

# Carleton Student Wins Adrian Chan Award for Volunteer and Community Service for Efforts with Canadian Red Cross, St. John Ambulance

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By Matt Gergyek

“Volunteering, at the end of the day, means putting your efforts into something greater than yourself—it’s a calling,” says Trong Nguyen, a student in Carleton University’s Faculty of Engineering and Design. The value of helping others and giving back is a sentiment that runs deep for Nguyen, earning him this year’s Adrian D. C. Chan Award for Volunteer and Community Service.

Established in 2012 by Adrian Chan, a longtime professor in Carleton’s Department of Systems and Computer Engineering, the award seeks to recognize student’s voluntary involvement and community engagement at Carleton and in the broader community. The award is open to undergraduate and graduate engineering students, with winners receiving a letter of congratulations and a \$500 prize.



Trong Nguyen

“It’s sometimes forgotten that engineering is a service profession—engineers exist to solve problems for the betterment of society,” says Chan.

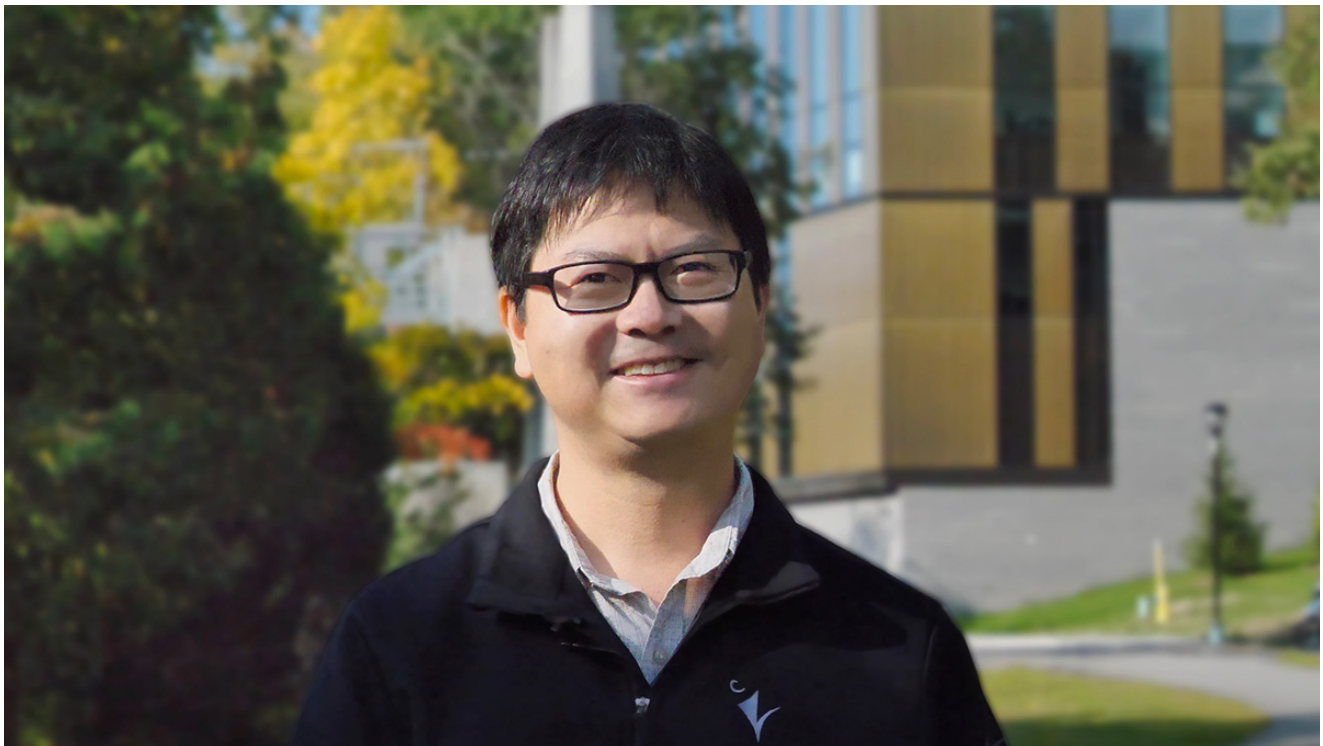
“I wanted to highlight the amazing things that these future engineers do.”

Nguyen, now going into his third year of Carleton’s Software Engineering program, also holds a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and a Master of Science in Biology from the university. Nguyen is drawn toward volunteering in the health-care, emergency management and disaster relief sectors, focusing his current efforts on St. John Ambulance and the Canadian Red Cross.

“The amount of things that (Nguyen) does, the level of commitment that he has shown and the consistency across many years is just outstanding,” says Chan. “Through COVID-19, not only did (Nguyen) continue to volunteer but even stepped up his contributions.”

Nguyen first got involved with St. John Ambulance, an organization that teaches and provides first aid and emergency medical services, all the way back in 2015. Nguyen volunteers as a medical first responder with the organization, where he attends community events as the first aid responder on site.

One of the biggest perks of this volunteering opportunity for Nguyen is the chance to connect with communities he might otherwise never have the chance to engage with, building up a wide network of peers across the city.



Prof. Adrian Chan

Since 2019, Nguyen has also been volunteering with the Canadian Red Cross as a personal disaster assistance responder. In that role, Nguyen works with families in the aftermath of a traumatic event such as a house fire, helping them secure food, shelter, clothing and transportation, while also providing referrals to other community resources and counselling.

“I’ve been with these organizations long enough that my goal now is to teach others and get others involved with volunteering,” says Nguyen.

| “I want to push it forward.”

In the past, Nguyen has volunteered with patients at the Ottawa Hospital and as a classroom demonstrator with Let’s Talk Science, a Canadian charity focused on engaging children and youth with science, technology, engineering and math-based programs.

“It gives me such joy just reading the applications, to hear about all these students’ efforts,” says Chan, noting that it’s notoriously difficult to choose a winner of the award each year because of the large number of dedicated applicants. “I think it’s important to also recognize that there are many other students like Trong out there.”

Nguyen isn’t sure exactly where he’ll end up once he wraps up his third degree at Carleton, but he knows he wants to continue prioritizing volunteering and engaging with local communities.

| “It’s important not just to be a good academic, but also a well-rounded person,” says Nguyen.

“You want to take what you learn and apply it to the real world.”

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