

Paralympic gold medallist among three awarded APB

scholarship

Singapore's first ever Paralympic Games gold medallist , Yip Pin Xiu, is one of three recipients of this year's Asia Pacific Breweries (APB) Foundation Scholarship for Persons with Disabilities.

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Singapore's swimmer Yip Pin Xiu (Photo: Singapore Disability Sports Council)

SINGAPORE: Singapore's first ever Paralympic Games gold medallist, Yip Pin Xiu, is one of three recipients of this year's Asia Pacific Breweries (APB) Foundation Scholarship for Persons with Disabilities.

Minister of State for Education, and Communications and Information Sim Ann presented the awards on Friday.

Yip, 21, a national swimmer, is currently a second-year social sciences student at the Singapore Management University and plans on becoming a sports psychologist.

She said it is an issue of mind over matter in dealing with her condition of muscular dystrophy, a degenerative musculoskeletal disease.

Yip said: "It's about having a barrier-free road in your mind. With a negative thought, it's an extra barrier in your mind, and why would anybody want that?"

"If I did not think of myself as worse than the rest, I am not worse than the rest. This mindset has helped me reach a lot of goals. It's allowed me to train hard."

The other two recipients of APB's bond-free university scholarships are -- Samuel Soh, 23, who suffers from a degenerative joint condition, and Winston Wong, 25, who has lost almost 85 per cent of his hearing in both ears due to a congenital condition.

Both are now studying at the National University of Singapore.

Samuel is studying civil engineering, while Winston is a final-year bioengineering student.

The recipients said Singapore has come a long way in terms of providing a barrier-free environment and a more accessible transportation system.

But in creating an inclusive society, which has been a tag word of late, there needs to be a mindset change and it needs to start at a very young age.

Winston said there is little interaction between the community and persons with disabilities at the moment, which results in stereotypes.

Winston said: "These stereotypes include able (bodied) people who think that people with disabilities are troublesome to take care of, and they are not as capable as able people. These are the mindsets that need to change.

"We need to believe that people with disabilities are almost, if not as capable as an able-bodied person."

Winston related his experiences of being bullied when he was in primary and secondary school, where he stood out because of his "large and prominent" hearing aids.

He said: "A long-term solution would be to allow children to interact with people with disabilities, because at a young age, they are very impressionable.

"So if you give them the opportunity to interact with people with disabilities, they will then be able to understand how to interact with people with disabilities, as well as understand their special needs."

The APB Foundation scholarship will provide the recipients with S\$12,000 a year throughout their university education.

The scholarship, which is into its ninth year, had disbursed S\$950,000 to help university students with disabilities.



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