

TAKING HEART

Rajah & Tann donates S\$650,000 to support legal education, children with developmental needs

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TO MARK its 50th anniversary, law firm Rajah & Tann donated a total of S\$650,000 to support legal education and children with developmental needs.

The National University of Singapore (NUS) and Singapore Management University (SMU) will each receive S\$250,000 for the Rajah & Tann Patrick Ang Memorial Scholarship at NUS and the Rajah & Tann Scholarship at SMU.

Rebecca Chew, chairperson of Rajah & Tann Foundation, said: "Legal education is fundamental to the future of the profession. The scholarships are intended to support deserving students and help ensure that financial circumstances do not prevent talented young people from pursuing a legal education."

"We hope that universities will also groom lawyers who are concerned about the community as well."

The NUS scholarship honours late managing partner Patrick Ang, an NUS Law alumnus from the Class of 1989.

For the other part of its gift to children with developmental needs, Rajah & Tann Foundation has committed S\$150,000 to the non-profit Fei Yue Community Services' Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children (Eipic).

In an interview with *The Business Times*, Chew said: "Supporting children and youth is also one of the core pillars of the Rajah & Tann Foundation. (It) has consistently supported programmes that contribute to their education, development and well-being – particularly those who may require additional assistance."

Through Eipic, beneficiaries build foundational motor skills and pick up practical skills for their daily lives; they are also provided with therapy services such as speech, occupational and physio-

therapy. Rajah & Tann Foundation and Fei Yue started their five-year partnership in 2023, with the law firm sponsoring the non-profit's large annual events serving hundreds of beneficiaries and their families.

So far, it has supported a sustainability carnival, sports day event and an outing at Mandai Wildlife Reserve's Curiosity Cove, a large indoor playground.

Dozens of the law firm's staff volunteer for these events, spending the day helping with operations or interacting with beneficiaries and their families.

"I think they come out understanding the needs of the community better," said Chew, adding that these experiences also build empathy and compassion.

Using legal expertise to give back

Earlier this year, Rajah & Tann launched a two-year collaboration called "Totally Legal: Empowering

Non-profits" in partnership with Pro Bono SG, the charity arm of Law Society Singapore, and philanthropic organisation The Majurity Trust.

Totally Legal comprises four half-day sessions at which Rajah & Tann and its partners run legal workshops and provide practical and accessible guidance to non-profit agencies.

Chew said: "This programme aims to support charities and non-profit organisations by equipping them with practical legal knowledge to navigate the issues they encounter in their day-to-day operations."

Totally Legal also includes breakout sessions to facilitate discussions on selected topics, ranging from contract essentials and confidentiality to memoranda of understanding and managing disputes.

"For non-profits, access to legal knowledge can be an important part of building organisational resilience. These organisations must



The law firm has sponsored an outing for children at Mandai Wildlife Reserve's Curiosity Cove, with its own lawyers volunteering at the event.
PHOTO: RAJAH & TANN FOUNDATION

manage staff, volunteers, donors, beneficiaries, contracts, confidential information and governance responsibilities, often while operating with limited resources."

She noted that the feedback received from charities has so far been positive.

"We had dialogues with the non-profits to understand their challenges, and gave them legal solutions," Chew said. "They need to be aware of the legal risks when dealing with counterparties."

For this initiative, the law firm roped in about 10 of its own lawyers as volunteers to run the workshops, as well as in-house corporate lawyers.

She added: "The long-term aim is capability-building. We want to

help non-profits identify legal risks earlier, strengthen their internal practices and approach legal issues with greater confidence."

More broadly, Totally Legal helps to democratise access to legal knowledge and contribute to a stronger, more sustainable social sector – moving beyond one-off assistance for charities to lasting relationships, she said.

Rajah & Tann Foundation was set up in 2011, initially for charitable giving, but it has since come to focus on three key pillars. Besides donations, it provides pro bono legal services – for example, conducting community legal clinics for individuals, social enterprises, charities and non-profits – and engages in community outreach.