



## PRESS CONTACT

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## OLYMPIANS AND BUSINESS LEADERS RAISE OVER HK\$3 MILLION FOR CHARITY IN 45KM SWIM RELAY AROUND HONG KONG ISLAND

Donations from 'Make Waves for Hong Kong'  
to benefit Splash Foundation's Free Learn-to-Swim Programme

(November 7th, 2023, Hong Kong) - On November 4th, five teams of elite swimmers, ranging from Olympic athletes Camille Cheng, Toto Wong, and Jasmine Alkhaldi to amateur swimmers new to ocean swimming, came together to complete the inaugural 'Make Waves for Hong Kong', a 45km multi-relay swim around Hong Kong Island. The swim relay successfully raised over HK\$3 million for Splash Foundation, a charity dedicated to addressing chronic swim illiteracy in the city by providing free learn-to-swim programs to underprivileged individuals, including low-income families, children with special educational needs, and domestic workers.

***Check Out the Thrilling Moments! Click [HERE](#)***

### 11-Hour Gruelling Swim Challenge: Endurance and Teamwork Prevail



The first relay swimmers from each team started at 3:15am in the dark from Sandy Bay near Cyberport. Plunging into the dark waters, they were relieved 30 minutes later by the next relay swimmers stepping in outside Kennedy Town, and then progressing clockwise through Victoria Harbour as the sun came up, to Chai Wan, Shek O, around Cape D'Aguilar and on to Stanley, Ap Lei Chau, and finishing around 10 to 11 hours later at Sandy Bay.

The swim event followed Marathon Swimming Federation rules, the swimmers wore one standard issue swim costume and a pair of goggles, and they were not permitted to touch any of the support vessels around them or receive assistance in any way.

Despite some challenging conditions, the inaugural swim event proceeded smoothly. Swimmers navigated Victoria Harbour in the dark, reaching Chai Wan at sunrise. The stretch from Big Wave Bay to Cape D'Aguilar was the most picturesque, but also the choppiest section of the journey. Swimmers ventured through the Lamma Channel to complete the 45km circumnavigation.

The first team to reach the finish line was former Hong Kong Olympic swimmer Annemarie Munk's Purple Team in 10 hours 14 minutes and 55 seconds. Shortly thereafter, the other four teams finished the swim, with the final team, Team Orange, completing the swim in 11 hours and 26 minutes. The swimmers were greeted by celebration and enthusiastic supporters and beneficiaries of Splash Foundation.

### **From Olympians to Amateur Swimmers, United by the Wellbeing Benefits of Swimming**

The inaugural event gained widespread support from diverse backgrounds. The group of 30 swimmers included current Olympians and passionate amateur swimming enthusiasts, all united by their belief in the profound physical and mental benefits of swimming.

**Camille Cheng, Hong Kong Olympic Swimmer:** "It's been an incredible experience to do this iconic Hong Kong swim again, this time with multiple relay teams. Swimming truly brings people together and today, we were able to make it possible for thousands more people to experience the joy of swimming as well. Hopefully one day it will be the norm that everyone in Hong Kong learns to swim, and until then, we will keep pushing to make swimming accessible."

**Jasmine Alkhaldi, Filipino Olympic Swimmer:** "Swimming in the dark was definitely something I was anxious about but I found it calming and almost meditative - especially seeing the lights set up for us by supporters and Splash beneficiaries at 3am in the morning. The camaraderie of this whole event has been great and it's been a pleasure to support Splash's amazing programme to teach people to swim."



Among the swimmers were passionate amateurs who were new to open water swimming. One inspiring example is **Rachael Guan**, a breast cancer survivor who found solace in swimming. Swimming played an essential role in her rehabilitation journey, providing both physical and mental support. Rachael Guan shared: “What a sense of achievement we all have. I have come such a long way since accepting the challenge, committing to training, and now completing the swim. For me, swimming is about potential, and this has been an empowering experience for me. Never thought I’d achieve something like this - but I’m owning it!”

### **Breaking Barriers, Making Waves: Splash’s Inaugural Fundraising Event Extends Reach in 2024**

Despite Hong Kong having the longest coastline of any city and an abundance of swimming pools, nearly half of its population remains unable to swim. This leaves a significant portion of the community susceptible to water-related risks, while also depriving them of the physical, mental, and social wellbeing benefits that come with being in the water.

The donations raised from Make Waves for Hong Kong will benefit Splash Foundation's free learn-to-swim programme. This initiative aims to eliminate financial and cultural barriers, providing the community with greater opportunities to acquire this essential life skill and enhance the city's swim literacy. Since its establishment in 2015, Splash Foundation has successfully taught over 6,000 individuals to swim, achieving a 90% success rate after only 20 hours of instruction.

**Roy Pang, Chairperson of Splash Foundation**, who also swam in the relay, said: “I would like to express my deepest appreciation to our incredible staff, volunteers, swim community, corporate sponsors and donors, whose tireless efforts and generosity ensured the success of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our 30 swimmers to swim 45km around the beautiful coastline of Hong Kong Island.

With over HK\$3 million raised from over 1,000 donors (and counting), Make Waves for Hong Kong represented the largest swim and fundraising campaign Splash Foundation has undertaken. We look to make this an annual event that allows Splash to continue its mission to teach key water safety and swimming skills to thousands more in our underprivileged communities.”

In addition to more than one thousand individual donations, the Make Waves for Hong Kong relay was generously sponsored by Kiri Capital, Ng Teng Fong Charitable Foundation, Shanghai Commercial Bank, and Simpson Marine. The event direction was set by Shu Pu, the founder of AVRA and HK360 Swim.



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## NOTES TO EDITORS:

### About Splash Foundation:

- Splash has taught over 6,000 people how to swim through a targeted curriculum based on building water confidence and water safety skills
- Splash provides free Learn-to-Swim programmes focused on water safety and wellbeing to low-income communities
- Splash's programmes currently serve migrant domestic workers, kids from low-income communities and kids with Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Learn more: [www.splashfoundation.org](http://www.splashfoundation.org)

### Key Facts about Swim Illiteracy, Water Safety & Wellbeing Through Swimming:

- Despite having the longest coastline of any city and an abundance of swimming pools, 47% of secondary school students cannot swim ([source](#))
- The majority of people worldwide cannot swim, and women account for most of them: 2 out of 3 women cannot swim ([source](#))
- Drowning is the third leading cause of death for young people aged 1-24 years ([source](#))
- Parents who can swim are more likely to ensure their children know how to swim ([source](#))
- Swimming is a low impact, low cost exercise that can be enjoyed at any age by everyone ([source](#))
- Swimming is medicine and has been linked to lowering stress, anxiety and depression ([source](#))
- Swimming is social. Whether training in teams or enjoying the water recreationally, swimming brings people together ([source](#))

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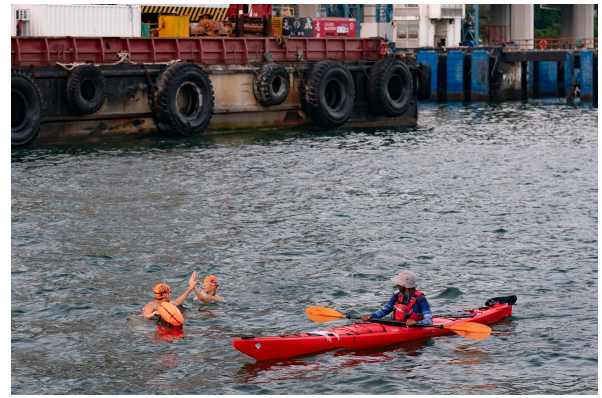
The first swimmers of the five teams had staggered starts with 5 minutes in between, starting at 3:15am.



The stretch from Big Wave Bay to Cape D'Aguiar was the most picturesque, but also the choppiest section of the journey.



Swimmers swam in 30min relay intervals. The event went clockwise from Sandy Bay, through Victoria Harbour, around Cape D'Aguiar and on to Stanley, Ap Lei Chau, and finishing around 10 to 11 hours later at Sandy Bay.



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**IMAGE DOWNLOAD:** <https://bit.ly/45iiosG>