

## NTU raises more than \$1m on first Giving Day as part of 30th anniversary fund-raising campaign



(From left) Nanyang Technological University's senior vice-president for administration Tan Aik Na, Senior Minister of State for Defence and Manpower Zaqy Mohamad, NTU Board trustee Lo Kien Foh and NTU vice-president for university advancement Lien Siaou-Sze. PHOTO: NTU SINGAPORE



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UPDATED MAR 23, 2022, 9:44 PM SGT ▾

SINGAPORE - Nanyang Technological University (NTU) freshman Mohamad Salihin Mohamad Kassim ran into financial problems in late 2020 after his mother was diagnosed with stage four liver cancer and his father lost his job as a pump attendant soon after.

To make matters worse, he was sitting exams for his course, electrical and electronic engineering, at the time.

Fortunately, he was able to tap an NTU bursary of \$6,000 to pay for his family's medical and utility bills.

Mr Salihin, 25, now a third-year student, shared his experience at NTU's first Giving Day on Wednesday (March 23) when NTU held a 12-hour donation drive as part of a fund-raising campaign called We Belong. The campaign aims to raise \$1 million to celebrate the university's 30th anniversary this year.

The latest drive comes after NTU Service Week in January and a fund-raising run, Best Foot Forward, in February.

Participants donated laptops and provided social support to seniors and underprivileged residents at South West District, among other volunteering efforts.

At 8.55pm, the amount raised was \$1,038,694 after passing the \$1m target. Those who wish to donate can still call the hotline on 6592-3112 till 9am on Thursday.

Donors can contribute to the NTU Bursary Fund, NTU Priorities Fund, NTU Sustainability Fund and the School Advancement Funds.

The bursaries help financially challenged students, the priorities fund benefits students gravely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, the school advancement funds support NTU's schools and colleges, while the sustainability fund is part of the university's mission to respond to environmental, social and economic challenges.

NTU provided 360 students with bursaries last year through donations from its alumni.

Senior Minister of State for Manpower and Defence Zaqy Mohamad, who was the guest of honour at the event, recounted his involvement in fund-raising efforts to help needy students cope with rising university fees during the Asian financial crisis in 1997.

"I was in my first term as student union president then. We raised our concern to the MOE (Ministry of Education) and the university. They heard us and supported our proposal to raise funds to set up a bursary for students - including agreeing to match our fund-raising efforts to support students in need, to the tune of \$1 million then.

"I remember how our fellow students and the NTU student union mobilised to do flag day and other fund-raising activities. It took us a couple of years, even after I was no longer with NTU student union. But this exemplified the spirit of giving among us students in times of need, to help others who may need a helping hand."

Mr Zaqy is donating \$5,000 to his alma mater, matching the donation of NTU president Subra Suresh.

Professor Suresh said the amount raised during the 12-hour fund-raising drive will be used to help needy students, as well as support sustainability initiatives, digital inclusion and advance cutting-edge research in NTU's colleges and schools.

In the financial year that ended March 2021, NTU raised \$45 million, down from the \$69 million it collected in the previous financial year.

The National University of Singapore also saw a drop in funds raised, with \$74 million collected in the financial year that ended March 2021, from \$150 million the year before.