

Scholars' Choice 2022: Part 3

Striking a balance in sports and medicine

Besides pursuing her calling as a doctor, NUS Sports Scholarship recipient Ashley Lee is also determined to make her mark as a competitive badminton player

TEXT BY CHELSIA TAN

Ms Ashley Lee's interest in medicine was piqued when she found herself at the A&E department after having dislocated her elbow while skateboarding. Seeing how doctors worked in an emergency setting made an indelible impression on her.
PHOTO: WINSTON CHUANG

MS ASHLEY LEE
recipient of the NUS Sports Scholarship

I aspire to become a surgeon and work in hospitals where I can help people of all backgrounds and income levels.

When she was 16 years old, aspiring doctor Ashley Lee attended a seminar for pre-medical students that would set her on the path to medicine. There, the go-getter was inspired to approach one of the speakers, an orthopaedic surgeon from Tan Tock Seng Hospital, for an attachment to shadow him for a week.

"It was an eye-opening experience to attend clinic sessions and see surgeries first-hand," says Ms Lee. "As I watched the doctors interact with patients, it became clear to me that this was what I wanted to do as a career," she says.

Ms Lee did not always grow up wanting to be a doctor. However, her interest was piqued when she found herself at the A&E department after having dislocated her elbow while skateboarding. Then only 12, she saw how doctors worked in an emergency setting – an experience that made an indelible impression.

Despite the accident, she continued to stay active.

As a competitive badminton player since she was 10, not only did she become captain of the badminton team at Raffles Institution (JC), she was also the vice-captain of the ASEAN School Games' badminton team. Ms Lee's outstanding achievements in the sport,

coupled with her excellent academic results, led her to apply for the NUS Sports Scholarship.

The scholarship covers her school and hostel fees, allowing her to focus on striking a balance in sports and medicine while providing the assurance that she can pursue the five-year course without burdening her parents financially.

VOLUNTEERING IN COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE PROJECTS

Now a first-year student at National University of Singapore's (NUS) Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, the 19-year-old has been actively pursuing her calling by volunteering in community healthcare projects, which include befriending sessions for palliative care patients, now conducted online due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

She is also looking forward to her upcoming patient-based and caregiver attachment programmes, which will allow her to observe the healthcare system in action and interact with patients.

"I am passionate about becoming a good doctor who can help my patients in times of need," she says. "I aspire to become a surgeon and work in hospitals where I can help people of all backgrounds and income levels."

As a sports scholarship recipient, Ms Lee is excited about the training

and enrichment opportunities available, not to mention a semester-long exchange programme.

"I hope to meet others who are part of this scholarship programme and connect with people who play different sports and come from other backgrounds," she says.

While many focus mainly on their studies at university, Ms Lee still continues to train competitively for NUS's intervarsity and hall teams, and has even picked up ultimate frisbee, squash and floorball along the way.

"Because I love badminton so much, it is something I still want to pursue at a competitive level," she says. "Badminton has been a huge part of my life and taught me much about character building. Over the years, it has imbued in me the grit, resilience and perseverance that have helped me overcome many challenges in my life."

Despite Covid-19 disrupting her training and tournaments, she refuses to put her sporting goals on hold. She is now focusing on badminton training with the aim to qualify for the World University Games, a multi-sport tournament that will be held in China next year.

Visit nus.edu.sg/oam/scholarships/freshmen-singapore-citizens/nus-sports-scholarship for more information.