

# Celebrating Our LITTLE HEROES

## Paediatric Brain and Solid Tumour Awareness Day 2018

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Zahaan sat shyly beside his mother as she proudly presented a picture he drew, depicting him pushing his little trolley up a slope. He never gave up despite his exhaustion; he never complained and he shared that he made it by always focusing on the goal ahead and never stopping to look back. What wise words from our young little fighter!

Very often in life, it is important that we push on without looking back. Focusing on the journey ahead will eventually get us to our destination, however long that may take. And Zahaan reminded us of that during his short sharing session.

Zahaan, along with 79 other little heroes and their families and friends, was part of the group of brave fighters who participated in our fourth annual Paediatric Brain and Solid Tumour Awareness Day (PBSTA), held on 4 February 2018, which coincided with World Cancer Day 2018. This year, the fun-filled and educational day held at the KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) also included our brave heroes who are battling against solid tumours. Launched in 2014 as PBTA (Paediatric Brain Tumour Awareness) and newly renamed to PBSTA, the event aims to raise public awareness about both paediatric brain and solid tumours while providing support for affected patients and families.

Although rare, childhood cancers are the second most common cause of death in children. 55% of paediatric tumours are brain and solid tumours. In fact, brain tumours are the second most common childhood tumour. Moreover, brain and solid tumours in childhood are associated with faster growth of the tumour tissue, leading to long-term effects on growth and neurological

development. This makes the journey all the more difficult for both our patients and their loved ones. With greater awareness of the diseases and prevalence, we hope to engender more interest and to involve various organisations in understanding our little fighters' journeys.

### Involvement of schools

This year, we invited students from various junior colleges and universities to join in our celebration and affirmation of the efforts of our little fighters. Through recruitment emails and an educational video on paediatric and solid brain tumours, we were able to gather 57 volunteers for the event day to set up booths and befriend our little heroes. The event was made possible with the encouraging support and combined efforts of students from Duke-NUS Medical School (Duke-NUS); National University of Singapore (NUS) High School; NUS Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies; NUS Faculty of Science; School of Law, Singapore Management University; and Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, Nanyang Technological University.

We hope that with the involvement of more schools and through the education provided to the students and volunteers, we will be able to provide a platform for the students to interact with and

understand our little fighters' journeys better, as well as to build rapport and lasting friendships.

### Speaker series and performances

This year, attendees gathered in the auditorium for a series of talks and performances. Asst Prof David Low Chyi Yeu opened the morning series of talks with a general introduction on paediatric tumours before Zahaan went on stage to courageously share his journey. Performances were put up by the Duke-NUS jam band and Mystinus, a group of magicians from NUS, which entertained the audience and enlivened the atmosphere with laughs and wonderment.

### Game booths, mascots, balloons, food and goodies!

Following the performances, the children and their families were welcomed to the atrium with goodie bags containing delicious snacks, thirst-quenching beverages and entertainment vouchers. They were also greeted with a variety of fun and engaging game booths, where they could shoot rubber bands out of guns fashioned from ice cream sticks and decorate their own DIY photo frames. Right next to the DIY photo frame booth stood our friendly photo booth





You can find out more about PBSTA on our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/pbsta2018> and view our educational recruitment video at <https://tinyurl.com/PBSTA2018fact>.

photographers, who were always ready to immortalise the bonds of newly formed friendships (and wacky props!) via instant printouts that fit perfectly into the DIY frames. Everyone had great fun grooving along to the catchy and child-friendly tunes blasting out of the high-quality AV system. As our participants munched on the buffet lunch and snacked on desserts specially customised for the event, the magicians, mascots and balloon sculptors wandered among our little fighters and their families, bringing a spark of wonder, unexpected gifts of balloon-sculpted animals, more photo-taking opportunities and joy to the participants. To top it all off, each participant was presented with a cap that had the words "Paediatric Brain + Solid Tumour Awareness" printed on it, as a keepsake of this memorable event.

### Notes of encouragement and hope

Amid the flurry of activities, the volunteers, Porsche drivers, and our little fighters and families penned words of encouragement on rainbow-coloured magnetic drawing boards. Messages included: "Do not give up!", "Stay strong and smile always" and "Be happy!" This was a reminder to our little fighters that they are not alone in their journey and they can encourage one another along the way with the support of family and friends.

### Porsche joy car ride

At 12.30 pm, our Guest of Honour, Mr Christopher Wilson, Executive Board of Directors of Viva Foundation, gave an inspirational speech encouraging our little fighters on their journey. All the participants and volunteers gathered to take a group photo before the official flag-off for the convoy of Porsche cars. Our little fighters could hardly contain their excitement as they looked for their driving companions. The Porsche drivers mingled well with the children and their families, joined in the games and also penned encouragements to our little fighters.

The convoy of cars, labelled with car decals displaying the event's logo, zoomed off into the horizon, ferrying the joyful little riders who waved at us shyly through the car windows as the event drew to an end.

Our little fighters continue on their uphill journey but we know they would do so with smiles on their faces, never-wavering spirits and the support of their family and new-found friends. They would discover interesting sights and have many exciting experiences awaiting them as they focus on their goals ahead without looking back.

There is indeed much to learn from our little fighters and we are happy to have shared part of their journey with them. Let us too keep this spirit of trudging through the toughest times to one day stand triumphant at the top of our little hills, and do so with hope, smiles and friends.

### Our gratitude

We would like to express our sincere appreciation for Prof David Low, who worked tirelessly with us to organise PBSTA 2018. We also thank the Guest of Honour, Mr Christopher Wilson, and esteemed speakers, Dr Enrica Tan and Zahaan with his family, for gracing the event. Our thanks also go out to the volunteers who took time out of their busy schedules to support the morning's activities. Last but not least, a big thank you to our various sponsors: Duke-NUS Medical School, KK Women's and Children's Hospital, SMA Charity Fund, VIVA Foundation, Porsche Club Singapore, Exquisite Technique, Highlight Systems, PUB Singapore, Science Centre Singapore, Shun Zhou Group, Suntory Beverage & Food Asia and Sweetest Moments, for making PBSTA 2018 a fun-filled day for our little fighters. ♦

#### Legend

1. Event mascots and emcee posing for a group shot
2. Our first customer of the event
3. Brave little hero inspiring us with his story

**L to R:** June and Michelle are the co-heads of publicity, and Samantha is head of sponsorship for PBSTA 2018. They are from Duke-NUS Medical School's Class of 2020.



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