

OUR JOURNEY

 MEGAWORLD FOUNDATION, INC.



OUR JOURNEY



“Life is a series of journeys. Each one of us follows a particular path, and when we pursue it with purpose and passion, it leads to golden opportunities for **growth, transformation and success.**”

DR. ANDREW L. TAN
Chairman Emeritus and Philanthropist

MEGAWORLD FOUNDATION

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OUR JOURNEY

MEGAWORLD FOUNDATION

Chairman Emeritus’ Message

DR. ANDREW L. TAN

Life is a series of journeys. Each one of us follows a particular path, and when we pursue it with purpose and passion, it leads to golden opportunities for growth, transformation and success.

In this first-ever yearbook of Megaworld Foundation entitled *Our Journey*, 28 Megaworld scholars share their stories in their own words—where they came from, the challenges they persevered through, and how the Foundation became part of their journey. A good education put them on the right track, and these pages are a testament to their milestones, big and small.

The aspiration to lead a better life, coupled with hard work and an unwavering sense of dedication, are a common thread that weaves the narratives in this book together. Our scholars have faced adversity and navigated difficult times, and it is inspiring to see how they never lost sight of their dreams. We at the Foundation are very proud of them.

Personally, I resonate with the stories here because I was also a student from a humble background. I remember walking six kilometers a day to and from the University of the East in Manila, and juggling several jobs with my studies. Back then, as a Business Administration student, my ambition was to open a grocery store. This was a goal inspired by my classmates, whose families ran their own hardware stores or textile shops. I knew that studying hard would prepare me for an entrepreneurial career.

My education truly helped pave the way for my success. Today, I may not own a grocery store, but I have various businesses under the Alliance Global Group that I’m very passionate about. This is why I strongly advocate for a good education among the youth. I believe it is the key to lead people out of poverty. Through the scholarship grants of Megaworld Foundation, deserving individuals such as our scholars can move toward a bright future.

As the businesses under Alliance Global steadily grow and expand, we continue to open our doors to our graduate scholars. We look forward to them joining and strengthening our ranks, just as we are excited to be part of the next stage of their journey.





Chairman's Message

KEVIN ANDREW L. TAN

Driven by a lifelong passion for education, our Chairman Emeritus Dr. Andrew L. Tan underscores its pivotal role in fostering innovation and excellence, which are at the heart of Megaworld's core values as a company.

Within the pages of this inaugural yearbook, titled *Our Journey*, we embark on a celebration of the remarkable stories of 28 Megaworld scholars. Through their own heartfelt narratives, these scholars share their humble beginnings, the challenges they conquered, and how Megaworld Foundation became an indispensable part of their path to success.

As we immerse ourselves in the pages of this book, let these inspiring tales of resilience, determination, and unwavering spirit serve as a reminder of the profound impact and transformative power of education.

Moreover, may this book deepen our understanding and appreciation of Megaworld Foundation's mission to empower individuals and uplift lives, paving the way for a future teeming with promise and possibilities.

I enjoin everyone in upholding Dr. Tan's guiding principle: that education is not merely a destination but a lifelong journey. Through continuous learning, we cultivate minds, foster innovation, and drive both individual and organizational success.

May the stories encapsulated within this book serve as a testament to Megaworld's commitment to uplifting lives, impacting society and helping build the nation, while inspiring future generations to recognize and embrace the invaluable significance of education and lifelong learning.



President's Message

DR. FRANCISCO C. CANUTO

In this journey called life, everyone is drawn to walk certain roads to reach a certain destination—toward success, joy, growth, or all these, all at once. As I look back at Megaworld Foundation's past 25 years, I find it heartwarming to witness how the scholars' stories unfolded, and how the Foundation helped them get to where they dreamed to be.

Megaworld Foundation's very first yearbook, *Our Journey*, features the graduate scholars and their personal essays about humble beginnings, the hardships they faced, and the breakthroughs they experienced. They may have taken different paths, but along the way, they all discovered the value of education, and how they took it along with them as they marched through life.

Receiving an education was something that I held on to when I was a college student in the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP). There were three of us in the family who were pursuing our college studies at the time. I knew I had to do my best to make my parents' hard work pay off. In between my daily commute and walks on railways to Sta. Mesa, as well as skipping lunches except for the occasional fishball snacks, I was driven by my dream to become a certified public accountant.

I have journeyed a long way since then and I can attest that my education has truly made a difference in my life. I am now a CPA, and after receiving notable accomplishments, my alma mater PUP awarded me with an honorary doctorate degree in Business Administration. My career has been fulfilling as I am in the right company together with commendable officers and colleagues. To our Megaworld Foundation scholars, we can't wait to welcome you in our workforce as we continue to celebrate success in business and in life together!

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28 Stories. Our Journey.

For the first time in our history, Megaworld Foundation has come out with a yearbook, a publication and an ebook that puts the graduate scholars in the spotlight as a part of its 25th anniversary celebration.

This yearbook, *Our Journey*, is more than a mere compendium of photos, awards and mottos. It is, in its entirety, a meaningful endeavor capturing precious snapshots of our Megaworld scholars' journey in pursuit of their dreams. *Our Journey* brings together personal essays by scholars who each represent a school that had graduating scholars in time for the Foundation's 25th anniversary. As representatives of their alma mater, the scholars featured in these pages embodied academic excellence, demonstrated strong leadership, and proved themselves in extra-curricular and volunteerism engagement.

The Editorial Board has been privileged to learn the life stories of these scholars. We present them to you here—written journeys that have unfolded and shed light on how Megaworld Foundation has truly created change and transformed lives.

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The Journey I Never Dreamt Of

BEVERLY ANN A. ROMERO

*Summa Cum Laude
Rizal Technological University*

All stories start with “once upon a time,” and finish with a happy ending, but we all know that those are mostly fairy tales, imaginings, and dreams that we can only hope for. Or at least that is what I thought. Hi, I am Beverly Ann A. Romero, the main character of this story.

Entering college is like having a new book. You don’t know what the ending is, and you don’t know how it will go. But you continue, reading it until the end. For every chapter, you have changing opinions, conclusions and emotions. Your thoughts about it are right sometimes, and other times, they’re wrong.

Going to college was the first chapter of my growth. At first, I was lost. I didn’t know what to do with my life. I didn’t have direction, and I just went with the flow— “whatever happens, happens.” Then one day, I decided to apply to Rizal Technological University - Boni Campus and take an exam in Financial Management. Fortunately, I passed and became an RTUrista. I never thought college would be expensive to the point that I needed to apply for different scholarships to pursue my studies.



My friends and I struggled financially during our first year in college. We searched for scholarships and ended up coming across the Megaworld Foundation. We didn't expect much since we were aware that many students were applying for scholarships, too, and we were also hoping that they would get a grant. We tried our luck anyway. Fortunately, I was one of the students who passed the interview and got a scholarship.

The Megaworld Foundation brought light to my life. When I was in the dark, the Foundation showed me the way. The people from the Foundation kept my passion on fire. They helped me achieve my dreams without worrying about my finances. They also eased my parents' worries about having the money to buy books and school uniforms, and providing the allowance needed for my projects and research. In short, the Foundation was like a parent to me, which I was, and still am, grateful for. It was like my fairy godmother. As the Foundation supported me throughout my college years, I had the desire to truly focus on my studies and pay it forward. True enough, I graduated *summa cum laude*. I am proud of myself, but I would have never achieved this without the help of the Foundation.

Every person has their own story and their own happy ending. You just need to be patient, do your best, and



pray. One day, you will find your own fairy godmother who will help you write a happy ending to your story. In this lifetime, I am happy that I experienced being both at my lowest and at my highest, as it helped me to become motivated and passionate about what I do. I can now say that this is my happy ending as a scholar of the Megaworld Foundation.



“The Megaworld Foundation brought light to my life. When I was in the dark, the Foundation showed me the way.”

Not the Destination but the Journey

ELLA C. PIID

Magna Cum Laude

I was once in the middle of a dark road, looking for a light that would lead me to the end of the street. I experienced tears, pain and hardships to finish the story I started.

Five years ago, I used to believe that life was unfair. For those of us who were less privileged, chasing success was like going through the eye of a needle. I grew up in a big family with six siblings and three nephews. Yes, it's awesome, but it did come with its challenges. I can't even remember how many times we asked for help from our friends, relatives and neighbors just to survive the day. I remember asking myself, "How many times do we have to wake up in the middle of the night just to pick things up from our flooded house due to severe rain?" and "Do we deserve this?"

It was the end of my senior year in high school when I overheard a group of students in the room talking about where they were going to college. While I was busy finishing the school year, I was enlightened about a new window of opportunity. I reclaimed myself and the hope I once had.



“ The Megaworld Foundation taught me that true success is not the goal itself, but going through the process.”



With my mom's support, I was fortunately chosen as one of the scholars of the Megaworld Foundation. I was able to attend college at Adamson University, one of the country's prestigious institutions. Since then, finishing school became less of a concern, and more a reality. I burned my eyebrows and persevered to keep my scholarship. I undertook endeavors that would help me toward my goals. I used the allowance I got from my scholarship to help my family. The years went by as fast as lightning. All I remember now is standing on the platform, dressed to the nines, with a medal around my neck.

The Megaworld Foundation helped me to get to where I am now. It taught me that true success is not the goal itself, but going through the process. I may still be far from reaching my dreams, but I am far ahead enough to be grateful. What's meant for us always arrives at the right time. I still get up early in the morning—not to go to school anymore, but to work for my dream company, while continuing to learn in my career. Now, I can provide for my family's needs and give them what they deserve. Along the way, I can confidently say that if I ever find myself again in the middle of a dark road, I can walk it even if my eyes are closed.



From Nobody to Somebody

CRISELDA LYN V. AUSTRIA
Magna Cum Laude

There was once a nobody from a modest background with scarce financial resources, but determination and ambition burned bright within her heart.

Financial problems were heartbreaking for me, and I wanted to satisfy the hunger of poverty-stricken families like us. The aspiration to finish my studies and an unwavering desire to make a difference ignited the fire in my soul.

Pursuing higher studies seemed impossible. Fortunately, I was introduced to the Megaworld Foundation back in high school. I went through the application process, and amidst the uncertainty, a glimmer of hope emerged. I received the news that the Foundation had accepted me as a scholar. Through the scholarship, I was able to finance my school expenses and pay for the university entrance exams without the help of my parents. I have been a part of the Foundation since 2015.

With the burden of financial constraints lifted, I embarked on my journey toward academic excellence. The campus became my second home, a place where knowledge blossomed, and opportunities were abundant. Beyond the academic realm, the scholarship exposed me to diverse individuals with various backgrounds from different organizations. Interacting with them brought me different perspectives that broadened my horizons and enriched my understanding of the world.





Even though half of my college years were spent online, my passion for creativity was enhanced, friendships were formed, collaborations were forged, and the bonds created in those university years became lifelong connections that continue to shape my personal and professional life.

I built a sense of self-worth and confidence that I had never known before. It was a validation of my potential and my abilities. The belief that others had placed in me fueled my determination to succeed, pushing me to aim higher and set ambitious goals.

Through the Foundation, I graduated *magna cum laude* and was awarded “Top 1 in Business Plan” in our college department. Now, I am currently working as a training coordinator of Suntrust Properties, Inc. I have been with the company since September 2022, all because of the trust and recommendation of the Foundation.

Looking back, I am humbled and grateful that my life has changed. In the past, there were numerous things that my family couldn’t afford, but now we can enjoy various experiences that we once only dreamt of. My life is a testament to the transformative power of education and the importance of investing in the dreams of young individuals. I am now committed to paying it forward to empower others who face similar challenges, and to provide them with the support they need to realize their potential.

The nobody who once had nothing but her determination and resilience, became somebody through her belief that dreams can become a reality. It is a reminder that with the right support and opportunities, anyone can overcome challenges and create a bright future and a life of purpose and fulfillment.

“**My life is a testament to the transformative power of education and the importance of investing in the dreams of young individuals.**”



Transforming Dreams into Reality

HECTOR DANIEL A. REBADAVIA

Cum Laude

Artistic Director, Mega Scholars Symphony (2022)



Growing up as a simple kid from Cavite, I never had a clear vision of what the future held for me. All I wanted was a comfortable life and a sense of contentment. However, the path toward achieving my dreams seemed uncertain, given the financial challenges my family faced. Scholarships became my lifeline, and my determination led me to the FEU Institute of Technology, where my college journey and life took a transformative turn.

One fateful day, I received a life-altering phone call. It was from the coordinator of the Megaworld Foundation informing me that I was accepted as a scholar. With a surge of joy and determination, I immediately enrolled in FEU-IT's Information Technology program, knowing that my life was about to change. I quickly realized that the scholarship came with great responsibility. I understood that it was not a free ride but an opportunity that required hard work and dedication. The Foundation instilled in me the values of consistency, diligence and excellence, which I carried with me in every aspect of my academic and personal life.

As a Megaworld Foundation scholar, I had the privilege of participating in various activities and programs, including being a part of the Mega Scholar Symphony, where I led a group of scholars in singing songs for the events of the Foundation. Moreover, I was a top-performing student for three years and I graduated with *cum laude* honors. Alongside these accomplishments, I also had the privilege of being a part of the Far Eastern University Chorale, where I marked notable achievements in renowned national and international choral competitions. These experiences, combined with the support of the Foundation, shaped me into a well-rounded individual ready to face the challenges of the professional world.

The journey to my graduation day was filled with countless sleepless nights and rigorous academic endeavors, but it was all worth it. Standing among my fellow graduates, I felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude toward the Megaworld Foundation. Its support not only made my dreams come true but also made me believe in my own abilities.



“ Through the Megaworld Foundation’s guidance, I not only achieved academic excellence but also developed the mindset of consistently striving for greatness.”

Armed with my degree and the experience gained as a Megaworld Foundation scholar, I started my first job as a web developer in the Operations Division of Megaworld Corporation. The transition into the professional world was seamless, thanks to the Foundation’s guarantee of a career for its scholars. The skills and knowledge I acquired throughout my college journey made me well-positioned as a professional ready to contribute to the company’s success.

Looking back at my college journey, I am filled with immense gratitude for the Foundation. Through its guidance, I not only achieved academic excellence but also developed the mindset of consistently striving for greatness. My dreams of a comfortable life and contentment have been replaced with aspirations to aim higher and dream bigger, knowing that as long as I approach life with consistency, diligence and excellence, there are no limits to what I can accomplish.

The Gift of Education

RAQUEL C. VICTORIO

Cum Laude

“Now that you’ve graduated from senior high school, you should start working already. Don’t go to college anymore and start helping your family instead.” This is what I used to hear, and it only motivated me to strive harder. As someone not born into a wealthy family, achieving my dreams and finishing my education has been very hard, but the Megaworld Foundation made it possible.

After I graduated from senior high school, I wanted to go to college with all my heart because I was fully aware of what the future would hold once I earned my bachelor’s degree. I thought it was going to be smooth sailing. I took an examination at a public university to get a free education, but unfortunately, I didn’t pass. I was so disappointed in myself at the time. I thought that maybe my parents were right, and that I should start working instead of studying, and that I should leave my dreams behind. But I stayed motivated and set new goals. I used that setback as my motivation to improve my skills and knowledge. I planned to achieve them, remembering that success often comes through determination and perseverance.



“The Megaworld Foundation’s belief in my abilities motivated me to go for excellence and make the most of this remarkable opportunity. I promise to pay it forward.”



Eventually, failure opened up a much better opportunity for me when I tried applying for a Megaworld Foundation scholarship grant. It was not easy, but instead of doubting myself, I focused more on believing that I could do it. After interviews, exams and months of waiting, I finally received a text saying, “Congratulations, scholar!” I can still recall that day, and I felt that it was beyond my wildest dreams. My mother and I cried—we were so happy. Receiving the scholarship was that first success that significantly impacted my life.

Then, my collegiate years came. Balancing the responsibilities of a working student and a small business owner was not easy. I carried the weight of financially supporting myself while striving to excel academically. Despite the challenges, I always told myself that my determination to pursue my education while facing numerous struggles was commendable. So, to my fellow working students who are also scholars, always remember to take care of yourselves and find time to recharge, as self-care is equally important in your journey.

Here I am now, one of the scholars who graduated with *cum laude* honors. I feel so honored and grateful for this milestone. As it is said in Isaiah 60:22, “When the time is right, I, the Lord, will make it happen.”

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Megaworld Foundation for the gift of education. Your belief in my abilities motivated me to go for excellence and make the most of this remarkable opportunity. I promise to pay it forward.



Beyond Grateful

ROLDAN E. CAYABYAB

Magna Cum Laude

I once knew a young boy who was fearless, dreamful and determined to make a difference in his life. He was the youngest of eleven children, whose father passed away when he was five years old, and whose mother was having a hard time making ends meet. He was a sweet young boy, who, due to his financial difficulties, was unable to do all the things he wanted.

I knew that boy, more than his family or anyone else, because that boy was me.

I thought graduating from primary school would be my highest educational attainment because I was among the poorest of the poor. But God provides. God had prepared something for me. Right before graduating from elementary school, a Catholic boarding school run by nuns offered an entrance exam to academically capable yet underprivileged students who wished to continue their studies for free. I did not hesitate to take the exam. It was a good opportunity, and it was my only chance to achieve my dreams, even when the price for this aspiration was to be away from my family for four years. After passing the exam, I left Pangasinan to study in Silang, Cavite. I endured everything because I knew this would lead me to a better place. I knew that God would always be with me along the way.





“ God made the Megaworld Foundation an instrument to help me reach my goals.”

Not long after graduating high school, God blessed me again. Our high school principal recommended that I pursue a scholarship from the Megaworld Foundation in order to go to college. With courage and determination, I went to Metro Manila, took the exam, and secured a slot for the scholarship. The Foundation supported me financially to get through college. All I had to do was study very hard. Four years later, I graduated *magna cum laude* from the Class of 2022.

It was not an easy road. I pretty much spent my younger days away from home to achieve my dreams. But my faith in God was strong, and I clung to prayer. God made it all possible for me. God made the Megaworld Foundation an instrument to help me reach my goals. I am what I am today because of the Foundation, and there are no words to express my heartfelt gratitude.

Today, still with the help of the Foundation, I am building my career in Global One Integrated Business Services, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Megaworld Corporation. I am now part of the Treasury Department, where I get to utilize my skills and knowledge as well as enhance them. I was a Megaworld Foundation scholar then, and I am a Megaworld employee now—all thanks to the Foundation and all glory to almighty God.



Empowered by Opportunity

BERNADETTE R. CUBAY

Cum Laude

As an only child, I often felt like a burden, despite my parents never expressing it. Compared to our relatives, our financial struggles and the disparity in our social status fueled my determination to work hard and pursue a degree. Fortunately, I secured college scholarships, alleviating some of the financial strain.

During my freshman year, a challenging subject threatened my scholarship, causing me immense fear. Desperate to explore alternatives, I bumped into a high school classmate in the library who introduced me to the Megaworld Foundation. Without hesitation, I contacted the Foundation to inquire about its available slots. In just two days, I gathered and submitted the required documents, underwent interviews and background checks, and had my parents participate in the final interview.

On December 24, 2018, amidst our Noche Buena gathering, I received devastating news—I lost my university scholarship due to my performance in the difficult subject I was worried about. In order to secure the down payment for my tuition fee, my mother made the courageous decision three days later to mortgage her precious ring given to her by her father during his time as an overseas Filipino worker. Filled with determination, I visited the Megaworld Foundation office on December 28 to inquire about my scholarship application. To my immense surprise and gratitude, they awarded me a scholarship.

Megaworld Foundation's support made our financial situation more manageable, relieving us of the constant worry of paying off my tuition fees. However, the pressure to maintain my scholarship as an engineering scholar weighed heavily on me. The learning challenges during the pandemic intensified this. Nevertheless, I persevered, driven by my goal to graduate as a scholar and alleviate our family's financial struggles.





Being a Megaworld Foundation scholar exceeded my expectations. The Foundation offered financial aid, activities, seminars and workshops that fostered personal growth. Furthermore, it provided job opportunities after graduation at Megaworld Corporation, its subsidiaries and affiliates.

In October 2022, I proudly graduated as a Megaworld Foundation scholar with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering, and achieved the honor of being one of the only four *cum laude* students in our engineering batch. Although I wasn't a recipient of any specific award, my exceptional grades and involvement in different extracurricular activities allowed me to become the representative of the College of Engineering.

Today, I work as an analyst programmer at Global One Integrated Business Services, Inc., a subsidiary of Megaworld. Initially uncertain, I quickly gained the company's trust and was entrusted with handling a project involving system development.



Being a part of Megaworld has provided me with invaluable experience, and has equipped me to face various challenges in the corporate world.

Reflecting on my journey, I am immensely proud of my accomplishments. My life has undergone a remarkable transformation, allowing me to assist my parents in managing household finances, as well as enjoying quality time with my family. While challenges may lie ahead, I firmly believe in my capabilities. We all have the potential to overcome obstacles as we continue to grow.

In conclusion, my journey, from feeling like a burden to my family to becoming a successful professional, was shaped by the scholarships, sacrifices, hard work and the support of institutions such as the Megaworld Foundation and the National University. I am grateful for the opportunities they have provided me, positively impacting my personal and professional life.

“Being a Megaworld Foundation scholar exceeded my expectations.”

That One Afternoon's Plot Twist

LOUISE P. ALPANTA

Cum Laude

It was 2018, and a jeepney ferried passengers under the afternoon's scorching sun. Who knew where each of these commuters' destinations was, or what their purpose might be? One may simply be looking for space to breathe, another might be bringing food home to his family, and a young lady could be getting her purse out to pay the fare. As she rummages through her things, she receives a notification on her phone. The jeepney ride was supposed to offer a warm breeze, but she feels a cold shiver instead. A message tells her that she has been given the opportunity to be part of a growing company.

That young lady was me. And this was how I was able to wear a green robe with a fancy cap and stand on stage in front of a massive crowd.

Through a scholarship grant, the Megaworld Foundation opened a door for me. As someone who had been blessed with good things since the beginning of her education, the feeling of receiving them always compares to finding a golden needle in a haystack. Those blessings fueled and encouraged me, urging me to keep writing more chapters for my life story. The Foundation will always receive my gratitude—it is an institution that listens to voices like mine that yearn for a chance to experience a quality education.





“Megaworld Foundation will always receive my gratitude—it is an institution that listens to voices like mine that yearn for a chance to experience a quality education.”

Imagine how much weight was lifted from my family’s shoulders, year after year, because of the scholarship’s continuous assistance. True, I was given a head start, but that came with its share of struggles and responsibilities. I needed to find a way to maintain excellent standing in my academic performance as well as balance my everyday accountabilities. My journey was a road that included numerous tests, conflicts with myself, and a lot of self-questioning over whether or not I had the strength to push through. And because the Megaworld Foundation offered to take on my scholastic finances, I made sure to give my studies the highest priority by doubling down on my dedication and tenacity.

After my graduation, I am still under the care of Megaworld, this time as an employee. The difference is that I am able to reciprocate its generosity. It sure is surreal to belong and flourish in my current environment. To quote the gist I left on my alma mater’s digest: “My academic years were very well written. The journey wasn’t always the brightest of colors, but I realized that these weren’t the only variation of shades that could add tint to what was ahead of me.” Megaworld became one of my life’s colorways, and with that, multiple other palettes have been discovered, and are yet to be created.



The Driver's Daughter

SAMANTHA MARIE A. CABANSAG

Magna Cum Laude

Growing up, I remember my family struggling to have enough money for our food as well as school expenses. As such, we were unable to afford the basic necessities. I even remember that I used to be jealous of my peers who had new toys. However, despite our lack of wealth, I enjoyed my childhood. My relatives, especially my aunt and grandmother, supported our education, and I'm so very grateful.



Despite being shy, I was a hardworking student and graduated first honorable mention. I am proud of myself and I have always believed that education can improve lives. After high school, I chose Bachelor of Arts in Communication as my course and passed the entrance exam. Despite facing failures, sleepless nights and heartbreaks, the people around me as well as the drive to finish the course strengthened me.

Because of our financial challenges, I had to find a side hustle to support my studies. I earned extra money by accepting writing commissions. During the pandemic in December 2021, I applied for a scholarship grant from the Megaworld Foundation through our school, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Marikina.

I worked hard to become a scholar and received financial support from the Foundation. I graduated in June 2022, grateful for the hardships, people I've come in contact with, my alma mater and the Foundation. The Foundation provided me with unforgettable experiences. One of them was my being a part of the 25 Academic Excellence Awardees and sharing success stories with my co-scholars.

I believe that not being born with a silver spoon in my mouth will never hinder my success in life. Everything is possible with hard work, faith in God, and hope. I look forward to helping others by bringing them hope as they write another chapter in their lives.



“ I believe that not being born with a silver spoon in my mouth will never hinder my success in life. Everything is possible with hard work, faith in God, and hope.”

On the Road to Success

JUSTINE LAUREN R. YATCO

Magna Cum Laude

I wake up very early in the morning to catch the first bus as I travel for a couple of hours or more. I eat breakfast while reading my reviewers on the way to school. I also do homework while I am stuck in traffic, or at times, I just catch some sleep. Then, I arrive home late in the evening to repeat the same routine.

As a college student who couldn't afford pricey dormitories, I traveled every day from Laguna to Manila just to pursue my studies at my dream university. Slowly, the daily expenses became a burden to me and my family. I started thinking of ways to earn extra money. I tried selling candies and snacks to my classmates and even looked for part-time jobs. Still, my efforts were never enough. The exhausting long hours of commute, combined with the overwhelming school workload led me to the point of becoming discouraged to continue studying in Manila as my everyday journey started to affect my physical and mental health, as well as my family's finances.



It was around that time when something unexpected happened. As I walked past the faculty office, a piece of paper that any student would normally pass by without a second look caught my eye and changed my life forever. I read the advertisement on the paper, applied, and got accepted as one of the scholars of the Megaworld Foundation. Through the Foundation, I received the financial and social support I needed to strive harder.

At present, I still wake up early in the morning to catch the bus—but this time is completely different. I am now officially a part of Megaworld, thanks to my scholarship. Starting this new journey, I can't help but smile whenever I fondly reminisce about those times when I was still a student reviewing for my exams while stuck in traffic. It was truly a journey that I will always be grateful for. To God, my family, friends, the Megaworld Foundation and myself, I know I made all of us proud and will forever continue to do so.

“ It was truly a journey that I will always be grateful for.”



Finally

BENIDICT V. AUSTRIA

As a child, I became aware early on of how difficult life was because I grew up in poverty. With my situation, I became determined to achieve the dream of my parents, particularly my mother, to see us succeed in life. When I lost my mom, my inspiration and number one supporter, I was discouraged by setbacks and failures and often hesitated to take risks or assert myself in challenging situations. I was afraid to step out of my comfort zone and into the unknown. Despite my ambitions, I struggled to find my footing in the real world.

As I grew older, I saw my siblings rooting for me. It reminded me that my mother's dream was unfinished, so I tried to light the fire within me, and something began to shift. From then on, I tried redirecting myself and finishing my studies with flying colors, which became possible when the Megaworld Foundation came along. Not only did the Foundation help me financially, it also served as a beacon of hope to achieve my dreams in life.

I started small by volunteering for projects and initiatives outside my normal scope. I took on leadership roles in the academe, my parish, as well as my local community, organizing events and spearheading initiatives I believed in. I learned to trust my instincts and believe in my abilities again, even when things felt uncertain or overwhelming. At times, the road was rocky and fraught with obstacles, and I struggled with self-doubt. But even in the face of adversity, I refused to give up. I was determined to push through the challenges and be stronger as I reached the other side.



“By taking risks, I am now conquering fear and achieving things I once thought were impossible. By pushing myself to be limitless, I am continuously building a life I will be proud of.”



Eventually, I achieved things I never thought possible. I received various awards. I write academic articles and papers now, even inspirational pieces. I speak at conferences and seminars. Now, I am already a part of the Megaworld family as an investor relations analyst, and I am starting to make remarkable contributions in our field. Each new accomplishment fills me with a sense of pride and satisfaction. It was as if I was finally living up to the potential that I always knew I had inside me.

My previous experiences required me to take a hard look at myself and my weaknesses, be honest about my struggles, and learn to push through my fears instead of letting them hold me back. So, when you constrain yourself to fear, you are closing the doors to opportunities. As Pope Pius XII said, “To live without risk is to risk not living.”

By taking risks, I am now conquering fear and achieving things I once thought were impossible. By pushing myself to be limitless, I am continuously building a life I will be proud of. I am now happily supporting my siblings and living the dream of my parents—especially the dream of my mom. Slowly but surely, my “what ifs” are turning into “finally.”

How the Megaworld Foundation Reshaped My Future

CHRISTOPHER KING B. BUENAFLOR

I was born into poverty, with my parents working as vegetable farmers, struggling to meet our daily needs. Growing up in this situation, we firmly believed education was the path to improving our lives. As I approached high school graduation, my hopes were shaken when my mother informed me that our financial situation made it impossible for them to support my college education. That night, tears streamed down my face as I thought of the obstacles standing between me and my dreams. But even in that moment of despair, I promised myself that no matter what, I would find a way to finance my education.

I worked as a helper in my uncle's bakery to earn money for college. Luckily, I passed the Pangasinan State University admission exam. At first, joy filled my heart until I realized the weight of the financial burden. I applied for different scholarship programs, but unfortunately, luck was not on my side, and none of the applications were successful. I had to work during semester break and even on Christmas break. However, my earnings were still not enough to fully support my studies, so I took on a role as a student assistant.





Opportunities came through the scholarship program of the Megaworld Foundation—like a beacon of hope in my pursuit of a better life. When the Foundation gave me a scholarship, I was overwhelmed with emotions. It was a life-changing experience. The weight of financial burdens was lifted. The Foundation not only provided me with financial assistance for my education but also mentorship and guidance through different learning activities. My graduation resulted from years of hard work, determination and the steadfast support of my family, colleagues and the Foundation. As I stood on the stage wearing a barong and abaray, I felt an overwhelming sense of accomplishment.

Another dream was made possible by the Foundation when it gave me an opportunity to be a part of the growing Megaworld family. I was so grateful that a community of passionate and driven individuals who shared a common goal to uplift lives surrounded me. I am honored to be actively involved in the pursuit of the Megaworld's mission, dedicated toward meaningful work that has the power to drive change.

Being a Megaworld Foundation scholar didn't just change my life—it transformed it entirely and granted me access to many opportunities. The stark contrast between my past struggles and achievements is a testament to the power of education and the unwavering support of organizations like the Megaworld Foundation. I am eternally grateful for the scholarship that opened doors and paved the way for a future filled with hope, success, and the ability to give back to my family, the community and the company.

“The stark contrast between my past struggles and achievements is a testament to the power of education and the unwavering support of organizations like the Megaworld Foundation.”



A Grant that Fulfilled a Calling

DANELYN C. BARRIENTOS

Magna Cum Laude

I never considered my upbringing as ideal. As the eldest child of a poor family of four, I was expected to learn about life's hardships at an early age. I share with utmost pride that I am a product of my father, a tricycle driver, and my mother, a small store owner. Our family has always been happy and content, but having limited resources led us to miss opportunities and face various challenges.

As the first college graduate in our family, it was clear that the world does not stop for anyone. I had to brace for hardships and keep up with life's twists and turns. I had to take two additional years in high school when they implemented the K-12 program. The full scholarship grant allowed me to study at a private school in Cavite. I finally graduated with honors, proving to myself and others that I wasn't just any ordinary student.

On my first day of college, I promised myself that I would work even harder to reach my dreams. However, when I entered the Philippine Normal University, I learned that college was a totally different experience. There were moments when I felt powerless. Throughout those four years, my father and I managed to work together for my allowance as I commuted from Cavite to Manila.



“ The Megaworld Foundation is a part of my dreams that are now becoming a reality. The institution has inspired me to pay it forward to the next generation of minds.”

It was my final year at PNU when I received financial assistance from the Megaworld Foundation. I needed it desperately, as it was the height of the pandemic, and we shifted to distance learning. Before my last year was over, I used the remaining money to pay for a laptop, which was vital for the beginning of my teaching career. With God's mercy and help, I graduated *magna cum laude* and am now a full-time teacher. Little by little, I am fulfilling the dreams of my seven-year-old self, who once believed that the world had always been unfair to her.

The Megaworld Foundation is a part of my dreams that are now becoming a reality. The institution has inspired me to pay it forward to the next generation of minds. Thus, I am teaching and helping shape the dreams of the students I teach today.



Triumphing Over the Struggles of Life

DHESSA L. PALISOC
Magna Cum Laude

If you asked me what my plans for the future were 13 years ago, my answer would have been vastly different from what I would give today. As a child, I used to believe everything had structure. My coloring books had lines, my pad papers were ruled, I wrote letters and numbers in a particular way, and I knew well enough to abide by the rules in our house and even the classroom.

I took solace in knowing that my path in life followed a template known to everyone. I started in kindergarten, moved on to elementary school, then high school and college. After that, I needed to work, help my family, start my own family and retire. My parents also made it clear that during these phases, education is important, and I must do well. I aimed to be at the top of my class, joined different school-based organizations, and competed in contests and quiz bees. It seemed like my life was going well, right?

Everything changed when we discovered that my mother was diagnosed with hypothyroidism and that her epilepsy had worsened. Things around our house changed. My mom got easily irritated and became very moody, as these were side effects of her medicine. We were also alert at all times because her seizures often happened at night when everybody was asleep. We looked at the possibility of an operation for her hypothyroidism, but we were too scared because of its impact on her brain, which could worsen her epilepsy.





“ **Being a Megaworld scholar gave me a purpose.**”

Her medication became really expensive, so I decided to study at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, a state university, to avoid adding to the burden of my parents thinking about how they would pay my tuition fees. My determination to graduate grew ten times stronger because I wanted to help my parents, especially my father, who was a freelancer, to provide for our needs.

It was around late June 2019 when I saw an announcement that the Megaworld Foundation was looking for scholars. I looked up the details and found that it accepted students from my course. I applied with no expectations because I knew that there were other students who needed financial assistance more than I did. I just hoped to help my family somehow because they would not let me work so I could focus on my studies.

After a few months, I received the news that the Megaworld Foundation had extended its generosity to me. I got accepted as a scholar! I studied harder and graduated *magna cum laude*.

Again, if you were to ask me 13 years ago about my ideal future, despite the structure, I would be clueless. However, being a Megaworld scholar gave me a purpose. It gave me hope, helped my family financially, and most of all, led me to the path I wanted to be on as a part of Megaworld International.



Believing Something Beautiful is On the Horizon

JOYLYN C. CASTOR
Magna Cum Laude



I am Joylyn Cordero Castor, and I have been a Megaworld Foundation scholar since my eighth grade in high school. Let me share my journey.

Believing something beautiful is on the horizon is something I often do. I dreamed of big things that might be impossible, but because of the opportunity I had as a Megaworld Foundation scholar, I found hope and a light to achieve these beautiful things.

Way back in 2013, the Megaworld Foundation went to Justice Cecilia Munoz Palma High School in Payatas. I was blessed enough to be one of the students given the opportunity to be their scholar. The Foundation gave us school supplies and a monthly allowance that helped my parents financially. With that, I could also support them if there was some spare money from my allowance. Since then, my family and the Foundation motivated me to excel in my studies, be grade-conscious in a positive manner, and always do my best. It was unexpected for me to become their scholar, as I may not have planned it at first, but life happens. I believe this was a blessing from God upon seeing how He moved in my life as He gave me this kind of breakthrough.



Despite the uncertainties and encountering a challenging ride academically and in life, I acknowledged how life is a climb with its highs and lows. But my journey was incredible. I am now a graduate of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines - Quezon City. I now have my degree in Business Administration with a major in Marketing. I graduated with *magna cum laude* honors due to being a consistent President's Lister.



God is good to me, and I am forever thankful for everything that happened in my life. I am a daughter, sister, youth servant, youth leader, lecturer and commentator in church, a friend, former president of the scholarship organization, a Megaworld Foundation scholar, a former PUPian student, and now, a business development associate. It has been a decade since I started as a scholar, and now I am a part of Megaworld's workforce in the Business Development and Services Group under the Office of the COO. I am blessed, indeed.



I am forever grateful to my family, the Megaworld Foundation, and the people behind it who came along and supported me throughout my whole academic journey. You were all a big part of my achievements. You are the reason I made it through to the end. I hope I made you all proud.

Now that I am on my next journey, pursuing a career in Megaworld, the value of being grateful, having faith and always trusting the process will continue to influence me today. I am grateful for God's endless love, abundant blessings, and how He introduced the Megaworld Foundation to my life.

“ God is good to me, and I am forever thankful for everything that happened in my life.”

The Hero in Me

KING DOMINIC E. MAYO

Being a hero means having special powers, or at least that's what I thought when I was young. But then I saw a hero who didn't have any superpowers. He rescued people with his armor which he created himself. At that moment, I knew that I wanted to be like Iron Man, and that I would be someone who would never stop seeking knowledge.

As surprising as it seems, it was not just a short-lived childhood dream. It was real and personal. This dream of mine started when I was still a senior high school student. I can remember everything vividly. I was busy doing my homework for physics, and my mama was helping my grandpa take his medicine. Suddenly, my grandpa said to me: "*Ikaw ang pag-asa ng pamilya natin.*" I was so confused at the time. Why did he say that to me? What was his basis? These questions kept lingering in my mind until bedtime.



The next day, a dreadful event occurred in our family. My dad picked me up from school when he broke the news that my grandpa passed away. I heard him, but I could not process the information clearly. All I can recall is that I felt a burning sensation in my eyes, and tears poured down my face. Then I remembered what my grandpa had told me. I decided then and there that I would be our family's hero.

“**The Megaworld Foundation became my family and support system throughout my college journey.**”

When I graduated from senior high school, I knew I needed to strive hard to achieve my dreams. I took the entrance exam at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines - Taguig. However, I didn't reach the minimum PUPCET score for engineering degrees. Thankfully, the university still gave me a chance and asked me to proceed to the interview. I was so nervous and excited at the same time. I just thought to myself that I'd answer their questions truthfully. The first question that was asked of me was, "Why did you choose Mechanical Engineering?" and I responded confidently, "Because of my idol, Iron Man." The interviewer laughed at my answer, probably thinking I was bluffing. But I was serious about it. The next thing I knew, I was already one step closer to my dream because I had gotten in.



Like any other hero, Iron Man had a support system guiding him throughout his journey. The Megaworld Foundation became my family and support system throughout my college journey, and it was my own version of the Avengers, Earth's mightiest heroes. It helped me get through my education to achieve my lifelong dream of becoming a mechanical engineer, which is close to what Iron Man does. I could combat challenging subjects because the Foundation inspired me to always do my best in every subject I take.

Four years later, I'm already the person I always wanted to be. I am now a licensed mechanical engineer. But am I a hero now? Honestly, I don't know, but I am certain that whether I am a hero or not, I will continue to strive to improve in my field every single time.



A Cup of Coffee

PAMELLA A. RAMOS
Magna Cum Laude



I went to a café after a long, tiring but fulfilling day at work. I ordered a cup of coffee and sat near the window. It was a serene moment as the rain started to pour, and the wind blew in through the windows. I took a sip of coffee, realizing all of a sudden how much differently it tasted now.

Six years ago, my father was diagnosed with severe diabetes and pneumonia, which made him stop working. We struggled financially as my mother barely made money working as a nanny. She could not afford to send us to school since she prioritized my father's medical treatment. I had no idea where life would take me.



The only thing I had was courage as I conquered life alone and started to build my dreams from scratch. I was left with no choice. I took the risk of working a part-time job, so I could financially support my studies and my siblings, who were depending on me. I was very young at the time, vulnerable as I made life mistakes, and yet giving up was never an option. It took me a lot of setbacks before I became a dean's lister and a Megaworld Foundation scholar. Wearing a black toga was not a dream anymore, as the Foundation turned it into reality. I now have my bachelor's degree, and I graduated with flying colors. Eventually, I started my young career as a management analyst at Megaworld Corporation. My life has only gotten better since then. Indeed, my winning moment to date took place because of Megaworld.

Before, my coffee tasted bitter, and so did life. I took a lot of detours filled with doubts and fears. Now, my coffee tastes completely different. It's sweeter and tastier. I'm living the life I once dreamed and prayed for. And wherever life takes me, I will always be grateful to Megaworld for being a big part of who I am today, and of course thankful for my parents, whom I drew strength from.

“ I'm living the life I once dreamed and prayed for.”



She Believed She Could, So She Did

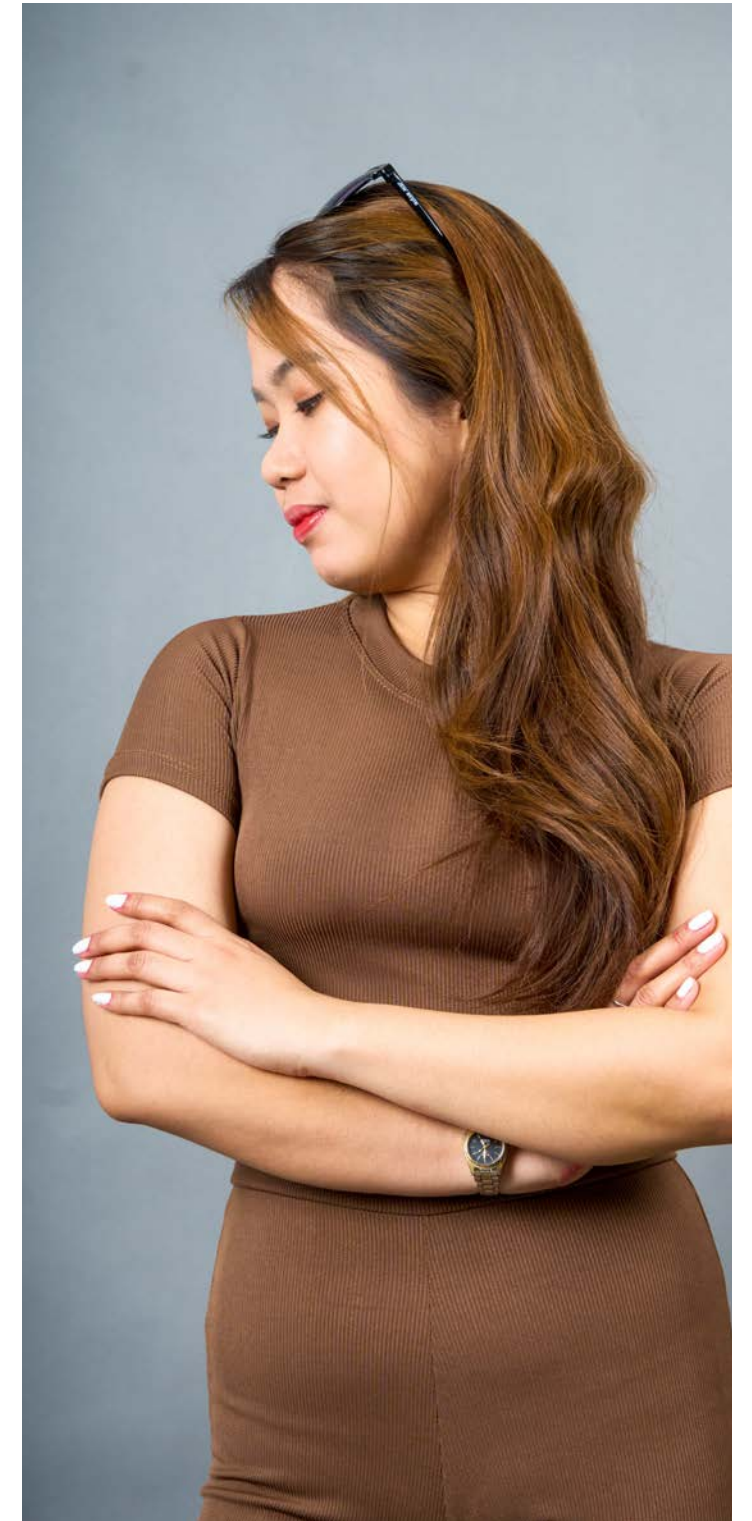
KHRIZZA MAE I. SUAN

Magna Cum Laude

I was a child with modest aspirations for the future. To continue my education after graduating from senior high school in our province, I moved to Manila. I knew that adapting would be difficult for me in many ways, but I also knew that it would be worthwhile. When I entered college at the Rizal Technological University, I took up a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, with a major in Human Resource Management. It was always my first choice because of my passion to serve and develop positive relationships with people.

I remember the year 2018 when I heard about the Megaworld Foundation. The Foundation actually visited our school to look for deserving students. I applied for a scholarship grant, which completely altered my situation. I was very thankful to God for providing me with the opportunity to get to know Megaworld.

One afternoon, I visited the Megaworld office at the Alliance Global Tower in Taguig City. I met the people who worked there and found them all to be generous and accommodating. After that, I promised myself that one day, I would be going to this building, not just as a scholar anymore, but as an employee of the company.





“ I know that God worked through Megaworld Foundation to help me.”

Megaworld changed me in a way that made me more tenacious and committed to my academic goals. That year, I was elected president of our school organization, which helped me feel more confident as I embraced my desire to help my classmates.

Megaworld was also there for me when the pandemic happened. As we continued our studies online, I had to return to our province filled with worry. During this time, students like my classmates and me faced many challenges. Taking virtual classes was one of them—only a few of us had the resources for this kind of learning. As class president, I had no idea how to help or what to do because, like them, I did not even have a smartphone or a laptop.

I was sure that this was not the only issue. Online classes still required internet connectivity to log in via Zoom or Google Meet. I was among those helpless individuals until the Megaworld Foundation gave me a computer set, aside from semestral allowances, to ensure the pandemic would not interfere with my academic pursuits. The Foundation helped me feel more at ease in managing the virtual classroom environment. It was more than I could ask for. My other siblings also benefited from the assistance of the Foundation in continuing their education as well as pursuing their aspirations.

Despite the challenges life continued throwing my way, I worked even harder to continue and finish my collegiate education. In October 2022, I graduated *magna cum laude*. Yes, I survived.

Looking back on those times, I know that God worked through Megaworld Foundation to help me. Today, I am thankful that I am regularly making my way to the Alliance Global Tower, the same building I first visited when I was a scholar, which I now enter as a Human Resources employee of Megaworld.

The Path to My Dreams

PATRICIA MELROSE V. CRUZ

As a child, I already knew that life was challenging and that there would always be adversities. I only had one goal in mind: to make my family happy more than anything else. Growing up, I realized the sacrifices my family made to give us a good life. They always said that I should focus on my studies to avoid repeating the mistakes they made. When I saw their regrets, it saddened me that they thought lowly of themselves. In reality, even though we weren't like other families, I couldn't ask for a better one. I knew that one thing I could do to change their perception of themselves was for me to become successful in life. In that way, I could prove that they raised me right, and that was the fruit of their sacrifices.



“Megaworld continued to change my life and mold me to become a better person.”



I needed to think of a way to help my family while finishing my studies that would eventually help give them a better life. I was eager to find a scholarship so they could focus on other things. I then discovered that the Megaworld Foundation was offering scholarships to deserving college students. During my first visit to the Alliance Global Tower (AGT) to apply for the grant, I was mesmerized by the ambiance of the offices. I hoped to work with the company someday. On the day of my interview, my mother and I traveled together to AGT. Despite my mother suffering from an illness, she still accompanied me and provided much-needed support.

As I waited for feedback from the Megaworld Foundation, I started to lose hope of getting accepted as a scholar. But finally, the day that changed my future came. I received a confirmation that I was accepted. Who knew that it would take only one signature to change someone's life? I became a proud scholar of the Foundation. But I still needed to work hard to support myself and my family. At night, I was an advisor taking calls, and in the morning, I was studying. My family became my inspiration to push through despite all the challenges.

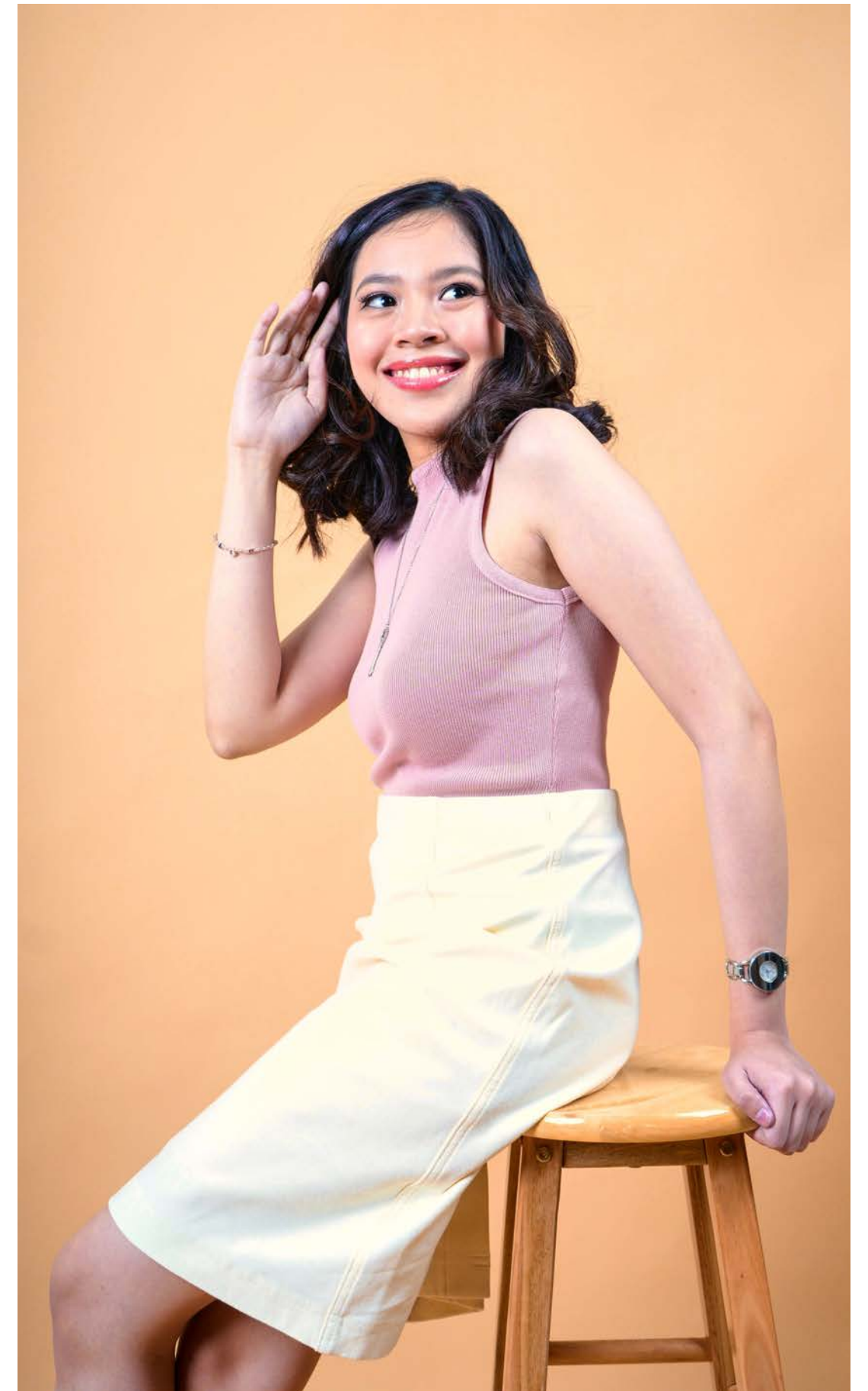
With God's grace and guidance, I'm now a degree holder. I achieved one of my greatest goals in honor of my family. After graduating, I thought it would be the end of my story with Megaworld. However, the company continued to change my life and mold me to become a better person. Before, I would only daydream about the time I first went to AGT. But here I am now, a proud employee of Megaworld. I eventually joined the workforce under the company's Finance Group, where I was blessed to have a welcoming manager and colleagues. Now, it's my time to give back. I'm committed to give the job my all and play my part in helping the company grow. I've learned to always keep my head up and remember that every challenge we face is an opportunity for growth.

Faith and Trust

SAMANTHA NICOLE B. NOVALES

I always had faith in the Lord. This helped me a lot as a spiritual committee head for three years in high school. When I was in my Grade 11 Accountancy, Business and Management track, I consistently worked toward my goal of joining the field of marketing. It had been my dream since I saw my mom work in sales. But along came an unexpected turn of events when my dad lost his job. The years 2017 and 2018 were a difficult time for us back then. My siblings and I were able to finish the school year but we had difficulty paying our tuition fees. I thought at the time that there was no hope left. When I entered San Beda University in Manila, the initial plan was to submit a petition to the school to accept my promissory letter, as we couldn't pay my tuition fee in full. But a miracle happened when my dad discovered that the Megaworld Foundation offered scholarships for my school.

It took a month after my first day of school, in July 2018, to get my scholarship grant. I was delighted as I saw a great life ahead of me. I thanked the Lord for that. Being a scholar back then was challenging. I had to make sure I finished college but also maintain the minimum grade to keep my scholarship. I joined Megaworld seminars and lesson sessions with the help of Sir Bernabe. I studied hard to eventually achieve my dreams of becoming a marketer someday. I joined the San Beda Junior Marketing Association's Executive Board and became a Bedan Scholars' Guild member. Earning my first-ever dean's list award was a surprise back then. My graduation was exciting but bittersweet because I never knew that leaving San Beda University would come with memories that I would never forget. I owe it all to my late dad, who helped me in my time of need.





Entering the workforce of Megaworld was a different world. It was full of surprises that made me very nervous. But now, I enjoy my work because I keep learning along the way. There's a big difference between my life then and my life now. I became a better person who could do great things along the way. I started as a small seed in a difficult world with no hope of growing, to a sapling that kept growing even as I faced challenges. All this because I was surrounded by the people in my life—my family, friends and my guiding organization moderators, Sir Greg Borja III and the late Ms. Karen Rimando. I learned that there should always be faith and trust in the process, and the things you never knew you needed.

“ There’s a big difference between my life then and my life now. I became a better person who could do great things along the way.”



The Dreamer

KATE MARIE I. ROSSEL



This is the story of a little girl who grew up to become a dreamer. She was born in 1999 and was a simple, contented and pleasant little girl fortunate to have a loving and supportive family. Please let me tell you more about her family. She has a brother who is usually the master among the siblings; he finished his studies and is now a marketing manager. She also has a younger sister who is very headstrong and is always the winner in every argument. She wants to become a nurse someday, God willing. Lastly, the dreaming girl is a middle child who needs patience to carry out household tasks. More importantly, she needs to be okay all the time, but at the same time, she needs to be reminded that “It’s okay not to be okay.” Their family is not rich, but they are blessed to eat three times a day and have a roof over their heads, and clothes to wear, for which they are very grateful. The parents of the siblings are dedicated as well as passionate about their children’s dreams of finishing their studies. They believe studying is the first step toward reaching one’s own milestones.

We all know that being a student is not easy. It’s a rollercoaster adventure. Fast forward to 2018, the girl’s senior high school adventure went from smooth to rough. She felt failure, discouragement and pressure all around her. But she read a Bible verse, Jeremiah 29:11, that encouraged and motivated her because it reminded her that God never fails. She used the Bible verse to guide her throughout her whole year as a student.

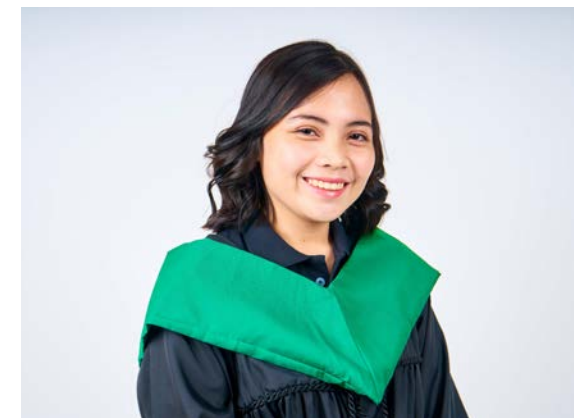




“ **Megaworld Foundation was an instrument toward me becoming successful.**”



God gave her challenges to the point that she thought she could not study in college due to life's difficulties. At that time, her brother and her younger sister were still studying. But like she said, God never fails. The very same year, she found out about the Megaworld Foundation. She thought it was easy to get in, but it was not as easy as others would think because there were so many requirements that she needed to submit, and she had no idea if she could pass these on time. There were also a lot of students who applied for a grant. One time, when she went to the Foundation's office after her classes to submit a requirement, she couldn't make it to the cut-off. But because of the poverty she experienced and her persistence, the Foundation gave her a great opportunity to study at a prestigious school. The Foundation was a big part of her success. She graduated and now works at the Alliance Global Tower as one of Megaworld's employees, where she met her second family.



She wants to take this opportunity to say thank you so much. The Megaworld Foundation helped her in a big way financially. The Foundation was an instrument toward her becoming successful. Life is not easy, but she encourages you to never give up because tomorrow will inspire you to do what you have always dreamt of.

The Power Within Silver Linings

GIORGIO ARMANI G. MAGNO

Cum Laude

Dr. Andrew L. Tan Student Leadership Excellence Awardee

I am a product of a poor and broken family. My parents separated at a young age, making growing up challenging. We prioritized the most essential needs over unnecessary expenses to survive. I grew up in an environment where contentment and gratitude were valued. I learned to appreciate my blessings and make the most out of what I had. I realized that there is abundance in the simplicity of life.

Without a father figure, I embraced the support of my grandparents, Nanay Lilia and Daddy Boy, who stood by my mother's side in raising us and ensuring that we received the attention we needed. Mama Lyn instilled in us the value of not harboring anger toward my father and showing him respect should our paths cross again. I chose acceptance and shifted my focus to appreciate those who stepped in to provide the guidance and support that a father could offer. To my father, I have already forgiven you. I hope that you are proud of the person I have become, the accomplishments I have worked toward, and the strength I have developed along the way.

Although I have forgotten many details of my painful experiences in the act of moving forward, I still remember their impact. But I refuse to let them define my future. By setting goals, envisioning my desired life, and using setbacks as motivation, I discovered the power within me.

On my mother's birthday, I was selected as a beneficiary of the Megaworld Foundation's scholarship program. It was perhaps the most precious gift my mother could receive. The sacrifices I endured during the application process were worthwhile. I never imagined that I would be able to finish college in a private institution.



Inspired by the “pay it forward” advocacy, I served the parish, took on a student leadership role and engaged in various extracurricular activities. My mother’s constant reminder, “*Hawak mo na ‘yung ginto, ‘wag mo nang bitawan pa,*” resonated with me. It highlighted the importance of valuing opportunities and motivated me to strive for academic excellence.

From receiving a scholarship and being recognized as the first recipient of the “Dr. Andrew L. Tan Student Leadership Excellence Award” to joining the workforce as an assistant data scientist, Megaworld has opened up countless opportunities for me. Embracing challenges, exceeding expectations, attending conferences, and meeting esteemed executive leaders have inspired and taught me valuable lessons on professionalism, effective communication and leadership.

Reflecting on the past, I faced challenges I thought I couldn’t overcome. These experiences shaped my character and resilience, and made me the person I am today. As I conclude this life story, gratitude fills my heart for the lessons learned, the strength gained, and the love and support that carried me through the darkest times. Thank you, Megaworld Foundation, for being instrumental in helping me achieve my dreams, especially those of my mother’s.

To the one reading this, take a moment and speak these words aloud: **I AM GREAT! I AM STRONG! I AM CAPABLE!**

Shape the life you want by setting goals, transforming habits and staying disciplined. See setbacks as opportunities to grow. Enjoy the journey, celebrate progress and surround yourself with positivity. Believe in yourself. I am counting on you! Together, let’s embark on a journey toward success.



“ Gratitude fills my heart for the lessons learned, the strength gained, and the love and support that carried me through the darkest times.”



Chances Create Champions

ANTHONY CLARENCE M. ELLA

Cum Laude



Turtles carry their shells throughout their lives, just as we shoulder our own burdens in life. I was that turtle who had to move forward despite many challenges. I was a student who sometimes walked several kilometers because I had to save money for an affordable meal. It was among my many dilemmas that eventually became normal for me back then. I was also bullied and teased for being the son of a teacher. It was hard to find confidence in myself when everyone else was doing well in a very competitive environment.

My experiences taught me to look at life differently. I was already street-smart at a relatively young age. My friends witnessed how well I overcame life's adversities. At the time, I acknowledged that there were issues far more significant than what other people said about me. I needed to let go of people's expectations of me and focus on my happiness instead.

The day I took the Megaworld Foundation scholarship examination was the day I decided to have a better life. I knew it was far from the life I longed for, but it was the beginning of a change. It was also the start of many frustrations and failures that I surprisingly conquered during my first years as a scholar. It was not easy, like what our mothers say. But every time I felt hopeless, this thought lingered—if there are thousands, or even millions, of other people who are fighting for a better life, then who am I to surrender? I will fight with them.

“ The day I took the Megaworld Foundation scholarship examination was the day I decided to have a better life.”



I was blessed with people who inspired and motivated me to continue my journey despite financial challenges, especially those who cared for me in the Foundation. There is no way I could return the love I received, but through the determination to keep moving forward, I believe that someday I can also give others hope. Those people were a significant part of my seven-year scholarship story. This essay is for all of you. Thank you.

Now, I work as a contracts civil engineer at Megaworld Corporation, where I continue to grow and discover my limitless capabilities as an empowered individual. I am proof that not all of life's turtles are losers. Sometimes, all we need is a chance to lighten our loads and trust that we can blossom even in the harshest realities of life. Chances create champions, and I hope that whoever reads this gets their own chance.

With joy in my heart, I tell you this: Where winds whistle hopes and fears, we, too, deserve to be freed from our curse of tears. There's always someone out there who will see us for who we truly are, true winners in the making.

How I Met MEGA

FERDINAND M. QUINTO

Magna Cum Laude

I am a child of a barber and dressmaker from the humble town of Obando, Bulacan. I may not have been born with a silver spoon in my mouth, but my parents always did their best to provide us with what we needed. They made our life much easier. Indeed, I am so lucky to have them. At an early age, my sister and I learned to value education at all costs. My parents always reminded us that if we study hard and give importance to our studies, we will have the life we always imagined. That's how my love for education started.

As I grew up, I became aware of our socioeconomic status. I realized that if I truly wanted a better future, I needed to ensure that my parents' hard work would pay off someday. At that time, I only thought about helping my family by doing my best at school. Since studying at a university would cost us a lot, I applied for different scholarships to help my parents by easing some of my school expenses. Even though it was uncertain, I applied anyway.

I still vividly remember how the Megaworld Foundation entered my life. In my first year, one of our seniors invited the whole class to try our luck. At first, I said to myself, "If I don't qualify for the scholarship, the most important thing is that I tried." Months passed when I received a call from an unknown number. On the other line, the person asked for our home's exact location and stated that he would visit our place as part of the scholarship's screening process. After a month or two, I received a congratulatory message that I was one of the scholarship grant recipients. I was on cloud nine. I immediately told my family about the good news. At that point, I told myself, "With this, I will be able to help my family and make my dreams come true with the help of the angels sent from above."



Years passed, and I finally reaped what I sowed. I graduated *magna cum laude* with a degree in Entrepreneurial Management from the Technological University of the Philippines. I was also one of the 25 recipients of the Foundation's Academic Excellence Awards.

I didn't expect that the Foundation would help us beyond our studies. It also gave us the opportunity to work with Megaworld. I received an email inviting me for a job interview. I was nervous, but the interview went well. They told me that I aced the interview and was offered a management information associate position. I am grateful that I am now part of the Megaworld workforce.

I have been with the company for a while now, and I have been blessed to be part of an organization that prioritizes the well-being of its employees. I am grateful to have very supportive and loving co-workers that make my stay more meaningful. With Megaworld, I am bound for greatness.



“ With
Megaworld,
I am bound
for greatness.”



How Megaworld Changed My Life

GIL I. ARCOS



It was quite a few years ago when my life began to change. Back then, I was still determining whether to enter university and continue my studies or to work after graduating high school. It was a test of faith and dedication when I returned to Manila to find a scholarship and pursue college. It was a battle where I triumphed.

While searching for the best university, I landed on the University of Makati. When I first saw UMak, I knew God planned something for me. It was also in the same place where I met Megaworld—the one that helped build my “ikigai,” or purpose and beginning. Let me quote from Dr. Tan’s words of wisdom on success, “Every time I see certain room to grow, or a new opportunity to advance further, I go out and take it.” This statement motivated me to go out of my comfort zone and take the lead to serve and help my fellow students in our university. With much courage and commitment, I became the longest-serving University Student Council President and Student Regent in the Board of Regents for two consecutive years. I also served the university in my five years as a Civil Engineering student. It was also because of the Megaworld Foundation that I learned to stand and aim higher, which helped me gain several awards and recognition as a student and leader. I received the Outstanding Student Leader of the University Award for two consecutive years, a first for our school. I was also elected the first-ever president of the Jr. Association of Local Colleges and Universities in the Philippines. I also became a nine-time Dean’s Lister. As I pay it forward, I give credit to the Foundation.



“ **The Megaworld Foundation is a home of dreamers, a pillar of success, and a torch of hope that brings light and fortune to everyone.**”



After graduation, I landed a job at the most valued and respected company in my field, First Oceanic Property Management (FOPM), the property management arm of Megaworld Corporation. I enjoy collaborating with the team, and I am so blessed to have very supportive and empowering mentors through Ma'am Neo, Sir Ram, Sir Adie and Ma'am Maricel, who gave their best efforts in helping me develop my potential to the fullest.

Today, I have become more productive in helping the community and giving back to my alma mater by sharing my leadership experiences and best practices through speaking and mentorship engagements. I am also humbled to share that because of my alma mater and the Megaworld Foundation, I received international recognition as “Asia's Outstanding and Dedicated Student and Community Leader of the Year.” I am also excited to share that I have moved to a new position as a property manager at FOPM.

The Megaworld Foundation is a home of dreamers, a pillar of success, and a torch of hope that brings light and fortune to everyone. Indeed, nothing is impossible with Megaworld.

Changing the Entire Course of My Life

WENNIE GRACE E. DELA TORRE

Magna Cum Laude

I have come so far in life, and this is all because the heavens have sent people who were willing to take a chance on me. I was once a financially challenged province-based girl hoping for greener pastures in Manila. Life was a tough row to hoe. While the big city had lots to offer, there were also several challenges. I may have found friends who always had my back, but I also met judgmental ones who made me question my own abilities. There may have been several opportunities that came my way, but they were also too expensive for me to grab. It may have broadened my perspective, but it had to break my heart many times first. It was challenging for the young me, but I kept on dreaming and working hard, always hoping that the right opportunity would come my way one day.



Indeed, the right opportunity came when I chanced upon the Megaworld Foundation, an organization that saw my potential and believed that my dreams weren't too big to achieve. I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to pursue studying in my dream program at my dream school. This was also the time when my life started falling into place. Especially even after college, a work opportunity already awaited me. It's like a total package of unraveling me from poverty.

Today, I see how my life has changed for the better. Equipped with the formal education I've always dreamt of, I can now work and provide for myself and my loved ones. I still get teary-eyed at times, realizing that I can now afford the things I was once deprived of. The scholarship had such a positive ripple effect that it changed the entire course of my life. With this, I will always be grateful to the Foundation.



“Equipped with the formal education I've always dreamt of, I can now work and provide for myself and my loved ones.”

A Dream Turned Into Reality

SAMANTHA ETHEL R. CARIÑO

I'm Samantha Ethel R. Cariño, a Megaworld scholar. I graduated from the University of the East - Manila with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration major in Marketing Management. I love watching lifestyle and beauty vlogs and listening to Korean music. I am also the youngest in the family. My mother is a housewife, and my older sister works as a quality analyst. I live in San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan, and dream of becoming a successful marketing manager someday.

My scholarship journey with the Megaworld Foundation started when my college friend decided that he wanted to apply for a scholarship grant. He told me that I should come with him to the Foundation's office and encouraged me to apply for a scholarship. Since there was no harm in trying something new, I decided to try it for myself. By God's grace, I received a text message confirming I got the scholarship grant.





“ I am truly thankful to all those who supported me throughout my journey, especially Megaworld.”



I was ecstatic to be a Megaworld Foundation scholar officially. It happened unexpectedly, and yet it felt so fulfilling. This scholarship helped me during my college years. This meant a lot to me, knowing that a company was providing assistance for my education and that all I had to do was be the best student I could be to achieve my dreams and goals. My college friend was a blessing in disguise as well. Without him, I wouldn't have been able to be part of this journey. Megaworld also had fun learning sessions like the Mega BER-dahan Learning Sessions. It was engaging, and I learned a lot of lessons and insights from the speakers.

I was also truly honored to receive the Exemplary Academic Performance Award from my university. On my graduation day in July 2022, I had mixed emotions. I was happy because I was able to complete my studies, but at the same time, I felt sad because, for the last two years of my collegiate journey, I spent most of them via online classes due to the pandemic. It was a rollercoaster ride to be sure, but I am glad to have experienced it. Lastly, I am truly thankful to all those who supported me throughout my journey, especially Megaworld. It was indeed the most memorable moment of my life.

My Anchor Amid the Storm

VINCENT JOHN E. AGUSTIN

Magna Cum Laude

Growing up in an ordinary and underprivileged family, I took my first steps into a world filled with hardships and limitations. My family struggled to make ends meet, our dreams seemed elusive, and slipped through our desperate fingers. Each day brought its own challenges, and the weight of poverty cast a suffocating shadow over our aspirations. Yet even in the darkest times, a spark of hope flashed upon me, urging me to break free from the cycle of despair.

Being a Megaworld Foundation scholar for three years in high school and four years in college breathed life into my aspirations, propelling me toward a future I had only dared to envision in my wildest dreams. With the Foundation's financial support, I devoted myself wholeheartedly to my studies, exploring subjects that ignited my passion and challenged my intellect. It was not merely the monetary aspect that transformed my life, but the validation and belief it bestowed upon me.



It seemed like the Foundation whispered to me, “You are worthy. Your dreams matter.”

Of course, the road to securing the scholarship was laden with obstacles. I was forced to navigate a complex web of responsibilities, treading a fine line between dreams and reality. Maintaining exemplary grades while being limited by financial constraints became a juggling act that tested the limits of my endurance. There were nights when fatigue engulfed my body, and doubt crept in like a relentless tide, threatening to drown my hopes.





“**Now as a Civil Engineer and a member of the Megaworld family, I carry the indelible impact of my scholarship.**”



Then came the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, where the importance of receiving a scholarship became even more profound. Economic hardships ensued, rendering countless dreams shattered and aspirations put on hold. Amid the chaos, the Megaworld Foundation scholarship became my lifeline—an anchor that kept me afloat amid the storm. As the pandemic ravaged communities, the Megaworld Foundation scholarship gave me hope in the face of adversity. It shielded me from the financial fallout that impacted so many, allowing me to continue my education without the burden of mounting student loans or sacrificing my dreams.

Difficult days passed, and I eventually finished my Bachelor in Science degree in Civil Engineering at the University of the Philippines - Diliman with a *magna cum laude* distinction. Being able to graduate on time after the pandemic was already an amazing feat for me, but achieving a Latin honor from a prestigious top university in the Philippines is something that I will forever be proud of myself for. All of these would not be possible without the support of my family, my friends, and of course, the Foundation that never left me behind in spite of the difficulties and uncertainties brought upon by the global pandemic.

Now as a Civil Engineer and a member of the Megaworld family, I carry the indelible impact of my scholarship. As a professional, I now devote myself to serving the nation and giving back to the community as well as the company which helped me become what I am today.



The Pay It Forward culture

Megaworld Foundation empowers its current and alumni scholars to create a ripple effect using the positive impact they received through the Scholarship Program by sharing it with other students and their less-privileged fellowmen.



Walk Into Your Future Scholarship Caravan



'Yan Ang Lola Ko: Buwan ng Wika, Buwan ni Lola Outreach Activity



Future Forward: Turning Visions Into Reality



One with the Aetas Christmas Outreach Activity



Hapag Saya sa Kapaskuhan Outreach Activity



Hope for Health: Medical Mission



Eskwela ng Bayan: A Mega Classroom on Wheels



Green Thumbs-up! Tree Planting Activity



Mega Santa Christmas Initiative



One Mega for Brigada

over **1,700**
graduate scholars

Megaworld Foundation, especially through its Scholarship Program, is privileged to pave the journey for many young Filipinos. The graduation of each scholar represents the realization of dreams thousands of bright students hold close to their hearts.

**Data as of August 2024*

Messages from other alumni scholars who joined the workforce



AUBREY MARIE P. BAJAN
Finance Manager
Alliance Global Group

Dear Megaworld Scholars, I'd like to congratulate and welcome you all as you embark on the next chapter of your life. As a fellow scholar who is now part of the group's workforce, I attest to the joy of working with the Alliance Global Inc. family.

Always remember that every success started with something small. View challenges as opportunities for growth. Never lose your hunger for knowledge and continue to pursue your passion. Have God at the center of your lives for He will lead you to a greater path. Always have a grateful heart and remember to pay it forward.



KEVEN F. AYAG
Full-Stack Web Developer / Junior Manager
Megaworld Corporation

Congratulations to our graduating scholars! As someone who was once in your shoes and now employed at Megaworld, I encourage you to embrace this new chapter with enthusiasm and hunger for learning.

Starting your career can feel overwhelming, but remember: every challenge is an opportunity to grow. Stay curious, stay resilient, and never stop pursuing your passions. Your journey is just beginning. I'm excited for all the great things you'll achieve. Best of luck!



JHOANNA DENYSE L. RAVARRA
Assistant Administrative Manager
Megaworld Hotels & Resorts

Congratulations on reaching this significant milestone. Your dedication and perseverance have brought you to this moment. As you step into the professional world, bring with you the knowledge and values you've gained. One thing I have learned during my seven years in the industry is to always have a positive attitude and willingness to adapt; your flexibility will be a valuable asset to your career.

Remember, your experience as a Megaworld scholar has equipped you with a solid foundation. Seize every opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute to your chosen field. Your journey is yours to shape, and I do not doubt that you'll make a remarkable impact wherever your path leads. Congratulations once again, and best wishes for all that lies ahead.



JEHNYNE LALAIN F. BAUTISTA
Human Resource Officer
Emperador Distillers, Inc.

To the graduates, congratulations! With all the challenges that you encountered on the path to reaching your goals, take time to celebrate this proud moment of accomplishment. Whatever career path you choose to take, remember that the struggles along the way are meant to fuel you with the strength to create the best version of yourself.

Looking back, no doubt, there was stress. No doubt, there were obstacles (a lot!). And no doubt, there was anxiety. Despite these, you overcame them. So, be proud of your achievements and continue to believe in yourself as we believe in you. Keep moving forward, future professionals!

Ito ang totoong kwentong tagumpay! Now, go change the world and reach for your dreams.

265 awards received

Megaworld Foundation has been recognized by prestigious international and local award-giving bodies for its socio-civic efforts.



Megaworld Foundation Team



(Center)

Dr. Francisco C. Canuto

(From L-R)

Rica Joy R. Pasiga

Maybeline T. Dames

Ma. Elishabeth L. Broqueza

Marielle B. Reyes

Janel M. Gabriel

Jhon Ricar C. Bernabe

Ailyn O. Amado

Jerica Inna A. Lechuga

Trishia Ann E. Mirambel

Jan Michael B. Suarez

(Seated from L-R, front row)

Russel D. Morota

Lovely Joy B. Baylosis

Criselda M. Ebatuan

(Not in photo)

Diane A. Guardian

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