

NTU president tells new medical students: Be doctors with heart

 DAVID SUN

Doctors who use their hearts as much as their heads — that is the goal set for the newest batch of medical students here.

Empathy is a key theme at Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, which saw its latest intake of 120 students receive their white coats on Wednesday.

The school, created in partnership with Imperial College London, is into its fifth year and attracted a record high of more than 1,000 applicants this year.

Among the new students was Mr Chung Ray Ern, 19, who was inspired to study medicine after volunteering at Chen Su Lan Methodist Children's Home.

"The 1½ years I spent volunteering at the home were the best parts of my life," said Mr Chung, who tutored mostly primary school children with family difficulties at the home.

"It was not just about tutoring, but about spending time and caring for the children and listening to their problems."

He recalled staying late at the home one night to tutor an inattentive and wilful boy.

"I didn't think much of it. But when I couldn't make it the week after because of school commitments, the other volunteers said the boy missed me and kept asking for me. I realised I can make a difference," he said.

"I want to be a doctor because I want to be better, so that I can better help others."

Mr Kevin Chan, 19, also chose to study medicine to help others.

When his grandfather was diagnosed with esophageal cancer five years ago, he saw how the doctors worked tirelessly to care for him.

"I saw that the doctors cared, and it was not just a job for them," he said. "Even though he died two years later, I saw how the doctors did all they could to relieve his suffering."

"It is a noble profession, and I want to be a doctor so that I can help others, like the doctors who helped my grandfather."

Professor Bertil Andersson, the outgoing president of NTU, said in his opening address that his hope for students from the school was to become doctors with heart.

"By combining your knowledge and skills with compassion and empathy, you will practise medicine to improve people's lives and contribute to the good of humanity," he said.

"We want to train you to become the type of doctors that you and I would like to have caring for us."

"Remember, not only the head, but also the heart."



Mr Kevin Chan (left) and Mr Chung Ray Ern. TNP PHOTO: **WENDY LIM**