Youngsters with heart raise record $665,000

They rally others to raise money for various causes

BY YAP SU-YIN

THE mission: Produce 1,500 CDs of original music by nine local bands, get sponsors and volunteers to pull off a charity concert – all within eight weeks.

The result: CDs sold and most sold, 13 sponsors and more than 850 volunteers brought on board. And a concert staged before an audience of 1,500.

The effort raised $45,010 for The Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund, which helps needy children.

The project was not run by a well-staffed, big-time event management company, but by four teenage music lovers from Anglo-Chinese Junior College and 21 of their friends.

The team, called Dream On, has been named one of the three winners of this year’s Citibank-YMCA Youth for Causes contest, which started in May and closed in September for evaluation and judging.

The contest, in its fourth year, asks youth as young as 14 to form teams of four to conceive, plan and execute entrepreneurship projects. They get a seed fund of $1,600 from Citibank and some guidance from volunteer mentors.

All proceeds go to the voluntary welfare organisation of the team’s choice.

This year, 100 teams picked from the 181 that applied – raised a record $665,000 to benefit 46 charities.

At an awards ceremony at the new Supreme Court today, the winning teams will each receive $4,500 in cash, a certificate and a plaque.

Subsidy awards will also be given out for categories such as project sustainability, promising entrepreneur, public outreach, volunteer management, fund management and best mentor.

Members of Dream On, which won the 17- to 21-years-old category and the promising entrepreneur award, hope their project will encourage others to try and make their dreams a reality.

The team members are Miss Carmen Ching and Miss Rachel Pang, both 18, and Miss Agnes Christina and Miss Marsha Nugroho, both 19.

The above-21 category was topped by A(r)t Live, comprising Singapore Management University students.

They raised $18,357 for Very Special Arts Singapore, a charity which provides access to the arts for the disabled.

Among their fund-raising efforts was a helium balloon sale at Suntec City.

Recalled team leader Tan Wendy, 22: “We charged $5 for each balloon, but some gave $10.”

The team members – Mr Tan, Miss Ouyang Yan Ling, 20, Miss Dai Xiaoixiang, 21, and Mr Justin Yeo, 22 – raised $2,000 that day.

In the contest’s 16-and-below category, a team from Chua Chu Kang Secondary School walked away with top honours.

The four schoolmates formed the Flying Free team, raising $16,370 for the Children’s Cancer Foundation.

They got 200 volunteers to help make bookmarks, balloon sculptures and kites in 10 places with high pedestrian traffic, such as the Lot 1 and Suntec City shopping malls.

The team – 15-year-olds Lim Mei Yen, Jane Sia, Audrey Lim and Christina Soh – found partners in the National Library Board and the Kite Association of Singapore.

They also organised two kite-flying events in the East Coast and West Coast parks.

Said team leader Mei Yen: “The kite was our symbol of freeing the pain and suffering of children with cancer.”

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