

my paper 我报

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SINGAPORE PRESS HOLDINGS

## SINGAPORE



FOR GOOD CAUSES: Boxers (from left) John Timms, Robin James, Ian Mullane, Julian Andriesz and Vatche Mundigian. (PHOTO: NEO XIAOBIN)

## FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

S'poreans and expats take to the boxing ring to raise money for local and Asian charities

VICTORIA BARKER

**B**USY though they may be, white-collar professionals – both Singaporean and foreign – are taking time out of their packed schedules to do their bit for charity.

Take, for example, the part-time pugilists who go head to head in the boxing ring to raise money for a good cause.

These “white-collar boxers”, who have no formal training in boxing, have day jobs as teachers, lawyers, bankers and businessmen, among others.

Behind the concept is sporting-event company Vanda Promotions and its founder, Briton Ian Mullane.

Mr Mullane, who has lived in Singapore for six years, told *my paper*: “Most of them have never boxed, and never thought they’d take up boxing.”

“But for a good cause, you’d be amazed at the interest and support the sport can draw.”

The company organises boxing events all over Asia. It has raised an average of between \$80,000 and \$100,000 for charities such as the Spastic Children’s Association of Singapore (SCAS) and the Hong Kong Red Cross.

On top of boxing matches, each event also includes a black-tie dinner and charity auction of sporting memorabilia to bring in donations.

The company’s next event, which will benefit the Children’s Surgical Centre (CSC) in Cambodia, is slated for April 18 at the Suntec City Convention Centre.

All 85 tables have already sold out. Tickets, costing up to \$350 apiece, are typically sold to friends and family members through the boxers themselves.

The last event, held in Singapore last October, raised US\$70,000 (S\$107,000) for SCAS and CSC.

As for training, the white-collar boxers receive crash courses over 12 weeks by four instructors, including Singaporean Alexis David, to deliver those hooks, jabs and uppercuts.

Said Mr David, 40, a policeman: “To be part of something so fulfilling is worth the time I spend training and fighting.”

For some boxers, it is not just the thrill of being part of a real-life fight club that gets their adrenaline flowing – some have personal convictions.

One, for example, is the father of a cerebral-palsy sufferer. After seeing the challenges his son faces daily, he picked up the



WORTHWHILE PURSUIT: HSR Property Group CEO Patrick Liew (above, left) believes in giving back to society. (PHOTO: JAMIE KOH)

sport to show his support for his boy.

Meanwhile, other executives are also doing their part in helping others, in similar adrenaline-pumping fashion.

The HSR Property Group is planning a dinner and dance in April, where its staff will walk on fire to raise money for a charity, which has yet to be decided upon.

In December, 90 employees of the home-grown company organised a funfair to raise \$7,500 for Evercare Welfare Centre.

HSR chief executive Patrick Liew told *my paper*: “We see giving back to society as an integral part of our business.”

“The more we give back, the more sense of meaning we’ll

have in our lives, so it is worth taking time out to do that.”

For white-collar boxer Julian Aldriesz, 43, the draw of making a contribution is simple.

“What we’re doing is generating awareness and funds for causes that are close to people’s hearts, and that is priceless,” said the CEO of an investment company.

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Boxing: 拳击 quán jī

Crash courses: 速成班 sù chéng bān