



養和醫院  
Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital

For Immediate Release

**HKSH Village Volunteers 9<sup>th</sup> Walk For A Vision Supports Children's Cancer Foundation  
To Raise Public Awareness of 'White Pupil Reflex'  
Early Detection and Treatment of Childhood Eye Cancer**

(31 March 2017 – Hong Kong) More than 280 runners and well-wishers participated in this year's Walk For A Vision organised by HKSH Village Volunteers, raising over HK\$540,000 for Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF) in support of its public education campaign to boost awareness of retinoblastoma among healthcare professionals as well as members of the public. The Campaign calls for public attention on "white pupil reflex", an early sign of retinoblastoma or RB, to enable early detection and treatment of the potentially debilitating and fatal disease.

RB is the commonest eye cancer affecting young children, with around 5-10 new cases in Hong Kong every year. The onset age is usually below five years old and in extreme cases, as young as two months old. More than 100 local cases were recorded during 1980 and 2014 and over 80% were diagnosed at late stage with eyeball removal being left as the only life-saving option. Since RB can be diagnosed within the first few years of infancy, late detection will have a significant adverse impact on a patient's personality development and psychological maturation, and the whole family as well. In contrast, if RB is diagnosed early enough, it can mostly be treated effectively with chemotherapy plus focal consolidative therapy with laser therapy that can preserve the eyeball and useful vision.

Dr. Joseph CHAN, Deputy Medical Superintendent of the Hospital and Chief Volunteer Leader of HKSH Village Volunteers said, "There are many successful national campaigns worldwide for early diagnosis of RB. Every year, there are about 10 RB cases among 180 childhood cancer new cases in Hong Kong.



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Through our annual walkathon fundraising event, we are delighted to support this noble cause to save kids' vision and for some, their lives.”

Mr. Tony HO, Chairman of Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF) stressed that it is the mission of CCF to guard children's life. “Most RB cases are diagnosed at late stage, and the decision to remove eyeballs of young kids is usually done within a few days as it is unfortunately the last life-saving resort. We are grateful for the support of HKSH Village Volunteers and all participants in the walkathon who have worked with us to raise public awareness of the disease through a simple act: Use your phone or camera to take a photo with flash and watch out for the early sign of RB.”

Flash photography results in “red-eye effect” for normal eyes as flash light is able to reflect blood vessels of retina and choroid of the eye. On the contrary, “white pupil”, one of the early signs of RB, can be seen if there is a tumour on the retina obstructing the light. Parents should consult an eye doctor if “white pupil” is suspected.

Retinoblastoma Awareness and Education Campaign is organised by CCF in collaboration with the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, Faculty of Medicine of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). Dr. Jason YAM, Assistant Professor of CUHK, who is the convener of the Campaign said, “The Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences of CUHK has recently conducted a pilot survey of about 1,000 parents of kindergarten children, and found that 96.2% of the respondents have not heard of RB, while another 97% said they are not aware of the importance of white pupil reflex as related to childhood eye cancer.”

Dr. Dorothy FAN, Specialist in Ophthalmology of the Hospital, added, “While about 40% are related to hereditary factors, the majority of RB cases are sporadic without family history. This makes it all the



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more important to raise public awareness of ‘white pupil’, and parents must bring their kids for eye check when in doubt.”

The 18-month long campaign, to be launched later this year, is targeted at parents with children aged under 5 years and healthcare professionals including paediatricians, family medicine doctors and general practitioners, as well as medical professionals in Maternal & Child Health Centres. Videos, posters, pamphlets, public talks will be used to drive home messages while an academic symposium will be organised for healthcare professionals.

Walk For A Vision, which was held on 26 March, is an annual charity event organised by HKSH Village Volunteers, supporting medical-related institutions and projects with a noble cause. Starting from the Hospital, the 8-km walkathon route passes through Sing Woo Road, Blue Pool Road, Wong Nai Chung Gap Road, and Violet Hill hilltop and then back to the Hospital.

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### **RB patient case sharing**

#### **Fion**

Fion, a mother of two, is a volunteer of Child’s Vision – Retinoblastoma parents support group organised by the Children’s Cancer Foundation. Her eldest daughter was diagnosed with RB at the age of one year. After the removal of her right eyeball, she received chemotherapy as cancer cells were found in surrounding tissues. Fitted with an artificial eye, Fion’s daughter, now a teenager, is leading a normal life, enjoying school and activities including swimming. “The lesson to learn from my painful yet hopeful experience is that parents should watch out for ‘white pupil’ and seek professional help immediately. It is my wish that no more kids in Hong Kong will lose their eyeballs due to RB.” she said.



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## **Crystal and Terry**

Born in 2015, Crystal and Terry's son was diagnosed with RB at the early age of 14 months old. As the tumour was screened at late stage, his right eyeball had to be removed within days after he was confirmed with the disease. Now 3 months after surgery, the little boy has received an artificial eye and is now under regular check-up at Hong Kong Eye Hospital. Genetic testing shows that the cause is sporadic, and his 4-year-old sister does not carry the RB gene. "It only took 10 days from diagnosis to surgery, and as parents we were devastated by the news. Support from other family members as well as assistance from volunteers and staff at the Children's Cancer Foundation have helped us sail through the storm. Our son remains a happy kid for which we are most grateful."

## **About Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital**

Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital is one of the leading private hospitals in Hong Kong. With the motto "Quality in Service Excellence in Care", the Hospital is committed to serving the public as well as promoting medical education and research.

## **About HKSH Village Volunteers**

Established in April 2009, the HKSH Village Volunteers, which consists of HKSH staff members, doctors, nursing students, alumni of the School of Nursing and retired staff, has been taking part in various community and fundraising activities in order to promote the health and wellness of people in Hong Kong through care and love. Its major fundraising events are the annual Walkathon "Walk For A Vision" and "Christmas Party in Benefit of OSC". In recent years, more volunteer programmes and services have been developed, including "HKSH Health Buddies", "HKSH Health Talks", "HKSH Caring Friends", and "HKSH Trekkers". Partners include Ebenezer New Hope School, Ripple Action, Enlighten, and St. James' Settlement.



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### **About Children's Cancer Foundation**

The Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF) was founded in 1989. Its mission is to improve the quality of life for young cancer patients and their families in caring for their physical, psychological and social well-being; to help doctors improve the survival rate of children with cancer; to assist major public hospitals in Hong Kong upgrade equipment and services in paediatric oncology.

Through its Family Service Centre in Wong Tai Sin and Community Service & Rehabilitation Centre in Shek Kip Mei, CCF is able to provide comprehensive patient support programmes which include family counselling, clinical psychology, child life (previously named hospital play), occupational therapy, palliative and home care, long-term follow-up, respite care, rehabilitation as well as financial, social and educational support. In addition, CCF also provides funding for the purchase of medical equipment and drugs, diagnostic tests, facility upgrades in the wards, half-way homes, research and medical training.

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Photos

1. The kick-off ceremony of “Walk For A Vision” organised by HKSH Village Volunteers is officiated by Dr. Walton LI, Medical Superintendent of the Hospital; Dr. Joseph CHAN, Deputy Medical Superintendent of the Hospital and Chief Volunteer Leader of HKSH Village Volunteers; Mr. Tony HO, Chairman of Children’s Cancer Foundation; and members of the Clinical Governance Committee and Hospital Management Committee of the Hospital.



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2. Dr. Joseph CHAN (right), Deputy Medical Superintendent of the Hospital and Chief Volunteer Leader of HKSH Village Volunteers, presents a cheque of HK\$546,500 to Mr. Tony HO (left), Chairman of Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF), to support CCF's Retinoblastoma Awareness and Education Campaign.



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3. Dr. Joseph CHAN (third from right), Deputy Medical Superintendent of the Hospital and Chief Volunteer Leader of HKSH Village Volunteers, Dr. Dorothy FAN (second from right), Specialist in Ophthalmology of Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital, Dr. Jason YAM (first from right), Assistant Professor of Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, Faculty of Medicine of CUHK, Mr. Tony HO (fourth from right), Chairman of Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF), and two families of CCF's Child's Vision RB parents support group, joined to call for public attention on "white pupil reflex", an early sign of RB, which can be detected through flash photography. (Remarks: the two children in this photo are not RB patients)



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