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● Photos JACQUELINE HO and Contributed by PA Scholars

Finding Joy in Connecting Communities

Social harmony is integral and intrinsic to a diverse society. As part of the People's Association, Scholars **Jin Xuan** and **Khalisah Binte Shari** are keen to build and bridge communities and to cater to Singaporeans from all walks of life.



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I realised that what PA does really resonates with my passion in community development.”

Khalisah

The People's Association (PA) was first established over 60 years ago to help build the nation. It continues to strive towards its goal of “one people, one Singapore” by bridging the various communities together through grassroots efforts and initiatives. This noble mission to cultivate social harmony and togetherness is shared by Jin Xuan and Khalisah Binte Shari, who have both undertaken the PA Undergraduate Scholarship in preparation for future careers with PA.

Khalisah's interest in community development started when she first began volunteering as an ad-hoc volunteer. Her passion for community development grew gradually as she experienced the joy of helping others.

“I began to realise that community development is something that I am very passionate about and hence, I decided to pursue a career in it,” she said.

Conversely, Jin Xuan was inspired by the joy of receiving help. With her family being new citizens, she recalls how they benefitted greatly from the grassroots efforts of community building and their integration into the community. She was fortunate enough to observe these efforts through the grassroots leaders around her firsthand, which encouraged her to be like them and to pay it forward by giving back to the community.

“As new citizens, I have witnessed great dedication and passion from the grassroots leaders around me, which inspired me to be like them one day. Therefore, pursuing a community-oriented career is my way of giving back to the community that has given me so much,” Jin Xuan shared.

A PASSION FOR COMMUNITY WORK

Despite there being career options with several other social organisations in Singapore, both Khalisah and Jin Xuan opted to join PA.

One reason for Khalisah's choice was that she felt that PA could offer more than other organisations in the social sector in terms of its sheer scale of community development projects. She was also passionate about contributing to its mission of building and bridging communities in Singapore.

In addition, her volunteer work as well as a previous internship with North East Community Development Council (CDC), meant that she already had an understanding of PA as an organisation. “I realised that PA resonates with my passion in community development,” Khalisah added.

Likewise, Jin Xuan had prior experience



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Jin Xuan

with PA through her previous internship with the Aljunied Group Constituency Director Office, where she was exposed to some of its operational processes. Like Khalisah, she too believes that PA best suits her. “The alignment

SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION



PROFILE

Khalisah Binte Shari

Khalisah Binte Shari is the recipient of the PA Undergraduate Scholarship (Local). She is currently studying a Bachelor of Science in Data Science and Economics with NUS.

Jin Xuan

Jin Xuan is the recipient of the PA Undergraduate Scholarship (Overseas). She is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Politics and International Relations at University College London.

individual both within and outside of work and it is incredibly empowering to be in a work environment that nurtures and values your success,” she said.

Having acquired valuable lessons and experiences from their education, both students intend to apply their knowledge to their future PA careers. Khalisah aims to apply her data science and economics knowledge to improving policies, as well as utilise the social skills she honed throughout her education. As for Jin Xuan, her studies on public policy have led her to consider how to better engage communities through both physical and virtual spaces.

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE FUTURE

Both Khalisah and Jin Xuan are already looking forward to their future careers and have their sights set on achieving their respective goals.

Khalisah intends to work at a Constituency Office as she believes it is a good learning experience. She also hopes to further build her social skills and work on nation-wide community development projects that make a positive impact on society.

Jin Xuan expresses excitement at the prospect of working with people from different walks of life. “I think the most interesting aspect of PA's work is meeting people from all kinds of backgrounds. Thus, I will savour every moment and experience throughout this journey with an open mind,” she quipped.

POSSIBILITIES AT PA

When asked about what they enjoy most about working at PA, Khalisah is quick to highlight the opportunities for professional development.

“Even as interns, my friends and I were given the opportunity to participate in a social media marketing programme. I think it's safe to say that PA always does their best to ensure that their staff are of a high level of knowledge and skills,” she said.

Similarly, Jin Xuan added, “The possibilities are endless! From immersing oneself in grassroots work to creating outputs at a strategic level, there are so many opportunities to grow and learn.”