

TAKING HEART

Care Corner ruckathon raises S\$500,000 to date, involves corporate participation

The funds raised will go towards programmes for those facing financial stress, mental health challenges, frailty and more

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Taking Heart

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Yong Lum Sung, board chairman, Care Corner Singapore (far left) and Patrick Yeo, deputy markets leader, PwC Singapore (second from right) with ruckathon participants. PHOTO: CARE CORNER SINGAPORE

NON-PROFIT organisation Care Corner Singapore hosted the country's first major ruckathon on Saturday (Sep 14), raising S\$491,950. It aims to raise S\$1.5 million by end-October.

The Uplift For Life Ruckathon 2024 took place at Punggol Waterway Park and involved corporate participation. Nearly 2,000 participants embarked on a 5 km walk while carrying a 5 kg backpack.

Christian Chao, chief executive of Care Corner, said: "With participants carrying weighted backpacks, it symbolises the weight our beneficiaries bear and the community's collective effort to 'lift' these burdens off their shoulders."

The funds raised will go towards supporting individuals who face financial stress, mental health challenges, caregiving responsibilities, frailty and social isolation. They will be used for student care, learning and special

needs support, free health screenings, mental health and counselling support, and early detection of frailty and intervention programmes.

“These funds will go towards investing in long-term preventive and developmental programmes for children, seniors or individuals facing mental health challenges,” she added.

The event included adventure zones, where participants took on extra weight on their backpacks to symbolise carrying a heavier load to complete obstacle courses.

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“After this, participants will carry a lighter backpack labelled with ways Care Corner supports our beneficiaries, demonstrating how the community’s support can help lighten these loads,” said Chao.

Corporate participation

Since June, OCBC and Oatly were involved in the ruckathon to help train and prepare participants. More than 90 seniors from Care Corner’s Active Ageing Centres trained over the past three months.

The seniors trained twice a week by exercising to improve strength and mobility, with milestone check-ins to prepare them for the ruckathon. About 10 Oatly volunteers participated in four strength-training sessions, while more than 30 volunteers from OCBC supported two training ruckathons.

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Chao said: “With corporate volunteers acting as befrienders, they create a safe exercise environment with proper supervision, encouragement, and motivation.”

OCBC assistant vice-president Lin Lijuan said the seniors were “motivated and excited”, making the experience “rewarding” for the employees.

Katherine Quek, senior regional human resources manager at Oatly, said

the company hired an instructor just to train its volunteers for this event.

Other corporates participated in the ruckathon and its fundraising efforts.

For instance, 40 representatives from Manulife Financial Advisers took part. Tan Hong Tau, its chief executive, noted that another 1,400 financial representatives will be invited to join in the fundraising efforts.

A group of Visa employees also rucked alongside the seniors. Serene Gay, group country manager of regional South-east Asia, said the company encourages employees to give back to the community because it improves health and well-being, helps them learn new skill sets and enhances employee engagement.

Meanwhile, PwC Singapore sent a team of nearly 70 employees to ruck. Patrick Yeo, deputy markets leader, said: "Group activities centred on health, well-being and the community, such as the ruckathon, are particularly appealing to our people as they encourage doing good together while staying active."

UBS, which gathered almost 100 employees to take part, has partnered Care Corner through its UBS Optimus Foundation since February 2023. They collaborated for programmes to foster preventive healthcare for children from low-income families and befriend children from the organisation's student care centres, said Sheryl Fofaria, head of social impact and philanthropy, South-east Asia.

Care Corner's Chao added: "Corporates also offer valuable resources, expertise and a broad network that helps us expand and sustain our preventive work, ultimately aiding in breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty."

The Uplift For Life fundraising will be open until Oct 31.

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