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Women Now

Super She-ro #2: This woman provides legal help for the underprivileged

Managing director June Lim set up her own law firm, Eden Law Corporation, to assist those who have fallen through the cracks

17 AUG 2017 BY HOE I YUNE



June Lim took matters into her own hands to effect change for men and women who have trouble getting legal advice and representation.

For June, law (<http://womanoftheyear.herworldplus.com/2014-rachel-eng>) was always going to be a way for her to give back to those who needed help the most (<http://www.herworldplus.com/lifestyle/stuff-do/20-ways-volunteer-singapore>).

After five years at various law firms, the 31-year-old realised pro bono cases would always take a back seat to other obligations. And she wasn't going to stand idly by (<http://www.herworldplus.com/lifestyle/women-now/sign-young-woman-achiever-forum-2015-life-inspiration>) and watch that happen. In 2014, she set up "low bono" firm, Eden Law Corporation.

The company operates on a fixed-fee model – unlike most law firms, which charge according to the amount of work put in. When needier clients are involved, June even works out fees based on their monthly salaries. To keep costs manageable, June has leveraged legal technology, which means operations are largely paperless, and her staff can work from anywhere – at a hospital, a shelter, or even overseas.



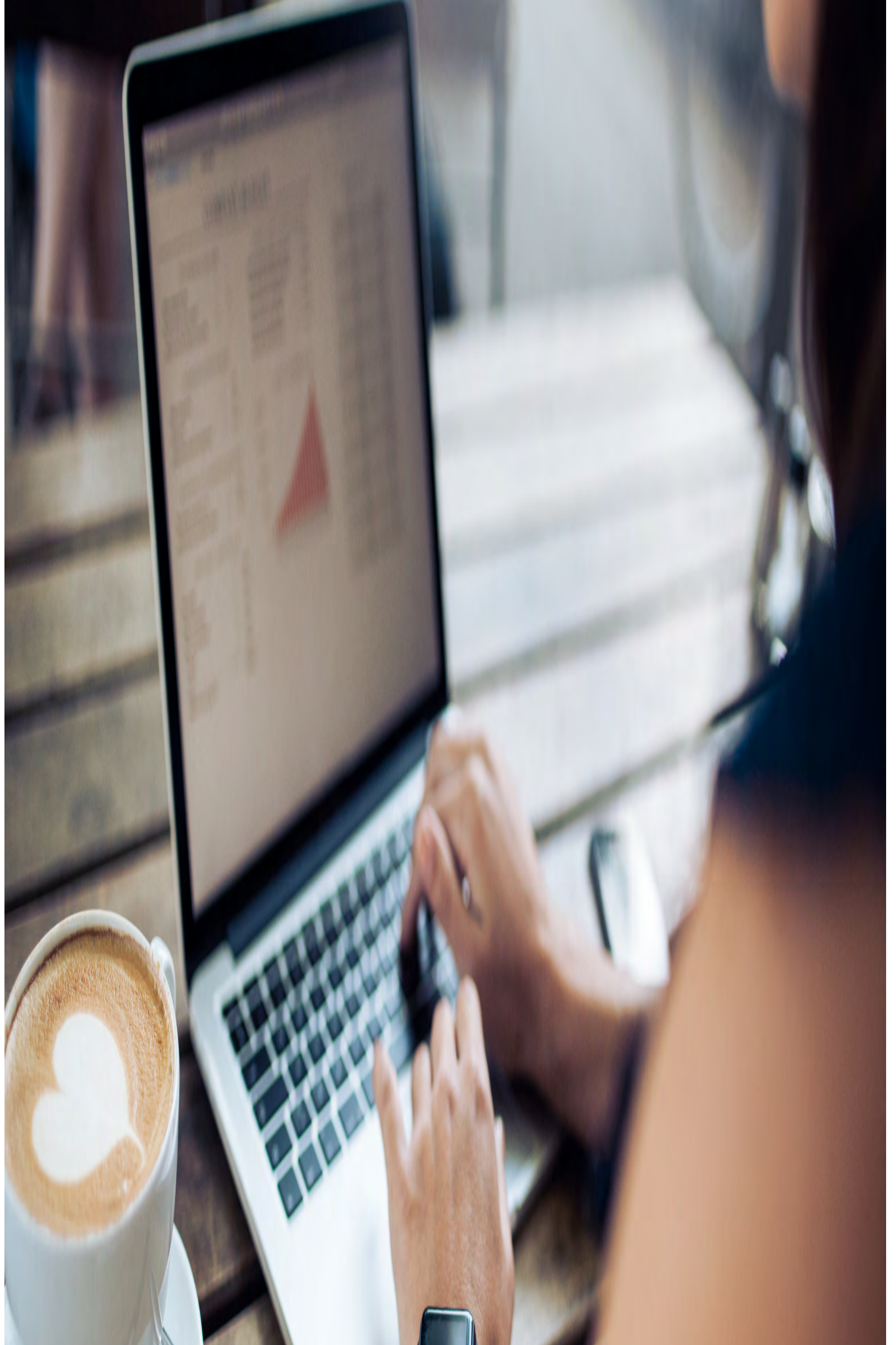




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All this comes from June's desire to find a sustainable way to help those who need it most. This was first kindled during an internship in Kenya in 2006, when she visited the criminal courts in the country's largest slum, Kibera. What stayed with her was the fact that these people in the docks were poor, and were facing long jail terms for stealing necessities like a bag of rice or a pack of batteries.

She realised things were not so different back home. "We have pockets of society in Singapore – including abused women or migrant workers – who can't tap into legal resources," she points out. In Singapore, civil legal aid is only for Singaporeans and Singapore PRs with an annual disposable income of \$10,000 and below. This, June feels, creates a "sandwiched class" – a group of people who fail to meet the criteria for legal aid, but aren't able to afford a lawyer.

She cites a recent example of a client who wanted the court to appoint him as his mother's deputy – meaning that he would make decisions on her behalf if she should become mentally incapacitated. Although he was assessed to have an annual disposable income of \$11,000 because of the size of his flat (which disqualified him from getting legal aid), he had six siblings with schizophrenia to care for, and was only taking home \$1,300 a month working in pest control. Just to file an application in court would have cost him a month's salary. June took on his case and ended up waiving the legal fees.

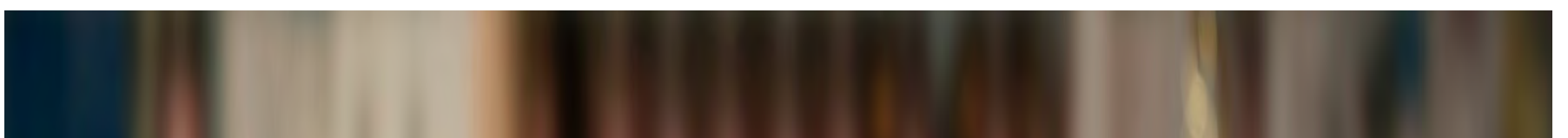






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June always knew that striking out on her own would come with risks, and was prepared to go back to a bigger law firm if things didn't work out. But after a year, Eden Law had turned a profit. June now has four people working for her, and her gamble has paid off. "I was a commercial litigator (<http://www.herworldplus.com/lifestyle/women-now/what-its-be-successful-young-lawyer-singapore>), and I suppose I could have stayed on in a bigger firm and earned more money, but ultimately it's about having a career that fits you (<http://www.herworldplus.com/lifestyle/health-fitness/modelling-lawyer-youtube-star-anne-kissner-career-inspiration>)."

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This is the second of a six part series about super she-roes and the magic they're making in other people's lives and their own. It was originally published in the August 2017 issue of Her World.

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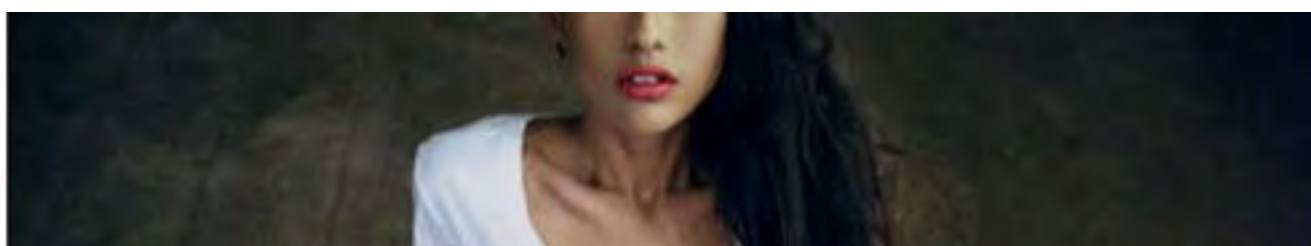


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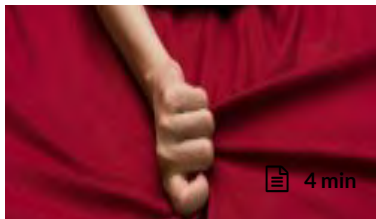
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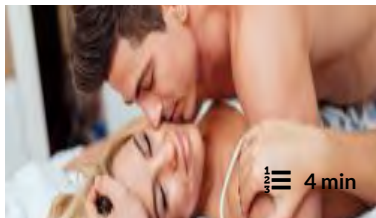
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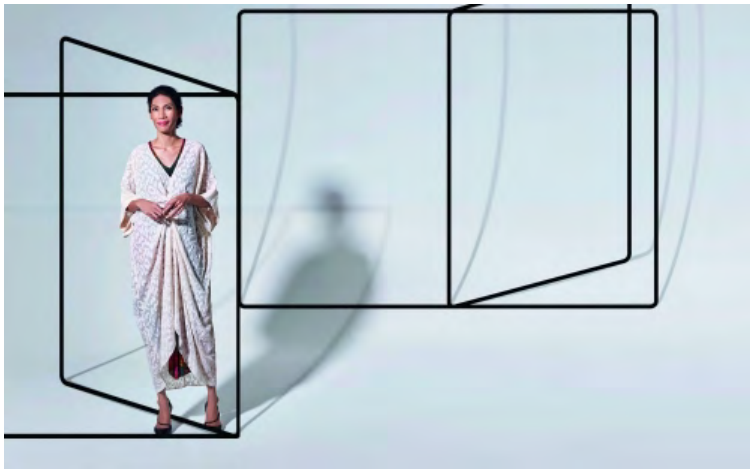
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