

EMBARGOED TILL AFTER 6 SEP 2021, 12PM – MEDIA RELEASE

September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month: Children's Cancer Foundation Leads Singapore in Global Movement to Raise Childhood Cancer Awareness

The month-long initiative includes light up of the National Gallery of Singapore and KK Women's & Children's Hospital, an art-themed exhibition at VivoCity and an interactive virtual art canvas wall for Singaporeans to encourage children and families affected by cancer.

Singapore, 1 September 2021 – As the leading provider of resources and psychosocial services to children and families affected by cancer in Singapore, Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF) joins the global mission to advocate for the childhood cancer community in commemoration of **Childhood Cancer Awareness Month (CCAM)** in September.

CCF is Singapore's representative at Childhood Cancer International (CCI) which is the largest patient support organisation for childhood cancer globally. It will join its counterparts in other member countries such as Australia, India, Japan, Spain and Portugal in CCI's global movement – "Light Up Hope, Light Up Gold".

This year, CCF has garnered the support of both the National Gallery of Singapore and KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) for their building exteriors to be lit in gold, the symbolic colour that represents childhood cancer awareness, for the entire month of September.

"It is the first time that CCF is commemorating CCAM on a national scale and in collaboration with partners like The National Gallery of Singapore and KKH. We are so grateful and humbled by their enthusiasm to help us pilot this initiative and show solidarity for the childhood cancer community in Singapore," says **Ms Peng Hai Ying, CCF Chief Executive Officer**.

"As a Children's Hospital in Singapore managing children and teenagers with blood disorders and various cancers, KKH would want to do more for our young patients. For over two decades, CCF has been a steadfast partner to our patients and their families, rendering support in what can often be an arduous journey for our patients. We are also grateful to CCF's ongoing support in cancer research and trials to help KKH offer the most optimal treatment options to the children under our care. Our patients who have recovered and joined our Childhood Cancer Survivorship Programme for longer term monitoring is testament to the partnership with CCF for holistic patient care," shares **Dr Soh Shui Yen, Head and Senior Consultant, Haematology/Oncology Service, Department of Paediatric Subspecialties, KK Women's and Children's Hospital**.

"As an institution dedicated to inspiring a more thoughtful and inclusive society through art, we at the Gallery are proud to stand together with the CCF in its efforts to raise awareness for this vitally important cause. Through this gesture of support, we hope to inspire more Singaporeans to join us in giving encouragement and hope to all children and families battling cancer," says **Ms Chong Siak Ching, CEO, National Gallery Singapore**.

The CCAM light-ups will run parallel to another meaningful campaign led by CCF, **The Hope Train**, which aims to build a more inclusive society for its beneficiaries, and raise funds for the Foundation.

The campaign comprises two key activities – **an arts-themed childhood cancer exhibition at VivoCity (“Artville”)** from 6 to 19 September and an **interactive virtual art canvas (“Sketchville”)** from 13 to 30 September that invites supporters to doodle and leave words of encouragement for children who are still battling the life-threatening illness.

Not to be missed is the 12-piece creative showcase of CCF calico whale dolls designed by CCF beneficiaries between ages three and 18 years old at Artville.

Calico dolls (also known as ‘trauma dolls’) are used by CCF to help children with cancer process and cope with their hospital stays and medical procedures. Each calico whale doll featured at the exhibition is unique and tells of the children’s childhood cancer struggles, hopes and dreams. As their way of giving back, all CCF beneficiaries will be placing their calico whale dolls for adoption and 100% of the sales proceeds will be donated to CCF.

One of the featured artists is **seven-year-old CCF beneficiary Alveena Safiyya Binti Haddy Shuhry** who was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia (ALL) even before she got to celebrate her first birthday. She had responded well to chemotherapy and was en-route to being declared cancer-free when her cancer relapsed again, just before her fifth birthday. Her calico whale, which she named “Aleesa the Pop It! Artist”, is a personal reflection of herself and how she copes creatively with her frequent hospital admissions and experiences.

“Aleesa is a baby whale that sings, dances, and makes rainbow splatters wherever she swims. That is how she spends time through good and bad days,” says Alveena. Her **CCF Art Therapist, Ms Yenn Ang**, shares, “Alveena observes her environment and turns them into art. Creating imagaries of her own experiences allows her to gain control over difficult situations.”

Another young artist is **five-year-old Damien Wai Renjie** who was also diagnosed with ALL at the tender age of two in June 2018. While he had fun blending colours and “administering treatment” on his calico doll named ‘ABC Whale’, the art-making process also reflects a snippet of his world view of his childhood cancer struggles.

One of the most striking features of Damien’s whale is the nasogastric (NG) tube attached to it, a flexible tube of rubber that is passed through the nose, down through the esophagus, and into the stomach. The NG tube can be uncomfortable, especially when it is being placed but necessary for administering nutrients when the child's appetite is affected from chemotherapy. “ABC Whale is sick and has to go to the hospital often. He has a tube because he can't eat,” says Damien.

“Damien’s whale is a persona of himself when he was ill. We co-named it ‘ABC Whale’ together to reflect the three ‘special powers’ that helped him get through his cancer journey. They are **Appreciation, Bravery and Celebrations** of the little milestones,” **says Ms Rebecca Sit, Damien’s mother.**



Expressing her support for CCF children and their families, **Mediacorp artiste, He Ying Ying**, has volunteered to hop onboard CCF's The Hope Train as its celebrity ambassador this year to help raise childhood cancer awareness and tell CCF beneficiaries that they are not alone. The 26-year-old self-professed art enthusiast will personally design an exclusive CCF calico whale doll which will be put up for sale upon completion to raise funds for CCF.

"I am immensely thankful to be the ambassador of The Hope Train Campaign for CCF. I have always wanted to use my platform to raise awareness for causes that resonate deeply within me. This campaign rings especially close to my heart, because CCF beneficiaries are given an avenue to tell their stories, hopes and dreams through their artistic interpretation of the calico whales. I hope everyone can join me to create a more inclusive community for children and families affected by cancer," shares Ying Ying.

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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 3,200 children and their families at different stages of the illness and recovery.

Armed with the vision of providing world-class resources and psychosocial services to families impacted by childhood cancer, CCF employs professional caseworkers and counsellors, and adopts an integrated hospital-community-home service model to offer a spectrum of critical services to our beneficiaries.

About CCF's The Hope Train 2021

CCF's The Hope Train is a public education campaign to commemorate Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in September each year. The initiative aims to raise childhood cancer awareness and funds for CCF through experiential activities.

This year, we invite you to hop on an artsy journey with CCF's The Hope Train from 6 September to 3 October 2021.

Co-create the journey with us and discover the therapeutic effects of art for children with cancer. To make a donation or find out more, visit www.thehopetrain.sg

Artville - CCF Art Exhibition

6 – 19 September 2021

VivoCity, Southwest Boulevard, Level 1

Sketchville – Interactive Virtual Wall

13 – 30 September 2021

www.thehopetrain.sg/sketchville

About Childhood Cancer in Singapore

Quick Facts

Number of children that CCF served in 2020	510
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 2020	121

Annex B

About Childhood Cancer International and 'Light Up Hope, Light Up Gold'

Childhood Cancer International (CCI) was founded in 1994, as an umbrella organisation of childhood cancer grassroots and national parent organisations. Today, CCI is the largest patient support organisation for childhood cancer.

It is a global, parent-driven non-profit that represents more than 170 parent organisations, childhood cancer survivor associations, childhood cancer support groups, and cancer societies, in over 90 countries, across five continents.

In September, every year, CCI members and the whole community of childhood cancer champions, advocates and supporters encourage iconic buildings, historic landmarks, monuments, bridges and natural environments to Go Gold by lighting them up in GOLD or by hanging huge gold ribbons in these places.

To find out more about the Light Up Hope, Light Up Gold initiative, please visit <https://www.childhoodcancerinternational.org/cci-signature-events/light-it-up-gold/>