

Inspirational Sparks

Hallmarks of Success



A Special Place in my Heart

By Sivapalan S/O Perumal

In 1995, I came to Jurong Institute (JI) (currently known as Millennia Institute (MI)) with many hopes and dreams to make it to the university. Yet, things turned out unexpectedly when I only managed to achieve 1 'A' and 3 'AO' passes for my 'A' level examinations. I was totally devastated. I felt like a failure. It was brutal truth in reality that I could no longer be a part of a university education. Downcast and depressed that fateful day, I made a decision to finish my National Service (NS) first and start working with just my 'O' level certificate.

When Mrs. Vara Durai (General Paper) and Mr. Charles Chang (Physics) knew about my circumstances, they pulled me aside and suggested a possibility: to retake my 'A' level examinations again in JI. I was strongly against it as the thought of coming back to JI for 'a second chance' seemed so humiliating. How could I face my juniors? Back then, I was the President of the 9th Student Council and a representative with the JI Soccer team. It was simply unthinkable to see them again in school. It will be a total embarrassment.

Nevertheless, the two teachers did not give up on me like I did to my future. Mrs. Vara Durai and Mr. Charles Chang insisted me to retake my papers. Both teachers were adamant that I should give myself one more opportunity to prove my worth. With my morale and self-esteem at the lowest point of my life, I finally succumbed to this suggestion. I disrupted from National Service and returned to JI with an heavy heart. Never did I felt so demoralised before. For that extended stay in JI, I avoided any juniors or friends I knew. I would always come to school early and leave the Institute late so that I would not see them. The once vibrant school life became a living nightmare for me.

There were many moments that I wanted to give up. I cried in the face of insurmountable stress and anxiety which nobody could understand. I broke down. Mrs. Vara Durai and Mr. Charles Chang, my two mentors were patient with me and they helped to restore my confidence as an individual.

Those dreadful days were long over. The rest was history. I managed to do well in the 'A' levels and was accepted into Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE). During my years in NTU, I stayed in the school hostel and joined the CEE Club as its Sports Secretary. I made many friends and gained great friendships in the midst of the varsity varied programmes. Currently I am working as an Environmental Engineer in Setsco Services Pte Ltd. All these enjoyable days in the University would not be possible if my teachers did not come to my rescue.

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JI will always have a special place in my heart. I could still recall the leadership skills I have garnered during my appointment as the Student President in JI that are still relevant in my work. The Institute has taught me to always keep trying till you succeed. I could have taken a longer time than others to achieve my goal, but as long as there is still a chance to succeed, I will go for it.



A current member of MI Alumni Association 2007/2008, Sivapalan S/O Perumal graduated from the former Jurong Institute (JI) Class of 1995. Thereafter Sivapalan obtained his Bachelor's degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) in Nanyang Technological University (NTU). Sivapalan is currently working as an Environmental Engineer in Setsco Services Pte Ltd. We wish Sivapalan all the best in his future endeavours.