

# MY CONNECTION

A METROPOLITAN YMCA SINGAPORE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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2016



## Kick-starting MYMCA's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



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### PASSION

Youths challenge themselves in obstacle run

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### PULSE

Join us as a volunteer to mentor a youth

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### PERSPECTIVE

Conversations with the kaLIFEdoscope planning committee

# Editor's Note

## Dear Readers,

How does it feel like to see an idea, birthed two years ago, come to fruition? This was what happened with “kaLIFEdoscope”, a fun obstacle run, creatively designed by our youth, for youth to celebrate life through overcoming different obstacles.

This exhilarating event, which took place in March this year, kick-started Metropolitan YMCA's 70th Anniversary celebrations, #legacy70. We know it was not an easy feat, especially for our youths who had not experienced organising such a massive run before. We applaud them for taking on such a large-scale project.

In this issue, we connect with them to find out how they overcame the steep learning curve and braved through difficult times with sweat and tears, to see to the success of the event. We also look at how each obstacle in the run was specially designed to form a lasting impression in its participants so that they might be reminded to brace themselves up for life's obstacles similarly when challenges arise in the future.

As we look forward to the future, we also look back and appreciate what our parents have done for us. Mother's Day has passed and Father's Day is coming soon. As part of our #legacy70 celebrations, we have started a “Legacies of Love” online campaign on facebook to remember precious life lessons left by our parents. These stories serve as a springboard for every young person to create more legacies of his or her own.

Speaking of legacies, as we turn 70 this year, our building at 60 Stevens Road has also served the community for more than 3 decades! As part of our efforts to continue the legacy of our founding members to engage, equip and empower youth, our building's ground level facilities and service areas are currently undergoing a time of renewal to provide a more welcoming space to young people. We thank you for your patience and apologise for any inconvenience caused by this renovation. Once our renovations wrap up in October, we look forward to serving you even better!

There are 778,059 resident youths in Singapore in 2015, making up 19.9% of our resident population. The heartbeat of MYMCA is to engage young people to develop into individuals who would have zeal and resilience to lead positive community transformation.

The majority of youths are often sandwiched between their high achieving peers in schools or schoolmates with at-risk behaviour (such as juvenile delinquency). This group of youths are often out of the limelight, as compared to those who belong to extreme ends of the spectrum.

However as the next generation of young men and women in Singapore, these youths can be equipped, engaged and empowered for opportunities to make positive impact in their homes, work and various institutions.

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# When dreams come true



**Proving that no dream is too big, 16 youths, aged 16 to 24, organised kaLIFEdoscope – a 4.9km obstacle race to challenge one's endurance, speed and adaptability. It is a run to celebrate life with boldness and dynamism – to Work Hard, Play Hard and Live Harder!**

Held on 19 March at Pasir Ris Park, kaLIFEdoscope kickstarted Metropolitan YMCA's 70th Anniversary Celebrations. With more than 600 participants between the ages of 15 and 35 including volunteers, vendors and performers, it is possibly one of the biggest events ever

organised by MYMCA youths.

"The obstacles in the run are specially designed to represent the various obstacles we face in life," said Jasmine Poh, Assistant Manager of Youth Leadership & Development. It was developed with the intention to build resilience within participants and to allow them to experience helping and encouraging one another to triumph over life's difficulties.

"Through this race, the committee hoped to ignite a similar passion for the community amongst the youth," she said. "The participants will

be able to reflect on their own lives, look beyond their own needs and see the needs of the community as well."

The run included six obstacles – The Climb, Limbo Rambo, In-The-Net Connection, A-mazing Life, Sticks & Stones Don't Boulder Me and Never Too Tyred.

Initiated two years ago by YOUTHsync, a group involved in gathering student volunteers to provide services to the community, its first stage of execution began in October 2015, where 16 student volunteers formed the planning

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The obstacles in the run represent the obstacles we face in life.

- **Jasmine Poh**

committee to lead the project.

Prior to the event, kaLIFEscope was featured on thesmartlocal.com as one of the top 10 coolest themed runs to look out for in year 2016. This came as a huge surprise to the youth mentors and planning committee. “We’re still not sure how TheSmartLocal knew about the event, but we suspect it was through Facebook,” said Ng Wee Leng, Youth Executive as the planning committee had used Facebook as a key platform in publicising the event.

Mr Sergius Wat (board member of the National Youth Council), Guest-of-Honour of the event was welcomed with majestic beats from Mangrove Learning’s Japanese Daiko drums before he delivered his speech in the opening ceremony.

Ngee Ann Polytechnic’s Baracuda Batucada continued to build up the atmosphere as they cheered the participants at the flag-off with their bonafide and sensational beats.

There were two live bands - Kudos Street, who performed to songs like “Just The Way You Are” by Bruno Mars and Chasing Daylight, who engaged the attendees with their upbeat



performance.

Largely exceeding the expectations of the planning committee, the event proved to be a success and the team would like to thank the following sponsors and performers for their support:

**Water/Food**

- Bunnies Singapore
- Grand Mandarina
- Goro Goro Steamboat &
- Korean Restaurant
- I’m Kim Korean BBQ
- Kokomama Market Place
- Pere Ocean
- Sogurt

**Cash Donations**

- Electrical Product International Ptd Ltd
- NYJC Media Club aka NYJC Channel News
- Nanyang and Doodle Dans
- Itron Engineering Pte Ltd

**Event Venues**

- City Square Mall
- National Parks Board

**Performers**

- Baracuda Batucada
- Chasing Daylight
- Kudos Street
- Mangrove Learning

**Carnival**

- POP! Entertainment

# What the obstacles in the fun run meant



## The Climb

Nobody says that life is a bed of roses, but emotional resilience means to overcome each trial and challenge with courage and hope as we journey through life. You are not alone, we are all fellow sojourners together!

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## Limbo Rambo

There may be times when we feel stuck in life and unable to move on. Breakthroughs come when we take a step of faith - one step at a time, one step stronger each time.

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## A-mazing Life

Choices. Choices. Choices. Life is full of choices at every season. Take time to smell the roses, reflect on your journey and count your blessings. You are made for a purpose, you are meant for a destiny!

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## In-The-Net Connection

When we feel down in the pits, entangled in webs of confusion, these are the very times when we grow and rise up from the depths of our pain to burst forth into maturity.

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## Sticks & Stones Don't Boulder Me

Comparison with others often leaves us with feelings of inadequacy. If only I'm better than this person, if only I can excel in this area. Instead of speaking "If Onlys", don't be bothered by comparisons and know that you're unique and special just as you are!

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## Never Too Tired

There are no short cuts in life, it's the character that counts. For the weary ones, stay focused and keep going!



# Conversations about kaLIFEdoscope

Curious to find out about the experience of being a part of this huge-scale event, we talked to three youths from kaLIFEdoscope's planning committee.



## How was the concept of the inaugural youth event, kaLIFEdoscope, born?

**Jolene Low:** The concept of kaLIFEdoscope came from the idea of having a run that celebrates life, and how the ups and downs in life can be fun if we take an optimistic approach. We wanted to show that life can be a kaleidoscope of colours.

**Yueying Lim:** We wanted to make engagement fun in addition to being meaningful, and the idea of a race came up. Gradually, this idea developed into kaLIFEdoscope, which we hoped would communicate the idea of stepping up to embrace "life", and facing challenges with resilience. To encourage

the concept of "friendship" and "togetherness", kaLIFEdoscope was made a fun run instead of a competitive obstacle course.

## What was the purpose of the obstacle run? How do you think it was important/relevant to the youths?

**Shirley Ong:** One of the purposes of the obstacle race was to reach out to the youths. We wanted to bring across learning points such as resilience and perseverance. We wanted to show that the obstacle race represented life - full of unpredictable obstacles and challenges.

**Yueying Lim:** I felt that it was important/relevant because

many people tend to associate volunteering with being boring. The phrase "impacting the community" is overused. Through kaLIFEdoscope, one message that we would like to spread is that service can be both meaningful and interesting.

## What was so different about this youth event compared to other youth events in school or even in Singapore?

**Jolene Low:** One main differentiating factor would be that kaLIFEdoscope was planned by youths, for youths. This was an extremely heartfelt event planned by youths who believed in the cause and genuinely wanted to reach out



From left to right (Jolene Low, Shirley Ong, Lim Yueying)

to impact other youths.

**Yueying Lim:** kaLIFEdoscope was not a KPI-based event. It was initiated by YOUTHsync and carried through by the youths. We didn't have to do kaLIFEdoscope, we wanted to do kaLIFEdoscope.

### What did you enjoy most whilst planning for the event?

**Jolene Low:** I enjoyed working with the team the most. It was very inspiring to work with people who were passionate about the same cause.

**Shirley Ong:** The day I saw our plan coming to life. It reminded me of all the ups and downs we experienced in this journey.

**Yueying Lim:** Witnessing the event come to fruition. It felt like witnessing the birth of our child.

### What were the obstacles you faced whilst planning the event and how did you overcome them?

**Shirley Ong:** It was difficult keeping a relatively large team of volunteers in the loop most of the time so I delegated this task

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Persevering and choosing to get up each time we fall is always within our sphere of choice.  
- Shirley Ong

to a few leaders, trusting them to effectively reach out to the rest of the team members.

**Yueying Lim:** There were times when we were demoralised because of the lack of progress during the planning stage, or just dismayed at our inability to complete certain tasks due to our lack of experience. We are thankful to our mentors from MYMCA and Orange Room.

### What is one thing you have learnt from kaLIFEdoscope that you wish to impart to the youths in general?

**Jolene Low:** Nothing is impossible. Planning an obstacle course may seem hard, and throughout our planning journey there were times where

we doubted our abilities to pull it off, but we did it in the end.

**Shirley Ong:** I hope that youths can understand that ups and downs are unavoidable and sometimes beyond our control. But persevering and choosing to get up each time we fall is always within our sphere of choice.

### What was the biggest highlight or most memorable part of the event?

**Jolene Low:** The most memorable part of the event for me was when the last wave of participants took off. At that point, I just thought, “wow, we did it!”

**Yueying Lim:** It will be the days leading up to kaLIFEdoscope, specifically the week before. It was the time when we saw the fruits of our labour. One by one, things fell into place. Everything felt so surreal. The biggest highlight for me was definitely to see kaLIFEdoscope come to life.



# What's on?



## Mentor a Youth

Do you have a passion to see youths live life to the fullest? Be a mentor with MY Mentoring, our school-based programme to increase students' interest towards their studies. Together, we can guide a young person to make good decisions by empowering them with social-emotional skills. Training will begin in end June. Email [melissa.poh@mymca.org.sg](mailto:melissa.poh@mymca.org.sg) or call 68398335 for more information.

## MY Manna

MYMCA is happy to announce our new partner in serving the community through MY Manna - Foochow Methodist Church! MY Manna is an outreach programme which supplies basic groceries and toiletries to families who are living under the poverty line and where volunteers befriend and offer a listening ear to the beneficiaries.

If you would like to donate to MY Manna Programme, you may do so at [www.giving.sg/metropolitan-ymca-singapore](http://www.giving.sg/metropolitan-ymca-singapore) or write a cheque to "Metropolitan YMCA Singapore" stating behind the cheque "MY Manna Programme". All donations to us are eligible for 250% tax exemption.



## MY World Family Day & Charity Walk 2016

We believe children are never too young to be taught empathy and compassion, and learn kindness and generosity. From now till 15 July, MYMCA's subsidiary, MY World Preschool Ltd has organised a fund raising project whereby its childcare children will save up to donate to over 6,000 beneficiaries to help them live better lives through the provision of basic necessities such as groceries and toiletries.

The final amount raised will be announced at our MY World Family Day & Charity Walk 2016 on 30 July 2016. If you are interested to volunteer to help us at our game booths or do crowd/traffic control on that day, simply email us at [connect@mymca.org.sg](mailto:connect@mymca.org.sg)



## Share Your Story

There is no better time to pay tribute to what your parents have done for you than now. Until 19 June, MYMCA will be sharing stories and photos about special moments and beautiful memories with your parents on our Facebook page. **Share your story** by emailing to [connect@mymca.org.sg](mailto:connect@mymca.org.sg).



**SUBMIT A STORY  
ABOUT YOUR PARENTS!**

Metropolitan YMCA Singapore is a not-for-profit association which nurtures children and develops youth for social responsibility to impact the community positively through volunteerism and service. It envisions a young generation strong in body, mind and spirit, leading positive community transformation.