepared me with the necessary communication and critical thinking skills for my career,” said Elson. “More importantly, it has also taught me to be adaptable and to get comfortable with the uncomfortable.”

Arts and Humanities major Natalie Tan reflected on the importance of generosity in enabling those without financial means. She is a recipient of the Lim Ngee

Khoon Study Award, which was established by Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, the current President of the National University of Singapore. An instrumental figure in the founding of Yale-NUS, Professor Tan continues to play an important role as a member of the College’s Governing Board.

“This study award has provided me with the opportunity to complement classroom learning with hands-on experience through international opportunities such as Learning Across Boundaries (LAB) programmes,” shared Natalie. “It has also inspired me to contribute back to society because people with potential sometimes do not have the financial means to break glass ceilings. We need to channel our resources back into society to ensure that talent does not go unrecognised.”

Also keen to pay it forward is Chua Wan Ping a recipient of the Toh Chin Chye Study Award, which was



established with gifts from various donors to honour the late Dr Toh’s lifetime of service to Singapore. During her time at Yale-NUS, Wan Ping was able to immerse herself in college life without worrying about financial obligations, going so far as to help further the College’s culture of giving by being a member of its inaugural Senior Class Gift Committee. As an Environmental Studies major, she co-founded I’dECO: The Yale-NUS Sustainability Movement, as well as the Sustainable Solutions Network.

“Relieved of the burden of paying for my school fees with this study award, I could use my time that I would have otherwise spent on part-time jobs to start organisations, participate in events and be part of the Yale-NUS community,” said Wan Ping, who will join Heineken Asia Pacific’s corporate relations team before pursuing further studies at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.