

 news

Nanyang Poly graduate did not give up even when financial issues forced her to take a two-year deferment

‘Slow and steady wins the race’

REN CHNG

Getting a tertiary qualification is no walk in the park, but Ms Veronica Mathy Hui Ling had a tougher path than most.

On Wednesday, Ms Mathy, 23, graduated with a diploma in sports and wellness management from Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP)—after five years.

She is among NYP’s over 5,000 graduates this year, though her route took longer than the usual three years.

Due to financial issues, she had to take a two-year break from her course.

It was not easy returning to academic life after the hiatus, but she persevered.

Ms Mathy had to move around foster families since she was four years old, due to family problems.

When she turned 17, she moved out of her last foster home and into The Haven, a

hostel under The Salvation Army.

To pay for her rent and other expenditures, she worked part-time as a tutor and a banquet waitress.

In her second year, she wanted to be independent. So she moved out of the hostel and rented a room in an HDB flat.

Even though she was aided by the Ministry of Social and Family Development, Ms Mathy struggled to provide for herself while coping with school.

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When the stress became too much to handle, she decided to defer from her course to focus on supporting herself first.

“To me, my diploma was a passport to success — saying that I didn’t want to continue was very difficult,” she said.

“I had to choose between my dream and my needs.”

Ms Mathy managed to stabi-



Ms Veronica Mathy Hui Ling (right) with her mentor Mr Lionel Teo. PHOTONYP

lise her financial situation during her two years of deferment.

Thanks to a prior internship experience offered by NYP, she secured a six-month stint as a

projects and events coordinator at Safra Yishan Country Club last year.

It was then that she realised she had found her dream job in

event management.

But she also felt that a lack of tertiary qualification was hindering her growth, so she returned to finish her studies.

The first person she turned to was her course manager and personal mentor Mr Lionel Teo, who had guided her through hard times in the past.

“When I deferred, many people were telling me not to quit. But he was different — he told me I could come back after finishing what I had to do,” she said.

When asked if she has any advice for struggling students, she quoted Mr Teo: “He would always tell me, ‘You’re not superman! You can’t handle all 10 things at once, you have to deal with them one by one’.

“That’s the advice I would give to students facing problems — slow and steady wins the race.”

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