

[Home](#) » [Sports](#) » Vol 16 No 3 » Article

sports

Charity run at F1 racing track

Thousands of people ran on the Marina Bay Street Circuit, raising funds for the needy in S'pore

Cerelia Lim



FLAG OFF: Determination and perseverance powers these tough runners instead of diesel. PHOTOS | FOO CHEE CHANG

The action on the F1 circuit was slower than usual, as 4,000 runners made their way round the track.

But what it lacked in drama, it made up for in heart, as the runners were raising money for charity. The run on September 6th was just one of several events where sports and charity mix.

"Organising a run to raise funds is a mass event. It allows people to come together and bond as a community," said Mr Stanley Tan, chairman of Run Singapore Organising Committee.

First-year student from Nanyang Business School, Melissa Loo was one of 100 NTU students taking part in Run Singapore, a charity run organised by Singapore Cares.

Each one paid for the privilege of being there. "\$25 for the run is a bit steep," said Corinna Tan, a third-year student from the School of Biological Sciences. "But, since it is for charity, it is reasonable."

"I took part because I get to run on the F1 track," Aniruddha Majomder, a third-year doctorate student from the School of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering, said.

The event has raised more than \$1 million dollars which will benefit charity organisations such as Beyond Social Services, Girl Guides Singapore and the Yellow Ribbon Project.

"Combining sports with charity allows them to be a part of volunteerism and community."

Katherine Teo
Chairman
RHB-NTU Goal for Fund 2009

Coincidentally, the Yellow Ribbon Run was also flagged off earlier in the day at the SAF open field near Changi Village. It raised \$50,000 for the Yellow Ribbon Fund to help ex-offenders re-integrate into society.

NTU's Students' Union has also used sports to raise funds, collaborating with RHB Bank Singapore to organise a street soccer challenge which raised \$13,000 for needy NTU students in March.

Although the amount raised fell short of its target of \$40,000, it was clear that drawing on the popularity of soccer helped to attract more participants this year as compared to last year.

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"Youths identify with sports and combining sports with charity allows them to be a part of volunteerism and community," said Katherine Teo, chairman of RHB-NTU Goal for Fund 2009.

Mr Tan added: "Organising a run to raise funds is a mass event. It allows people to come together and bond as a community."

Last year, students from the Singapore Management University (SMU) and some junior colleges organised the Ultimate Frisbee 2008 competition to raise funds for Hope Centre, with 16 teams from different schools competing.

The students said that they wanted to go through different avenues to raise money.

"We didn't want to do a charity project that is the norm, where you do something and you don't feel the exact kind of ownership from it," said Denise Teo, Project leader of Ultimate Frisbee 2008.

These events show that sports is a good way to raise money for social causes. The first challenge though, is to get a sponsor for the start-up costs.

"For such a basic set up, I will say it costs around \$250,000," said Mr Jeffery Foo, 37, the events management contractor of Run Singapore.

Full or partial sponsorship from corporations usually helps to offset the five figure organising costs.

In the case of Run Singapore, their organising costs were fully covered by corporations such as Global Yellow Pages Media. NTU also contributed by sponsoring the registration fees for the first 100 students who signed up.

Mr Laurence Lien, CEO of the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) competed in Run Singapore, and said such sporting events are volunteer-driven and the participation of everyone is important.

Students from Hua Yi Secondary School volunteered as designers for the appreciation tokens given to sponsors.

Supporters of Run Singapore were treated to percussion items performed by SMU and Singapore Polytechnic students.

NVPC hopes to attract more of these volunteers and to promote volunteerism as a regular way of life.

"I'm running this race for charity," said Zahrul Bahri, a first-year student from Ngee Ann Polytechnic.



NTU Spirit: Chua Sin Yee and Lim Chee Kean, members of the NTU Runners Club at Run Singapore, doing their part for charity.