



Representatives from YLLSoM, SMA and SMACF with the YLLSoM student beneficiaries for Academic Year 2014/2015

# SMA Charity Fund: Going from Strength to Strength

By Jennifer Lee, Deputy Manager, SMA Charity Fund

## SMA's history of doing good

In the early days, SMA's charitable activities were carried out under the auspices of its Social Concerns Committee. The Committee was set up in 2006 and chaired by A/Prof Tan Sze Wee. Some of the Association's earlier altruistic programmes included the Singapore Medical Association Rainbow-of-Hope Doctors' Pledge 2006 – where SMA members were encouraged to set aside a part or all of their own earnings on a specific day as a one-time pledge to Club Rainbow, and the donations raised were used to fund its various support functions.

The Committee also set up the SMA Medical Students' Assistance Fund (SMA-MSAF) in October 2007 to help medical students from challenging financial backgrounds with their basic living expenses. This was done in collaboration with the National University of Singapore (NUS) Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (YLLSoM), with support from the NUS Development Office. At that time, the Fund aimed to support two students per class year, up to ten students for the entire cohort. Each recipient received \$3,600 for a year and the sum was disbursed in full to the students. A total of around \$680,000 was raised through the donations from medical professionals and well-wishers by the end of 2008. That

## *SMA Charity Fund Vision*

***A compassionate profession  
that impacts healthcare***

year, proceeds from two other activities, the SMA Charity Golf Tournament 2008 and sale of SMA Christmas cards, also contributed to SMA-MSAF. In 2012, SMA News kick-started new columns, and one of them was the "From the Heart" section which promotes a variety of volunteerism and humanitarian projects for doctors to participate in.

## **Birth of SMA Charity Fund (SMACF)**

SMACF was established in 2013 by SMA to address the rising costs of medical education and the changing healthcare landscape, to benefit both doctors and patients. Since our inception, we have, in small ways, strived to create impact on healthcare through our various charitable activities.

SMA-MSAF, which now comes under the umbrella of SMACF, continues to support medical students from challenging financial backgrounds. Our financial support is extended to deserving students from all three local medical schools.

Beyond just providing financial assistance, SMACF also: advocates volunteerism to inculcate the value of altruism and build a compassionate medical profession; supports the learning exposure of the underprivileged medical students by their pursuit of medical knowledge, through attending conferences or doing electives; and recognises the mentors who have contributed their time and efforts to medical students.

### **Institution of a Public Character (IPC) status**

SMACF is registered with the Commissioner of Charities, and was first granted IPC status in December 2013.

Charities with IPC status are able to issue tax deductible receipts to donors for qualifying donations. Tax deduction is given for donations made in the preceding year. For example, if you make an approved charitable donation in 2014, you will get a tax deduction in your tax bill for Year of Assessment (YA) 2015. From YA 2010 to YA 2016, you will get a once-off tax deduction of 2.5 times the donation value (information extracted from the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore's website).

## *SMA Charity Fund Mission Statement*

### **Strengthen medical professionalism to benefit the community**

Donors are more likely to be attracted to donate to charities with IPC status, as such charities are held to a high level of operating and accountability standard, especially in the areas of regulatory compliance and governance.

With that said, SMACF has successfully renewed our IPC status, when it expired in December 2014, for another two years – from 27 December 2014 till 26 December 2016. We will continue to exercise good stewardship for the monetary gifts we receive. More information on SMACF, with regard to IPC compliance and governance, can be found on the Charity Portal at <http://www.charities.gov.sg>. ■

#### **How you can pledge your support!**

- Online donations: visit <http://www.sgives.org/smacf>.
- Cheque or credit card donations: download our donation form from <http://www.sma.org.sg/smacares>.

*"I know how SMACF's work matters for medical students who may not be poor enough to qualify for full financial support, and yet are having problems to make ends meet."*

*– Anonymous doctor (long-term donor to SMACF in support of the SMA-MSAF)*

*"I am grateful to be given the opportunity to attend the conference. It allows me to gain a better insight on the various medical missions. I am inspired by all the passionate individuals who are dedicated in community service, despite their hectic work schedule. This inspired me to do the same in the future."*

*– Tham Kar Mun, M5, YLLSoM (attended the inaugural International Conference on Humanitarian Medical Missions last year with SMACF's support)*

*"I would like to thank SMACF for awarding me this bursary. Even though I come from a middle-income family, the associated expenses for my medical education are still daunting for my parents and me. The support from SMACF gives me a greater peace of mind as I know I have less to worry about. I look forward to contributing back to the healthcare landscape in my capacity as a student and after I graduate."*

*– Russell John Chuah Xue Ciang, M1, Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine*

*"Volunteering at the Public Health Screening (PHS) made me realise how privileged I am to be in a position where I can make significant contributions to my community. Society has given healthcare professionals great trust by empowering us to serve and care for numerous individuals around us. The knowledge that every effort we put into our work can benefit the health of others, motivated my committee as we strived to integrate individuals into the healthcare system. We are truly thankful for the opportunities that SMA and SMACF has given to PHS over the years. Their unyielding support has made it possible for us to step forward and address the needs of our community year after year."*

*– Jonathan See, M3, NUS YLLSoM, Public Health Screening 2014 Project Director*