

Epitomising the Medical Spirit

The NUS Medical Society - Christine Chong Hui Xian Bursary

By Andrew Arjun Sayampanathan and Alise Tu Yan

“Her bubbly character, sweet smile and unique laughter attracted many to her.” These were the words a friend used to describe Christine Chong, a well-liked and treasured student of the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (YLLSoM), National University of Singapore (NUS).

To her friends, Christine was a cheerful and selfless girl, with a kind word for everyone. In the face of adversity and troubles, she was the one who always offered a listening ear and encouragement. Looking at her cheery self, one would never have guessed that Christine was actually diagnosed with Systemic Lupus Erythematosus at a young age. However, her illness never deterred her from pursuing her dream of studying Medicine. She continued the fight with bravery and determination, sitting for her professional examinations in the wards when she was hospitalised.

Christine eventually passed away from lymphoma in December 2009. Despite her passing, her strong faith and perseverance in the face of adversity inspired many, and stands as the foundation of a new student-initiated project – the NUS Medical Society - Christine Chong Hui Xian Bursary, which aims to become a longlasting source of financial support for underprivileged students.

The bursary aims to provide financial help to students who are unable to strive towards their goals because of the expensive medical school fees, and provide them an opportunity to live their lives to the fullest, just as Christine did. Moreover, as the bursary is funded entirely by voluntary donations, it is also a platform for medical graduates who are now financially independent to help fresh undergraduates who are going through what they have gone through themselves.

The bursary also aims to support up to three financially needy students every year. Unlike other medical bursaries, the NUS Medical Society - Christine Chong Hui Xian Bursary seeks to provide each student supported with a substantial amount of financial resources annually, so that the students can maximise their potential without needing to worry about their personal and family challenges.

A team of medical students will be involved in setting up the NUS Medical Society - Christine Chong Hui Xian Bursary, through the organisation of various events targeted at different groups within the medical community. Medical doctors, for instance, can look forward to the donation gala dinner Wine & Dine 2012, while medical students can continue to strengthen their newly forged bonds through the annual Charity Movie Screening. As part of the medical community at large, all of us can contribute to helping our needy medical students through attending Operation Theatre 4, an annual charity drama production put up by medical students for the medical community. A book containing snippets of the journeys of some prominent members of our medical community will also be published, and proceeds from sales will go towards starting up the fund.

We hope that at least \$150,000 can be raised, so an endowment fund can be started, which will be matched by the government accordingly. Through this endowment fund, we aim to plant a seed to help financially needy medical students substantially in the long term.

Let us work together to remember the spirit which Christine has demonstrated – to push on despite challenges and to think of others before self. Christine rightly showed us that every attempt and effort to cheer someone up can go a long way in helping them in ways unknown. As we remember Christine, let us also remember our family of needy medical students and support them in their pursuit of learning. Together, we can help relieve needy medical students of their financial burden.

If you would like to make a donation, or simply wish find out more about the NUS Medical Society - Christine Chong Hui Xian Bursary, you may visit our website <https://bursary.medsoc.org.sg>, or contact Benjamin Tan (YLLSoM Class of 2013) at benjaminxytan@gmail.com. Thank you! **SMA**



Christine on a trip to Rome

Andrew and Alise are from the YLLSoM Class of 2016.