By REBECCA RAJENDRAM
educate@thestar.com.my

HIS stint in a hotel in Sepang is how 18-year-old Siraj Jeyaraman discovered his love for the hospitality industry.

Although a little shy, Siraj said he enjoys working in the hotel and his favourite "job" there is being able to serve customers at the restaurant.

The youngest of four siblings was so passionate about his part-time work at the hotel that he impressed the interviewers for the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation Scholarships.

As a result, he was awarded the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation Community Scholarship to pursue his diploma in hotel management at Sunway University.

Samantha Kaan Tsoi Ai, 20, volunteered as an intern at Yayasan Generasi Gemilang and enjoyed working with children so much that she now wants to pursue research in child psychology.

"I worked with the underprivileged children there after completing my Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM)," she said.

The Bachelor of Science in Psychology student in Sunway University is one of four recipients of the Chancellor’s Scholarship at the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation Scholarships and Awards Ceremony 2018.

For Natania Tan Li Suet, 18, it will always be a challenge to strike a balance between university work and fencing competitions.

The recipient of the Sunway Sports Scholarship said: "I think that it definitely does get tough, having to train many hours and also finishing assignments and projects."

She said that during the competition season, she trains four times a week for two-and-a-half hours per session.

Tan took part in the SEA games last year, representing Malaysia in fencing and is now majoring in psychology at Sunway University.

Another recipient of the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation Community Scholarship, Muhammad Sarizal Suhaimi, 21, is grateful for the scholarship.

Without it, he said, he would have had trouble financing his studies at Sunway University where he is doing his Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Finance.

MMH (middle) presents the certificate in the continuing scholarship category to Siti Sarah Mohd Azman while Cheah (right) looks on.

Ticket to their dreams

"My message for you today is I hope you will not learn just the skills that are important to your future but also the values that will benefit the society." she added during the award presentation.

"In line with this conviction, I endowed all my equity in the Sunway Education Group to the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation in perpetuity," he said.

Cheah has always believed that education offers the optimum route out of poverty and that education should be a not-for-profit initiative.

"The gift is currently valued at more than RM1bil, making the foundation the largest education-focused social enterprise in Malaysia," he said.

Today, he added, marked another major milestone for the foundation as a total of RM70mil has been allocated in scholarships, the highest annual amount so far.

By the end of the day, the foundation would cumulatively have awarded more than RM400mil in scholarships and grants to deserving students. It is my goal to disburse more than RM1bil in my lifetime," he said.