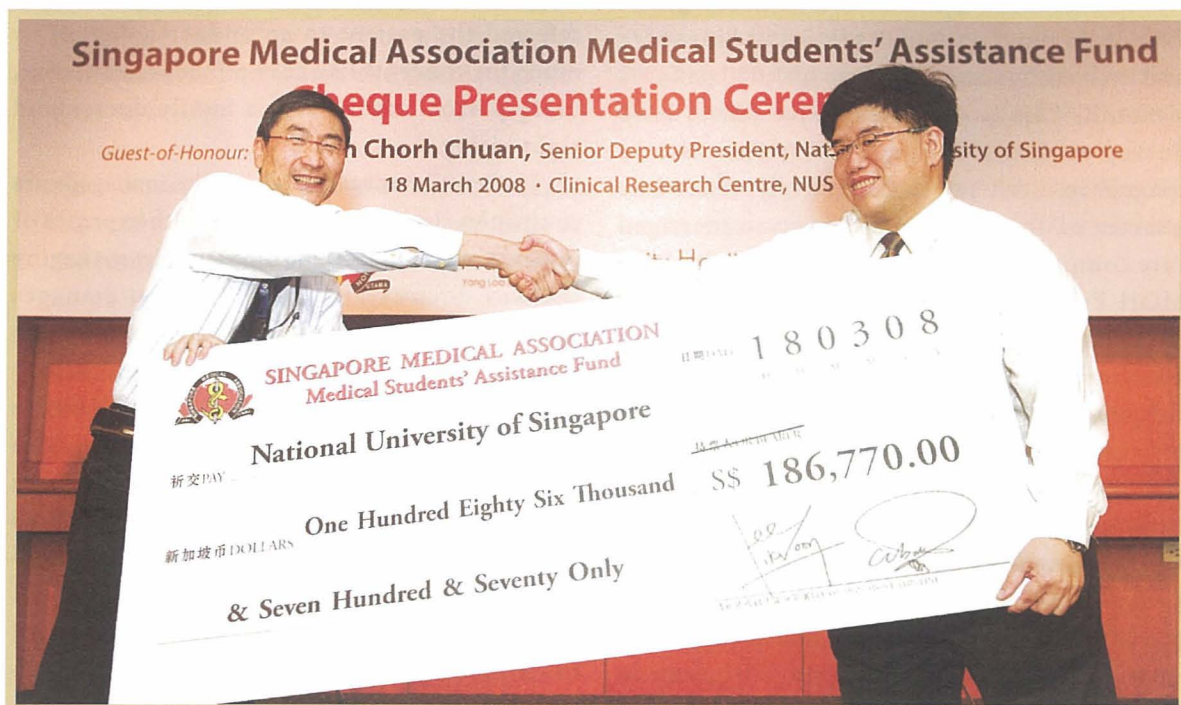


By Ms Adeline Chua, Editorial Executive



Dr Wong Chiang Yin, President, SMA, presenting the cheque of total donations received for the year 2007 to Prof John Wong, Dean, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, NUS.

\$186,770 raised for SMA Medical Students' Assistance Fund

"THERE IS REALLY NO MORE RELEVANT CAUSE TO THE MEDICAL PROFESSION THAN HELPING OUR POOR YOUTHS WHO DESIRE AND DESERVE A MERITOCRATIC MEDICAL EDUCATION."

— DR WONG CHIANG YIN, SMA PRESIDENT

A highly subsidised five-year medical undergraduate course such as that offered by the National University of Singapore (NUS) can cost over S\$100,000. A recent survey by the NUS Medical Society found that about 21%, or 250 medical students in the NUS undergraduate course, have a monthly household income of less than \$3,000. Another 26% come from households that earn between S\$3,000 to S\$5,000 a month.

The same survey found that a NUS medical student needs at least \$4,410 a year to survive day-to-day (transport, food, books and miscellaneous), or \$367.50 a month.

In collaboration with the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and with support from the NUS Development Office, the **SMA Medical Students' Assistance Fund** was thus established to help needy Singaporean medical students with their basic living expenses.

The charitable cause saw members actively making one-time or recurrent donations to the Fund. The donations made will not become part of an endowment fund and were matched dollar-to-dollar by SMA, up to a maximum of \$20,000.

Total donations received for the year 2007 amounted to a heartening **\$186,770**. The sum will go towards supporting 10 students every year. \$300 will be disbursed to the recipient per month, that is, \$3,600 for a year. Recipients will receive funding for up to the entire five years of their student life, depending on their remaining years in the medical school.

We also received a generous donation of \$20,000 from the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation. This donation, however, will only count towards year 2008.

The cheque presentation ceremony was held on 18 March 2008 at the Clinical Research Centre Auditorium, National University of Singapore. The Guest-of-Honour for the ceremony was Prof Tan Chorh Chuan, Senior Deputy President, National University of Singapore.

Said Prof Tan: "One of the most notable traditions of the medical profession is its very strong commitment to educate future generations of doctors. In this regard, this very generous pledge by the Singapore Medical Association will not only go a long way to help needy medical students pursue their studies, but is an admirable re-affirmation

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of this high ideal. On behalf of NUS, I would like to express our deep appreciation to the Singapore Medical Association for this magnificent gesture.”

Prof John Wong, Dean, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, NUS also said: “We are grateful to the Singapore Medical Association for their generous pledge to match the donations to the SMA Medical Students' Assistance Fund dollar-for-dollar, up to a maximum of \$20,000 a year. They saw the need and stepped up to contribute in this important way, which will surely inspire others to give. We all want our medical students to be free of financial worry and able to devote their precious time and energy to their studies. The long-term commitment from the SMA is truly an investment in our future generation of doctors.”

On behalf of the medical students of NUS, Mr Ng Chew Lip, President, NUS Medical Society, expressed his gratitude: “We are truly grateful to the SMA. Through this generous pledge, the SMA has not only helped alleviate the financial burden on medical students and our families, but has also made a momentous contribution to the future of the medical profession. Having benefited from those before us, this generation of medical students will be inspired to lend a hand to those after us in a virtuous cycle that the SMA has helped put in motion.”

As part of the initiative, SMA Christmas cards were also sold at various hospitals by medical students. The cards were sold in a box of 20, with four assorted designs. All proceeds from the card sales went towards the Fund.

In addition, we will be working hand-in-hand with the SMA Membership Committee, which will contribute \$5 to the Fund for every SMA T-shirt sold.

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– Mr Ng Chew Lip, President, NUS Medical Society

SMA also adopted a medical text *Baileys Surgery* for \$3,000 at the Adopt-A-Book Campaign on 20 August 2007 at the ST Lee Atrium, NUS Museum, which was launched by the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine.

The SMA Council and the SMA Social Concerns Committee would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to all donors and the Tan Chin Tuan Foundation who have responded to the SMA Medical Students' Assistance Fund. We would also like to thank the various hospitals who have assisted us in the Christmas cards sale and the medical students who have shared their time in volunteering.

We hope SMA members will continue to support this worthwhile endeavour – because medical students are already members of the medical profession and medical students are our future. ■



(L-R): Mr Eric Teng, CEO, Tan Chin Tuan Foundation; Prof Tan Chorh Chuan, Senior Deputy President, NUS; Dr Wong Chiang Yin, President, SMA; Mr Chew Kwee San, Council Member, Tan Chin Tuan Foundation; Dr Tan Sze Wee, Chairman, SMA Social Concerns Committee; and Prof John Wong, Dean, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, NUS.