SMU students, staff star in charity calendar

Chosen for their special talents, the ‘models’ have so far raised $52,000 for the Children’s Cancer Foundation

Sarah Ng

THE Singapore Management University (SMU) has again shown its flair for public relations, this time with a stylish desktop calendar featuring 18 of its undergraduates, alumni, staff and even students’ parents.

The photographs – shot in black-and-white by celebrity lensman Russel Wong – is not only the latest showcase of the six-year-old institution’s “message”, but it has also raised $52,000 for the Children’s Cancer Foundation so far.

The “models” were chosen for their special talents and achievements. Among them are dancers, musicians, sportsmen and sportswomen, school leaders, entrepreneurs and a beauty queen.

According to SMU’s director of undergraduate admissions, Mr Alan Goh, the project is the university’s way of connecting with the public.

He told The Sunday Times: “Put together, the 18 stories of each individual featured represent what SMU is all about.”

The tagline on each photo highlights the kind of virtues SMU wants to promote, like “true grit”, “enterprise”, “free spirit” and “humility”.

This is not the first time the university has delivered a message with slick showmanship. In 2002, it ran an advertising campaign featuring students in eye-catching poses.

Said business management undergraduate Liew Chong Choon, 22: “It is the people that make this university special. We are glad to be part of a project that celebrates this.”

Mr Liew and his brother, 21-year-old science undergraduate Chong Heng, are featured in November 2007. Both have spinal muscular atrophy, a condition in which the muscles weaken and waste away.

The calendar also includes well-known alumni such as former Miss Singapore Universe runner-up Jade Seah, and Ms Lavinia Tan, the Asian host of the Globe Trekker series on the Discovery Travel and Living channel.

Ms Tan, 24, an advertising accounts executive, said: “This is one way of giving back to the school.”

The calendar covers the period from January 2007 to June 2008, to encompass the financial year and the SMU academic year. It is available for $15 at the website www.smu.edu.sg. All proceeds raised will go to the Children’s Cancer Foundation.

More than 85 per cent of the 4,000 copies printed have been sold so far.

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