Inspiring John aims for the sky

I CAN now heave a sigh of relief. My son, John, had graduated on June 30 with a Bachelor of Science (First Class Honours) in Physics from the National University of Singapore, where he had obtained a scholarship from the Singapore’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He is now furthering his studies at a top-ranking university in the United Kingdom where he is pursuing a PhD in Astrophysics.

He had also received a MyBrainSc scholarship from our Education Ministry which enables him to complete his PhD in the UK but on the condition that he comes back to Malaysia to serve the government.

John assured me that he would come back as he wants to be in the field of education, like me.

John told me: “I believe in the potential of Malaysian students.

“My vision is to become a physics lecturer in the local universities, to encourage and inspire the future scientists to do great things for Malaysia.”

My wife, Khoo Bee Lee, 56, and I are so proud of John and so glad that he is our son.

We may not be in such a state of joy now if we had not made the decision to adopt John back in 1999.

John lost his father in a car crash when he was still in kindergarten. His mother was suffering from cancer. Bee Lee knew John’s mother because they attended the same church. Before John’s mother lost her battle with cancer, she wrote a will.
The only thing she asked of us was for John to be given a tertiary education. I am glad to say that not only is John a grateful boy, he is also very bright. If I were made to choose, I would say being grateful is more important than being smart.

Since John has both, I feel that we are indeed blessed. My wife and I just gave him our love and treated him like our own flesh and blood.

After John came into our family, Bee Lee got pregnant. Our daughter, Soo Jacinth, is now 14 and gets along well with John, who is 24. Although I am 60, I, too, am pursuing a PhD.

Now John and I are competing with each other to see who gets the PhD first. I believe a father can turn a boy into a good man. I learnt how to be good from my father, who led by example.

He moulded me into what I am today, and for that, I am grateful to dad. For couples who are childless, I want to say this to them: Have faith. My John turned out fine.

I would say more than fine. I know there are stories of adopted children who failed to show gratitude and caused pain to their families. I have also heard stories of foster parents who regret their decisions later in life. But there are also positive stories, like mine, for instance.

There are children out there who have lost their parents. Give these kids a chance in life, if you can.

Peter Soo, 60, is a retired teacher who lives at Taman Kerjasama, Kluang, with his wife and daughter.