

## **List of Microsoft YouthSpark Scholarship 2015 Award Recipients**

**Name:** Ang Chin Hao

**Age/Gender:** 21/Male

**Nature of Disability:** Vision impairment (Macular Dystrophy)

**Course of Study:** Bachelor of Engineering (Computer Engineering) (Year 1) at Nanyang Technological University



Ang Chin Hao was born with macular dystrophy, a rare genetic eye disorder that causes vision loss. His vision started blurring when he was in secondary school and was eventually diagnosed with the condition in 2012. Although Chin Hao is unable to see clearly, he commutes on his own and values this independence.

Despite his deteriorating vision, Chin Hao is not afraid to try out new things and it was with such attitude that drew him to wushu and table tennis. Chin Hao joined the wushu and table-tennis clubs when he was studying at Pei Hwa Secondary School (PHSS) and was quickly propelled to the role of vice-captain of the school table-tennis team, leading it to several inter-school table-tennis competitions.

Even though Chin Hao was active in co-curricular activities, he was equally dedicated to his studies and was an Edusave scholarship recipient in Secondary One and Two. However, Chin Hao's condition took a turn for the worse when he was in Secondary Three, affecting his studies and morale in the last two years of secondary school. Not wanting to let his parents down, he strived on with their encouragement.

With perseverance and hard work, Chin Hao secured a place in Engineering Informatics at Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP). In his first year at NYP, he struggled to keep up with his studies due to his deteriorating vision. As he had difficulties reading from the projector screen during lectures, Chin Hao would print out his lecture notes and read them up beforehand in order to keep up in class. His efforts paid off and he was placed on the Director's List from the second semester onwards to graduation for his excellent grades.

As a person with disability, Chin Hao understands better than anyone else the importance of encouragement and support. He decided to participate in community projects to help others. He raised funds for underprivileged patients at Tan Tock Seng Hospital through his four years in secondary school, and also delivered food to the poor and disadvantaged under the *Food from the Heart Charity Drive* when he was in Secondary Four.

Chin Hao is currently a first-year computer engineering student at the Nanyang Technological University.

His sheer determination and resilience in the face of adversity won over the Microsoft YouthSpark Scholarship review panel which awarded the scholarship to him for the second time. Chin Hao was a recipient of the Microsoft YouthSpark Scholarship in 2013 when he was in his second year of study at NYP.

Chin Hao aspires to be his own boss in the IT industry after graduation. He also hopes to help and encourage other individuals diagnosed with macular dystrophy like himself to never give up.

The 21-year-old lives with his parents and two older siblings in Sengkang.

**Name:** Mohamed Najulah

**Age/Gender:** 19/Male

**Nature of Disability:** Osteogenesis Imperfecta (Brittle Bones Disease)

**Course of Study:** Diploma in Business Information Technology (Year 2) at Singapore Polytechnic



Mohamed Najulah was born with Osteogenesis Imperfecta, commonly known as brittle bones disease.

Najulah was a determined and hardworking student at Queensway Secondary School. He was consistently a top student and a recipient of numerous awards, such as the Edusave Scholarship Award from Secondary One to Three. For his general good conduct and many academic achievements, Najulah was also awarded the Star Pupil Award in Secondary One and the Alumni Award in Secondary Three. In addition, Najulah was highly active in co-curricular activities, particularly in the Library Council where he was a member from Secondary One to Four. As council member, he helped in the running of library programmes and ensured that the library was in order and conducive for studying.

After completing his GCE 'N' level examinations in 2012, Najulah enrolled in the Polytechnic Foundation Programme and graduated with flying colours. He was awarded the Courageous Award for his determination in overcoming adversity to excel in the programme.

With an interest in software development, Najulah decided to pursue a Diploma in Business Information Technology at Singapore Polytechnic (SP) in 2014. In the first year, Najulah encountered difficulties getting around his school, especially in lecture halls where seats are only accessible via stairs. He had to rely on his friends to help him get to his seat. Najulah was also required to attend swimming lessons as part of a sports elective module for Year One students. Determined not to let his disability affect him, he worked hard at swimming and managed to complete a 400-metre endurance swim.

Najulah joined a special interest IT group where like-minded students and industry professionals came together to talk about the emerging challenges in technology. Najulah took part in two hackathon events – the BattleHack, and the Transport and You(th) Hackathon, in which his team won the People's Choice Award for developing an app that allowed users to upload and share convenient travelling paths for wheelchair-users.

Well-liked by both his peers and lecturers, Najulah was made deputy class representative in his first year at SP. His consistently good grades kept him in the top five per cent of his cohort and he was subsequently awarded the Director's Honour Roll for his stellar academic performance.

Currently a second-year student at SP, Najulah wants to be a software developer in the future in order to develop technological applications to help persons with disabilities.

The 19-year-old lives with his mother, brother and grandparents in Clementi.

**Name:** Er Xue Hui

**Age/Gender:** 20/Female

**Nature of Disability:** Severe hearing impairment in both ears

**Course of Study:** Bachelor of Computing in Computer Science (Year 1) at National University of Singapore (NUS)



Er Xue Hui was four when she was diagnosed with hearing impairment. It was after the feedback from her kindergarten that she was not responsive to questions that her parents brought her to an ENT (Ear, Nose & Throat) specialist. A battery of tests later confirmed their suspicion.

Xue Hui attended Canossian School for her primary education and went on to complete her secondary school education at Crescent Girls' School. It was while attending Crescent Girls' School and St. Andrew's Junior College that Xue Hui, who relied on hearing aids, started having difficulties concentrating in class as the classroom environment was noisier. She would have to put in more time and effort to understand what was taught in class. She spent hours researching on the Internet and consulted her teachers and friends if she could not comprehend certain concepts. None of these efforts were in vain. Xue Hui scored distinctions in six of her seven GCE 'A' level subjects.

Xue Hui did more than just keeping up her grades in school. She took up leadership roles and was active in co-curricular activities. She managed the class funds responsibly when she was class treasurer for two years in junior college (JC). She was awarded the Edusave Character Award when she was in JC 1 for demonstrating exemplary character. As assistant chief photographer in the Photographic Society Club in JC 1, she taught basic photography to her peers and juniors. She has an eye for photography which won her the first prize in the school's photojournalism competition in JC 2. Xue Hui also represented her school in computer science competitions such as the National Olympiad for Informatics which was organised by the National University of Singapore and the Australian Informatics Competition. Through these competitions, she gained experience and exposure to competitive programming, sparking her interest in cyber security.

Xue Hui believes in giving back to the society and participated in many community activities, including a Service Learning Day project called "Hope 2 Earth" where she helped to collect old newspapers in Hougang for recycling and shared water-saving tips with residents to encourage them to save water. When she was in Secondary 2 and 3, Xue Hui went on trips to Cambodia to help set up access to education for Cambodians who were deaf.

Currently a first-year Bachelor of Computing and Computer Science student minoring in Mathematics, Xue Hui hopes to eventually specialise in the study of algorithms and security.

The 20-year-old lives with her parents and an older sibling in Tanjong Rhu.

**Name:** Then An Zhi

**Age/Gender:** 22/Male

**Nature of Disability:** Hearing Impairment

**Course of Study:** Bachelor of Engineering (Computer Science) (Year 1) at Nanyang Technological University



Then An Zhi was born with hearing impairment and he wears a hearing aid in his left ear.

With a keen interest in information technology that was sparked by computer studies in Secondary Three, An Zhi decided to pursue a Diploma in Information Technology at Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) after graduating from Serangoon Secondary School in 2009. It was not an easy transition for An Zhi as he had difficulties understanding his lecturers, and hearing clearly in class and during conversations due to his profound hearing loss. While a hearing aid would have most likely helped him overcome the problem, his financial situation at that time did not allow him to own one. Resolved, An Zhi took up a part-time job and saved up enough to buy a hearing aid. He also sought help from his classmates when he was unclear about what was taught.

An Zhi overcame the initial hurdles to top his cohort in his three years at NYP and also made it to the Director's List throughout his NYP studies from 2010 to 2013. Not only did An Zhi excel academically, he was also outstanding in his co-curricular activities. He was a student leader at his school's IT club and was in the organising committees for many events including the freshmen orientation programmes. He also participated in the club's community service activities where he helped to recruit volunteers and dancers for the performances. In 2013, An Zhi was awarded the Outstanding Deaf Student Award by the Singapore Association for the Deaf (SADeaf) for his stellar academic performance and involvement in co-curricular activities.

An Zhi believes that to overcome the toughest challenges, one needs to put his mind on a goal and to push himself to achieve it. Therefore, he would often challenge himself by participating in marathons and dragon boat races. An Zhi is an active runner and has participated in many running events.

Currently a first-year computer science student at the Nanyang Technological University, An Zhi aspires to master the different programming languages and algorithms so as to create more technologies to cater to the needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly.

The 22-year-old lives with his parents in Bendemeer.

**Name:** Daryl Loh Kai Heng

**Age/Gender:** 18/Male

**Nature of Disability:** Asperger's Syndrome

**Course of Study:** Diploma in Infocomm Security Management (Year 1) at Singapore Polytechnic



Daryl Loh was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome at the age of six.

He was an all-rounder at Pathlight Secondary School. He was conscientious in his studies and achieved his goals through hard work. Daryl was a recipient of several academic awards, including the Outstanding Award for Mathematics, Science, Geography, and History when he was in Secondary Two, and for Mathematics and Additional Mathematics when he was in Secondary Five. He even took part in competitions such as the World Math Day 2012 and 2013, and in Algo-logic Challenge organised by Temasek Polytechnic in 2013.

Daryl served as a student counsellor from 2010 to 2014 at Pathlight School where he was tasked to manage the AVA system for the morning assembly and had to ensure that everything was in order. He was also the class monitor when he was in Secondary Four and Five. His willingness to extend a helping hand won him the class' Most Contributive Student Award from Secondary Three to Five.

As a member of the school's running club, Daryl took part in various running events for the community that included the Yellow Ribbon Prison Run in 2001 and 2013, and the 100 Plus Passion Run in 2011. He also participated actively in community events such as the Very Special Walk fundraising event from 2010 to 2014 and Milk Fund's Share A Meal event in 2014, and organised activities for the elderly at Sunlove Home in 2013.

Daryl graduated from Pathlight School in 2014 with outstanding GCE 'O' level results. Currently a first-year infocomm security management student at the Singapore Polytechnic, Daryl aspires to be a cyber-defender to help defend Singapore from online terrorists.

The 18-year-old lives with his mother and sister in Bukit Panjang.