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MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Outstanding young S'poreans



Ms Zhang Tingjun and Dr Juliana Chan (inset) are finalists in the Junior Chamber International Singapore's Ten Outstanding Young People awards. PHOTOS: ALEXANDRA TOH, JULIANA CHAN

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SINGAPORE – When she first started the *Asian Scientist* magazine in 2011, Dr Juliana Chan wanted it to “give a voice to Asian science and scientists”.

“A lot of the publications are Western-centric and I wanted to help these equally good Asian scientists make their mark,” said Dr Chan, a research fellow at the Agency for Science, Technology and Research.

It was a one-man — or one-woman — show at the start, the 29-year-old quipped. Dr Chan, who is due to start her own laboratory at Nanyang Technological University's Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine in November, recalled having to “code the entire website” herself, while persuading her friends in research to contribute articles. “This website is just my way of making my passion for science more accessible to the general public,” she added.

Dr Chan's work paid off last month when the World Scientific Publishing Company, Singapore's largest science and technology publisher, invested a high six-figure sum into her company, *Asian Scientist Publishing*, which produces the magazine.

Dr Chan is among 16 promising Singaporeans who emerged as finalists in the Junior Chamber International Singapore's Ten Outstanding Young People awards, which aims to recognise young professionals between the ages of 18 and 40 who create positive change in their respective fields.

Past recipients of the award include Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong (1975), Environment and Water Resources Minister Vivian Balakrishnan (1985) and paralympic swimmer Yip Pin Xiu (2011).

Other finalists this year include paralympian Laurentia Tan, crimi-



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Ms Zhang Tingjun
DIRECTOR AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE CHAIN REACTION PROJECT

nal lawyer Josephus Tan and entrepreneur Brans Ong.

For 30-year-old Zhang Tingjun, another finalist at this year's awards, it was also passion that led her to start The Chain Reaction Project (TCRP) in 2009. The non-profit organisation uses adventure as a platform to raise awareness for various causes around the region.

“It was the perfect opportunity to marry my passion for adventure and sports with my passion for people. And this was the first time I could really see the overlap (of my passions)” she said.

This marriage, however, was certainly not a bed of roses, as the adventure and sport junkie would testify. Ms Zhang and her co-founder never drew a salary for the first two years of TCRP's operations, and the former broadcast journalist took up emceeing to keep her going.

There were other challenges too. “We've had money that we raised be directed to a charity that was later accused of fraud,” she recalled.

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This was where her experience as a former national netball player, competing at international events such as the Commonwealth Games, the World Championships and the Asian Games proved useful.

“If you have what it takes to last through some of those crazy adventures, you have what it takes to be an effective catalyst for change because it takes the same thing,” said Ms Zhang.

To date, close to 400 participants have joined TCRP on its adventures, raising a total of some S\$400,000 for its adopted charities that has benefited more than 30,000 people.