

# Hokkien clan to give \$120k to needy uni students

Bursaries will be offered even to those with no ties to the association

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LEONG Khay Huay Kuan is giving out money to needy students who have no ties to the Hokkien clan association, starting this year.

The clan has more than 220 members, most of whom were originally from China's Fujian province. It is giving out \$120,000 a year for three years to five tertiary institutions, from its \$10 million Education Trust Fund.

On Saturday, it signed an agreement and presented cheques of \$24,000 each to representatives from the National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore Management University (SMU), Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) and Singapore Institute of Technology.

To qualify, the students, or one of their parents, must be native Hokkien speakers.

The money will come in the form of a \$3,000 bursary for individual students each year. Up to eight students from each institution will be funded for three years in this way.

Said the association's president and the chairman of its Education Trust Fund, Mr Ko Oon Joo: "Our goal is to help even more students complete their tertiary education, and we are leaving it to the universities to set their criteria and identify students who need help."

He said the fund was created two years ago, after the association made profits from the sale of properties in Geylang and Serangoon. The 76-year-old association set aside \$10 million for the fund because its founders believed in the importance of education, he said.

"We are still looking at other ways to use the fund to help those in need," he said. "We hope to eventually extend assistance to all Singapore students, regardless of race or the dialects they speak."

Vice-president and assistant treasurer Ko Oen Tjiang said the fund had been used to provide bursaries of \$1,000 to \$4,000 each for children of seven members.

University representatives at the signing ceremony, held at the association's premises in Cantonment Road, lauded its generosity.

Said SUTD's director for advancement and development, Ms Yvonne Ho: "The gift is meaningful, and it will help deserving Singapore students from humble families financially."

"It will also help encourage a keen interest in Chinese culture and heritage."

The associate director of SMU's office of advancement and alumni, Mr Tan Siang Peng, noted: "We are grateful to the Huay Kuan for the money because one in five of the 7,800 students we have is from a needy family."

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