



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Vertical Challenge 2020: HCA STEPS UP Fundraising Efforts

HCA Hospice Care (HCA) is organising The Vertical Challenge 2020 to raise \$300,000, which will fund 1,000 home visits to provide care and comfort to patients with life-limiting illnesses.

The virtual fundraising campaign is part of HCA's Dandelion Events series, which kicked off with The Dandelion Ride in October 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic has posed immense challenges for the HCA team in all aspects, with far-reaching ripple effects.

The economic fallout and safe-distancing restrictions on physical events have inflicted a double blow on HCA's fundraising efforts. But there is a silver lining – going virtual has made The Vertical Challenge more accessible to the masses, who can complete the challenge at their convenience.

“Like many charitable organisations, HCA has not been spared from the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic,” says Ms Angeline Wee, CEO of HCA Hospice Care. “Donations have dwindled significantly since May, but we are heartened by the support we have received thus far from individuals and groups alike.”

Stepping Up for HCA

To date, over 20 groups and 100 participants have signed up for The Vertical Challenge 2020. These participants come from all walks of life, comprising volunteers, staff, corporate groups and beneficiaries.

One of these groups is affectionately named “Star PALS Loves You”, comprising nurses from the HCA Star PALS (Paediatric Advanced Life Support) team and family members of Star PALS patients. Initiated by Poh Ya Nee, HCA Star PALS Senior Palliative Care Nurse, the combined team effort is a tribute to patients and their caregivers.

“It is my personal tribute to our patients and their caregivers, to send a message that their journeys are our journeys too,” Ya Nee explains. “We will be there to share the tears and laughter, the joy and fear and every step of adding life to days.”

For 17-year-old Amanda Ng, being part of the “Star PALS Loves You” team enables her to raise awareness for the cause and debunk myths surrounding palliative care. “Apart from raising funds, I really wanted to raise awareness for HCA and especially, Star PALS,” she shares. “Many people feel that hospice care is sad and devastating. However, being in Star PALS, my younger sister Amelia is living her life with so much joy.”

Tailored for the Masses

There are two categories to The Vertical Challenge 2020: the challenge and competitive. The challenge category is suitable for those who prefer a less-strenuous experience. Participants (as individuals or teams) can choose to complete vertical gains of either 50m (equivalent of 18 floors), 100m (36 floors) or 200m (72 floors) on multiple attempts.

The competitive category is catered for participants who are physically fit and looking to challenge themselves further. Participants (as individuals or teams) must complete vertical gains of either 250m (90 floors), 500m (179 floors), 1,000m (358 floors) or 2020m (722 floors) in one attempt.

Collectively, the participants have clocked a total vertical gain of 21,520m – almost 2.5 times the height of Mount Everest, which stands at 8,848m. To date, HCA is just over the halfway mark – at almost \$180,000 – of the fundraising target of \$300,000.

For more information, please visit <https://www.thedandelionevents.org/>. For media queries and interviews, please contact Wei Shi at 97539619.

A promotional banner for 'The Vertical Challenge 2020'. It features a man in a pink tank top and black shorts running up a white staircase against a blue sky with clouds. A dandelion seed head is in the foreground. On the right, there is a circular logo with a silhouette of a runner and the text 'THE VERTICAL CHALLENGE 2020'. Below the logo, it says 'RISE TO THE CHALLENGE, ADD LIFE TO DAYS!' and '1 October – 31 December 2020'. At the bottom, there is a small text block: 'As part of our Dandelion Event series, this year, HCA Hospice Care (HCA) is organising "The Vertical Challenge 2020" to raise \$300,000. This amount will fund 1,000 home visits to provide care and comfort to patients with life-limiting illnesses.' In the top left corner, there is a QR code and the text 'Register at www.thedandelionevents.org/online-registration or scan the QR code.' In the top right corner, it says 'Organised by HCA hospice care' with the HCA logo.

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ABOUT HCA HOSPICE CARE

HCA Hospice Care (HCA) is Singapore's largest home hospice provider and has been a registered charity since 1989. The organisation provides comfort and support to patients with life-limiting illnesses regardless of age, religion, ethnicity, nationality and financial status.

HCA's core service, home hospice care, is provided at no charge to about 3,500 patients annually. Besides medical care for patients, this service also entails psychosocial support for patients and caregivers. A 24/7 hotline ensures help is available round-the-clock.

HCA is a NCSS Centre of Specialisation for palliative care, and conducts palliative care training for its patients' caregivers. Its other services and programmes include day hospice care, paediatric palliative care (Star PALS), bereavement support, and outreach programmes such as the Young Caregivers Programme.

Find out more at www.hca.org.sg.