



The EduTomahawk team (in red T-shirts) comprising ITE students (from second from left) Gan Shi Ying, 18; Cheryl Ee, 18; Tan Jia Shun, 19; and Josh Ang, 19, with samples of the tote bags they sold to raise funds for underprivileged children from Canossaville Children and Community Services. Flanking them are schoolmates Sim Joo Siang (left), 20, and Darren Goh, 18, who helped out as volunteers. ST PHOTO: MARK CHEONG

ITE students turn \$1,600 into \$72,000 in fund-raiser

Group of four raises the most money among 100 teams in Youth for Causes event this year

Jolene Ang

They started with seed funding of \$1,600 in February. By this month, they had raised \$72,146 for Canossaville Children and Community Services.

The group of four students – Josh Ang, Tan Jia Shun, Cheryl Ee and Gan Shi Ying – from the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) College West was taking part in this year's Youth for Causes (YFC) fund-raising event, organised jointly by Citi and YMCA of Singapore.

A hundred teams were each given the same seed funding by Citi Foundation and had to decide how to utilise the funds to help a voluntary welfare organisation of their choice.

Canossaville Children and Community Services offers student care for primary-school children with hearing impairments, have learning disabilities, or are from families who need financial assistance.

It comes under Caritas Singapore, the official social and community arm of the Roman Catholic Church in Singapore.

The four, who are second-year Higher Nitec information technology students, spent the money on stationery, posters, banners and props to support their main project,

which was selling tote bags featuring a picture drawn by a 10-year-old girl from Canossaville, and the words “love”, “faith”, “joy” and “hope”.

They also received \$3,540 from Canossaville to help with the cost of the bags, which cost around \$1 each. The bags were sold for \$15 each initially before being reduced to \$10 following public feedback.

Of the total raised by the ITE team, which called itself EduTomahawk, about \$30,000 came from selling tote bags.

Some \$21,000 was from the Tote Board, which is a statutory board and Singapore's largest grant giver.

\$30,000

Amount raised through the selling of the tote bags by the ITE team, which called itself EduTomahawk.

The rest was garnered through donations from parishioners of the Catholic Church.

The team leader, Mr Ang, 19, said the four values printed on the tote bags represented the team members, adding: “Without these elements, we wouldn't have come so far into this project.”

Mr Tan, 19, said: “We wanted to bring those values into our actions – love, joy and hope to the Canossaville children, and faith in our project for ourselves.”

The team visited several Catholic churches over seven weekends to sell the tote bags.

The amount raised by EduTomahawk was the highest across the 100 teams this year, which earned them the YFC Best Fundraiser award.

The previous year's best fund-raising team raked in more than \$50,000.

Ms Gan, 18, said: “We wanted to raise more than our seniors' team last year, so our target was \$60,000... We were a bit apprehensive, but when we passed that mark, we started to gain momentum and build confidence.”

While they were running the project, all four students were concurrently doing internships.

Mr Ang said the experience gave them a huge confidence boost, which they carried over to their internships. He added: “I'm a lot more vocal about my ideas.”

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THE RIGHT VALUES

We wanted to bring those values into our actions – love, joy and hope to the Canossaville children, and faith in our project for ourselves.



MR TAN JIA SHUN, who shared team leader Josh Ang's views that the four values printed on the tote bags represented the team members.

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

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MS GAN SHI YING, another EduTomahawk team member. She and her teammates were serving internships while they were running the project.