

# Youth raise awareness for mental health issues, inspired by own stories



The team members from left to right: Ms Adelyn Lim, 23, Ms Tricia Chua, 20, Ms Tricia Koh, 18, and Ms Tan Li Ying, 18. ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE

 PUBLISHED MAY 16, 2017, 9:56 PM SGT

SINGAPORE - An amazing race with a difference will be held in August where participants will have to put themselves in the shoes of the mentally ill.

Participants will be asked, for example, to wolf down a large plate of food individually, to draw parallels to how mental health patients sometimes feel overwhelmed.

The group, consisting of Ms Adelyn Lim, 23, Ms Tricia Chua, 20, Ms Tricia Koh, 18, and Ms Tan Li Ying, 18, have something in common - all of them had experienced mental health issues before - ranging from anxiety, depression and personality disorder. They are currently undergoing treatment.

"We started this project because of our own experiences. Due to social stigma, we felt like we couldn't speak to our friends about mental illnesses, and learnt that others face similar problems," said team leader Ms Tricia Chua, who is studying for her private A-level examinations at MDIS.

Get **The Straits Times**  
newsletters in your inbox

SIGN UP

Ms Chua and her teammates will also sell items, such as handicraft products made by SAMH clients, in the Orchard Road area. The team hopes to raise about \$8,000 in funds for SAMH.

The group was one of 100 teams in this year's Citi-YMCA Youth For Causes programme, which was launched on Tuesday (May 16) at the School of the Arts. The initiative, which marked its 15th anniversary, was graced by President Tony Tan Keng Yam.

The launch was attended by YMCA delegates from 15 cities, which have adopted the Youth For Causes programme in their various countries. Under the initiative, each team receives funding of \$1,600, in addition to resources such as training in financial management and marketing. The team will promote and raise funds for a voluntary welfare organisation of its choice, for 15 weeks until end-August.

Other projects cover topics such as art therapy, social entrepreneurship, and children empowerment.

Ms Tan Li Li, executive director of SAMH, told The Straits Times that raising awareness is more important than fundraising under the programme.

"The scheme gives us a platform to engage youth about social causes such as mental health. When they hear about us, they'll know that there is an avenue to seek help."