

# *Illuminating Connections:* SMACF Bursary Recipients' Engagement Event 2025

Text by Sharmilah Banu, Executive, SMA Charity Fund

At SMA Charity Fund (SMACF), we believe that no aspiring doctor should face financial obstacles alone. Since our founding, this mission has guided every bursary awarded, every student supported and every story of perseverance we have had the privilege to witness. This spirit of care culminated in a gathering of like-minded people at our Bursary Recipients' Engagement Event 2025, held on 30 October.

This year, through the generous donations from our donors, we disbursed \$276,000 in bursaries to 46 deserving medical students across all three local medical schools. Each bursary, valued at \$6,000, provided students with critical financial relief, allowing them to focus on their rigorous training rather than worry about day-to-day expenses.

The event began with a playful segment of "Ask Me Anything", where Board members and legacy donor Dr Ong Eng Kang had to blind pick and answer questions submitted by students, sparking spontaneous moments of connection. From reflections on medical journeys to words of wisdom about resilience, the game revealed the shared humanity that ties everyone in the room together – mentors, donors and students alike.

The bursary event is a meaningful gathering that bridges SMACF Board members, legacy donors and bursary recipients, fostering connections that inspire and uplift the next generation of medical professionals. Students had the chance to meet and share a meal with the generous individuals behind their bursaries, learning not only the stories of giving that make their education possible but also insights from senior colleagues that will serve as guiding stars through the challenges and triumphs of their medical school journeys.

The evening also marked a new milestone in SMACF's journey: the filming of our first-ever corporate video. The video captured the beating hearts behind our mission, featuring interviews with SMACF Board members, SMA President Dr Ng Chee Kwan, our legacy donor Dr Ong Eng Kang and the bursary recipients themselves.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who took the time to share their stories and insights on camera. Your sincerity and warmth will soon come together to paint a living portrait of SMACF, celebrating the generosity, hope and belief that sustain our cause.

While the night eventually came to an end, we hope the spirit it kindled – of giving, gratitude and growth – continues to shine brightly in our hearts.

To our students, donors and members of the SMACF community, thank you for being part of this enduring story. We look forward with excitement to unveiling our corporate video – a reflection of the shared light that guides us all. Together, we continue to build a lasting ripple of care and compassion in Singapore's medical community, one student at a time. ♦



*Students beam with laughter while bonding with legacy donor Dr Ong Eng Kang*



*A cheeky pose, symbolising a brief pause of fun amid the medical school hustle*