

PROJECT EDELSTEIN

Group Number: 7-16



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Section I: Project Overview

Area of Concern

Every day in Singapore, 6 people are diagnosed with a blood-related disease such as leukaemia and many of them will not survive without a bone marrow transplant. A bone marrow transplant may be their only chance of survival, but that requires a donor with the same HLA (Human Leukocyte Antigen) profile. The odds of finding this matching donor are 1 in 20,000. As such, they turn to the Bone Marrow Donor Programme (BMDP). Established in 1993, the BMDP is a non-profit organisation responsible for building and managing Singapore's only register of volunteer donors who are willing to donate their bone marrow to save the lives of patients with leukaemia.

However, at current, the BMDP only has 85,000 donors in its registry. The chances are even lesser for people from minority races who have a smaller pool of matching donors. That is why the BMDP desperately needs more people to sign up as donors, especially from Malay and Indian communities.

Challenges Identified

The Bone Marrow Donor Program (BMDP), our beneficiary, is the only bone marrow registry in Singapore. There are several areas that the BMDP lacks in:

A. Awareness

Misconceptions surrounding bone marrow donation . For example, some people believe that bone marrow is a bone where in fact, it is a tissue that produces stem cells and platelets.

B. Donors

With only 85,000 donors in the registry currently, the chances of finding a matching bone marrow is extremely slim.

C. Funding

The BMDP receives no government funding and in line with it's goal to increase the register by 17,000 bone marrow donors this year, a total of \$3 million needs to be raised as it costs \$180 to add a donor into the donor registry.

Underlying Problem

Given that patients with blood diseases encounter difficulty in finding donors due to a lack of awareness and various misconceptions revolving around bone marrow donation, as well as a need of funding for BMDP, how might we raise awareness of BMDP amongst the population such that there would be more people equipped with accurate knowledge of bone marrows and thus more willing to become donors in the year 2018 and beyond?

Plan of Action

Project Edelstein has carried out numerous events to achieve its three main objectives: Raising Funds, Raising Awareness and Recruiting Donors. Upon discussion with the BMDP, we carried out our plans with the help of our various Organising Teams.

Date	Action	Objectives
March 2018	Marrow Escape A bone marrow themed escape room held at the Boon Lay Community Centre, enabling participants to have fun while learning more about our cause	Outreach: 50 Funds Raised: \$124
March 2018	Taman Jurong CC Donor Drive Donor drive booth set up to recruit bone marrow donors	Est. Outreach: 300 Donors recruited: 38
April 2018	Service Learning Summit Took part in Hwa Chong Institution's Service Learning Summit involving 20 schools, setting up a donor pledging booth and a presentation to promote our project and allowed students to gain a deeper understanding of bone marrow donation.	Est. Outreach: 800 Donor pledges: 50 Funds Raised: \$50
May 2018	Open House Set up a booth at Hwa Chong Institution's Open House, serving as a platform to raise awareness for the BMDP's cause, as well as sell merchandise to raise funds for the BMDP.	Est. Outreach: 3000 Funds Raised: \$300
May 2018	River Valley High School Donor Drive Donor drive booth set up to recruit bone marrow donors	Est. Outreach: 500 Donors recruited: 59 Donor pledges: 88

June 2018	Concert Matchstick: Incandescent A concert opened to public, featuring premier acts from 11 different schools and local artiste - Jasmine Sokko.	Est. Outreach: 450 Funds Raised: \$4226 Donor pledges: 54 Donors recruited: 14
June 2018	95.8FM Radio Talk Show 30 minute time slot on 95.8FM radio talk show to educate the public on misconceptions surrounding bone marrow donation	Est. Outreach: 30,000
June 2018	Street Sales We recruited 225 volunteers from 22 schools, who sold merchandise pertaining to the BMDP over the course of 20 days.	Est. Outreach: 70,000 Funds Raised: \$9700
June 2018	Busking Volunteers busked on the 19th of June at Orchard to raise funds	Est. Outreach: 500 Funds Raised: \$250
June 2018	Social Media Campaign Weekly posts on social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook to correct public's misconception surrounding bone marrow donation and inform the public of facts about the BMDP.	Instagram followers: 1420 Facebook followers: 1094 Est. Outreach: 6400
July 2018	Door-to-Door pamphlet distribution A form of pre-drive publicity, involving 40 volunteers going door-to-door to raise awareness on bone marrow donation and invite residents to sign up as donors.	Est. Outreach: 1000 households
July 2018	Second Taman Jurong CC Donor Drive Donor drive booth set up to recruit bone marrow donors.	Est. Outreach: 500 Donors recruited: 18

August 2018	Flashmob Held at Lot One shopping mall featuring 20 performers from SOTA, with awareness booths and donor drives booths.	Est. Outreach: 5000 Donors recruited: 28
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Section III: Project Outcomes

Accomplishments

Impact on community:

The public was able to better empathise with the plight of people suffering from blood diseases in Singapore as they learnt about the rarity of finding a matching bone marrow donor and are more acquainted with the procedures of donating bone marrow. This addresses the common misconceptions people have with regards to bone marrow donation and galvanized more people to pledge their support for our cause.

Community involvement:

Project Edelstein, consisting **5 Core members and 70 organising team members** from more than **20 different secondary schools** in Singapore, has stirred the hearts of **459 inspiring youths** to volunteer to support for our events and our cause.

Given that we identified the problem that patients with blood diseases encounter difficulties in finding donors due to various misconceptions revolving around bone marrow donation, we can say that we have adequately tackled such a problem. Our appearance on the Radio Show as well as our various social media campaigns and events helped us reach out to over **120,000 people**, raising their awareness for bone marrow donation, and successfully raising the profile of BMDP to the general public. Through our committed efforts organising street sales, concert, donor drives and other various events, we were able to raise a combined **351 donors and donor pledges**, while also raising more than **\$16,250** in funds for BMDP. On our online outreach side, our social media accounts has managed to gain **1,420 followers** and reach a total of **1,100 likes** this year. As a whole, we can see that we have been able to make a significant impression on the public and raised greater awareness for BMDP and its cause.

Reflections

During the process of the project, we faced several difficulties.

As we had numerous events this year, we sent out more than 300 emails requesting for in-kind sponsorships from various companies in Singapore. However, we failed to obtain many sponsorships due to many companies having already contributed to other beneficiaries and causes. As a result, we encountered difficulty in reducing the expenditure of our events. In the future, we will try to expand our contacts within companies through volunteers and OT members, as well as calling up or heading down to companies to request for sponsorships.

As a project, one of the challenges we faced was that we were unable to meet face-to-face with the patients who have received a bone marrow transplant. This could be demoralising at times as we were unable to see the impacts of our actions and sometimes question the purpose of the project. Nonetheless, we constantly motivated one another throughout the course of the project and we were headstrong in the belief that whatever we did would truly impact the community and those in need.

Overall, we felt that our initiatives were largely successful in reaching out to the public and correcting misconceptions in the public, at the same time raising funds and donors for the BMDP. On hindsight, we should have expanded the number of venues we worked with for donor drives. We will work with the next batch of core members so as to bring Project Edelstein to greater heights.

Personal Growth (Individual):

Start of project	End of project
Lacked confidence and awareness when explaining what our beneficiary does and what they do	Confidently and quickly express what our beneficiary aims to do and the people it serves
Shy and not willing to find out more from the beneficiary as to how our Project could help them	Open and clear communication with the beneficiary in order to better help them
Lacked planning as to how to manage and motivate our volunteers	Able to plan out large scale events in detail and manage our volunteers in order to meet our project and event goals

New insights on Bone Marrow Donation (Community):

Insight	Reasoning
People did not want to sign up to be Bone Marrow donors even after having the Project explained to them	People fear hassle or are not willing to donate even if risk-free
Not many people have heard of the Bone Marrow Donor Programme	Lack of public exposure on the cause, not enough people understand its goals

References

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