

**PROFILE OF RECIPIENTS OF LEE KUAN YEW MODEL STUDENT
/TRAINEE AWARD 2015**

Name : Daniel Ravindran S/O Thangaraju
Course : *Higher Nitec* in Electronics Engineering
College : ITE College West

Passion Drives Progress

When asked what motivates him to succeed, 23-year-old Daniel Ravindran and winner of the Lee Kuan Yew Model Student Award 2015, recalled an incident close to his heart, “Two years back, I asked my mother for one last chance to right all my wrongs. She agreed unenthusiastically. I couldn’t blame her for being a skeptic. I had proven nothing to my credit.”

Daniel first pursued the *Nitec* in Mechatronics course at ITE College Central after his GCE “N” Levels examination. He stayed afloat scoring a Grade Point Average (GPA) score of 2.4. Uninspired by the course he took, he skipped classes and played truant. Soon after, he started his National Service, and saw the realities of life. “I realised that I needed to go back to school to secure my future.” Against his mother’s suggestion to sign up as a regular in the army, Daniel convinced her to give him one last chance to study at ITE again. This time, he chose to pursue a *Higher Nitec* in a new area, at a new College.

Daniel still remembers the words of his Class Advisor on the first day, “The secret to success is doing what you love.” Daniel was encouraged, more so he was happy to have finally found his niche. He was naturally good at Electrical Engineering, and passion drove even greater progress. He studied hard and achieved perfect attendance for the course. But the jewel on the crown was his perfect 4.0 GPA score. He achieved all this while contributing to a vibrant campus life.

Daniel has remarkable leadership skills, serving on multiple executive committees including as the President of the ACE Club, Chairman of the Eco Campus committee and co-leader of the Youth Corp Singapore Project. He was also selected as one of the four delegates to represent Singapore through a cultural exchange programme at the ASEAN Youth Expo 2014 in Jakarta. The civic-minded youth represented his College at various dialogue sessions with political appointees to lend a voice to the issues faced by youth. In fact, he

was initiated into the Sinda-ITE Leadership programme to strategise ways to instill confidence and address some challenges faced by Indian students.

On his success, Daniel shared with a smile, “My mother asked me what led to my transformation. And this time, she said it with pride and love in her eyes. And I had to let her in on my secret to success: Passion to do my best, so that I could give her and my family nothing less.”

Name : Gary Lau Hwei
Course : *Nitec* in Community Care and Social Services
College : ITE College East

Rising Above the Odds

Gary Lau Hwei's tattoo-filled body is a reflection of his past. From as early as his primary school days, Gary started mixing with the wrong company. At thirteen, he joined a gang to avoid being bullied, started gang fighting, sniffing glue, vandalising, clubbing, drinking and roaming the streets overnight. After running away from home, Gary was sent to the Remand Home and to Boys' Town for two years.

With such a bleak past, who would have thought that Gary would be a straight 'A' student who will soon be graduating with a perfect Grade Point Average score at ITE? At ITE, he was active in three Co-curricular Activities - as the Vice-President of the Interact Club, Vice-President of the Care Connection Club and a Member of the Track and Field team. What makes Gary more special is his helping hands and giving heart. Despite his busy schedule, he devotes much of this time to inspiring and uplifting youths through CampVision, YouthReach Centre, and Wand Inspiration. He shared, "My goal is to reach out to at-risk youths and reduce the rate of juvenile delinquency."

Gary started to reflect on his life and changed while in Boys' Town. There, he reluctantly attended CampVision, an annual camp for the youths. During the camp, he managed to reach the top of the wall during a rock-climbing activity, after receiving much encouragement and motivation from other volunteers. It was the first time he received positive reinforcement and care from others. It was also the first time he started reflecting on his life.

Realising that education was necessary, the young man sat for his GCE 'N' Levels Examinations with renewed determination, after his two years at Boys' Town. After completing his National Service, he applied for an ITE course, but was initially rejected. He eventually joined the *Nitec* in Community Care & Social Services course, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Today, Gary is a role model to youths, particularly youths with difficult backgrounds. Though many have misjudged him due to his appearance, he has stayed strong to prove himself. He hopes that his will be an inspiring story to other youths like him.

“Everyone deserves a second chance. Never judge nor misjudge them, as it can kill their spirit,” said Gary. This is the same message he delivered during the Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths, where he represented Singapore as a Youth Ambassador for National Youth Council. He is also thankful for other opportunities ITE has provided him to grow and develop, including a two-week Overseas Industry Attachment in the US, and community outreach programmes.

Gary hopes to get a Degree, which qualifies him to become a professional social worker in future. He also wants to continue helping youths, and to instil hope and purpose in their lives.

Name : Lim Yew Kiat, Marcus
Course : *Higher Nitec* in Electrical Engineering
College : ITE College West

Getting Better Each Day

A competition held in ITE ignited the confidence in 19-year-old Lim Yew Kiat, Marcus, to rise and start a journey of success. He has always possessed a hunger for competition, but he never thought he could feed that hunger with victory. It was after winning awards at the Energy Market Authority's 'Changing the Game' competition in 2013 that Marcus discovered he had the ability to do well. His appetite for success grew too. Before the competition, he was happy to just achieve a good academic score and progress to a polytechnic. But after winning, he decided he could do more than just that.

Marcus and his younger step-sister were raised single-handedly by their mother. During his secondary school days, his mother even juggled two jobs to support the family. The family of three rents a room from his auntie, as they cannot afford their own flat. However, Marcus has never allowed himself to feel under privileged. Although his family is not well off, Marcus is content that they have enough to live by.

But Marcus is not as easily satisfied when it comes to his own performance. "I love the feeling of knowing I have grown better as compared to before," he shared, when asked about his motivation. He stretches himself to learn and participate in new areas. After his first competition in 2013, Marcus has achieved success in larger-scale national and regional competitions.

In 2014, he volunteered to take part in the Industrial Control Skill Area in the WorldSkills Singapore competition. He did this despite not knowing much about the area. He was set on learning all that was needed for the competition. As a result, he attended a hundred training sessions over a period of nine months, sacrificing his personal time after school and during the holidays. He achieved a Silver medal, and learnt a new set of skills.

He also volunteered to take part in the Shell Eco Marathon in 2015, competing against university students from Asia and the Middle East. His team held their own and won the third prize in the Battery Electricity Prototype segment.

Marcus actively volunteered for activities that met his interests, such as the leading the Clean Energy Club, swimming, dialogue sessions, and community work. His plan is to serve his National Service and then to start working after that, support his family and further his studies. With this appetite to grow, Marcus can only get better each day.

Name : Moses Charles S/O Felix
Course : Nitec in Fitness Training
College : ITE College West

Attitude Reflects Leadership

Moses Charles has an interesting outlook in life. He feels that, since we are defined by our attitudes, we must have a positive one. "It is alright if I am better with hands-on learning than churning out stacks of model essays. It is alright if I have to take a longer route to achieve my dreams than most people. But it is not alright to stop trying to be the best in everything that I can be," the 19-year old Lee Kuan Yew Model Student Award 2015 winner shared.

This attitude translates beautifully into everything that he does. In secondary school, he stunned his peers by becoming a Head Prefect, even though he was from the Normal Technical stream. "It was a challenge to earn the respect of my peers from the other streams. But I did not put myself down. Instead, I chose to rise to the occasion to lead them by example." The experience made him realise that a good leader is not recognised by a sterling report card, but the ability to lead and inspire others.

At ITE College West, Moses continued to do what he did best. He helmed the Student Council as its elected President. His energy and tenacity has influenced his fellow student councilors, and made a positive and lasting impact to the student body. For his contributions to the Student Council and to College West, he was awarded the *Diamond Service Star Award* in August 2014. Moses managed to do this while maintaining an impressive Grade Point Average of 3.86 in his studies.

A true leader progresses with his team. Moses was always on the lookout for his peers, ensuring that they got their fair share of opportunities to grow and shine. For example, he involved a fellow counsellor to help out at an eco-event when he realised the latter had a personal interest in green initiatives. He even used his network with the Eco Club to rope in the student for subsequent events run by the club.

Moses' excellence transcends the school. Supervisors at Pure Fitness, where Moses served his 10-week industrial attachment, shared on Moses' exemplary work, professionalism and service attitude. He wowed his employer and customers alike with his pleasant personality and contagious positivity. Moses is an excellent ITE role model, a worthy and deserving candidate for the Lee Kuan Yew Model Student Award.

Name : Ray Tan Guan Rui
Course : *Nitec in Aerospace Avionics*
College : ITE College Central

Leaving No One Behind

“I believe that a leader’s responsibility is to bring everyone in the team along with him, and progress together. A good leader never leaves anyone behind,” 19-year-old Ray Tan Guan Rui answered, when asked about his leadership philosophy. Ray is the winner of the Halogen Foundation’s 2014 National Young Leader Award, an award decided by votes. He is regarded as a natural leader among teachers and peers, and has an interest to care for each person in his team.

As the President of the Student Council at ITE College Central, Ray earned the respect of other members by taking a personal interest in each of them. In return, they did not hesitate to partner him to organise activities for the student body, such as the Student Council Bonding Camp and the Student Council Recruitment Drive. Such is the manner in which he inspires his team members and earns their respect as a leader.

Ray has a perfect Grade Point Average of 4.0, but his influence extends beyond the classroom, the College and even our shores. In 2014, he was one of two Singaporeans who represented our nation at the Young South East Asian Leaders Initiative Conference. At the Conference in Yangon, Myanmar, Ray lent his voice to issues such as the global environment, social crisis and volunteerism. For Ray, it was an inspiration to meet the President of the United States, Mr Barack Obama, at the Conference, where he encouraged youth to persevere.

Back at home, this Aerospace Avionics student started a programme with his schoolmates called ‘License To Play’, which has successfully engaged over 600 students to be actively involved in sports. Ray constantly stretches himself and believes in being involved in areas he is passionate about, and to help others in the process. One of Ray’s passions is swimming and he regularly serves as a qualified life guard at Sentosa.

This young man is clear about what he loves and does not hesitate to pursue his varied interests. It is hard to imagine that Ray felt demoralised when he first stepped into ITE. This changed when he realised, after a few days, that there were many paths open to ITE students.

“I want to tell all ITE students that it is never the end, unless we ourselves think so. Today is the day we can start doing something great.” he shared.

Ray has just completed his attachment with Halogen Foundation Singapore, where he inspires other youth through talks on change management. He often shares about his own transformational journey at ITE too. He is now heading towards the next phase of his journey in Singapore Polytechnic, pursuing a Diploma in Aeronautical Engineering.

Name : Samuel Ng Zheng Jie
Course : *Nitec* in Visual Effects
College : ITE College Central

Real Skills for The Reel World

For those who enjoyed Jack Neo's movie 'Ah Boys to Men 3: Frogmen' and sat through the credit roll at the end, you would have noticed the name 'Samuel Ng Zheng Jie' for visual effects. Samuel was a *Nitec* in Visual Effects student who had the opportunity to work on the movie's special effects during his three-month industrial attachment with production company Vividtree Production. He said, "I applied the gunfire effects on the characters in the movie. When the person squeezed the trigger on his firearm, I was the one who added the sparks and smoke!"

The perfect Grade Point Average graduate never thought that as an intern, he could work on a real movie. During his internship, he noticed that the skills he learnt were relevant. Samuel said, "The software that we used in our school projects are 100% similar to what the industry uses. In that sense, it is not an issue for us to contribute immediately when we start work."

The self-confessed enthusiast in visual effects admits that his interest was piqued at a young age, before ITE, due to his love of movies. "I thought, 'Wouldn't it be cool if I could do some of the effects in the movies?' And so, here I am," shared Samuel. His class was a competitive one, with many peers doing filming projects on the side, and editing them beyond what the curriculum required. In this environment, he too, tried to apply his skills on out-of-class work, and invested in similar software at home.

One of the areas where he had tried to test his technical knowhow would be his Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs). Samuel was in the ITE College Central ACE programme, which develops outstanding students through opportunities that can best maximise their potential. Under ACE, he was the Camp Commander leading 100 students in a three-day leadership camp. His other CCA activities include being Treasurer of the Dragon Boat Club, and an ITE representative in fencing. And during his participation in fencing that he did a short promotional video for the Fencing Club.

Currently a student in Temasek Polytechnic pursuing a Diploma in Game Design and Development, Samuel believes that ITE students, like him, have an advantage. He said, "We know how to study smart and focus on doing well in a tertiary institute."

Name : Yong Mei En
Course : *Higher Nitec in Process Plant Design*
College : ITE College Central

Stepping Up for Others

“I remember this little girl, who was about six years old, who joined the programme. At first, she was shy but over time, we forged a common bond. I looked forward to seeing her every Saturday. One of my fondest memories was of her at the beach at East Coast Park. She was so happy,” said Yong Mei En, ITE graduate and President of the ITE College Central Community Service Club.

The programme that Mei En referred to was the Y-Arts Challenge Programme, which takes place every Saturday. An initiative between ITE and YMCA, the programme involved providing children from disadvantaged backgrounds with companionship, where student volunteers organised activities for them. Mei En facilitated the programme for 10 months, from January to November 2014.

It was through numerous meaningful programmes such as this, which Mei En was intricately involved in during her time in ITE, that inspired her towards growing a passion for community service. The *Higher Nitec in Process Plant Design* graduate said, “I used to lack confidence in talking to people. However, ITE has given me many opportunities to step up, particularly in learning how to mobilise fellow students and organise events that bring cheer into the lives of the less fortunate.” Besides leading the Community Service Club, Mei En was also Vice Chairperson of the Projects Committee of ITE College Central’s Student Council.

Mei En’s sterling record in ITE extends beyond excelling in her CCA work. She achieved a perfect Grade Point Average of 4.0. She had also applied her skills in the Student Design Challenge in Assistive and Rehabilitation Technologies 2014, where she led her team in achieving the Gold Award through the designing of an innovative product – the ‘X-Y Magnifying Table’. The product works just like the ‘Desktop CCTV’, which caters to the needs of those with poor vision, but costs only a fraction of the price.

Today, the 22-year-old is beginning a new phase in life, as a polytechnic student. Mei En is pursuing a Diploma in Chemical Engineering at Singapore Polytechnic. Despite the challenging field of study she is in, Mei En remains positive that she has what it takes to do well. She said, “When I started my *Higher Nitec* course, it was difficult as well. But I worked

hard and gained confidence along the way. When results showed promise, my passion for the course also grew!”

For her outstanding achievements, Mei En receives the Lee Kuan Yew Award Model Student Award 2015, and is on track in her application for the National Youth Achievement Award (Gold Award).

Name : Tan Kai Hao Andrew
Course : *Higher Nitec* in Electrical Engineering
College : ITE College East

Endurance Reaps Performance

“I was excited, yet nervous, to compete at the regional level. My opponents from the other ASEAN countries seemed so strong,” admitted Andrew Tan Kai Hao, then a second-year student in the *Higher Nitec* in Electrical Engineering course. He recounted his participation in the 10th ASEAN Skills Competition (ASC), Hanoi, Vietnam, in October 2014. Despite securing a Gold Medal three months before at the WorldSkills Singapore competition, Andrew still felt intimidated by some older ASC competitors, who had work experience. Yet this 19-year-old resolved to be calm and cleared each test segment to the best of his abilities during the competition.

Andrew eventually made ITE and Singapore proud by clinching a Gold Medal for Information Network Cabling, and the ‘Best of Nation’ Award, which was presented to the highest scorer of each country. Andrew credited his win to the comprehensive preparation and guidance from his lecturers. When the odds were against him, he pushed himself to do even better. “It was tough, but I couldn’t let those long hours of training go to waste. It helped that my coaches were very encouraging. I’m glad I didn’t give up,” he shared.

While participation in such skill competitions brought out his resilience, Andrew has a softer side – he possesses a heart of gold and cares very much for the elderly and underprivileged. As the Team Leader in ITE’s Community Service Club, he organised outings and showed compassion in taking care of some 30 senior citizens from Fei Yue Senior Activity Centre.

Andrew is surprised at his accomplishments at school. A few years ago, the mere thought of participating in competitions scared him, and he would gladly choose computer games over his books. Under the Direct Entry Scheme to Polytechnic Programme, Andrew took up *Higher Nitec* in Electrical Engineering in ITE. Although the Engineering course was not his first choice - it was his seventh as he has an interest in Info-Comm Technology - he worked hard, achieved a perfect Grade Point Average of 4.0, and made it to the College Director’s List in both years of his course. The attainment of other awards such as the Singapore Power Book Prize and Phoenix Contact Book Prize, is also testament to his diligence.

Andrew remains grateful to his ITE lecturers for unlocking his potential in Engineering. They often encouraged him to go beyond his comfort zone and pick up new skills.

Andrew is now pursuing a Diploma in Computer Engineering at Singapore Polytechnic. To him, this is the best of both worlds, since it combines his interest in Information Technology and capability in Engineering.

Name : Chin Clement
Course : *Higher Nitec* in Information Technology
College : ITE College East

Gift of the Gab

“The phrase ‘Ladies and Gentleman’ must have been the most common phrase I used,” quipped 19-year-old Clement Chin. The ITE graduate was a familiar face on stage, through his emceeing stints at ITE College East’s events and other external functions. Clement is always ready to address a crowd. This air of confidence was a far cry from the bespectacled youth’s pre-ITE days when he felt inadequate in giving public speeches. Citing US President Barack Obama as his role model in public speaking, Clement yearned to speak like him and unexpectedly found his stage at ITE.

His lecturers and friends in ITE noticed his interest in public speaking, and supported him. To widen his exposure, Clement was encouraged to participate in public speaking competitions. With his gift of the gab, he was crowned the champion in ITE College East’s Public Speaking Competition 2013, and participated in Plain English Speaking Competition 2013 where he pitted his skills against representatives from Junior Colleges and Polytechnics at the semi-finals.

The now confident and chatty lad expressed his gratitude to ITE, not only for providing him with knowledge through his course, but also in nurturing his talent. “When I applied for ITE, some people commented that it was unwise, especially if I could have gone on to Secondary Five. I don’t regret my decision. ITE allowed me to shine on and off stage,” shared Clement. An ace student with a perfect Grade Point Average of 4.0, Clement excelled in both his studies and in public speaking.

Putting his skills in Information Technology to good use, Clement and his classmates submitted a video on environmental conservation, to compete in the National Climate Change Competition 2013. His team won the first place in the Institutes of Higher Learning Category. This feat led to his moment of fame when he was interviewed in Mandarin on ‘Good Morning Singapore’, a Chinese television programme. As the animator and designer of the video, he elaborated on the storyboard and creation process of the winning entry, on behalf of his team.

Clement served as the President of Curtain Call. Besides looking after the members' interests, Clement also tried his hand at scripting and acting. He is well liked by his peers for his positive attitude and modest disposition. Clement's exceptional qualities will put him in good stead at Singapore Polytechnic, where he will study a Diploma in InfoComm Security Management.

Name : Mercado Aldrich Gail Deposoy
Course : *Higher Nitec* in Marine & Offshore Technology
Company : Keppel Offshore & Marine Ltd

Like Father, Like Son

As a child, Mercado Aldrich Gail Deposoy looked at his father in admiration whenever he returned home looking rugged after a day's work as an electrical manager in the Marine industry. Listening to his father's tales of his exciting job, he decided at a young age that he wanted to follow his father's footsteps to work in the Marine industry.

Mercado took a step closer towards his dream when he enrolled under the Traineeship Programme and accepted a job at Keppel Offshore & Marine Ltd, after completing his National Service. Initially, he had joined the *Nitec* in Marine Technology traineeship programme. However, after Keppel Offshore & Marine became an Approved Training Centre to conduct the *Higher Nitec* in Marine & Offshore Technology course, Mercado took an entrance test and successfully enrolled in the course.

According to him, it is a winning programme as trainees can 'earn-as-you-learn' and gain real-work experience. Mercado said, "I had the passion for the Marine sector, but no knowledge. Through the programme, I have built a good foundation for my career by learning practical skills and knowledge from experienced mentors in such a renowned Marine company." He also has a clearer picture of his future plans, as meeting different people has given him better exposure of the varying skills and work of a Marine Engineer.

From the word 'go', Mercado has been giving his best to his employer. His interest in the Marine industry is reflected in his excellent work performance, which earned him the Lee Kuan Yew Model Trainee award. His instructor, Mr Sasidharan Krishnan, is all praise for the responsible and hardworking lad. "I believe that his passion for the industry and character attributes will make him a valuable talent in the company. He has what it takes to rise to a good position," shared Mr Sasidharan on his thoughts on Mercado.

Besides learning the nuts and bolts of the marine industry, Mercado displayed his softer side when he eagerly volunteered his services for community projects, such as Thye Hua Kwan Seniors' Activity Centre and Flag Day for the disabled organised by People's Association. He has also provided several career talks in secondary schools and other organisations.

In a family of seven siblings, 23-year-old Mercado is the only one who took after his father to take on a technical job, and that too, in the Marine industry. His father is undoubtedly proud of his son's career choice.