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Hair for Hope 2022 Kicks-Offs to Make a BALD Statement for Childhood Cancer Patients and Survivors Battling Social Stigmas and Long-Term Impacts of Childhood Cancer

Singapore, 1 May 2022 – In its 19th run, Children's Cancer Foundation's (CCF) annual flagship fundraiser campaign, Hair for Hope (HfH), has a bigger message than telling children with cancer that it is OK to be bald this year. The campaign will kick-off at Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery (KMSPKS) on 1 May 2022 (Sunday) to spotlight the long-lasting effects of social stigmas surrounding one of the most common side-effects of chemotherapy faced by childhood cancer patients and survivors – hair loss and being bald.

Children with cancer are often hit hard by temporary hair loss as it serves as a physical reminder that they are battling a life-threatening illness. However, being mocked by others for being bald leaves them with a permanent and invisible scar far more detrimental than the hair loss itself and affects their long-term psychological and social well-being.

Take **22-year-old CCF childhood cancer survivor, Lee Xin Tong**, for instance. Diagnosed with brain tumour when she was 15, Xin Tong decided to shave off all her locks when they kept falling out in patches. It was a liberating move that finally made her feel like she was in control of her predicament, until the weird looks from her friends and the public left her with doubts and made her self-conscious. To make matters worse, she also had to come to terms with permanent hearing loss in her left ear, poor stamina and stunted hair growth post-cancer.

“Living with the aftermath of childhood cancer has been challenging. I sometimes hope that my friends would be more considerate towards my needs,” admits Xin Tong. “By being one of the first ceremonial shavees to kick-off Hair for Hope this year, I hope to send a clear encouragement to other children with cancer that we can still be confident individuals even though we are bald.”

Fellow **CCF brain tumour survivor, 27-year-old Tay Qin Han**, also shared a similar hair loss experience as Xin Tong. Although he was prepared for the day he would lose his locks, it was still a solemn affair when he woke up to clumps of hair on his pillow.

“I remember trying to ease the tension by cracking a joke with my mother about the hair care ads we kept seeing on television, but it broke her. She kept crying after that,” shares Qin Han.

His brush with brain tumour left him with double vision from permanent damage to his left optic nerve and in fear of potential seizures at any time. However, the long-term impact that irks him most is his crowning glory that has never grown back to its full volume.

The trooper admits that while this has affected his self-confidence very much, it is still “not a good enough reason” to deter him from making a BALD statement at Hair for Hope annually for the past eight runs.

Accompanying both Xin Tong and Qin Han as the final ceremonial shavee is **CCF's Chief Executive Officer, Ms Peng Hai Ying**. She is shaving her long tresses to commemorate CCF's 30th anniversary, a proud milestone for the organisation since its humble days of meeting the unmet needs of children with Leukaemia in 1992.

"I shave not only to tell our children that it is OK to be bald but also to celebrate CCF's achievement in becoming the only full-fledged social service agency offering integrated psychosocial support for children and families affected by all types of childhood cancers today," shares Hai Ying.

Gracing this year's HfH campaign launch is **Mr Baey Yam Keng, Senior Parliamentary Secretary of Ministry of Transport**. Mr Baey, who empathises with CCF beneficiaries as he is currently battling nose cancer, will lead the opening ceremony of HfH 2022 by shaving the head of Xin Tong. KMSPKS represent, Venerable Chuan Sheng, and Operations Manager from QB Net International Pte Ltd, HfH 2022's Official Hairstylist, Ms Elva Chung, will also join in the ceremonial event by shaving the locks of Qin Han and Hai Ying respectively.

Mr Baey says: "As adults, we understand the concepts of being ill, pain, treatment, as well as side-effects. This helps us to manage and speak about our fears. I can only imagine what it must be like for a young child who has to undergo what I went through for my own treatment. The entire ordeal must be foreign, confusing and frightening for them and their parents."

CCF Chairman, Mr Ho Cheng Huat, says: "Over the last 30 years, CCF has been redefining childhood cancer care for our children and families. We will continue to do so with a progressive care model in which our ears, hearts and minds align to their needs."

Hair for Hope 2022 is made possible through the kind support of BL Falcon Pte Ltd – Official Media Sponsor (Out-of-Home); CWT Pte. Limited – Official Logistics Sponsor; Horangi Cyber Security – Official Cyber Security Sponsor; Moove Media Pte. Ltd. – Official Media Sponsor (Outdoor); QB Net International Pte Ltd – Official Hairstylist; 88.3JIA and POWER 98 LOVE SONGS – Official Media Sponsor (Radio); Aoyama Hair Studio, Apgujeong Hair Studio, Ghetto Cutz, Hair Fitness, James Barker Barber, Kerluxe Hair Studio, Myeongdong Hair Studio, QB House Premium, Sultans, Sultans of Shave, Woodstock Barber – Supporting Hairstylists.

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Annex A

About Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF)

Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF) is a social service agency with a mission to improve the quality of life of children with cancer and their families through enhancing their emotional, social and medical well-being.

Founded in 1992, CCF provides children with cancer and their families the much needed support in their battle against the life-threatening illness. Over the years, CCF has helped more than 3,500 children and their families at different stages of the illness and recovery.

CCF's 30th Anniversary



In 2022, CCF commemorates 30 years of **redefining childhood cancer care** for children and families affected by cancer. To mark our commitment to the CCF mission, the design of our anniversary logo centres on **our purpose, who we serve and how we deliver**.

The many **smiling faces** represent our children who are at the heart of why we do what we do. The **helping hands** make up our staff team who are always within an arm's reach, the **beating hearts** promises passion and only our best work. And CCF's Specialist Clinic programmes – **art, play and animal-assisted therapy** – allow the voices of our children to be heard.

The logo encapsulates not only the 30 years of achievements in journeying with our children but also our 30-year promise of a progressive care model that continues to listen to the needs of our beneficiaries.

About Hair for Hope (HfH)

HfH is the only head-shaving campaign in Singapore that serves to raise funds and childhood cancer awareness. Every shaven head represents an understanding by an individual of the ordeals that a child with cancer is subjected to. By volunteering to shave, the shavees become CCF's ambassadors in spreading childhood cancer messages to their family, friends and colleagues.

Through this symbolic gesture, we aim to:

- Create awareness of childhood cancer in Singapore
- Show children with cancer and their families that they are not alone in their fight against cancer
- Tell children with cancer that it is OK to be bald
- Raise funds to help children with cancer and their families
- Build a community of support for children with cancer and their families

The funds raised will enable CCF to continue providing critical programmes and services to assist our children with cancer and their families to cope with the needs at different stages of the illness and recovery.

To register: <https://www.hairforhope.org.sg>

To donate: <https://www.hairforhope.org.sg/donate/>

Quick Facts

Number of children and families that CCF served in 2021	608
Most common cancer among children	Leukaemia
The largest age group of children newly-diagnosed with cancer	0-4 years old
No. of children diagnosed with childhood cancer in 2021	136