

NYP programme cements her desire to help the needy

✔ RUTH PHANG

She comes from a family of special educators, but it was her work experience in a nursing home that cemented her decision to become a social worker.

Last year, Miss Joanna Tay, 21, was on an internship when she met a middle-aged woman who was bedridden due to severe arthritis.

At work, Miss Tay would ask about her day and encourage her.

The Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) health and social sciences graduate said: "One day, she caught me by surprise – she told me I was going to be a good social worker."

Miss Tay credits her parents for introducing her to the needy from a young age.

Her father, Mr Tay Yew Siong, 53, is a special-needs therapist and would take Miss Tay on volunteer projects, such as helping people with disabilities and going door-to-door for donations.

Her mother, Madam Cheryl Lee, 52, is a shadow teacher who supports students with special needs.

Miss Tay's hopes of gaining work experience, coupled with a degree in social work, was realised when NYP initiated the Work Learn Programme (WLP) for Social Work Associates partnership with Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS).

Backed by SkillsFuture SG, the WLP is a 12-month work-study programme for stu-



Miss Joanna Tay (left) and Mrs Dawn Ong, a lecturer at NYP's School of Health and Social Sciences. TNP PHOTO: RUTH PHANG

dents like Miss Tay, who are in the social sector and want to gain work experience.

Mrs Dawn Ong, a lecturer of the School of Health and Social Sciences at NYP, said: "The selling point of the joint programme of NYP and SUSS is students can work and learn."

The WLP offers structured on-the-job training designed to map out skills, competency and progression.

Participants undergo three SUSS modules a semester, attending lessons at SUSS after work on weeknights, up to three nights a week.

Upon completion of the WLP, students like Miss Tay will receive a grant of \$5,000.

Miss Tay now works in Fei Yue Community Services' early intervention programme for infants and children as a social work associate.

Her father, Mr Tay, said: "I see Joanna's work as one that has the opportunity to shape our social fabric."

Miss Tay added: "We need more social workers. Especially with Singapore's ageing population."

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