

More Than Just Giving

Supporting Tomorrow's Doctors Today

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Since the inception of the SMA Charity Fund (SMACF) in 2013, we have been blessed by the support of many loyal donors who unflinchingly give to our cause without fanfare or publicity.

To these loyal supporters, donating is so much more than just giving. It is a calling to support medical students who aspire to serve in the profession but are in need of a helping hand to tide them through their financial challenges, especially amid this turbulent economic environment.

Not all heroes wear capes, and as the saying goes, we share with you two unique fundraising initiatives by doctors who shared their passion for food through their creative ideas.

How To Eat

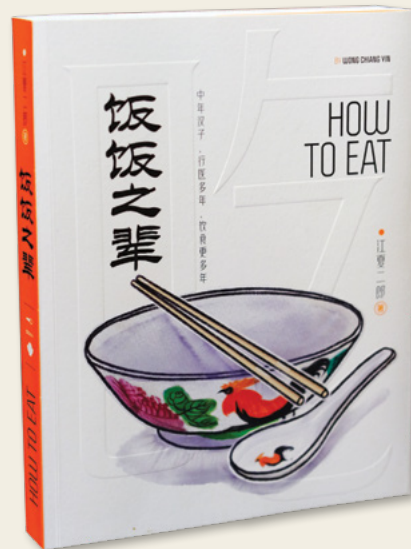
"The quintessential food guide for serious foodies" is how I would describe this wonderful book by SMACF Board Member Dr Wong Chiang Yin, a Singapore born and bred Cantonese boy – as he describes himself in the book.

On what inspired him to celebrate the launch of the book by raising funds for SMACF through book sales, Dr Wong shared that "the SMACF is something very close to my heart. It was during my stint as President of SMA that I felt SMA should get into the charity sector, mainly by looking after our own medical students who may find it difficult to cope with living expenses."

Why pick SMACF as a beneficiary? Dr Wong shared a bit of his own personal experience: "I was a recipient of financial assistance from the Lee Foundation when my father passed away in my second year of medical school. The Foundation paid half my tuition fees from Year 3 to 5 and I am always grateful to them for this."

Through this initiative, Dr Wong hopes to inspire medical students to look out for and give generously to those in need among us, especially when they become doctors themselves.

Dr Wong shared that the most enjoyable part of the initiative was "when you see the strong support your friends and colleagues show you by ordering the book. The book's first print of 3,000 copies sold out in about two months and it is now into its second print."



Finally, Dr Wong appeals to readers: "The SMACF needs to raise at least \$250,000 a year to keep things going, so please continue to support SMACF by giving generously and/or buying *How to Eat*."

Dr Wong has a final piece of advice for us foodies. "Never get fat on bad food!"

The way to a man's heart is through his stomach, and our next story certainly seems to shed some light into this age-old adage.

A very special bowl of wonton noodles

"The project was a curious coincidence between two events," quipped Dr Khoo Bee Sim, doctor, chef and architect of this amazing fundraiser.

Dr Khoo elaborated: "The first was the launch of Dr Wong Chiang Yin's book, within which he described how he sought advice on how to cook barbequed pork, or char siu. The second was a candid conversation between a couple of close friends over some bowls of home-cooked char siu noodles; that conversation, where we jokingly suggested that we'd open a noodle shop, planted the seed of the idea that eventually became the project."

On the campaign and its subsequent reaction, Dr Khoo shared that "it was a means of raising good money, through the honest endeavour of cooking food for people who love to eat. And the reaction was fantastic! I don't think we felt burdened to adhere to a particular vision or theme – we just wanted to cook noodles and raise money. Thanks to a host of very active Facebook friends, I was a little overwhelmed by the amount of orders, but I think 650 bowls later, I can comfortably say we accomplished what we set out to do."

Dr Khoo had this to say about choosing SMACF as a beneficiary: "I think on a personal level the SMACF was the natural place to start as a beneficiary. My husband is a part of SMA and has been so for many years. I also have friends in the SMA. So to me, I understood their values and



the good work they've put in for the medical community, and I've always felt a close personal connection to those involved in it. Given these pandemic times, medical school students face the dual pressure of studying for themselves and being put into a system where they become frontline defenders of our healthcare system. There is nothing more heart-breaking than a willing medical student whose only barrier to achieving personal success is the lingering background stresses of having to work part-time just to pay his/her way through medical school. And so we thought – if we could make a difference for that one student, that would be time well spent."

On the most enjoyable part of the campaign, Dr Khoo quipped: "I think there were two parts. On an external front, this project was a quirky way to reconnect with friends I hadn't spoken to in a long while. I was humbled and touched by the friends who made their way from all over Singapore to pick up the food, as well as helped deliver to other friends and coordinate orders. However, as a mother of two growing boys, my favourite part of the process was spending time with them. Now that they are in or completing university, I realised I never found a good time to teach them how to cook their favourite dishes. I'm just grateful that we got this moment to look back on, years down the road when they've all grown up, graduated and forged their own paths."

In conclusion, Dr Khoo had this advice to share with all readers: "Try to give your best at whatever you do, even if it's just a bowl of wonton noodles."



Scan the QR code below or visit <https://bit.ly/SMACFAppeal2021> to donate today.



Being part of the cause

Every year since our inception, we receive a deluge of applications from medical students seeking financial assistance in order to tide them through their years in medical school. Their stories are heartfelt and their pleas desperate. We at SMACF seek to fulfil every appeal from these students but as in all things financial, we are limited by the funds we can raise.

We have been supporting needy medical students for the last eight years and many of them have graduated and contributed significantly by living up to the ethos of curing sometimes, healing often and comforting always. You can support us by initiating fundraisers such as those by Dr Wong and Dr Khoo or by donating to our SMACF Fundraising Appeal 2021 campaign. ♦