

Peddalling to power cancer research

Eunice Sng speaks to young cyclists who used their passion to support a good cause

During Chinese New Year, young Singaporeans looked forward to visiting their relatives' houses to receive red packets.

But for Por Yu Han, nine, he had a second goal in mind.

The Primary 4 pupil at St. Joseph's Institution International also seized the chance to ask his extended family for donations that would go towards cancer research. In 1½ months, he managed to raise more than \$4,000.

Yu Han was one of the 92 participants of CanCycle 2023. They could clock in 25km or 100km to raise funds for work done in labs that could possibly lead to better treatments for cancer patients.

The cyclethon was jointly organised by the Cancer Institute of Singapore, National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) and the National University of Singapore Centre for Cancer Research. It has raised more than \$50,000 as of press time.

The boy was not the only young person who joined the fundraiser. In fact, it was Yu Han's schoolmate, Sebastian Djene Putera, also nine, who roped him in. The duo, who were the youngest to participate in CanCycle, registered to be in the same team, CHAINcancer.

"I wanted to support patients with cancer because it is hard for them," said Sebastian, "They lose hair when they get chemotherapy."

Yu Han and Sebastian wasted no opportunities to garner as many donations as possible.

Sebastian's mother, Dr Caryn Wujanto, said: "When I told Sebastian that we are meeting my long-time friend for dinner at the airport the next day, the first thing he asked me was 'Can we ask her for donations?'"

Yu Han and Sebastian carved out time amid their hectic schedules to ride their bicycles.

The boys would cycle with their mothers



Por Yu Han (left) managed to raise more than \$4,000 for cancer research. He was inspired to do so by his schoolmate Sebastian Djene Putera who, together with his mother Dr Caryn Wujanto, raised more than \$3,000. CMG FILE PHOTO

after enrichment classes on the weekends. All of them have exceeded their target of 100 km.

Through the park connectors, Dr Wujanto and Sebastian rode from central to eastern parts of Singapore.

In particular, Sebastian enjoyed riding on the Kallang Loop because their route would resemble a "flying unicorn" on Strava – a GPS-enabled fitness app. "That's the highlight of finishing your ride – when you look at your route," said Dr Wujanto.

One other interesting event occurred when Sebastian and Dr Wujanto were riding at East Coast Park. An older group of cyclists passed by and shouted: "Go boy! All the best!"

Although they did not know that the pair was cycling for CanCycle, Sebastian was heartened by their words. Dr Wujanto quipped: "At that moment, he wished he could have put a sign saying 'please support me' on his bike!"

Sebastian is no stranger to charity acts. Last year, he participated in TalkMed Relay For Life, another cycling event hosted by the Singapore Cancer Society to celebrate cancer survivors.

After a teacher-in-charge of the school newsletter invited him to write an article about his fund-raising journey, donations poured in from other other parents. Even his principal chipped in.

Sebastian sent thank you letters to every single donor.

Together with his mother, they compiled photos from their cycling trips and stuck the prints on yellow paper. He penned his messages of appreciation inside and handed them out to the donors.

"The one he wrote to his principal is now up on her wall," said Dr Wujanto.

Another active participant of CanCycle was 14-year-old Pramukh Chandrakanth Kamath. The Grade 8 student at NPS International School cycled two to three times per week and felt good that he was giving back to society through his actions.

To all youths interested in charity, Pramukh advised: "Find a cause that you are passionate about, and focus on making an impact no matter how small it is. It is important to stay motivated and focused, and to remember that every bit helps."

ANSWERS

Page 10-11: 1. destinations 2. hospitally 3. emigrated 4. ancestors 5. connected 6. originating 7. founded 8. important 9. remembered 10. congregate 11. showcased 12. substances 13. gmm
Page 12-11 Grammar Cloze 1. by 2. in 3. of 4. to 5. as 6. but 7. At 8. on 9. with 10. since Vocabulary 1. d 2. e 3. f 4. b 5. g 6. c 7. h 8. a

