

SMU PRO BONO CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



SMU

SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY

PRO BONO CENTRE



Yong Pung How
School of
Law

OUR PEOPLE



Director

Professor Chan Wing Cheong

Senior Assistant Manager

Ms Rebecca Teo

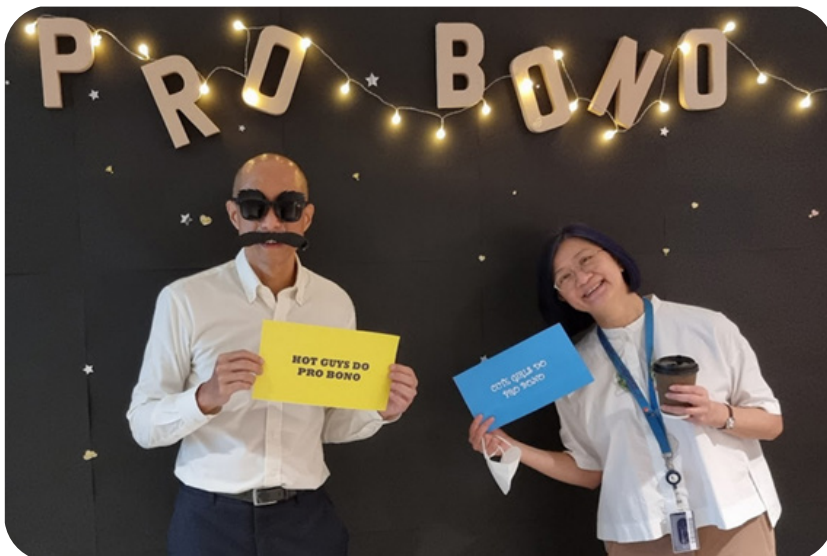
Deputy Director

Ms Ruby Lee

Executive

Mr Vincent Goh

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Pro Bono has an important place in the nurturing of our future lawyers. It should be an integral part of every SMU Law student's training now and being a lawyer in future. Through a wide range of programmes, the Pro Bono Centre aims to help our students gain a deeper understanding of the needs of our society and the less privileged, and cultivate in them a sense of service – of what it means to give without expecting anything in return.

I'm proud and heartened that SMU Law students have continued to contribute actively to the pro bono scene in 2022. Nearly 30 legal awareness talks have been conducted on a variety of topics such as LPA, Wills, Rights of the Intellectually Disabled, Protection and Guardianship of Children, Divorce, and Abortion to the general public. They have also helped out in LPA certification for clients of Cornerstone Community Services, assisted caregivers of SUN-DAC in applying for deputyship orders, helped parents of special needs children from SNTC draft Wills and make CPF nominations, supported litigants in person at the State Courts, and assisted volunteer lawyers at legal clinics.

Student-initiated pro bono projects have also flourished. The Pro Bono Centre Mediation Clinic, offered in collaboration with the SMU Mediation and Negotiation Club, successfully concluded a case with the parties signing an agreement in March 2022. Project Lighthouse, initiated by students to support lawyers who take on cases from CLAS, LASCO and LAB, also assisted 10 lawyers in 18 cases since August 2021.

Although the average number of pro bono hours completed by the Class of 2022 registered a slight drop to 42.6 hours, this was not unexpected owing to fewer pro bono opportunities due to the Covid-19 restrictions. However, this is still more than double the required 20 pro bono hours mandated by SILE. I wish to acknowledge 3 JD graduates and 28 LLB graduates who completed at least 50 and 80 pro bono hours respectively, for their dedication and contribution.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I would also like to congratulate students who are receiving awards this year. Sarah Teo (JD) and Meher Malhotra (LLB) completed the most number of pro bono hours in their respective cohorts and will be receiving the Spirit of Pro Bono Hero Award. Kit Pang and Neo Yu Fan stand out among their peers for initiating Project Lighthouse and encouraging their classmates to take part in pro bono. Kit will be receiving the Spirit of Pro Bono Leadership Award while Yu Fan will be receiving the Spirit of Pro Bono Endeavour Award.

Our volunteer lawyers play a big part in inspiring and being role models for our future lawyers. The Spirit of Pro Bono Bronze Award is given to Alvin Sia, Charlotte Tan, and Jolie Giouw for having volunteered at the SMU PBC Legal Clinic for 5 years or more. Richard Tan receives the Spirit of Pro Bono Pinnacle Award for volunteering at the SMU PBC Legal Clinic the most number of times in 4 consecutive years.

The Pro Bono Centre aims to help students find purpose in their law studies and in their future careers. To this end, we launched a video in August 2022 featuring the pro bono efforts of students, volunteer lawyers and placement partners to showcase how each of them has made a difference by helping the vulnerable gain access to legal services. A physical pro bono fair was also held for the first time this year for student clubs and partner organisations to tell students, particularly law freshmen, about pro bono opportunities.

What Amelia Lim (LLB Class of 2022) said in the video best sums up the pro bono spirit, "You don't have to wait till you become a lawyer to help someone". In other words, if you have the desire to help someone, don't wait! Thank you to all the students for participating in pro bono, and thank you to all our volunteer lawyers and placement partners for helping students make Amelia's statement come true.



The full video can be found at



SPOTLIGHT



SARAH TEO

SPIRIT OF PRO BONO HERO AWARD (JD)

I grew up in a working-class family with an absent father who was abusive when he was present. One of the reasons why my mother refused to divorce him was because she could not afford the legal fees to do so and did not even know where to begin if she wanted to represent herself in a divorce. I specifically chose to do all of my pro bono at OSLAS and community legal clinics because I wanted to help those who are in similar situations as I was growing up.

Pro bono can be tough and time-consuming but it is very rewarding because you can make a difference in someone's life. You may not change the entire world but you can change the world of one person.



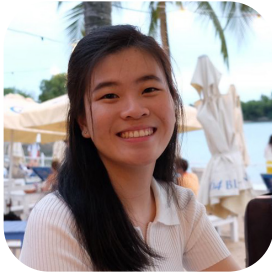
MEHER MALHOTRA

SPIRIT OF PRO BONO HERO AWARD (LLB)

My parents migrated to Singapore from India and only became Singaporeans recently. Throughout my life, I have witnessed their struggles to assimilate in a new country. This has helped me to understand the difficulties faced by migrant workers in Singapore. I am glad I had the chance to help foreign domestic workers during my time with Justice Without Borders on issues such as wrongful salary deductions, illegal deployment and abuse. I learnt how important it is to provide not just legal assistance but also emotional support when needed.

Pro Bono helped me to connect the dots between Law School and the outside world. Not only was it a fulfilling experience that added purpose to my legal education, it also helped me to appreciate the law and its power to help those in need.

SPOTLIGHT



KIT PANG

SPIRIT OF PRO BONO LEADERSHIP AWARD

Project Lighthouse was started by like-minded students with a heart to serve. I hope that more students will have the opportunity to assist lawyers taking on pro bono cases and help a greater number of people.

Doing good starts incrementally, semester by semester.



NEO YU FAN

SPIRIT OF PRO BONO ENDEAVOUR AWARD

I decided to initiate and co-lead Project Lighthouse because I wanted a meaningful summer, and beyond that, a meaningful experience in Law School. While browsing through the different pro bono opportunities available to students, I found that there was no opportunity for students to play a more involved role in pro bono work.

The question that came to me was, "If not me, then who, and if not now, then when?"

SPOTLIGHT



ALVIN SIA

SPIRIT OF PRO BONO BRONZE AWARD

I decided to start on my pro bono journey because I realised that there are many people in the community who are not familiar with the law or are “intimidated” by legalese and hence require assistance from a trained lawyer.

I have executed Wills and LPAs for very old or terminally ill patients who have subsequently passed on. This work left a lasting impression on me as it shows that life is fleeting. It also gave me a sense of satisfaction that I am able to assist them in their final day.

Being able to help someone is a privilege and brings a sense of satisfaction.



CHARLOTTE TAN

SPIRIT OF PRO BONO BRONZE AWARD

I entered Law School wanting to make a difference. I wanted to make the law more accessible to the people who needed protection. But as a corporate lawyer, I don't often deal with the areas of law that concern the man in the street, and it's easy to lose sight of the ideals I had as a student.

Pro Bono gives me the chance to give back. Through pro bono work, I've met troubled students, foreigners and elderly retirees – average people who just needed some legal guidance on the everyday issues they face. It's rewarding to be able to use my legal knowledge to help others.

As a lawyer, we can do something that others can't, so why not make it count?

SPOTLIGHT



JOLIE GIOUW

SPIRIT OF PRO BONO BRONZE AWARD

My family has always been supportive of my “extra-curricular” endeavours. My parents have always encouraged me to be involved with and give back to the community as much as I can, and my husband is also happy to help out at home to allow me to do what I find meaningful (notwithstanding a toddler and a new baby!).

It's a blessing to have the ability (whether in terms of skills, money or time) to make a difference in someone else's life no matter how small a difference it may be. I treasure every opportunity to do so.



RICHARD TAN

SPIRIT OF PRO BONO PINNACLE AWARD

I had been a volunteer in many organisations since school days and I started volunteering at the Law Society's legal clinics more than a decade ago. When SMU was looking for help to start its legal clinic, I volunteered as well.

As one of the fortunate minority who have benefitted from a legal education, I wanted to do something to help those who may not be able to pay for legal assistance. It is really a privilege to be able to help someone.

Doing pro bono work has helped me to realise the role that chance plays in life. It has also allowed me to make a difference in the lives of others.

WHAT PARTNER AGENCIES AND STUDENTS SAY

This was a very meaningful experience! I've learnt a lot, not just about Wills in general, but also about the practical realities of parents with special needs children. I look forward to embarking on more of such projects in the future!

SONIA LU, LLB CLASS OF 2024
Legal Awareness Talk on Wills

I got to see how the problems the beneficiaries face can be overwhelming. I'm really thankful to have an opportunity to provide support to them.

LAURA SIM, LLB CLASS OF 2024
Legal Awareness Talk on Wills

Law Society Pro Bono Services appreciates the SMU Law intern's efforts to help Mandarin speaking applicants receive guidance on their legal issues in their own language and hope that more multilingual students can step forward.

WENDY NG, VOLUNTEER MANAGER
Law Society Pro Bono Services

Thank you for helping our caregivers with today's iFAMS filing. We are grateful that [SMU Law student] Wen Qing extended her help even when she is in the midst of preparing for her exams.

LENG YEN LI, SOCIAL WORKER
Cerebral Palsy Alliance Singapore, Project iFAMS

If there is a six-star rating, I would definitely rate CJC and the volunteers a six star. They constantly helped me when I was filling up the documents. Thanks to CJC and [SMU Law student] Nicole with much appreciation.

APPLICANT FOR DEPUTYSHIP ORDER
Community Justice Centre

SERVICE AWARD & CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION RECIPIENTS

Spirit of Pro Bono Hero Award – Class of 2022 (JD)

Teo Hui Yan, Sarah

Spirit of Pro Bono Hero Award – Class of 2022 (LLB)

Meher Malhotra

Spirit of Pro Bono Leadership Award

Pang Cheng Kit, Kit

Spirit of Pro Bono Endeavour Award

Neo Yu Fan

Spirit of Pro Bono Pinnacle Award

Richard Tan Ming Kirk

Spirit of Pro Bono Bronze Award

Alvin Sia

Charlotte Tan

Jolie Giouw

JD graduates from Class of 2022 who completed 50 or more approved pro bono hours

Bonnie Kay Song
Neo Yingwei, Alex

LLB graduates from Class of 2022 who completed 80 or more approved pro bono hours

Anmol Singh
Chan Yu Jie
Chia Kerxin
Darryl Hor Jun Heng
Fong Kay Siong, Jonathan
Grace Sim Yi Ning
Isabel Tia Hui Li
Jaiesh Jin Sachithananthan
Jill Phua
Lee Pei Yi, Jamey
Lieu Kah Yen
Lim Hong Wen, Amelia
Liu, Jiayi
Lo Kar Keong Darryl
Loh Kai Wen, Cleven
Matthew Soo Yee
Mo Fei
Ng Yi Ran
Ong Siew Choo
Phang Hong Cheong
Quek Jiaying, Elizabeth
Seth Yeo Ao-Wen
Theophilus Darius Thomas
Wee Li-N
Wong Min Hui
Zhang, Yuqian
Zicco Jonathan Foo

Lawyers who volunteered at the SMU PBC Legal Clinic in 2022

Alvin Ong+
Alvin Sia+
Anita Kaur Gill
Charlotte Tan+
Christian Teo+
Derek Tay+
Erik Widjaja
Genghis Koh
Heather Huey Yen Hoong
Jasper Chan+
Jolie Giouw+
Junie Loh+
Kong Zi Xie
Lim Yong Sheng, David+
Lim Yuan Jing
Matthew Teo+
Niranjanaa Ram
Richard Tan Ming Kirk
Ruby Lee
Tan Wei Liang+
Tay Tze Choong+
Violet Lee Chiu Mei
Zheng Pei+

REPORT OF THE SMU PRO BONO CENTRE LEGAL CLINIC

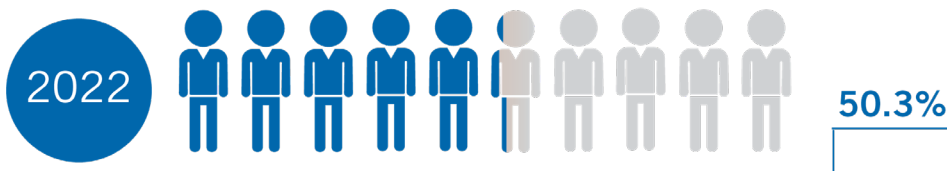
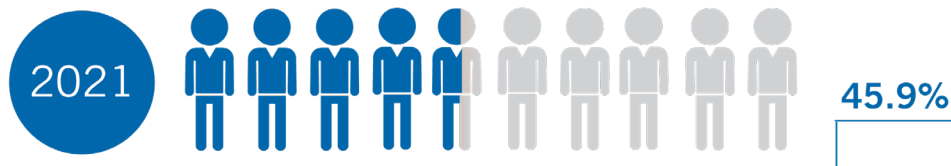
The legal clinic provided assistance to a total of 155 applicants from January to September 2022.

PROFILE OF THE APPLICANTS

SINGAPOREAN



AGE UNDER 40 YEARS-OLD



REPORT OF THE SMU PRO BONO CENTRE LEGAL CLINIC

PROFILE OF THE APPLICANTS

HAVE DIPLOMA EDUCATION & ABOVE



EARN LESS THAN \$4,000/MONTH



REPORT OF THE SMU PRO BONO CENTRE LEGAL CLINIC

LEGAL ISSUES PRESENTED AT THE SMU PRO BONO CENTRE LEGAL CLINIC



FAMILY

2021 **18.5%**

2022 **14.8%**



EMPLOYMENT

2021 **6.7%**

2022 **13.9%**



TENANCY

2021 **12.6%**

2022 **13.5%**



CRIMINAL

2021 **10.4%**

2022 **11.1%**

REPORT OF THE SMU PRO BONO CENTRE LEGAL CLINIC

APPLICANTS FOUND OUT ABOUT THE SMU PBC LEGAL CLINIC THROUGH



ONLINE RESOURCES

2021 **39.3%**

2022 **40.0%**



FAMILY & FRIENDS

2021 **23.1%**

2022 **24.8%**



LAW SOCIETY PRO BONO SERVICES

2021 **9.4%**

2022 **8.3%**

SATISFACTION WITH THE SMU PBC LEGAL CLINIC IN 2022



MORE THAN 8 IN 10 APPLICANTS WERE 'VERY SATISFIED' OR 'QUITE SATISFIED' WITH

- The legal clinic staff's helpfulness and efficiency
- Venue and operating hours of the legal clinic
- Length of session and helpfulness of the volunteer lawyer



MORE THAN 9 IN 10 APPLICANTS WOULD

- Return to the legal clinic if they had new legal issues
- Recommend the legal clinic to others

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish thank the following volunteer lawyers, partners and stakeholders for supporting the SMU Pro Bono Centre:

Ada Chua
Adrian Tan
Ahmad Nizam Abbas
Aikjoo Tay
Allen Sng
Alicia Lim
Ang Wei Yun
Asoka Markandu
Audrey Tan
Avis Yeo
Azrina Abdul Azim
Benjamin Mui
Benny Tan
Bestlyn Loo
Bhavani Sriram
Chan Hian Young
Cheah Su-Ann
Chen Shi Ling
Cheryl Ng
Chew Siew Kheng
Chong Cheh Hoon
Chong Fu Shan
Christine Goh
Chua Siew Geok
Chua Xue Li
Damien Chng
Danial Hakim
Daniel Law
David Quark
Denny Lin
Diana TQ Chua
Douglas MacLean
Eleanor Wong
Ellis See
Emily Teo
Emma Chen
Ervin Tan
Esther Tan
Faizal Shah
Francis Wong
Geethanjali Chandra
Gerald Tan
Gloria Lim
Goh Wheeki
Greg Tan
Ho Soh Li
Ignatius Chia
Ijechi Nazirah
Irina Nechifor
Isalyn Chew
Jason Foo
Jazreel Tay
Jocelyn Tan
Joel Chia
Joel Tay
Justice Tan Siong Thye
K Prasad
Kanak Muchhal
Kathleen Chong

Kelvin Lim
Kwok Kaylee
Kwok-Chern Yew Tee
Lee Ji En
Lee Shao Xun
Lee Soo Kwan
Leng Yan Lee
Leonard Lee
Leonie Lee
Li Jiabao
Liaw Hin Hao
Lim Hui Min
Lim Lei Theng
Lim Tanguy
Lim Weixing
Lin Huiyu
Loo Ching Fan
Loo Liang Zhi
Marianne Tan
Melinda Louis
Melisa Wong
Mervyn Cheong
Mr and Mrs Anjang
Ng Bin Hong
Ng Huey Min, Amanda
Ng Pei Xin
Ng Xiao Yan
Nicole Chua
Ong Lay Hoon
Pandiyani Vellasami
Pauline Tan
Peggy Yee
Phyllis Teng
Priscilla Chia

Quek You Zhen
Rachel Chan
Rachel Tan Xi'En
Rajan Menon
Ranald Or
Raymond Wong
Regina Chang
Richard Siew
Rina Kalpanath Singh
Roderick Ng
Serene Pok
Shahira Banu
Sham Sabnani
Shaun Wong
Soek Ying and Barry Koh
Soh Zu Xian
Song Yihang
Sonita Jeyapathy
Tan Chong Huat
Tan Hsuan Heng
Tan Mei Choo
Tanya Pillay
Timothy Seet
Too Xing Ji

Tracy Wang Jiamin
Tris Xavier
Vanathi Ray
Vanessa Ang
Vickneswary Jeraman
Wendy Koh
Wendy Ng
Yang Eu Jin
Yvonne Cheah

Agency for Integrated Care
Alzheimer's Disease Association
Babes Pregnancy Crisis Support Ltd
Braddell Heights Community Legal Clinic
Catholic Lawyers Guild Legal Clinic
Cerebral Palsy Alliance Singapore
Chong Pang CC Legal Clinic
Church of Christ the King Legal Clinic
Community Justice & Tribunals Division
Community Justice Centre
Cornerstone Community Services
Daughters of Tomorrow
Dementia Association
Frontier CC Legal Clinic
HCSA - SPIN
Irene Tan Foundation
JP Morgan
Jurong Spring Legal Clinic
Justice Without Borders
Kebun Baru Link RC Legal Clinic
Kembangan-Chai Chee Community Legal Clinic
KK Women's and Children's Hospital
Law Society Pro Bono Services
Legal Aid Bureau
MINDS
Ministry of Law
Ministry of Manpower
Ministry of Social and Family Development
Office of Public Guardian
Mustard Tree
NTUC LawWorks
NUS Centre for Pro Bono and Clinical Legal Education
Potter's Place Community Services Society Legal Clinic
RHTLaw Asia LLP
SG Assist
Singapore Council of Women's Organisations
Singapore Institute of Legal Education
Singapore International Arbitration Centre
SNTC
St. Margaret's Ex-Students Association
SUN-DAC
Supreme Court
Singapore University of Social Sciences
TRANS FOCUS Centre
Vamos Photography LLP
Vanguard Healthcare Pte Ltd



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