

# 455 make bald statement for cancer

Some 455 people shaved their heads yesterday to raise more than \$100,000 for children battling cancer at the annual Hair for Hope event, held at the Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery.

They included staff from the monastery, volunteers, devotees and Buddhist patrons.

The event is organised by the Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF), which aims to get at least 6,000 participants and raise \$3.6 million this year.

Two of the participants were Mr Chong Hui Kwee and his 14-year-old daughter Joanna, a CCF beneficiary.

Joanna was diagnosed in 2014 with a type of brain cancer called medulloblastoma, which is currently in remission. While yesterday marked her father's sixth Hair for Hope, it was the first time for her.

"I was a bit nervous at the start, but now I'm feeling happy," said the Secondary 1 student.

"I want to shave to support the other children who still have cancer and tell them not to give up."

Mr Chong, 51, who has been a supporter of Hair for Hope even before his daughter was diagnosed with cancer, said that her illness had made the cause even more significant.

"That made me understand and appreciate it more, and that's why I carry on almost every year," said Mr Chong, who quit his job as a research and development manager to be a full-time caregiver to his daughter.

Local actor Andie Chen, who is one of the three Hair for Hope ambassadors this year, also took to the stage with Joanna and Mr Chong to get his head shaved.

Ms Neo Lay Tin, CCF's executive director, said: "Each year, CCF is encouraged by the enthusiasm of the organiser, devotees and members of the public who shave at Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery.

"CCF would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery and supporters for believing in our cause. Together, we can tell children with cancer that it is okay to be bald, and build a community of support for them and their families."

The monastery in Bishan has been Hair for Hope's top satellite partner since 2012, raising more than \$1.2 million for the cause.

The two-day main event of Hair for Hope will be held on July 27 from 11am to 7pm and on July 28 from 11am to 6pm at VivoCity mall.

Felicia Choo

## SUPPORT NETWORK

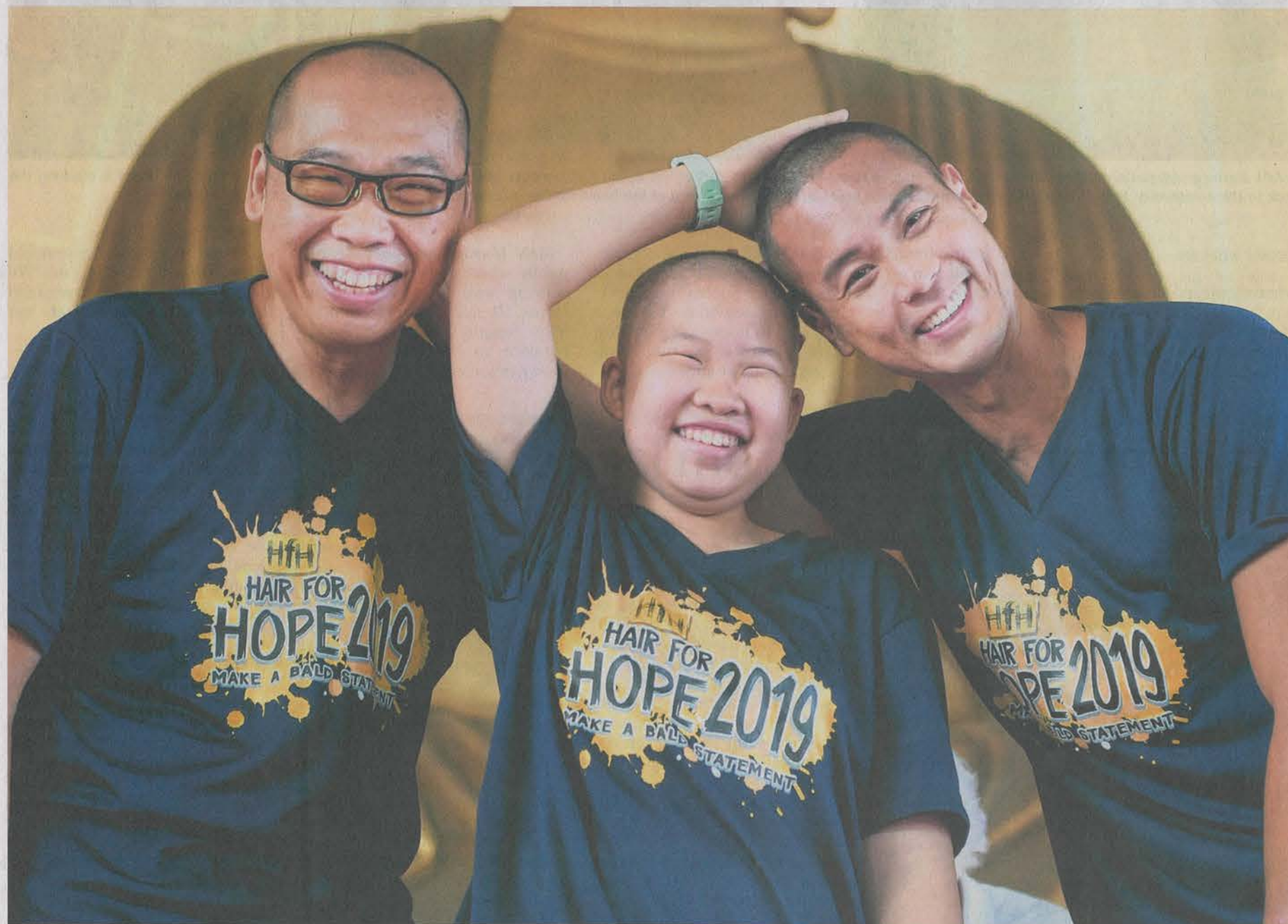
Together, we can tell children with cancer that it is okay to be bald, and build a community of support for them and their families.



MS NEO LAY TIN, Children's Cancer Foundation's executive director.

Right: Mr Chong Hui Kwee (left of image), his daughter Joanna and local actor Andie Chen, one of this year's Hair for Hope ambassadors.

Far right: Mr Chong and his daughter getting their heads shaved as part of Hair for Hope at Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery yesterday.



(From left) Mr Chong Hui Kwee, Joanna Chong and actor Andie Chen with freshly shaved heads in support of the Hair for Hope event, organised by the Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF). Through the event, CCF aims to raise awareness of childhood cancer. It hopes to attract at least 6,000 participants and raise \$3.6 million this year. PHOTOS: LIANHE ZAOBAO