

Head Over Heels

Just after sunrise on Saturday, March 28, 140 couples from all parts of Singapore and all walks of life gathered at East Coast Park for CCS's Head Over Heels Couples Run 2009. There were young dating couples, newly-married couples and couples who had been married for decades. Some came in coordinated and matching outfits while some came with their children and strollers in tow. Despite their differences, all had these in common – to run the 8km run as a celebration of their love, and to complete it with the love of their life.

Long before the first gleam of dawn, staff and volunteers already began busily unloading goodie bags and other items at various points along the route, getting ready for the flag-off by the Guest of Honour, Mayor of South East CDC Mr Matthias Yao.

Various activities were planned en route to liken the marriage journey to a long-distance run with 'obstacles' and 'distractions' along the way – that the strength and support of one's life partner would make the journey more enjoyable, less gruelling, and help spur one another toward the finish line. Volunteer 'Cheer teams' also lined the route to root for the couples to meet the end-goal. For some couples, finishing together meant carrying their partners across the finish line!



Couples Run 2009



140 couples from all walks of life convened one Saturday morning to fall head over heels – literally – with their partners. Into its second year, the run, organised by Care Community Services Society (CCSS), was a celebration of the journey of a couple's love.

Here are what some couples have to say:

Soon Seng, who is self-employed, ran with his wife Puay Ling, a bank officer. Married for eight years, they each ran pushing a stroller with their toddler and baby. When asked how it felt running with their children in tow, Soon Seng said, "We underestimated the distance and didn't know it would be so long. We were tempted to just walk the whole way. But the atmosphere was very encouraging and supportive, and the scenery was beautiful. We enjoyed the fact that it was a family activity." Puay Ling added, "We learned not to give up and **what was important to us was not the breaking of any records but just completing this run together.**"

Students Patrick and Karen met each other at a beach volleyball game in Sentosa a couple of years ago and have been dating since. **"We came across this Couples Run while surfing the internet for runs and decided to go for it because it was something different.** This race is like a snapshot of life where we must both start and end the race together and it will require stamina, supporting one another and not leaving the other behind," said Patrick. Karen added, "It was a good run and Patrick and the volunteers, who were so supportive, kept me going."

Alfred, an engineer and his wife Sheila, who works in a hospital, dated each other for 11 years since secondary school before tying the knot in 2007. "We are both runners and Alfred usually runs way ahead of me but in this race, he was forced to stay with me," said Sheila jokingly. "It was a great opportunity for us to run a race together. This is probably the only race I can run with her," added Alfred. **When asked if they would take part in this race again, they declared unanimously, "Definitely!"**



Christopher and Molly, both managers and married

for 19 years had participated in last year's couples run and were running again this year. **"We had so much fun last year, we wanted to come back for more. We get to spend time together away from work and other responsibilities and it definitely helps us bond and build our relationship"** said Christopher. "After such a fantastic and fun run, we are going out for breakfast together," said a happy Molly.

When interviewed, our special guests, newly-married celebrity couple Randall Tan and Melody Chen shared some personal discoveries and insights. Tongue in cheek, Randall confessed, "The best thing about being married is that I don't have to drive from east to west to pick her up and send her home anymore." Said Melody, **"Sports is something that you can share and participate in for the other's sake.** Randall plays football and although I don't play, I will go with him and watch. I recently took up table tennis for a show and Randall decided to go and play table tennis with me one day instead of each of us just doing our own thing." In answer to the question on how they were planning to spend their first wedding anniversary, Randall shared that they would be renewing their vows in church on that day.

Head Over Heels Couples Run 2009 was organised by CCSS in conjunction with the MCYS-initiated "We Are Married!" celebrations. The Head Over Heels Couples Run targets married and soon-to-wed couples who embrace running as a healthy lifestyle.

