

Needy students get more than just cash

EDUCATIONAL bursaries now encompass more than cash handouts.

They cover supplementary learning, allowing needy students access to field trips, museum tours and tuition.

This week, the Hong Leong Foundation gave \$500,000 to enrichment centre MindChamps to provide a year's free tuition - with the Primary School Leaving Examination in mind - to 60 Primary 5 pupils from families whose monthly household income is about \$2,000.

The Tan Chin Tuan Foundation, meanwhile, this year set up the Young Arts Reporter Programme, which enables less privileged students to attend cultural events, while learning to write about them through workshops.

Ms Yap Su-Yin, the foundation's programme director, said the programme aims "to expand their horizons, increase their appreciation of culture and creative learning" beyond the scope of their school-work.

The Education Ministry's Edusave Scheme too, goes some way to help with co-curricular activities. This year, it expects to receive \$86.2 million from the Government to cover enrichment programmes for learners aged six to 16. It covers everything from newspaper subscriptions to field trips and even music lessons.

Foundations, however, are broadening the reach of existing programmes, such as those run by community groups Mendaki and the Taoist Federation of Singapore, which offer free tuition on weekends for failing students.

For 11-year-old Tan Tian Le, a Primary 5 pupil at Yangzheng Primary School, such classes bring him closer to his ambition of becoming a teacher.

"I want to get into a good secondary school so I can be a teacher and earn enough money to take care of my family."

YEN FENG

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