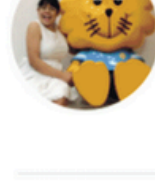




Feature

Made a Bald Statement

Instead of the usual trim, our writer made a different decision - to take part in this year's Hair for Hope! The 2024 theme is "Hope is Yours to Give".



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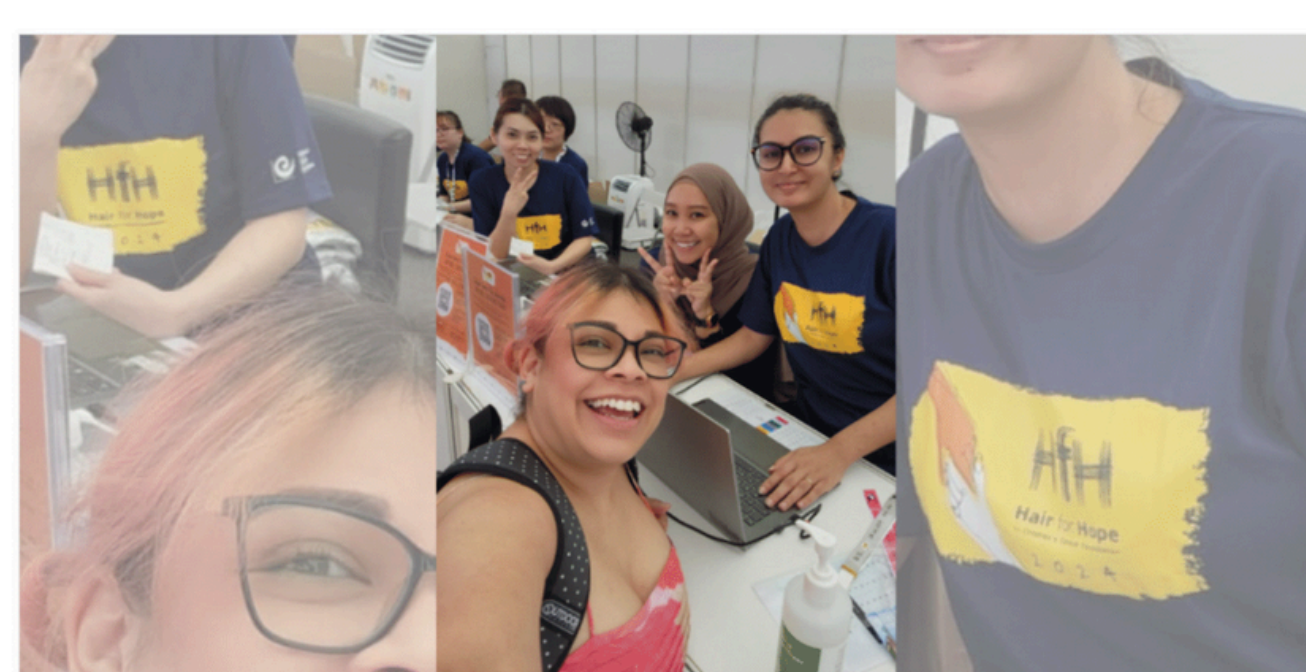
Two months ago, I had this wild thought dawn on me. Instead of getting the usual trim, I wanted to shave off my hair.

I shared the idea with my best friend and she pointed me in the direction of [Hair for Hope](#) — the Children's Cancer Foundation's (CCF) advocacy and fundraising campaign. It was then I learnt that I could raise funds for children suffering from childhood cancer with a haircut.

Cancer, like any other health challenge is a costly, a struggle for caregivers and demotivating for patients. Having to fight through both emotional and physical pain is something I could not fathom for adults, much less children.

The least we can do to support others is to raise funds that can be channelled to families who need it and this platform allows for us ordinary folks to raise funds for the cause — a brilliant idea!

For those who contributed to my fundraising attempt - thank you for your generosity and aiding in surpassing my humble goal. I am inspired and grateful by your individual kindness.



Excited to collect my HFH t-shirt and identification tag. Love the energy of the volunteers. Image credit : Stacey

Weeks leading up to what I called "Shave Head Day", I put up videos to call for donations and it was a delight that I raised the amount that superseded the initial goal. Honestly, I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to and that I would let the children down.

When it came to the actual shave, I sat there with all sorts of emotions and thoughts running through my brain:

"I am voluntarily doing this knowing that my hair will grow back and I will live another day but what about the families, caregivers and children who don't know what the next few hours or days may bring for them?"

How do they feel?

Is what I'm doing even enough?

How would I share the news with a child that their bodies aren't the same as others around them?

How do they walk this journey and heal from it?"

I remembered the words of my boss - "Keep the smile on! Enjoy the process". So I did. I smiled! I reminded myself, that my contribution for now is to raise funds for the families.



We forget that the shavers are volunteers too. Image credit : Natalie Sidik

It was a moment of realisation and perspective. We all have a journey to walk, and what makes a difference is how we perceive the journey and make the most of our human experience.

If one is to take it bravely, confidently and kindly with smiles on our faces, this keeps hope flowing through our bodies and minds; and in turn our souls will feel gratitude. Focusing on joy in comparison to worrying about the next moment is what keeps hope afloat — no matter how tough our lives may be, we can make the choice to be content and hopeful.



Greeted with fist bumps after the shave. Image credit : Natalie Sidik

As I got down from the stage, I was greeted by fist bumps and cheers from my friends who were there, it really meant a lot to have support both online and in person.

Walking around with a bald head has been quite an experience. I've received quite a few rude and intrusive stares, some curious looks and some smiles and head nods.

But it seems like out of every 5 encounters, 3 are positive ones:

Fresh from my shave, there was a lady who came up to me and gave me a very encouraging message of support and respect — "I just want you to know that you look awesome, it's a really nice thing that you've done!"

I was gifted extra meatballs at a hawker stall along with a smile of encouragement.

And the bus drivers plying the routes near my home now greet me in the morning with a head nod and a "good morning!"

I have received lovely words of affirmation in person and on social media for my brave act and I wish to pass this messages on to all the children who are bravely seeking their treatment: It's OK to be bald, what matters more than your hair, is YOU — that you are here, and that is more than enough.

Just like how kindness stems from being considerate and making kind gestures, hope is ours to give.



Thank you my dear friends for supporting and celebrating hope. Image credit: Karen Yong

We can make a difference, big or small. Reach out to a cause that you resonate with and contribute. Be the reason that someone smiles today.