

**SPEECH BY MR LOH LIK PENG
CHAIRMAN, SOTA BOARD
SOTA AWARDS 2020
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Good afternoon, SOTA. This is your Chairman, Mr Loh Lik Peng. Congratulations to all our awardees and graduates. While Awards Day is held on a different platform this year, it does not diminish what you have achieved. Your accomplishments are no less exceptional and we are all very proud of you.

Resilience in unexpected situations

This year, we are celebrating Awards Day in very challenging circumstances. The effects of this pandemic have been truly breath-taking and unprecedented. We have all had to make some very dramatic changes to adapt to this difficult period, not just in the school but all over the world. I'm sure many of you would have witnessed this impact on your own lives, and in the lives of your family and loved ones. I have also heard examples of how many of you at SOTA - students and alumni alike – have stood up to be counted. You have raised funds for those amongst us in need, sang inspiring songs to keep the spirits up, and encouraged one another through messages, drawings and videos. It is heartwarming to see such examples of resilience and fortitude.

Some of you would have had to cancel or postpone long laid and very cherished plans because of the global interruptions. For the Class of 2019 graduates, quite a number of you would have been looking forward to embarking on tertiary education overseas, and many of these plans have now been upended. I would urge you to take a pause and to reset, and to use this period to rediscover new opportunities. Out of this may come new ways of continuing your journey though unexpected paths. Be open to new ways of doing things and fresh ideas. Keep your dreams and aspirations alive. Remember, you have youth and you have vast potential on your side.

Recipe for success

There is no set recipe for success. However, we do see some common traits in all of you - you are driven and passionate young people, and you have benefitted from a unique and integrated arts and academic education. More than ever before, your unique education and upbringing will be a pathway to success because it has taught you to be resilient, to be curious, adaptable, and creative, and to harness your talents to the best of your abilities. I am confident you will all make valuable contributions to society whatever you choose to do.

I want you to always appreciate the importance of constant learning. Throughout your life, you will need to learn, you will need to un-learn, and you will need to re-learn to adapt to the ever-changing circumstances. This need for constant adaptation will be the hallmark of your generation. I urge you also to treasure the people who have been on this journey with you through your formative years. The friendships and bonds that you have forged in this school will bring you far in life.

Appreciation to supporters

As we celebrate our SOTA students' accomplishments, I would like to mention the many who have been instrumental in their journey of success. I would like to thank the parents, who have been so supportive in your child's pursuit of their passion. I would like to applaud the teachers, who have shown dedication and patience in nurturing the potential of each student. I would like also to express my appreciation to the school's donors, including the Ngee Ann Kongsi, Temasek Foundation, CapitaLand Hope Foundation, Standard Chartered Bank, OCBC Bank and many more.

I would especially like to thank Dr Lee Boon Yang for his support for the school since its inception. Having worked closely with the school in its formative years, he continues to encourage outstanding SOTA students in their pursuit of all-round excellence with the annual Dr Lee Boon Yang Student of the Year Award. Dr Lee has recently made another donation of \$100,000 to SOTA. His donation will go into the SOTA Endowment Fund, which will fund scholarships, bursaries and provide financial assistance to SOTA students who face financial hardship. Thank you Dr Lee and all our donors for your generous contributions. Your support enables our students to receive the best quality arts education.

To our partners, Checkpoint Theatre, the Orchestra of the Music Makers, The Esplanade, National Gallery Singapore and many more, the opportunities you offer for authentic learning allow our students to gain invaluable experience from the industry. Thank you for sharing our belief in nurturing artistic and creative professionals.

Conclusion

Finally, to our awardees, congratulations once again on your outstanding achievements. As you continue to pursue your dreams, stay curious, stay humble, and stay passionate. Keep in mind the education you have received in SOTA. Go out there to innovate, to serve, and to be the creative citizens of the future, and make the school proud. Take care, stay well, and I wish all of you the very best in your future endeavours!