

SMU PRO BONO CENTRE ANNUAL REPORT 2024



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I take great pride in announcing the excellent pro bono contributions by law students at SMU's Yong Pung How School of Law. The Class of 2024 collectively contributed 9,125 pro bono hours, 18 percent more than last year. This works out to more than 48 pro bono hours per student, far more than the 20 hours that is required of them. Furthermore, 6 JD and 29 LLB students contributed more than 50 and 80 pro bono hours respectively.

When I asked Natalia Beadle, winner of the Amellia Moo Spirit of Pro Bono Hero (LLB) Award, about what motivated her to contribute over 300 pro bono hours during the course of her undergraduate studies, she said, "I enjoyed it. I found great meaning in doing pro bono – to be able to use skills and knowledge I have learnt to help others". The same spirit of giving is shared by Dorcas Chang, winner of the Amellia Moo Spirit of Pro Bono Hero (JD) Award. She said, "I jumped at the opportunity to volunteer with Justice Without Borders (an international non-profit organisation offering legal aid to migrant domestic workers) even though I might miss out on legal internships during the summer holidays".

At the SMU Pro Bono Centre, we continue to look for innovative and impactful ways for students to help the community; we also provide meaningful opportunities for them to discover the value and context of the law that they study. This is only possible with the support of our many valued community partners. Through pro bono, students discover for themselves why they chose to study law in the first place.

I am heartened that the strong pro bono spirit continues even after our students leave SMU. Chen Lixin, an SMU Law alumnus from the Class of 2019, is conferred the Spirit of Pro Bono Champion Award for participating the greatest number of times at the PBC Legal Clinic this year. Despite her demanding commercial practice, she dedicates time to guide those facing legal challenges and serves as an exemplary role model for our students.

I would also like to thank Richard Tan. He is no stranger to pro bono, having been awarded the Spirit of Pro Bono Pinnacle Award in 2022 for volunteering at the PBC Legal Clinic the greatest number of times for four consecutive years. This is the 10th year that he is volunteering with us; in recognition of his service, he is awarded the Spirit of Pro Bono Silver Award. We definitely need more volunteer lawyers like him.

Finally, I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to Mr and Mrs Moo Chern Hwa, the parents of Ms Amellia Moo, for their generous contribution to the SMU Pro Bono Centre in loving memory of their daughter. Their support will significantly benefit various pro bono initiatives. It is with gratitude that we have renamed the awards for the JD and LLB students the Amellia Moo Spirit of Pro Bono Hero award.

As the saying goes, "We rise by lifting others". Your collective dedication exemplifies this. To our volunteer lawyers, community partners, and students, thank you for your unwavering commitment and tireless efforts in facilitating access to justice for those less fortunate. Your hard work not only uplifts individuals but strengthens our entire community. It inspires all of us to continue to strive for a more fair and compassionate society.



Prof Chan Wing Cheong
Director, SMU Pro Bono Centre

MEET THE TEAM



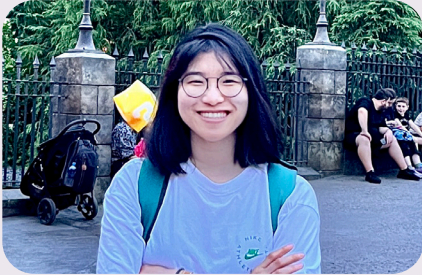
Mr Vincent Goh
Manager

Ms Ruby Lee
Deputy Director

Prof Chan Wing Cheong
Director

Ms Lu Qingqing
Assistant Manager

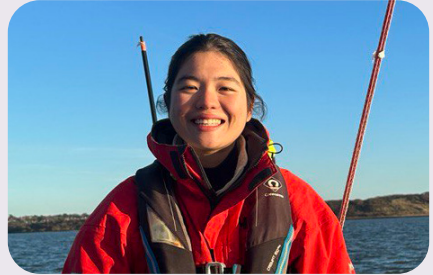
AWARD WINNERS



**CHANG PING @ DORCAS
CHANG**

**AMELLIA MOO SPIRIT OF PRO
BONO HERO (JD) AWARD**

Participating in pro bono made me realise that it takes a multi-faceted effort with the cooperation of many helping hands in order to transform society into a more equitable and just place for all. I aim to serve others willingly and joyfully. As the Chinese saying goes – 施比受更为有福 (it is more blessed to give than to receive).



NATALIA BEADLE

**AMELLIA MOO SPIRIT OF PRO
BONO HERO (LLB) AWARD**

I have a family member with intellectual disability. So participating in Project iFAMs where we help family members apply for deputyship orders for their loved ones was particularly meaningful for me. Through pro bono, I have come to realise that access to justice is not just for those who can afford it, but everyone who needs it.



CHEN LIXIN

**SPIRIT OF PRO BONO CHAMPION
AWARD**

Engaging in pro bono work as a volunteer lawyer was always something that I wanted to do after getting called to the Bar. I am pleased that I am able to continue the good work that the PBC Legal Clinic has been doing. As lawyers, we possess a special skill and owe it to ourselves to try pro bono work at least once!



RICHARD TAN MING KIRK

**SPIRIT OF PRO BONO SILVER
AWARD**

As someone who has benefited from a legal education, it is good 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 others.

WHAT PARTNER AGENCIES & STUDENTS SAY

On behalf of my Marymount residents and grassroots volunteers, I would like to convey my deepest appreciation to [the PBC team and SMU Law students] for the tremendous support in the LPA talk and certification You have made a positive impact in our community!

Gan Siow Huang

Minister of State for Education and Manpower

I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude for the efforts and dedication that the SMU students exhibited for our Child Maintenance Estimator project. They were enthusiastic, hardworking, eager to learn and overall, a pleasure to work with.

Lim Hui Min

Director, Legal Aid Bureau

I gained a lot of meaningful hands-on experience on how to handle applicant queries and apply technical knowledge to real life issues. I also really liked how I was exposed to a variety of different cases and areas of law.

Chen Xue Wen

JD Class of 2025 on OSLAS@State Court

I learned a lot about the importance of paying attention to detail in bankruptcy applications. Although my role did not involve communicating with the applicant, I felt that my role in note taking was no less important because it freed up the volunteer lawyer's time to focus on understanding the clients' needs.

Lee Taksawat

JD Class of 2024 on OSLAS@Supreme Court

Doing pro bono in SMU has given me a glimpse of how the law can positively impact others. Working alongside lawyers who are passionate about making a difference has inspired me to continue giving back even after graduating.

Ezra Lim Pin

LLB Class of 2024 on Project Lighthouse

I was able to gain in depth understanding of family law related issues and the legal procedures.

Princess Gladia

LLB Class of 2026 on PBSG Community Legal Clinic

It was an excellent learning opportunity about the management of migrant workers and foreign domestic workers, and their interactions with the law in Singapore.

Wen Xianda

JD Class of 2024 on MOM Pro Bono placement

I learnt legal terms in Mandarin when preparing for the talk which may come in useful when I help others in the future.

Tan Shaw Eun, Shaun

JD Class of 2026 on LPA talk and certification for SG Assist

The pro bono placement allowed me to discover how my knowledge of the law could be of assistance to those in need.

Soon Ke En Dora

LLB Class of 2025 on University Court Friends – Family Justice Courts

SERVICE AWARD & CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION RECIPIENTS

Amellia Moo Spirit of Pro Bono Hero Award – Class of 2024 (JD)

Chang Ping @ Dorcas Chang

Amellia Moo Spirit of Pro Bono Hero Award – Class of 2024 (LLB)

Natalia Beadle

Spirit of Pro Bono Champion Award

Chen Lixin*

Spirit of Pro Bono Silver Award

Richard Tan Ming Kirk

JD graduates from Class of 2024 who completed 50 or more approved pro bono hours

Chen, Yeh Chen
Guo Xinyi, Cindy
Koh Jie Min
Lee Jiayi
Wen Xianda

LLB graduates from Class of 2024 who completed 80 or more approved pro bono hours

Andre Chia Shaw Jin
Ava Leong En Yi
Bill Puah Ee Jie
Celeste Loi Yeen
Chang Ze-Yi, Ryan
Divya Shanaz Kolandai
Estelle Chan Jie Min
Ezra Lim Pin
Hor Wen Qin
Ivan Tang Wu Hwan
Keith Low
Lai Yi Qian
Lee Han Le, Marcus
Lim Ray Jen Esther
Lim Wei Tze
Ling, Jiating
Linus Koh Kok Chuen
Nam Chng Hou, Erik
Neo Yu Fan
Pang Cheng Kit, Kit
Quek Lin Yuan
Rachael Chan Zi Qing
Regan Ang Way Lynn
Sim Hsin Hui Laura
Tan Shi Hui
Vinessa Martin Budithi
Winnie Lim Wen Ying
Zheng Junxi

Lawyers who volunteered at the SMU PBC Legal Clinic in 2024

Brandon Ang Yi-Da*
Charlotte Tan Guan Ling*
Edwin Neo Xuan Hao*
Jasper Hayden Chan Mun Jun*
Jolie Giouw Rong Zhen*
Junie Loh*
Li Jiabao*
Lushna Neena Godhia*
Nguyen Sinh Vuong*
Ruby Lee Yen Kee
Violet Lee Chiu Mei
Zheng Pei*

* SMU Law Alumni

PROJECT WILL WRITING

- Assisted 21 families with their wills in 2023 and 14 families in 2024 (as at August 2024)
- Project conducted in collaboration with SNTC

THE LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT

- Students worked on 13 cases in 2023, and 15 cases in 2024 (as at August 2024)
- Project conducted in collaboration with volunteer lawyers

PROJECT IFAMS

- Assisted 6 families with their deputyship applications in 2023, and another 6 families in 2024 (as at August 2024)
- Project conducted in collaboration with SUN-DAC

SMU PBC MEDIATION CLINIC

THE RECOURSE INITIATIVE

- Students worked on 14 cases in 2023, and 3 cases in 2024 (as at August 2024)

LPA CERTIFICATION

- Certified 175 LPAs in 2023 and 79 LPAs in 2024 (as at August 2024)
- Collaborated with volunteer lawyers to provide certification
- Service provided to organisations such as SAd deaf, TRANS Family Services, Golden Ginger Active Ageing Centre, Bukit Batok East Community Club, Thomson Shunfu RC





LEGAL AWARENESS TALKS

- Conducted more than 60 talks from Jan 2023 to Aug 2024
- Topics include Lasting Power of Attorney, Wills and Probate, Consent, Abortion, Maintenance and The Criminal Process
- Reached out to more than 300 people in the community
- Talks are conducted in collaboration with organisations such as SNTC, SUN-DAC, Babes, SPIN, Care Corner, SG Assist and Golden Ginger

PROJECT SPARK

PROJECT GLADIOLUS

- Conducted interactive legal talks on topics such as Cyberbullying, Employment Law, and Gang-related offences
- Introduced peer-mediation skills to the girls at Gladiolus Place.

SMU PBC LEGAL CLINIC

- Helped 159 applicants in 2023 and 81 in 2024 (as at August 2024)
- 14 volunteer lawyers and 103 students assisted in the clinic in 2024
- Issues commonly raised involve family, employment, tenancy, wills and criminal matters

SMU PBC HELPDESK

PROJECT AGEING

- Collaborated with a doctor, a judge and caregivers
- Completed 6 videos on the legal issues relating to mental incapacity
- Videos can be found on PBC's website and SMU's YouTube channel

PRO BONO IN THE COMMUNITY



Video conferencing consultations with volunteer lawyers at the PBC Legal Clinic



LPA talk at Thomson Shunfu RC



OPG Pre-Planning Campaign to raise awareness of LPA and ACP



LPA talk at Bukit Batok East Community Club



Talk to migrant workers at TWC2

PRO BONO IN THE COMMUNITY



Talk on Advance Care Plan at Xin Yuan Community Care



LPA Certification at The Singapore Association For The Deaf



Project Gladious – peer mediation training at a residential refuge for teenage girls



Pro Bono Week 2024



HIGHLIGHTS

PROJECT AGEING



A new video, Youth Volunteers on Ageing-related Legal Issues, was completed where student volunteers in Project Ageing came together one last time to reflect on what they have learnt. This video will be uploaded on SMU's Youtube channel as well as PBC's website.

THE LIGHTHOUSE PROJECT

PP v Cheah Bernice

[2024] SGDC 220

47 I commend parties for their industry and diligence, in particular Mr Asoka, who took on this case as a criminal legal aid scheme matter. While I may not have agreed with all of his submissions, he has discharged his duties competently and with distinction. I also acknowledge the contributions and efforts of Singapore Management University's Project Lighthouse, from whom I understand Mr Asoka has derived much assistance for his case.



Members of Project Lighthouse recently assisted in a Criminal Legal Aid Scheme (CLAS) case under the guidance of a volunteer lawyer. The simple "plead guilty" matter turned out to be an unforgettable learning experience. The team had to review new developments and come up with convincing arguments in their mitigation plea. District Judge Paul Quan recognised the students' efforts in his judgment (PP v Cheah Bernice [2024] SGDC 220 at [47]).

PRO BONO ACTIVITIES

TOTAL APPROVED PRO BONO HOURS



AVERAGE APPROVED PRO BONO HOURS PER STUDENT



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

Aileen Chua Siew Ling
Aidan Goh Guo Yao
Alvin Ong Chee Keong
Anita Kaur Gill
Brandon Ang Yi-Da
Chen Lixin
Chooi Jing Yen
Elycia Lu Yanrong
Erik Widjaja
Giouw Rong Zhen Jolie
Grace Ang Ger Ean
Jason Chua Dong Wei
Jasper Hayden Chan Mun Jun
Khong Zi-Xie
Kwong Yan Ying Eugenia
Lee Chiu Mei Violet
Li Jiabao
Liew Dominic Junior
Lim Yong Sheng
Lin Yun-Yi@Abby Lin
Loh Yu Wei, Junie
Lushna Neena Godhia
Marissa Daisy Decruz
Neo Xuan Hao, Edwin
Nguyen Sinh Vuong
Sia Dewi, Alvin
Sim Puay Jain Edwin
Soon Peck Khim Tess
Tan E-Fang
Tan Guan Ling Charlotte
Tan Jia Le
Tan Ming Kirk Richard
Tan Wei Liang
Tay Tze Choong
Teo Hee Ann Matthew
Teo Hee Sheng Christian
Tien Shin-Yi, Christina
Toh Wei Ming Nicholas
Wang Tianyi
Yong Li Yuan
Yong Zhixin Esther
Zheng Pei

Ada Chua
Adrian Tan
Ahmad Nizam Abbas
Aikjoo Tay
Aishwarya Palti
Allen Sng
Alvin Cheng
Amelia Lim
Ang Wei Yun
Angeline Yeoh
Asoka Markandu
Audrey Tan
Avis Yeo
Barry Koh
Benjamin Mui
Benjamin Szeto
Bruce Lasky
Cai Chengying
Cathryn Neo
Cham Bei Qing
Cheah Su-Ann
Cheng Xuanhao
Cheong Jun Jie
Cheryl Ng
Chew Di Shun, Dickson
Chia Lyn Lynn
Chow Choy Yin
Chua Siew Geok
Chua Xue Li
Claudine Tan
Clement Cheong
Colin Tan
Danial Hakim
Daniel Law
Darren Chan
David Lam
David Quark
Deborah Fernandez
Devi
Diana Chua
Dong Yuantian
Dorcas Quek
Dr Bhavani Sriram
Dr Chen Shi Ling
Eduardo Ramos-Gomez
Eileen Chua
Eleanor Wong
Emilyn Teo

Emma Chen
Esther Tan
Foo Chee Chang
Frank Wong
Gerald Tan
Geraldine Kuah
Goh Kheng Huang
Goh Lay Yen
Goh Qian Hui
Greg Tan
Gregory Vijayendran
Ho Soh Li
Huang Peiling
Huang Zhihao
Ignatius Chia
Ijechi Nazirah
Irina Nechifor
Jaryl Lim
Jazreel Tay
Jessie Tan
Jo Olivia Lee
Jocelyn Tan
Joel Chia Jia Xuan
Joel Tay
Justice Tan Siong Thye
Kaamela Barvin
Kao Peixin Jamie
Kelvin Lim
Kenny Chng
Kimberly Chua
Kirsten Ong
Koh Soek Ying
Kwok Kaylee
Kwok-Chern Yew Tee
Lee Eng Hong
Leng Yen Li
Lenny Azuree Binte Ismail
Leonard Foster
Leonard Lee
Liaw Hin Hao
Lim Hui Min
Lim Lei Theng
Lim Sze Ling
Lim Tanguy
Lim Weixing
Lim Yien
Lin Huiyu
Lionel Tay

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

Liu Guoyi
Low Seow Ling
Lynette Seah
Lynn Ong
Marianne Tan
Marshall Lim
Matthew Chua Shi Jie
Melisa Wong
Meredith Soh
Mervyn Cheong
Michael Chen
Mr & Mrs Moo Chern Hwa
Ng Li-yen
Ng Wei Chern
Ng Xiao Yan
Nicole Chua
Nur Aqilah Shukor
Nur Athilah Iman
Ong Lay Hoon
Ong Lin Yee
Pamelia Chen
Patsy Ang
Paulin Straughan
Phua Shi Lin
Phyllis Cheng
Quek You Zhen
Rachel Chan
Rachel Tan
Rajan Menon
Ranald Or
Regina Chang
Richard Siaw
Roderick Ng
Sam Wu
Sara Lim
Sarah Phang
Sham Sabnani
Shaun Lee
Shawn Callen Chua
Sindy Lim
Siti Maisarah
Siti Yariyati Mohamed
Soh Zu Xian
Sonita Jeyapathy
Suganya
Syafiqah Zailani
Tan Chong Huat
Tan Kok Choon

Tan Shi Hua
Tan Zhixin
Tan Zi Yang
Toh Ding Jun
Tricia Tok
Vineetha Gunasekaran
Wendy Koh
Wendy Morrish
Wong Khai Leng
Wong Kok Weng
Wong Li Tein
Yang Eu Jin
Yap Xuan Wei
Yusuf Hamid
Yvonne Cheah

Anglo-Chinese School
(Independent)
Anita & Asoka LLC
Aurora Law
Babes Pregnancy Crisis
Support Ltd
Bird & Bird ATMD
Braddell Heights Community
Legal Clinic
CareElderly@Golden Ginger
Care Corner Singapore Ltd
Cerebral Palsy Alliance
Singapore
Chong Pang CC Legal Clinic
Church of Christ the King
Legal Clinic
Citibank
Community Justice Centre
Cornerstone Community
Services
Dunman High School
EMRE Legal LLC
Eunoia Junior College
Frontier CC Legal Clinics
Gladiolus Place
Hwa Chong Institution
HCSA - Single Parents
Informed, Involved, Included
It's Raining Raincoats
Jalan Kayu Legal Clinic
JP Morgan
Jurong Spring Legal Clinic

Justice Without Borders
Kebun Baru Link RC Legal
Clinic
Kembangan-Chai Chee
Community Legal Clinic
Legal Aid Bureau
MINDS
Ministry of Manpower
Ministry of Social and Family
Development
(Office of Public Guardian)
Mustard Tree
National Junior College
NTUC LawWorks
NUS Centre for Pro Bono and
Clinical Legal Education
Potter's Place Community
Services Society Legal Clinic
Potter's Place Community
Services Society Legal Clinic
Pro Bono SG
Public Service Division
Raffles Institution
Seng Pang Tua Peng Kong
Keng Legal Clinic
SG Assist
Singapore Council of
Women's Organisations
Society of Starfish Singapore
Special Needs Trust Company
Ltd
Stroke Support Station
SUN-DAC
Singapore University of Social
Sciences
Temasek Polytechnic
The Singapore Association for
The Deaf
TRANS Family Services
Voices@SMU
Xin Yuan Community Care



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