

Foundation lights way to bright future

Students looking forward to better opportunities thanks to scholarship

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PETALING JAYA: Keerthana Siva Sangar was ready to forgo student life for a full-time job that was not her ideal occupation but helped to pay the bills.

The 20-year-old student from Kuala Lumpur said if it weren't for a scholarship from the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation, pursuing tertiary education would have been extremely challenging.

"I had a back-up plan – take up a part-time degree while I continued working as a customer service representative, a job I've held since completing my SPM in 2016 and throughout my foundation year," said Keerthana, a recipient of a full scholarship from the foundation which she applied through the Star Education Fund.

She is now a Year 1 Semester 1 business management student at Sunway University and aspires to work in human resource.

"This scholarship saved me from a tough life of juggling work and studies," said the daughter of a receptionist and a school van driver.

The foundation held its scholarships and awards ceremony for 2019 at its Subang Jaya campus yesterday.

A total of RM80mil in scholarship funds were disbursed to over 6,000 scholars – the highest scholarship amount awarded in a year in the history of the foundation.



Big smiles: Lim and Cheah posing together with recipients of the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation during the awards ceremony at Sunway's Subang Jaya campus.

To date, the foundation has given out scholarships amounting to RM482mil.

Another recipient, Ummy Nurina Othman, was grateful she could study a course of her choice, thanks to the scholarship.

"My goal is to pursue psychology," said the 19-year-old Penangite whose mother is a housewife and her father a retiree.

Ummy Nurina plans to complete her degree and pursue a masters in psychology after gaining two years of work experience.

Aria Chin Jue Yue, 19, said she was "beyond words" when notified of the scholarship because her family faced financial constraints.

"Further education is important to me and I believe everyone should have the opportunity to pursue what they are interested in," said the Year 1 Semester 1 communications student.

Sunway Group founder and chairman Tan Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah pledged to continue providing affordable, accessible and quality education as well as scholarships to

deserving students.

"It's my personal goal to award more than RM1bil worth of scholarships in my lifetime.

"Growing up in a small town called Pusing in Perak, I witnessed first-hand the impact of poverty on families and how it closed off avenues for advancement, particularly in education for the children.

"It is priceless when students thank me personally for making their education possible," he said, adding that he had turned down offers to list Sunway Education

Group on the stock exchange.

"I hope that Sunway would be among the top 100 institutions in the world in 10 to 20 years' time," said Cheah, who reminded students to uphold the three core values at Sunway – integrity, humility and excellence.

Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng, who was present as the event's guest of honour, said the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation exemplified the collaboration between the private sector and the government in helping to achieve a shared vision among Malaysians.

"Such collaboration in education will help deliver skilled talent we need to bring our country to the next level.

"The government's effort alone is not sufficient to establish an entrepreneurial economy. We need the involvement of the private sector through a 4P partnership (public sector, private sector, professionals and the people)," he said.

Lim added that the government was also doing its part in ensuring equality in education, with one of the measures benefiting those in the B40 group, who could get matriculation places based on their results and compete equally without racial discrimination.

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