



MEDIA RELEASE
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COMING OF AGE: 14 YEARS AND GOING STRONG
The Business Times Budding Artists Fund Celebrates its 14th Anniversary

- The Business Times Budding Artists Fund celebrates the achievements of children and youths engaged in its programmes.
- The Business Times Budding Artists Fund pilots the Apprenticeship programme that will provide the development of skills for future employment in creative industries.
- United Overseas Bank donates SGD\$500,000 in support of BT BAF's programmes.

SINGAPORE, May 10, 2019 – Life would have turned out differently for David¹, 20, if he had quit school two years ago. In his growing up years, David was brought up in a troubled family split by divorce. Uninterested with his studies, he would often mix with the wrong crowd outside school.

Fortunately, through his school's intervention, David was referred into a youth arts programme, 10 Square Youth. For the first time in many years, David found a sense of belonging and a renewed interest in learning.

He joined a music collective, Harmonix, at 10 Square Youth where he developed a passion for singing and also received mentorship in his studies. 10 Square Youth is a youth arts training programme supported by The Business Times Budding Artists Fund (BT BAF), managed by The RICE Company Limited (TRCL), a not-for-profit organisation with IPC status which seeks to provide equal access to the arts for all. Today, David is enrolled in the music programme at LASALLE College of the Arts.

Says Ms Aminah Hussien, Head, Arts and Community, TRCL, "It is not an easy journey for these children and youth to get into arts institutions such as SOTA, NAFA and LASALLE Collage of the Arts. They train hard and participate in many performances or exhibitions to gain real-life presentation experiences to advance their skills. The Fund helps build their portfolios and assists them in their application into these institutions. We are truly heartened to see many of them pursue their life aspirations."

¹ Name changed to protect identity

Zamani 15, has been part of Sugar Rush Crew since 2015. The group recently participated and emerged as one of the top five dance groups in a national reality television dance competition. Says Zamani, "The Fund has supported me to nurture my interest for dance. The experiences that I have had for the past four years gave me the confidence and motivation to push my creative boundaries. I want to continue to grow and learn the different dance techniques and styles to reach my ultimate potential."

To date, 16 different arts collectives such as Harmonix (music), Sugar Rush Crew (dance), Young Actors Anonymous (theatre) and Mini Monet (visual arts) were formed by the BT BAF beneficiaries. These collectives have since performed at various public events and participated in competitions as well.

The Fund turns 14 this year and announced the introduction of a pilot programme – the Apprenticeship, under which beneficiaries will be trained and given opportunities to work.

Elaborates Ms Hussien, "It is a natural progression of BT BAF's training and will offer our beneficiaries plausible job opportunities using the skills and talents they have been equipped with as part of their learning journey with the Fund. This Apprenticeship provides an employment roadmap for our beneficiaries who want to pursue the arts as a sustainable career."

One of the first participants of the Apprenticeship is Melati, 15. A beneficiary of BT BAF since 2012, Melati is keen to become a visual arts instructor in future. As part of the Apprenticeship, she will receive on-the-job training from her instructors to conduct lessons for children in an underserved community in Batam.

BT BAF has supported Melati's training in visual arts through programmes including Mini Monet, which is sponsored by United Overseas Bank (UOB).

At the closing of the celebration, BT BAF received a \$500,000 donation from UOB. The cheque was presented by Ms Janice Leong, Head of Corporate Wealth Management, Group Commercial Banking, UOB to Mr Helmi Yusof, co-organising chairman of ChildAid.

Ms Janice Leong, Head of Corporate Wealth Management, Group Commercial Banking, UOB, said, "At UOB, we believe that art, children and education are three areas that play an important role in contributing to the growth and vibrancy of a community. Art opens the minds of the young to new ideas and experiences which in turn, encourages them to explore their creative abilities. We are delighted that through our support of The Business Times Budding Artists Fund, more young people, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds, will be able to pursue their passion for art and to rise to their potential."

UOB's donation of \$500,000 to BT BAF will be made through ChildAid, an annual children's charity concert held in aid of The Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund and BT BAF.

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About The Business Times Budding Artists Fund

Initiated in 2004 and adopted by The Business Times in 2005, The Business Times Budding Artists Fund (BT BAF) originated from a conviction that no child with the strong interest and potential in the arts should be denied the opportunity to develop his or her talents due to a lack of financial resources. Since 2005, BT BAF has reached out to more than 18,000 financially-disadvantaged children and youth, between the ages of six to 19 years old, through a variety of programmes including a structured arts training programme, arts camps, workshops and signature events. BT BAF supports arts training centres, The Little Arts Academy and 10 Square @ Orchard Central, and is managed by The RICE Company Limited. For more information, visit www.baf.sg.

About The RICE Company Limited

The RICE Company Limited (TRCL) is a not-for-profit organisation and registered charity with IPC (Institutions of Public Character) status. TRCL seeks to harness the potential of the arts to benefit under-served children and youths in the community. TRCL manages The Business Times Budding Artists Fund, arts training centres (The Little Arts Academy and 10 Square Youth) in three locations across Singapore, creative spaces (The Pavilion at Far East Square and Temenggong 18/20) and two subsidiaries (Global Cultural Alliance Ltd and Millet Holdings Pte Ltd). For more information, visit www.therice.sg