

Opportunities for more scholarships

A STAR Education Fund recipient herself, Debra Dante James put her experience to good use while advising students who were interested in applying for scholarships under the fund.

"Having gone through the selection and interview process itself, I found it easier to speak to students and their parents about the Star Education Fund scholarships and answer their questions," she said.

Debra received a scholarship for a Business degree majoring in Marketing from HELP University College in 2008.

She was one of the volunteers at the Star Education Fund booth during the fair last weekend, and answered questions on the scholarships from the public.

Susanna Kuan, who is the fund manager, said she got the idea of getting scholarship recipients themselves to help answer questions from the previous year's experience.

"One of our scholarship recipients dropped by during last year's fair.

"She sat down at one of the tables and we found that many people wanted to hear her speak about the selection and interview process," she said.

Kuan shared that this time around, there were three volunteers each day, adding that one of them, Chow Li Yun helped out on both days.

Li Yun, who is about to start the second year of an International Business degree at Stamford College, said she was touched by



Kuan (middle) and Debra (left) counselling a student who is interested in applying for a Star Education Fund scholarship.

the concern many parents showed for their children's future.

"Most of the enquiries on the scholarships and selection process are from both the students and their parents," said Li Yun.

Members of the Red Crescent Society since Form One, friends Rajeshwari Vijayamoorthi, Shuba Shini Selvan and Renuka Gunasekaran wanted more details on scholarships in either pharmacy or medicine.

"The Star Education Fund scholarships are a good idea as they will help lessen the burden of our families," said Rajeshwari, adding that they were waiting for their STPM results.

Chan Zhen Wai, who is awaiting his SPM results, was accompanied by his parents.

"I am interested in electrical and electronic engineering and am here to look at the options to study it locally and the scholarships available from *The Star*," he said.

Star Publications (M) Bhd group managing director and chief executive officer Datin Linda Ngiam said that this year, a record 46 local and foreign private higher education institutions pledged 398 scholarship awards totalling RM13.8mil.

She was speaking at the Fund's scholarship pledge ceremony last Sunday.

Ngiam also welcomed the five institutions which joined the Fund for the first time; namely, the International University College of Nursing (IUCN), PSB Academy Pre Ltd, Singapore, the Singapore Institute of Management, Swinburne University of Technology, Sarawak and The Otomotif College (TOC).

TOC founder and chief executive officer Adelaide Foo said that it was important for deserving students to gain access to higher education.

"Education has the power to turn someone's life around and provide them with a second chance.

"As someone who had less-than-stellar SPM results, I truly believe in encouraging talented individuals to pursue their dreams," she said.

PSB Academy's chief executive officer Dr Steve Lai said that the institution received a substantial number of Malaysian students.

"This is our way of encouraging bright

students to pursue their tertiary studies while raising the profile of our institution here," he said.

Eight institutions also pledged full fees at this year's fund.

They are the City University College of Science and Technology, IUCN, Kuala Lumpur Infrastructure University College, Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, Stamford College, Sunway University College, TOC and University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus (Nottingham).

Pledging 10 scholarships, Nottingham had increased its contribution from last year to coincide with its 10th anniversary in Malaysia.

"By being means-based, the Star Education Fund has always been a worthwhile effort to be involved in," said Nottingham's vice-president and chief executive officer Prof Ian Pashby.

"It made sense to celebrate our anniversary by showing our support to this prestigious award," he added.

The other contributors were ALFA International College, Brickfields Asia College, Equator Academy of Art, FTMS College, Han Chiang College, HELP International College of Technology, HELP University College, IACT College, INTI College Subang Jaya, INTI International College Penang, INTI University College, ISBA UK Thinking Skills College & Academy, KDU College, KDU College Penang, Life College, Management and Science University, Methodist College, Metropolitan College, Multimedia University, Olympia College, FJ College of Art & Design, FTPL Group of Colleges, Raffles International College, Saito College, SEGI University College, SEGI College Kuala Lumpur, SEGI College Subang Jaya, SEGI College Penang, SEGI College Sarawak, Sentral Technology College Penang, Taylor's University College, The One Academy of Communication Design, Tunku Abdul Rahman College, UCSI University and University Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Since its inception in 1994, the Fund has awarded scholarships worth more than RM59.9mil to 2,438 students.

