

# Tough times, big hearts, open wallets

Giving Ambassadors recognised for efforts in helping to raise money

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Recession blues do not dampen the spirit of giving back to NTU—that was the sentiment shared at the Annual Giving Ambassadors Night.

Held at the School of Art, Design and Media on October 2nd, the event honoured Annual Giving Ambassadors by awarding them trophies. The Ambassadors, who volunteer to encourage their peers to contribute money to the school come from three annual giving programmes: Faculty and Staff Annual Giving, Graduation Class Gift and Alumni Giving.

Almost a third of NTU faculty and staff contributed to the inaugural Faculty and Staff Annual Giving Campaign, one of the three annual giving programmes, with nine offices achieving a 100 percent participation rate. One of them was the Office of Finance, which has 100 staff.

"Initially, the recession made me unsure if my colleagues were willing to contribute," shared Ms Jean Lim, the Giving Ambassador as well as the Secretary of the Office of Finance.

To boost awareness about the campaign, she started a pledge list and publicised it during the lunch hour.

Said Ms Lim: "At the end of the day, it was the cohesiveness and the good team spirit coupled with the support of bosses that made it possible for the Office of Finance to achieve 100% participation rate."

Professor Cheng Tee Hiang, Associate Professor from the School of Electronic and Electrical Engineering (EEE) felt that "if not for the recession, we would have

collected more money". The 700-strong faculty, which achieved a 60% participation rate, won the Most Outstanding Team Spirit Award.

"People were willing to give back as they saw that the money was used for useful funds, like funding the professors' research," Professor Cheng added.

Gold, silver and bronze awards were given to the ambassadors according to the number of gifts they solicited from their peers.

The night also saw six alumni and two final-year students stepping forward to become 'Annual Giving Ambassadors', extending their service from being Graduation Class Ambassadors last year.

The Graduation Gift Campaign, also known as 'iGave', saw almost half of the 2009 cohort participating.

Despite the effort they put in, the ambassadors also acknowledged that some of their peers are reluctant to part with their money.

"Some of my peers feel resistant as they have no idea as to where the money will go to," shared Chan Sze Hua, an award recipient who graduated from the School of Materials Science and Engineering (MSE) this year.

Vincent Chia, a final-year EEE student who is also an awardee, felt that his peers have the wrong perception of 'iGave'.

"They think that it is similar to donating to charity, but it is more of a step to express gratitude," the award recipient said. He plans to contribute \$100.

Some feel that the culture of giving back is still not rooted in NTU.

Ryan Oetama, a second-year student from the Nanyang Business School, feels that giving should come naturally without all the hype. "If the culture is already there, there will not be a need to discuss or bring it up."



RECOGNITION: Limelight cast on the Ambassadors. PHOTO | WILLIS HENRY