

# Tearful start to 'love your parents' drive

Man quits job to push year-long cause to promote filial piety

BY SERENE LUO

WHEN his mother first said voices had "told her" the neighbours were calling her fat or that her husband was having an affair, Mr Tan Chin Hock had his doubts.

For about six months a few years ago, Mr Tan and his father, brother and sister, did not believe her - until doctors at the Institute of Mental Health diagnosed her with schizophrenia.

"I cried when the doctor told me the news, because she hadn't been

making it up and I didn't listen to her," said the 30-year-old.

His mother, who will turn 57 next Saturday, is now on regular treatment. Since her diagnosis, he has tried to show her more concern and wants to reaffirm his bond with his mum more openly.

He is also turning his personal experience into a year-long cause.

He quit his job as an operations executive and set up his own website [Holdingshands.sg](http://Holdingshands.sg) to promote a campaign on filial piety.

He is selling wristbands which say "Holdingshands - Love, Inspire and Be Happy", which, when worn, will remind people to show love to their parents. The bands will be sold in tandem with a 12-hour run that Mr Tan is planning to complete next Sunday from 8am at Bedok Reservoir.



Mr Tan Chin Hock, 30, with his mother Foo Lian, 56, who is being treated for schizophrenia. He had doubted her stories at first. ST PHOTO: CHEW SENG KIM

Even without a target, he has pledged \$30,000 of his proceeds to The Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund, because "I know what it feels like to go to school without a cent". His family was poor when he was growing up.

By this time next year, he hopes the audience he has reached will "pay it forward and spread the word" on their own.

"I know the thinking is we must have a job now, with these tough economic conditions...but it's now or never," he said, referring to his cause.

He said people are so caught up

"earning money, getting their dream cars, that they miss out on time with their parents". Difficult times now may prompt them to reconsider their long-term goals and family ties, he said.

He has the support of his accounts executive wife, and is living off his savings while keeping an eye out for another job.

His red, white and blue wristbands cost \$4 each. Mr Tan also intends to give \$10,000 to the Dover Park Hospice and \$10,000 to Action For Singapore Dogs.

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