



**Press Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**One-on-one Face-to-face**  
**Make Friends with Rare Genetic Disease Patients**  
**“Buddies Scheme”**

8 March 2009 ---- The “**Buddies Scheme**” encourages the public at large and patients to interact with each other as companions through this new online scheme.

Officially launched on 8 March 2009, the “**Buddies Scheme**” is the first campaign ever in Hong Kong for pairing up one-on-one with patients living with rare genetic diseases. Besides connecting patients and the public on a message board, it also allows funding support to go directly to specific patients in order to assist them with medication expenses and achieve their dream of receiving suitable medical care. The “**Buddies Scheme**” is organized by the Hong Kong Mucopolysaccharidoses and Rare Genetic Diseases Mutual Aid Group (“MPS Group” in short) and co-organized by final year students majoring in English for Professional Communication at City University of Hong Kong.

Numerous kind-hearted celebrities became buddies with our patients with rare genetic diseases at the Kick-off ceremony of the “**Buddies Scheme**”, including world renowned New York University Associate Professor of Neurology and Pediatrics (Dr. Gregory Pastores), our consultant Dr. Fernando Cheung Chiu Hung and “son of star” Chan Yik Hei. Also, renowned celebrity Ben Wong, guest emcee Roland Leung and artists Jason Chan, Fiona Fung and Jaime Fong encouraged everyone to be **buddies** with patients as they had, to support them and share each other’s joy and sorrow.

As the event coincided with the Women’s Day, mothers from our Group shared their experience of raising children who live with rare genetic diseases. “It was hard to be a woman, even more so to be a good mom!”

Chairman of the MPS Group, Mr. Stephen Ma, expressed that the MPS Group has about 30 patients with MPS and other rare genetic diseases. Being a minority in the society, the government has been ignoring their needs. The Hospital Authority still conveyed that no data is available to prove the efficacy of such therapies in question. So, public hospitals cannot provide these therapies. However, they are legally administered in other countries and regions, with obvious improvements among patients. Also, the cost for therapies is extremely high and not affordable. “We will continue to fight for our rights to receiving treatments, and will do so till the end. The “**Buddies Scheme**” slogan, “Your donations let love and hope prevail”, echoes with the same heartfelt wishes of patients in the MPS Group.

For more information about the campaign, please visit: [www.hk-mps.com/buddies](http://www.hk-mps.com/buddies).



**Please download photos of today's event from this link:**

[http://www.bbluesky.com/bblue2/BuddiesScheme\\_Launch\\_2009-03-08.zip](http://www.bbluesky.com/bblue2/BuddiesScheme_Launch_2009-03-08.zip)

**Photo captions:**

Photo No.	Caption
01	Celebrities and professionals from different fields launched the Buddies Scheme for patients with rare genetic diseases and encouraged the public to join and let hope prevail!  <i>Guests of honour (from left to right):</i> Singer Ms. Jaime Fong, guest emcee Mr. Ronald Leung, singers Ms. Fiona Fung and Mr. Jason Chan, Chairman of the MPS Group, Mr. Stephen Ma, MPS Group consultant, Dr. Fernando Cheung Chiu Hung, New York University Associate Professor of Neurology and Pediatrics, Dr. Gregory Pastores, renowned celebrity Mr. Ben Wong, and "son of star" Chan Yik Hei.
02	Group photo with guests of honour and patients.
03	As the event coincided with the Women's Day, Johnny's mother shared the difficulties in taking care of her son who suffered from MPS.
04	Ben Wong shared words of encouragement with MPS patients while Chan Yik Hei was inspired to invent new products for them.
05	Jason Chan, Fiona Fung and Jamie Fong became the first buddies of the scheme.
06	Jason Chan befriended two patients right after the Buddies Scheme Kick-off Ceremony.

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