



Members of The Ironman In You team at one of their visits to the Muscular Dystrophy Association (Singapore). The project, which aims to raise \$100,000, includes a fitness challenge, where participants are to swim 500m, walk or run 2.5km, or cycle 10km. PHOTO: THE IRONMAN IN YOU

Six friends launch fitness test to aid muscular dystrophy patients

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When Mr Ian Chan was in junior college three years ago, he was the slowest runner among the boys in the Ultimate Frisbee school team, and came in last in a 2.4km run.

Two weeks ago, motivated to do his bit for a good cause, he completed a back-breaking triathlon in 13 hours and 55 minutes. It involved a 3.8km swim, a 180km bike ride and a 42.2km run – similar to the distances in the Ironman triathlon – without a break between each leg.

Mr Chan, 21, undertook this challenge as part of The Ironman In You, a project he and five friends started in March to raise awareness and funds for those affected by muscular dystrophy in Singapore. It is a genetic condition that causes muscles to progressively weaken and waste away.

“During my training, I realised how difficult it was to improve my fitness,” said Mr Chan, who will start his studies at the National University of Singapore in August.

“I couldn’t imagine how difficult it must be for people with physical disabilities and neuromuscular disorders, who must be going through something that is many (orders of) magnitudes harder.”

With that in mind, Mr Chan rallied his friends to launch The Ironman In You. The team includes Mr Amos Khan, Mr Kenneth Han, Mr Ong Tsien Jin, Mr Shafiq Imran and Ms Shalynn Tsai Qi Yun, all aged 21.

The Ironman In You project includes a fitness challenge, where participants are to swim 500m, walk or run 2.5km, or cycle 10km.

Participants tag @TheIron-

manInYou in photos or videos of themselves completing the challenge on Instagram, with the distance and time clocked.

They then nominate five friends to complete the challenge or donate to the fund-raiser, which has a target of \$100,000.

All funds will go to the Muscular Dystrophy Association (Singapore). More than \$22,000 has

been raised by 34 donors so far.

On why the team decided to feature the triathlon as part of the project, Mr Chan said: “We felt the willpower people with muscular dystrophy need to get through everyday life is something many of us don’t understand. It requires a lot of perseverance and we wanted to use the Ironman triathlon to project that spirit.”

For Ms Tsai, a Year 2 undergraduate at the University of Adelaide, the project has been an eye-opening and humbling experience.

She said: “Many people are worried about saying the wrong things around people with muscular dystrophy, but I feel like being genuine with them is all they want.”

“They are aware of their condition and we do not have to beat around the bush. We should just treat them like a friend.”

Added Mr Chan: “Even if we don’t meet our target of \$100,000, we would just like for many more Singaporeans to learn about muscular dystrophy and gain awareness of those with the condition.”

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