

Tête-à-tête @ TCTF Series – Scholars’ Tea Reception (Hwa Chong Institute, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Republic Polytechnic, NCSS/SSTI)

The Tête-à-tête @ TCTF session was held on the 18th of August, Wednesday. 25 scholars were invited together with their parents, as well as teachers from their various tertiary institutions.

The session started off with a dialogue on ‘Youth & Volunteerism’ facilitated by TCTF Programme Director, Ms. Yap Su-Yin and Advisor, Mr. Eric Teng. The scholars were encouraged to share their experience in volunteerism. The engaging dialogue brought about a few queries and sharing from the many different scholars, present regarding the purpose of doing community and volunteerism work and their takeaways from them. Unique experiences from helping a poor family attain a second hand computer made of spare unwanted computer parts, the spirit of forging friendships from the Youth Olympic Games, the dedication to selling flags, and helping cancer patients and their families were some of the few that we managed to hear.

A hot topic was about overseas community involvement projects, where there was a discussion on the importance of sustainability and how to volunteer responsibly, as these were crucial things to consider before diving into deep end of the pool.

After which, the award ceremony took place and then scholars were directed out for some photo taking. The tea ended off nicely with a tour of the mansion by Ms. Yap, Mr. Teng and Ms. Chu (a former secretary of Tan Sri Tan Chin Tuan), where the scholars were exposed to the Tan Chin Tuan legacy. Ending off with further interacting over the mouthwatering spread of the tea reception, the guest left with a better understanding of not only Tan Chin Tuan and his life, but his values and beliefs.

The Tête-à-tête @ TCTF session was new and intriguing to some of the scholars who attended. Below are some of the interesting insights and reflections shared by the scholars after the event:

“I got to hear many different unique experiences coupled with their learning points from the scholars. It was heartening to hear Hang Zhi Cheng’s (Ngee Ann Polytechnic) recount of how he use his competencies of IT to bring about relief to a family who do not own a computer, and how he harness the power of the social media by gathering spare computer parts over the forum; it is an innovative way to use the resources and capabilities he already possesses to bring about a change to another person’s life. I believe through this, I learn that we do not look at what we cannot do to help others but rather what we already can do to make a difference to another party. The apt reminder from Ms. Yap and Mr. Teng regarding volunteering for overseas community involvement projects are very important and crucial as it really reminds me to always go back to the purpose of your service.”

- **Anders Soh, TCTF Intern,
NTU**

“One particular scholar that struck me was Vivien Lee, from Hwa Chong Institution, where she shared about how a book got her going. From the storyline, it inspired her to volunteer at the Singapore Cancer Society, where she met a patient that truly moved her to do what she would be doing in the future, study psychology. This taught me that volunteerism can start small, and then lead you to do something bigger and better, and help more people. This scholars’ tea session showed that being brainy isn’t everything – for what is the use if you know everything but don’t put it to good use? It has expanded what I know about volunteerism and charity work.”

- **Elizabeth Neo, TCTF Intern,
Republic Polytechnic**

“I was really honoured to be at the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation to learn more about who Tan Sri Dr Tan Chin Tuan was, to hear what the foundation is about and to be a recipient to receive the scholarship. Although I wasn’t one of those who shared about my experiences in volunteerism, my passion has always been with the youths, in helping and mentoring the younger ones. I’m looking forward to the mission trip to Cambodia with my youth group from church, and I would like to give as much as I can to the people who need help there. The dialogue session has spurred me and motivated me even more as I think about the trip. I really enjoyed myself during the time spent at the tea session and would like to once again thank the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation for giving me the opportunity to be there.”

- **Khoo Lay Keat, Bryan, Tan Sri Dr Tan Chin Tuan Scholar,
Republic Polytechnic**

“‘The Mansion with a History’ – that was what struck me the most as I stepped into Tan Chin Tuan Mansion again for the annual scholars’ tea session, this being my second time after my Tan Sri Dr Tan Chin Tuan Scholarship was renewed. With the beautiful architecture and luxurious, yet modest, surroundings, it was a treat to hear about the experiences of other volunteer enthusiasts being an active volunteer myself. It really struck me that sometimes volunteerism isn’t really about the glory or praise showered upon you from the beneficiaries or the people around you, volunteerism is sometimes the tiny self-satisfaction you get, knowing that somewhere, out there, you have helped someone in some little way; touching the life of another.”

- **Koh Lee Mei, Fanny, Tan Sri Dr Tan Chin Tuan Scholar,
Ngee Ann Polytechnic**

“It is my privilege and honour to receive the Tan Sri Dr Tan Chin Tuan scholarship. To me, it is not just an academic achievement, but a stepping stone to making a difference in other people’s life – inspiring others wherever I may to, to be the best that they can be. In life, other than all the great achievements that we could achieve, none is as satisfying as helping or inspiring somebody. I have received many leadership certificates and some academic awards, but at the end of it, I often felt that there has to be something more to life than just earning awards or getting good academic grades. From here, I decided that life should not only be about achieving the best you can in life, but making a difference in other people’s life as well.”

- **Ho Chih Ching, Jean, Tan Sri Dr Tan Chin Tuan Scholar,
Republic Polytechnic**

“What I’ve taken away from the scholars’ tea session is that I know I can still do more. I can venture overseas to render my services in mission trips. I can plan activities for charity organisations. I can give back to society. And I’m glad to know that the Tan Sri Dr Tan Chin Tuan scholars are given such opportunities. I’ve learnt a lot from just a tour of the Tan Chin Tuan Mansion. I just wish I could have met the late Dr Tan.”

- **Lai Si Ying, Tan Sri Dr Tan Chin Tuan Scholar,
Ngee Ann Polytechnic**