

Three tertiary students awarded APB scholarship

KOK XING HUI
xinghui@mediacorp.com.sg

SINGAPORE – A graduate of Raffles Institution and Raffles Junior College, Mr Samuel Soh had always wanted a military career, but his hopes were dashed at 19 when he contracted leukaemia. Although he overcame the disease after two years of chemotherapy, the steroids used in his treatment caused him to develop a side effect: Avascular necrosis — a slow degeneration of the major joints.

Mobility is now an issue for him and he is plagued by frequent pains, but the 23-year-old never gave up and is now a Year 3 civil engineering undergraduate at the National University of Singapore (NUS). His positive attitude and perseverance were recognised yesterday when he was among three undergraduates to be awarded the Asia Pacific Breweries (APB) Foundation Scholarship for Persons with Disabilities by Ms Sim Ann, Minister of State (Education and Communications and Information).

The bond-free scholarship, which was launched in 2004, awards the recipients S\$12,000 annually for the duration of their studies at any of the six local universities.

Mr Soh, whose condition worsens each time he walks or stands for a long time, shared that taking public transport is a problem for him because he looks just like everyone else.

“Because I look okay from the outside, it’s quite hard for me to get a seat sometimes,” he said.



Mr Roland Pirmez (second from left), Chairman of APB Foundation Board of Trustees and Advisory Committee, with recipients of the Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation Scholarship for Persons with Disabilities (from left) Mr Samuel Soh, Mr Winston Wong and Ms Yip Pin Xiu.

PHOTO: DONWONG

Mr Soh added that he wants to make public transportation more accessible for people with special needs in future and hopes this scholarship will boost his credibility when he goes job-hunting after graduation next year.

The other recipients were NUS bio-engineering undergraduate Winston Wong, 25, and competitive swimmer Yip Pin Xiu, 21.

Mr Wong, who is hearing-impaired, has had to keep up with his lecturers by lip-reading, but he said his classmates would always share their notes with him when he needs help.

Ms Yip, a Paralympic gold medalist, is a Year 2 social science undergraduate at the Singapore Management University who wants to work as a sports psychologist. She will be representing Singapore in a swimming competition in Myanmar next year.