



SM Scholars General Assembly in 2019

SM Foundation welcomes more than 300 new college scholars

“Education is the greatest equalizer.” This is a belief held by Henry Sy, Sr.

The late founder of the SM group deemed that if he could help send one child to school, that child could then help their siblings to also finish their schooling. And eventually, together, they could help uplift their family out of poverty.

As the group’s social good arm, SM Foundation, Inc. (SMFI) hence anchored its scholarship program to the belief of its founder.

SMFI offers scholarship grants to poor yet deserving students as a way to contribute in eradicating the intergenerational cycle of poverty in the Philippines. This year, SMFI has welcomed new scholars from across the country to sustain this vision.

The more than 300 new college scholars of SMFI were officially welcomed in The Online Awarding of the SM College Scholarship themed “Rise to Greatness”, broadcasted live on SMFI’s Facebook page and YouTube Channel last Aug. 27.

Of these more than 300 scholars, 60% come from provinces nationwide, while 40% are from Metro Manila. SMFI currently has over 1,300 college scholars in total.

The virtual event imparted inspiring stories from the new SM scholars, an alumnus of SM’s scholarship program, and messages from some officials of SMFI.

“We do this every beginning of the school calendar. But do you think we get tired? Not a bit. Because while the program agenda remains almost constant, the many stories behind each scholar applicant’s journey from application to being chosen as scholar take different forms, surface from diverse situations and locations, resulting to varied emotions,” Carmen Linda Atayde, SMFI’s executive director for education programs, said in her welcome remarks.

The new SM college scholars were also oriented about the program’s benefits and how to maintain their scholarship grants.

Their benefits include free tuition and miscellaneous fees; a monthly allowance of P2,000 for scholars studying in the provinces and P3,000 for those studying in Metro Manila; fun-filled and enrichment activities like Christmas party and recollection;



New SM scholar Diorella Songcuya



New SM scholar Joyson Abucay

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Exclusive Job Offers with the SM group

SMFI SAVP for education program Eleanor Lansang presented the benefits of the program to the new SM scholars.

an opportunity to work at SM during Christmas and summer break; and exclusive job offers with the SM group upon graduation.

The field of studies covered by SMFI’s college scholarship program include Computer Science, Information Technology, Engineering (Civil, Electrical, Mechanical, Computer, and Electronics), Education (Elementary and Secondary); Accountancy, and Financial Management.

“I hope that all of the benefits presented to you this morning will be enough motivation for you to really excel in your college journey,” Eleanor Lansang, SMFI senior assistant vice-president for education programs, told the scholars during the event.

STORIES OF ‘RISING TO GREATNESS’

“Since I was a child, I already know the importance of good education and character,” Joyson Abucay, one of the new college scholars of SMFI said. During his 12th grade, he knew that his parents could not financially support him

on their own. Thus, he researched about scholarships available for students like him. Then he found SM College Scholarship online.

“Applying for scholarships and colleges were challenging and I sacrificed a lot,” he said. “In the end, it was all worth it. Now, I am studying Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English [at Saint Louis University].”

In the future, Mr. Abucay sees himself working as an employee of SM.

“I believe that SM College Scholarship will not just help me finish my college education, but also help me become a productive citizen as well,” he said. Another student who received an SM college scholarship grant is Diorella Songcuya, who is now studying Bachelor of Science in Accountancy at the University of the Philippines Visayas (Iloilo).

Ms. Songcuya first knew about the SM scholarship back in her years in junior high school. She saw a tarpaulin on her school fence acknowledging two graduates who passed the SM Scholarship.

“I was amazed by them passing the said scholarship and hoped that someday I could also qualify and be like them,” she recounted. A teacher also told her to stay updated about the scholarship program and try to apply. “She really specified that I try applying for the SM scholarship. So, that’s what I did.”

When her 12th grade began, she tried to search for Facebook pages and groups posting updates about scholarships. She also joined a group chat in telegram that sends links in relation to different scholarship offers.

“But of course, the update I mostly wanted to receive at the time was about the SM Scholarship since I heard that it offers great benefits for students,” she said.

Upon seeing her Facebook friends sharing the application for SM Scholarship, she did not hesitate and immediately applied for it.

Ms. Songcuya believes that the SM college scholarship “substantially benefits” her and her family in numerous ways.

Aside from providing assistance in reducing their financial

obligations, she said the benefits from the scholarship, such as the allowance, would help in her scholastic needs. She also saw that the opportunity given to them scholars to work at SM Stores during Christmas and summer breaks would not only enable them to earn income and save but also be a means to sharpen their skills and prime themselves in a work environment setup. Meanwhile, access to events like Christmas parties and reunions offered exclusively to them by SMFI would allow them to develop their socialization skills and even extend their networks.

“Through the SM scholarship, my vision of achieving my dreams becomes clearer and more possible. As the theme of this year’s SM Scholarship Awarding goes, ‘Rise to Greatness’, I believe that this scholarship will serve as a ladder for me as I strive for success and rise to greatness.”

Since the establishment of its scholarship program in 1993, SM Foundation has supported and produced more than 8,000 college and tech-voc scholar-graduates.