

Take a leaf from this new book and live well

SMU undergrads' compilation aimed at inspiring young to seize the day

By GOH SHI TING

GO ON, live a little.

That is the message the authors of a new book want readers to take away.

They aim to inspire young readers with the 30 stories and bucket lists of professionals, young people and Special Olympic athletes in their 160-page book, entitled *Past, Present, Future*.

Bucket lists or wishlists of things to do before one dies, are more often associated with old age and death but the five co-authors, who are Singapore Management University (SMU) business undergraduates, believe it is never too early to seize the day.

The book project was funded by the Central Singapore Community Development Council (CDC) Mayor's Imagine Fund, which provided \$5,000 for the printing costs of 1,000 copies.

The fund, which started in 2002 to promote active citizenry among youth, has since reached

out to close to 300 groups and benefited 862,000 residents.

The expected sales proceeds of \$4,000 from the book will pay for shoes, clothing and transportation fees of members in the Hougang Care Centre, which provides mental health services.

The five co-authors and editors of the book, to be ready by this month's end, are Mr Clive Lim, 23; Ms Kimberly Loo, 20; Ms Desiree Chua, 21; Ms Rachel Koh, 20; and Ms Carylyne Chan, 20.

They are hoping to sell the books in schools. The book can also be pre-ordered online at tiny.cc/pastpresentfuture

"Death is a deadline, so do something purposeful while you are still alive," said the team's youthful leader and third-year business student, Mr Lim.

It was his idea to write the book during his first year in SMU. At the time, he was giving talks in schools about his experiences in community service.

"A friend asked me how sus-

tainable my sharing sessions were to reach out to the masses," he said. "I thought about it and decided to write a book, which was something I've always wanted to do but had no courage to."

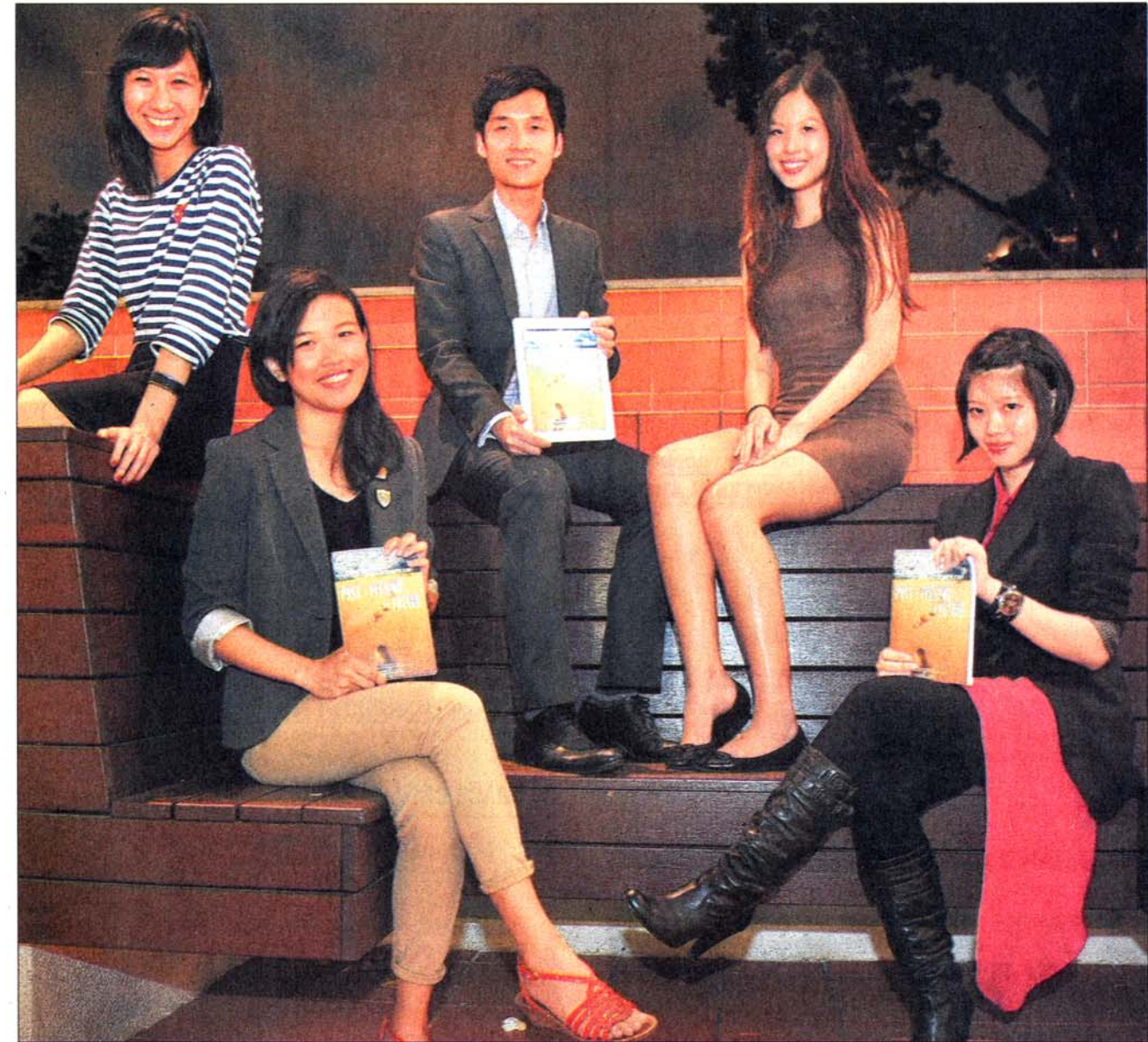
To find individuals with stories about personal triumphs and collect the lists, the undergrads got friends' recommendations and worked closely with agencies such as NTUC's youth group nEbO, Special Olympics Singapore and non-profit group Youth Without Borders.

"The most difficult part was to get people to open up about their personal life," said Ms Chua.

"At first, I asked difficult questions, but later I realised that the simple questions got better responses."

One story was from retired principal and cancer survivor Elizabeth Poey, 59, who shared her pain of going through treatment. One of the items on her bucket list is to perform a stand-up comedy show for 200 people and donate the proceeds to the National Cancer Centre.

In her story, she said: "Do not wait for a tragedy to strike before you start crossing items off your bucket list."



From left: Singapore Management University undergraduates Ms Kimberly Loo, 20; Ms Desiree Chua, 21; Mr Clive Lim, 23; Ms Rachel Koh, 20; and Ms Carylyne Chan, 20, wrote and edited a book entitled *Past, Present, Future*, compiling 30 stories of people and their bucket lists, or a wishlist of things to do before they die. The book aims to inspire youngsters to look beyond their difficulties and set goals to help them fulfil their dreams. ST PHOTO: ALPHONSUS CHERN

The undergrads took 10 months to put the book together. They also got in touch through e-mail with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Deputy Prime Ministers Teo Chee Hean and Tharman Shanmugaratnam, who

offer, in the book, life advice to young readers.

The SMU students hope that the book can inspire people to look beyond difficulties and setbacks and set goals for themselves.

It has already helped them. "It was very stressful but we can finally strike off one item that was on our bucket list - that is writing a book," Mr Lim said to laughter from his teammates. stgoh@sph.com.sg