

Learning In A New Light

CapitaLand aids in arranging for internship attachments at Ascott properties for NorthLight students in Singapore

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NorthLight School student Marcus Lim (left) enjoyed a fulfilling internship at Somerset Bencoolen, thanks to the mentorship of supervisor Nor Nikman (right)

For most 16-year-olds, work probably means stints at fast food restaurants in the company of peers. So when Marcus Lim Meng Hui, a Year Four student from NorthLight School found out about his two-month internship attachment at Somerset Bencoolen, he was understandably nervous.

"It was my first job and I was quite afraid of failing. When I first came here I was very unsure and just tried to follow orders as best as I can," said Marcus. But Marcus' fears were unfounded. With the help of friendly colleagues and engineering supervisor Nor Nikman, Marcus soon found confidence at his work.

"So far, Marcus is the youngest intern we've ever had," shared Nikman. "We treated him like one of our own and made sure he felt comfortable, so he adapted to the work environment within two days and communicated well with everyone."



A buddy system builds up confidence whilst ensuring students' safety in all they do

With a buddy system in place, Marcus tagged along with different technicians and engineering supervisors, learning the ropes along the way. Today, he is proud of the practical skills he has learnt, such as changing light bulbs, painting, clearing the air-conditioner drainage pipe and changing its filter.

"After just a few weeks, I was able to complete the various servicing tasks," Marcus beamed.

Opening Doors for Opportunities to Learn

Marcus is a Year Four student from NorthLight School, a school established by Singapore's Ministry of Education for students with difficulties handling the mainstream curriculum. The School focuses on a practical curriculum that prepares students for lifelong learning and employability, giving emphasis to the socio-emotional development of students by recognising their achievements, encouraging peer support and promoting self esteem.

Every year, the school organises an eight week industrial attachment or IA, to equip graduating students with relevant skills sets and working experience. Thus, it is constantly on the lookout for corporations who are willing to provide IA opportunities for its students. CapitaLand was happy to help. It roped in The Ascott Limited, CapitaLand's serviced residences arm, to provide the students with IA opportunities there.

Four students from the mechanical servicing course were attached to the building maintenance department of the participating serviced apartments, namely: Somerset Bencoolen, Citadines Mount Sophia, Somerset Liang Court and Somerset Orchard. Response from the students and their supervisors have been very positive.



Haikal learnt the soft skills of communicating with colleagues while picking up practical skills at work

Practical Learning on the Grounds

Year Four NorthLight student Nur Haikal bin Johan, who was attached to Citadines Mount Sophia, was rather quiet when he first started his internship. But soon he overcame his shyness. "I'm a very shy person and don't talk a lot. But everyone has been so friendly, I have learnt to speak up and ask questions," said Haikal.

For that, Engineering Supervisor Irwin Shah Bin Mohamad Salleh had a big part to play. "Bonding is very important before we can work together, so we will chat over our meals. I try to be like a big brother to him," shared Shah, who was also all praise for Haikal's working attitude. "For an intern to learn the task of cleaning the air-conditioner within such a short time was quite impressive."

Shah even printed a file of notes on electrical and wiring circuits for Haikal to bring back to learn. "I learnt mechanical servicing in school. Over here, I get to learn electrical servicing. It widens my knowledge without having to pay to attend a course on electrical systems. I find it very useful," Haikal said with a smile.

Mechanical Servicing teacher from NorthLight School, Tieh Seng Fatt, visited the students at the properties every other week to ensure that they are coping fine. He was encouraged by the students' attitudes and progress.



Engineering supervisor Shah spent time coaching Haikal on the electrical circuits at their office in Citadines Mount Sophia

"What you learn in school and what you do in the practical world can be different. Over here at the serviced residences, they are exposed to different scopes of servicing. That's a very good experience for them and we are grateful to CapitalLand for giving the students the opportunities to do so," shared Tieh.

Supporting Students in Their Learning Journey

Apart from its support for NorthLight School's IA program, CapitalLand Hope Foundation (CHF), the philanthropic arm of CapitalLand is also supporting needy students of the school from low income families. For a period of two years, 100 students from years three and four cohorts will each receive \$1000 for their educational needs.

"At CHF, we are always looking at how to help underprivileged children in practical ways. We are very pleased to be able to provide the students at NorthLight School practical learning opportunities and build up their confidence along the way. We view this partnership as an investment in the lives of our young and we hope that it will go a long way for these students," said Tan Bee Leng, General Manager of CHF.