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Awards bring hope and cheer



The Star Education Fund paves the way to long-cherished dreams for many recipients.

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RACHEL Sivanathan tied the knot at the age of 20 – it was an arranged marriage. She looked forward to continuing her studies but that plan had to be put on hold with the arrival of her first-born the following year.

Although the young mother was kept busy with household chores and her interests like tailoring and baking, she still harboured a dream – to become a pre-school teacher.

"I spoke to my husband, family, and in-laws and they were supportive of my decision to go back to school. So I just went ahead and applied for a scholarship," said the 25-year-old Methodist College early childhood education student.

Rachel is among 176 recipients who received scholarships to pursue tertiary education, thanks to the Star Education Fund and its partners in education.

They were presented their awards at a ceremony in Petaling Jaya recently.

The Star group editorial/education adviser Datuk Ng Poh Tip said the fund had awarded scholarships worth more than RM55mil to 2,276 students since its inception in 1994.

The fund is divided into two tiers. The first tier consists of contributions made by Star Publications.

Six students received scholarships worth RM85,000 under Tier 1, this year, to study at Montfort Boys Town, Universiti Putra Malaysia and Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Scholarships under Tier 2 are from local and foreign institutions of higher learning.

This year, 38 such institutions contributed to the fund by giving out scholarships worth RM6.1mil.

The top contributors for the Star Education Fund 2008 are SEG Group of Colleges, Sunway University College, The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus, Penang Medical College, KDU College Penang, and University College Sedaya International (UCSI).

Another recipient S. Kavitha, was thrilled to get a scholarship to further her studies.

The 18-year-old said that the scholarship was a blessing as her father, who works as a guard, was already finding it hard to make ends meet.

"I want to show my siblings that poverty is not the end of the world. You can still study if you have determination to shape your future," said the Life College business studies student.

Shamini Devi Ganesan echoed Kavitha's sentiments, saying that her decision to get a masters degree was not only for herself but also for her family.

She received a scholarship to pursue a masters degree in accounting and finance at the University of Gloucestershire via the Rose Education Foundation under the Star



Anthony David hugging his mother Roseline Arokiasamy after receiving his scholarship.



Rachel receiving her award from Methodist College Kuala Lumpur chief executive officer Moey Yoke Lai.



The ceremony was a proud occasion for Siti Roblah Ismail whose daughter Munirah Zaini, obtained a scholarship to pursue a professional design degree at Limkokwing University of Creative Technology in London.

Education Fund.

"The masters degree will enhance my career prospects and enable me to improve my family's lifestyle," Shamini said.

Meanwhile, student Jason Lee is one step closer to his dream of becoming a scientist.

The hearing-impaired recipient was on cloud nine after receiving the award to pursue a Bachelor of Biotechnology (Hons) at Inti International University College.

Jason said that even with his

hearing aid, he could only hear 70% of what people said. However, his passion for science prompted him to apply for the award.

As for L. Anthony David Luees, the fund had paved the way for him to pursue a master's degree in business administration (international business) at the University of East London.

"I was awarded a scholarship for my diploma at PTPL College in 1997, and my degree at the KDU College in 2001. Now I can pursue my MBA

in the United Kingdom. My tertiary education was made possible by the Star Education Fund ... I am very grateful and I value it," he said during his speech at the ceremony.

Inti International University College assoc vice-president (student services division) Dr Sia Ah Hiok said the institution and The Star had a common goal which was to reach out to those from needy backgrounds who showed a high

level of academic performance.

"We have been with the Star Education Fund since day one and we will continue to support it," she said.

Among those present at the awards ceremony were Star Publications (M) Bhd group managing director and chief executive officer Datin Linda Ngiam and The Star group chief editor Datuk Wong Chun Wai.