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HOME > BREAKING NEWS > SINGAPORE > STORY

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Health minister Gan plays the barber in Hair for Hope

By Irene Tham



At the head-shaving event organised by non-profit Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF), guest-of-honour Mr Gan admitted that he was playing barber for the first time and was 'nervous'. -- ST PHOTO: LIM WUI LIANG

FIRST, he was shocked. Then, anxiety took over after Jatin Khemlani, 15, learned just a few days ago that he would get his head shaved by Health Minister Gan Kim Yong at the ninth annual Hair for Hope.

'He is a minister, not a barber,' said Jatin. On Saturday morning, at the head-shaving event organised by non-profit Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF), guest-of-honour Mr Gan admitted that he was playing barber for the first time and was 'nervous'.

And even though he had to change to a larger shaver halfway through working on Jatin's thick locks, Mr Gan completed the job.

Jatin, a childhood cancer survivor, too, was glad he could be part of the event to bring hope to children battling cancer - although he was seen wincing occasionally throughout the shave. Saturday saw the fourth time he has lost his hair for a good cause. His continued participation in the event is his way of expressing thanks to the love and care he received during his five-year journey as a cancer patient. Jatin was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia when he was two, but later recovered from the illness. (Lymphoblastic leukaemia can be fatal in as little as a few weeks if left untreated).

'This is the least I could do for children with cancer to show them that they are not alone,' said the Secondary 4 student of St Patrick's School.

More than 1,400 people registered to shave their heads - the highest ever recorded - at the two-day Hair for Hope event at VivoCity which ends Sunday. CCF hopes to raise \$1.8 million in 2011 from donations.

24

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